Portraits of adolescence/juvenile delinquency: something written, something said, something constructed, something read

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PORTRAITS OF ADOLESCENCE/JUVENILE DELINQUENCY: 
SOMETHING WRITTEN, SOMETHING SAID, 
SOMETHING CONSTRUCTED, SOMETHING READ

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the 
Louisiana State University 
and Agricultural and Mechanical College 
in partial fulfillment of the 
requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Philosophy

in 
The Department of Educational Theory, Policy & Practice

by 
Marianne Fry 
B.S., The Ohio State University, 1962 
M.A., The Ohio State University, 1966 
May 2012
DEDICATION

For anyone who has ever been discriminated against due to race, gender, class, culture, or anything else—particularly if you are or have been affixed with a constructed label such as adolescent/juvenile delinquent. There is hope. There are people who care.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge a few people who have made a major difference in this long awaited journey in my life. This is an accomplishment that I have wanted to strive for since I received my master’s degree so many years ago. Looking back, I sometimes think that I should have followed the advice of my adviser, Dr. Herman J. Peters, from The Ohio State University. He suggested I enroll at Louisiana State University and get my doctorate degree in guidance and counseling as soon as possible after moving here. He had contacts and gave me their names. I have often regretted that I did not follow his advice. However, had I done so I would not have experienced the joy of meeting and working with so many interesting people, and I would not have had the opportunity to travel to exotic places such as China and South Africa.

My children, Cody and Kimberly, have given me great support throughout this endeavor—we have shared laughter, tears, complaints, suggestions, and celebrations along the way, and I greatly appreciate their patience. I have many friends, particularly my writing group, who were encouraging and helpful by offering advice related to technical and writing skills as well as many other areas, which I continuously needed and still do. I appreciate them so much. I am indebted to Kelley Young for all the technical assistance she has given me. I will forever be thankful.

Although I enjoyed all of the classes I took during my doctoral studies, I want to thank Dr. Kim MacGregor for introducing me to qualitative research methods and making it so interesting. It was in her class that I was first introduced to writing “I” poems and the concept of crystallization. I particularly want to acknowledge Dr. Miles Richardson, who opened my eyes to the possibility that I could write a poem. It was for his uniquely valuable anthropology class that I had been asked several times to write a poem about a given topic. His instructions were
simply to write a six line poem: four lines and then two final lines that are the kicker. It is a tremendous loss that he is no longer living—he passed away on November 14, 2011. He is greatly missed.

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to my doctoral committee: Dr. Petra Munro Hendry, Dr. William Doll, Dr. Denise Egea-Kuehne, Dr. Jennifer Jolly, and Dr. Paul Hoffman. I appreciate your time and willingness to read my dissertation and offer responses. I learned so much from those of you whom I took classes with throughout my doctoral studies. I will never forget the many interesting class discussions that were informative as well as enjoyable. Each of you has your own special way of making a graduate student feel capable and worthy of your time. Thank you so much for all of your help. I value every minute I have spent with each of you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and to question what makes this discourse possible. I use a poststructuralist perspective that thoroughly questions, dismantles, reveals, and analyzes this discourse in order to uncover hidden or obscure motives that shape how we understand adolescent individuals. Keeping in mind that everything is a construction, I investigate how the discourse works rather than what it means, and in the process I search for whether or not power or some type of oppression is involved. While conducting the interrogation and analysis procedure of the dominant narrative, I compare the term scarcity, which implies close-mindedness, manipulation, and control, and abundance, which implies open-mindedness, flexibility, and generosity, in terms of which the dominant narrative more clearly represents. As this ongoing analytical process takes place, I also consider the desirability and need to write a new narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency.

With qualitative research as the framework, I adopt a methodology grounded in narrative inquiry: open, flexible methodology promotes new understandings and different meanings. Narrative inquiry involves stories—it is a space for understanding experiences. This study inspects different types of stories: historical stories, stories related to the influence of constructed labels and identity formation, a story presented in poetic form of an individual who spent time in a juvenile prison, and my story; an autoethnography of my experience during the thirty-three years I worked in a juvenile prison.

As the researcher, my endeavor is to develop greater self-understanding, a better understanding of others; to give voice to the stories of marginalized adolescent/juvenile delinquent population that are seldom heard; and to promote an expanded social awareness in
readers that will help them develop more empathetic thinking. Having concluded that the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is steeped in an attitude of scarcity, I suggest that a new narrative based on abundance is needed. This new narrative will not know the meaning of scarcity. It will only recognize the concept of caring and encourage positive relationships, an aura of plenty, open-mindedness, generosity, tolerance, understanding, forgiveness, and individual dignity.
If, in a particular period in the history of our society, the delinquent was psychologized and pathologized, if criminal behavior could give rise to a whole series of objects of knowledge, this was because a group of particular relations was adopted for use in psychiatric discourse. (Foucault, 1972/1969, p. 43)

Complaints about youths’ behavior echo across the ages, as adults look at children and find them to be less than perfect. While animosity toward youths is not new, it has intensified as young people become increasingly separated from adults both socially and in the labor market. (Sternheimer, 2006, p. 9)

Justice has a long history. From the time of Socrates, Western philosophers have debated its meaning. At times it has referred to an inner state of serenity and well-being…; at other times, it has connoted a desirable relationship with God: and in modern times, it has pointed more directly at a preferred relationship between institutions and human beings. (Noddings, 1999, p. 7)

Exhibit I

As I sit in my car anxiously waiting for the guards to open the large, heavy razor-wire topped gate which serves as a border separating those on the inside from those on the outside, I wonder what to expect on my first day of work at a juvenile prison. The date is December 9, 1975. Rather than being one of those occasional warm, sunny days we are lucky enough to experience during the winters in south Louisiana, this particular morning begins in a grey, dreary manner, accompanied by a light, drizzling rain.

This juvenile prison sits on a large campus on the outskirts of Baton Rouge, the capitol city of Louisiana. The state capitol building unofficially represents a border between the northern and southern sections of Baton Rouge, and the most direct route to the prison is Interstate 110 going north. The distance from the state capitol building to the prison on this road is about thirteen miles. Much of the interstate is elevated, so the view from a car window looks out and over all that is below. The passing scenery continuously changes like the shifting
patterns viewed through a kaleidoscope: first there are tree-laden neighborhoods; then small houses that are close together, with several in disrepair; then scattered local businesses, with some shut down and boarded up; and later a school, churches, a network of connecting streets, and a few oil and industrial plants.

As I get closer to my destination, the interstate returns to ground level and the landscape gradually transforms into a more placid, rural-looking scene. On the last part of the drive open fields line both sides of the road. A number of small houses and churches dot the landscape here and there. Just past an isolated combination gas station and deli-market, the road curves to the right and the large campus, which covers over eight hundred acres, is easily recognizable by razor-wire topped fences that hug the edges of the highway and run as far back as one can see.

Sitting rather apprehensively in a line of cars waiting to cross this intimidating border, I think about the different world I am about to enter. I can see the guard house that appears to be indestructible with its sturdy construction of yellow cement blocks: this is a world that I know nothing about. As a child, I had once seen what I considered to be a huge fortress from the car window when my family was driving home from the zoo one Sunday afternoon. I did not know what this enormous structure was. When I asked my dad, he replied that it was an adult state penitentiary.

I have had no mental or emotional preparation for this new endeavor in life, although I do meet the required educational certification and work experience listed in a newspaper ad announcing an opening for a guidance counselor. I know nothing about the young people with whom I will be working, other than that they are incarcerated youth, or the more common label given to them: “juvenile delinquents.” The principal who interviewed me for the job told me that these teenagers had been found guilty of breaking the law in the state of Louisiana, and a
judge dictated a specific period of time for them to serve in a juvenile prison. As I sit here waiting, I search back through memories of when I was a teenager. The only images that appear in my mind from that particular period of time, which consist mostly of my experiences growing up on a farm in the rural cornfields of Ohio, are of those few classmates who missed a lot of school. They were mainly boys, but also some girls, and they enjoyed skipping school so they could spend the day smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, and playing pool. I think the young people with whom I will be working may be a little different, but I am not certain what those differences might entail. The gate is beginning to slowly slide open and I am the next car in line. Two security guards are standing at the doorway to the security house, and as I move my foot to press down on the gas pedal, the most pressing thought that rushes through my mind is that I am about to begin a new and unknown challenge—one for which I may be unprepared.

The above scenario took place thirty-six years ago when I began a long, intriguing journey as a guidance counselor working in a juvenile prison. There have been many bumpy roads along the way filled with ongoing challenges, a combination of surprises and changes, and assorted, conflicting emotions. Thinking back to those work-filled days as my memories flicker from one to another is like looking through an art gallery filled with portraits of varying images. These memorable paintings as well as countless experiences initially sparked my interest in conducting a study related to adolescence/juvenile delinquency and continue to fuel my thoughts.

Juvenile prison
razor-wire topped fences
security guards
new job
New expectations
new challenges

Examining the Narrative: Inspecting the Portrait for Context and Meaning

My interest in shedding light on the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and thoroughly examining the portrait that has been painted, supported, and sustained over the years is motivated by my having worked for thirty-three years with young people who fit within the working definition of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. My concern is driven by the pervasively negative, disinterested, attitude of most of the staff working in juvenile prisons, as well as friends and acquaintances who frequently made disparaging remarks about my working with such a population and frowned upon my doing so for as long as I did. I value the education I received through the lived experience of working in a juvenile prison because of its permanent effect on my thinking: it helps me appreciate and understand that there are a wide variety of individuals who make up any juvenile prison population and to realize that each one of them needs to be viewed as a separate individual who is worthy of positive, affirmative consideration. I believe it is my responsibility to make others aware of this possibility by uncovering the pervasive message in the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency that chiefly characterizes prisoners as a unit or group with the same thoughts, interests, and attitudes. I also believe that questioning what makes this discourse possible is a necessary concern. Wanting to understand more fully spurs me to question what others think, how they feel, and what images they visualize about adolescence/juvenile delinquency. How do anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, educators, and other scholars perceive the young individuals who fall within this culture? What does the common person on the street think? Do a majority of people share and accept a traditional portrait of

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1 Short poems such as this appear throughout the writing. Their purpose is to highlight, summarize, emphasize, clarify, and analyze. These unpublished poems are written by the author.
adolescence/juvenile delinquency? What images does the narrative evoke? Are they generally negative? Do the brushstrokes promote shades of darkness that powerfully confine all who fall within the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency to a problematic sameness? Are there subtle changes in the texture of the portrait that reinforce a message that all adolescents/juvenile delinquents are alike and in need of change or transformation? Are there additional portraits that support and reinforce or question one overpowering portrait with a dominant theme? Are brushstrokes ever made that speak of hope or success? Is an array of bold, exciting hues ever used to suggest helpfulness, promise and opportunity?

Examine narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency pervasive message seen as group same thoughts, interests, attitudes

Responsibility to make others aware value in seeing as individuals

**Primary Emphasis in Research Study**

As I attempt to narrow my concentration and bring everything into focus, my attention converges on the primary emphasis in this study: examining the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, questioning how this discourse is made possible, and rethinking new possibilities. Considering primarily the discourse that has been disseminated in the United States, I am interested in discovering what has been included in the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, how it originated and developed, what is portrayed in the general tone and attitude of that discourse, how the portrait may play a regulatory role, and what the possibilities are for re-writing the narrative or creating a wholly new and different one.
With statistics indicating a growing problem with the number of juveniles who are arrested,\(^2\) the number of youths who are incarcerated,\(^3\) and data suggesting that both race and gender play a role in these figures,\(^4\) I believe an examination of the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is important not only to provide a comprehensive understanding of what has been included in the contents of the narrative itself, but also to encourage support for a broad spectrum of social justice for all young people and to make certain that the narrative is not, as Apple (2006) warns, guided by hatefulness. I believe an examination of the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency can also provoke a keener awareness of all influential and controlling factors that can be involved in a narrative and in the process promote a change in thinking. I believe that we should interrogate any form of language that projects domination and that we should, as Cannella (1998) suggests, “construct languages that foster justice, liberation, and possibility” (p. 177). I also believe we need to give voice to the seldom heard stories that are representative of the marginalized youths in the adolescent/juvenile delinquent population. In sharing the stories of these individuals, I look forward to the possibility that readers will have a greater social awareness of the narrative and be more empathetic (Ellis, 2004). And in the process I hope to encourage and enhance their cognizance


\(^3\) According to Sickmund (2010), in the the U. S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Fact Sheet, there were 263 incarcerated youths (juveniles in residential placement) per every 100,000 adolescents in the general population in 2008.

\(^4\) Hawkins, Laub, Lauritsen, & Cothern (2000) report in the U. S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Juvenile Justice Bulletin that “differential rates of arrest for crime are related to race…Arrests of white juveniles (under age 18) constituted 71 percent of all juvenile arrests compared with 26 percent for black youth…Black youth were overrepresented, given the fact that they make up 15 percent of the juvenile population compared with 79 percent white and 5 percent other races” (p. 2).
and understanding. I suggest that such awareness, changed thinking, cognizance, and understanding can be helpful in the creation of a new portrait with bright possibilities, strong textures, and bold brushstrokes.

Dominant narrative includes problems indicated by statistics arrests, incarceration race, gender differences

Need social justice, awareness of controlling factors voice of marginalized people

**Definition of Terms**

“Adolescence” and “juvenile delinquency” are terms used separately, in combination, and often interchangeably. “Narrative” is also a term used in more than one way, and its interpretation and usage appears to vary with the user. Since these primary terms are somewhat elusive with different meanings in oral as well as written terms, for the purposes of this study, definitions are provided for each in order to provide clarification and a unified meaning. An additional term frequently used in this study is “discourse” and a definition for it is also included to enhance understanding.

By “narrative,” I mean what Lyotard (1984) refers to as the “preeminence of the narrative form in the formulation of traditional knowledge” (p. 19). He states that “[n]arration is the quintessential form of customary knowledge” (p. 19). Lyotard particularly emphasizes that narratives “define what has the right to be said and done in the culture in question, and since they are themselves a part of that culture, they are legitimated by the simple fact that they do what they do” (p. 23). For Lyotard (1984), power and control are influential forces that are regulated through a grand narrative that dominates society: the grand narrative is a dominant legitimating force.
I use the combination of “adolescence/juvenile delinquency” throughout this study because all juvenile delinquents are adolescents. However, each term has also been defined separately. Savage (2007), for instance, defines adolescence as “the category of young people from fourteen to eighteen” (p. xv). Similarly, Fenwick and Smith (1994) state the following:

Adolescence spans the years between puberty, when the secondary sexual characteristics start to appear, and 18, the age of legal adulthood. The term ‘adolescent’ is not one of pinpoint accuracy: it can refer to someone as young as 10 or as old as 18. (p. 15)

In defining juvenile delinquency, Giallombardo (1986) states “delinquency usually implies involvement with the police, detention, court handling, damaging associations, semipunitive correctional treatment, and a role and stigma that are ineradicably injurious” (p. 4).

Rice (1987) additionally clarifies that juvenile delinquency refers to those juveniles (under eighteen years of age in most states) who violate the law. He explains that “the legal term ‘juvenile delinquent’ was established for young lawbreakers to avoid the disgrace and stigma of being classified in legal records as criminals and to separate under-age people and treat them differently from adult criminals” (p. 278).

Reiss (1982) discusses the meaning of “discourse” by stating that the term “refers to the way in which the material embodying sign processes is organized” (p. 9). He explains more completely in the following:

Discourse can…be characterized as the visible and describable praxis of what is called ‘thinking’…[and] thinking is nothing but the organization of signs as an ongoing process. Signs…may be ‘defined’ provisionally as the non-discrete ‘elements’ composing the process toward meaningfulness that itself is both defined by and defining of what signs are…[This] implies that the only evidence whatsoever not only for thinking but for all human knowing and doing, without exception, is our common use of signs. (pp. 9-10, original emphasis)

Weiss adds that human action is a part of this and emphasizes that “it is specifically human action only to the extent that we can make it meaningful. That is the sense in which such action may be considered…a matter of the production and movement of signs” (p. 10, original
emphasis). He also points out that the “use and definition of signs themselves change as the discursive process moves along” (p. 10). He emphasizes that “[s]igns are not disembodied ideas…They are available only in specific material and in specific processes. Such material and such processes are…caught within a network of contextual relations, within a definable…complex environment, from which they are inseparable” (p. 10).

Definitions
narrative
adolescence/juvenile delinquency
discourse

Primary use in this study
provide clarification, unified meaning

**Research Questions**

In order to enhance thoroughness in this examination and to encourage adequate divergence in order to gain access to all angles of interest and concern, the following research questions guide this study.

- What is the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency in twentieth-century America and what makes this discourse possible?
- How do constructions of labels and identity formation within this dominant narrative become regulatory in terms of race, gender, class, and culture?
- How might a narrative on adolescence/juvenile delinquency be rethought and rewritten?

With a poststructuralist perspective guiding my process of examination, I keep in mind that there are no absolutes. Everything is constructed. My aim is to search for hidden purposes or unrecognized goals that may be oppressive by their existence—I will be searching for the
more described by Foucault (1972, original emphasis) that he argues needs to be revealed and described. I believe that each of these research questions will be valuable in this quest.

As I go through this process, I do so from a poststructuralist’s mindset that is presented from a metaphorical stance—one that takes place in a large art gallery where I am browsing through a display of interesting portraits. I examine the dominant portrait of adolescence/ juvenile delinquency along with an assortment of other versions by carefully inspecting each one along with its accompanying vignette. While discussing my findings, I use the language of painting.

Research questions
enhance thoroughness
encourage divergence
gain access to all angles

No absolutes
everything constructed

**Poststructuralism**

In researching these questions, attempting to develop a clear picture, and using the framework of poststructuralism, which, according to Davis (2004), “follow[s] the structuralist argument that terms are rendered meaningful through systems of difference and differentiation,” I hope to decipher hidden or fuzzy images that may be unclear and develop an acute awareness of what the brushstrokes are actually saying (p. 123). I also hope to encourage the technique of intensive questioning suggested by Foucault (1972). He stresses the importance of questioning in relation to purposes served and overall goals. Davis (2004) points out poststructuralists are concerned with whatever power structures are functioning and whether or not they are deliberate and explicit. He explains that “the focus is not so much the weave of a garment of knowledge, but its lining—the usually invisible structures that give it its shape” (p. 124).
Poststructuralists are concerned with discourses, which Davis (2004) emphasizes have the ability to organize as well as constrain “what can be said, thought, and done” (p. 124). He points out that attention is given to “implications and complications of…claims to truth that come to be taken as the truth” in these discourses (p. 139, original emphasis). He further explains that poststructuralists are not as concerned with how an individual shapes his or her personal understandings as with how understandings are shaped for individuals: the primary concern is with those structures that are hidden and implicit—supporting the existence of imbalances, oppressions, and aggressions.

For Pinar, Reynolds, Slatterly, and Taubman (2004), poststructuralism is both an assault on and an outgrowth of structuralism. They emphasize that poststructuralism opposes any universal truth or metanarrative. They further explain that poststructuralism stresses the importance of dismantling and revealing variances that exist within the system. Pointing out the importance of the term discourse in poststructuralism, Pinar et al. (2004) suggest that analyzing a discourse involves investigating how it works and what makes it possible, rather than what it means. They also discuss the notion of power as an important concern in poststructural analysis and assert that power and knowledge have traditionally been equated, but they explain that discourse, of which knowledge is a part, “does not represent reality…discourse constructs reality” (p. 463, original emphasis). Poststructuralists consider totalities and metanarratives to be discursive strategies that are used to legitimatize or even disguise some type of power being exercised and emphasize that any discursive practice that is oppressive needs to be revealed.

I believe that using a poststructuralist framework will be helpful in determining what the portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency suggests, what makes the brushstrokes possible, and whether or not it is a grand narrative legitimating a specific knowledge. Poststructuralism will
be useful in uncovering discursive strategies that are troubling or need to be recognized and exposed. It will also be useful in deciphering any underlying message that may exist and is being promoted in the narrative. I also believe a poststructuralist outlook can offer a valuable contribution towards rethinking and re-writing a narrative—it could be inspirational in painting a wholly new portrait.

Dominant narrative

Exhibit II

During my first few years of work at the juvenile prison, my primary responsibilities involved administering an assortment of educational and psychological tests as quickly and accurately as possible. New intakes of thirty to forty young people arrived each week, and I, along with institution counselors, social workers, and psychologists, had exactly two weeks to complete all of the required work. Most of the tests I administered were conducted in groups of fifteen to twenty adolescents, primarily black. The majority were male, although I occasionally saw female youths as well. At first, since I had no pre-conceived opinions or beliefs about this population, I adopted, without question, an image of the young people with whom I worked that corresponded to my co-workers’ image of them. It was one of superiority with a rather judgmental yet disinterested attitude. There was little concern for individuality other than how each young person performed on a specific test. I simply fell into step with my co-workers. I listened to their often condescending comments. I laughed at their ludicrous jokes. And I competed with them in terms of who was able to get a specific group of young people first. Sometimes I went to the dorms myself to escort a group I needed to test rather than wait for the
security guards to bring them to the testing room. I knew that I might not be able to get specific individuals if I waited and that would set me behind in the tight schedule we followed. Our goal was to accomplish different types of work as quickly as possible rather than to learn anything personal about the young people with whom we worked.

After working at the juvenile prison for a while and having occasional opportunities to read case histories or speak with one of the young people, called “juvenile delinquents,” I became more aware of individual differences. I realized that everyone was not the same, as was often depicted by co-workers. They each had unique personalities with various experiences, interests, problems, concerns, fears, and responsibilities. I started to question why most people who worked at the juvenile prison seemed to have a somewhat similar, superior attitude tinged with indifference and negativity towards these individuals. Although I was still searching for my own outlook and keeping my thoughts to myself, I was no longer comfortable with such a judgmental mentality. I wondered how I could have simply adopted this disinterested mind-set or laughed at jokes that were not funny. And I asked myself if these predominantly uncaring attitudes were unusual, or were they typical of most other people at all levels of society?

Young people
imprisoned
questioned, examined
procedures, decisions

Called juvenile delinquents
Who are they? How do they feel?

Narratives: A Portrait of Social Constructions

As I ponder the possibility of a vastly accepted grand narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency painted with descriptive and explanatory brushstrokes that evoke a dominantly negative portrait, I am drawn to Berger and Luckman’s (1966) explanation of reality in relation to the sociology of knowledge. They state that “reality is socially constructed and that the
sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs” (p. 1). They define “reality” as qualities belonging to phenomena that exist without being chosen or selected, and “knowledge” as a certainty about phenomena being real and possessing specific characteristics. They argue that these two terms are relevant to philosophers who question their status as well as an individual on the street who generally does not question “reality” or “knowledge” unless faced with some type of problem.

Berger and Luckman (1966) suggest that the sociology of knowledge should “concern itself with whatever passes for ‘knowledge’ in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity…of such ‘knowledge’” (p. 3). They emphasize that the development, transmission, and maintenance of human “knowledge” has become entangled with social situations to such a degree that it becomes a “reality” that is taken for granted by most—it is organized around the “here” and “now,” it presents itself as an intersubjective world that is shared with others through interactions and communication, and it stands in for reality.

Man’s development, according to Berger and Luckman (1966), is “subjected to continuing socially determined interference” (p. 48). They point out that individuals cannot really be understood as separate from the social context within which they are formed. Habitualization, they further explain, is something to which all human activity is subject: patterns develop from actions that are frequently repeated. The meanings that lay behind habitualized actions become embedded as routine: they become part of a general stock of knowledge that is taken for granted. Moreover, Berger and Luckman add that the repetition of habitualized actions result in their institutionalization. Institutions are a product of their history and they control human conduct: they set up patterns of conduct that are predefined and channeled in certain directions. Every social situation ultimately becomes institutionalized, and
any logic attributed to it becomes part of the socially available stock of knowledge that individuals take for granted. This knowledge is the basic motivation involved in the dynamics of institutionalized conduct, and it is transmitted to the next generation. Institutional activities are conceived of and transmitted as “knowledge,” which is often passed on as traditions that relegate certain individuals to specific roles.

As I consider this explanation of reality and knowledge and relate it to a possibly generalized mental picture about adolescence/juvenile delinquency, I can more easily understand why my co-workers, friends, and acquaintances had certain attitudes and why I initially adopted that same viewpoint without questioning it in any way. Based on this consideration, I suggest that adolescence/juvenile delinquency is a socially constructed concept: it was created, developed, accepted, and finally passed along without question for so long that it became a reality. The narrative was accepted and propagated as knowledge that ultimately became institutionalized. All that accompanies this concept, including age, race, gender, class, culture identities, definitions of what constitutes crime, and how such crime should be treated, I propose, are also social constructions with the same type of developmental history that has been accepted and passed down over time. Thus most people view this portrait as a masterpiece with nothing amiss: brushstrokes are boldly made, the desired texture is without flaw, enhanced shadows are exaggerated, precision is clear, and change is unnecessary. And this portrait is often supported by accompanying smaller renditions that help reinforce the dominant message.

Reality, knowledge
social context, habituation
institutionalization, tradition
accepted, believed

Portraits provoke images
narratives provide knowledge.
Choosing the Brushes for a Theoretical Perspective

Having sorted through the portraits in my mind from the years I worked at the juvenile prison, having examined the portraits in the large art gallery, having puzzled over certain aspects and having tried to fairly consider all possibilities, I believe adding another theoretical lens is valuable for clarification, illumination, and deeper understanding. The terminology involved within this additional theoretical perspective is borrowed primarily from Jardine, Friesen, and Clifford (2006). The terms these authors use to describe their thinking are directed toward school settings, teaching practices, and relationships between students and teachers. However, I believe these same terms can be used as a theoretical framework to view and analyze the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency.

As I carefully sort through different brushes to find the most appropriate to use, the terms I borrow from Jardine et al. (2006) as an additional theoretical perspective are scarcity and abundance. An outlook of scarcity represents the type of thinking where there never is enough of anything and carefulness and watchfulness are always considered a necessary requirement. In contrast, an outlook of abundance is one where an ongoing surplus always seems to be available and an overall feeling of plenty abounds. Although these authors use the terms in relation to making school settings more pleasant and successful through a culture of abundance, pointing out that the traditional outlook has been one of scarcity, I use scarcity and abundance as a means for questioning and understanding the message contained within the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. I carefully examine each layer of the dominant portrait, looking closely and questioning every little innuendo in order to achieve the greatest depth possible, and then I do the same with each of the accompanying versions. With great
As the narrative is painstakingly inspected, I suggest there is value in examining every brushstroke in each of the portraits in an attempt to determine whether or not the image being portrayed is one of scarcity—whether or not elements of carefulness and control are evident. Although scarcity is generally linked to economic concepts, I use it here as an attitude or outlook towards people and objects. For Jardine et al. (2006), scarcity dominates ways of seeing the world, ways of thinking, and ways of producing: it is an outlook that implies limitation and control. Scarcity suggests monitoring, manipulation, and the importance of limiting individual differences.

Jardine et al. (2006) view a culture of scarcity as being structured by both hurry and anxiety. They suggest that “the idea of scarcity insinuates itself…[making] it possible to control, predict, assess, and monitor…production, distribution, consumption, dispensation, and accumulation” (p. 4). The concept of scarcity is ungenerous and encourages a rigid outlook that makes domination possible. For Jardine et al. (2006), a culture or attitude of scarcity takes a narrow outlook of impoverishment and extreme carefulness, as opposed to a culture of abundance that views generosity, forgiveness, and open-mindedness to be important and also valuable in opening up new avenues of being.

Similarly, Pinar (2006) refers to a “culture of scarcity” when discussing current educational practices in schools. He states that an attitude of scarcity demands workable methods that will be successful and can be measured by regularly given standardized tests—a methodology he refers to as accountability (p. xviii). In schools in which scarcity is the
dominant outlook, there is never enough time, so time must be tightly regulated, scheduled, and monitored. Students are seen as inherently lacking, so they must be filled with knowledge and tested to make sure they are performing at acceptable levels. Teachers, too, are seen as lacking and incompetent, so they must be closely watched, limited, and directed in terms of what they teach and how and when they teach it. And students must be separated into rigid groups because there are not enough knowledge or resources to go around, etc.

The second term to be considered in this theoretical perspective is that of abundance, which I first heard during a lecture by Dr. Robert Phillips of the University of Tasmania in 2006. During this lecture, Phillips introduced the concept of abundance as it was being tried in several Australian school settings. He mentioned that in an outlook of abundance, competition is de-emphasized, while cooperation and equal opportunity to try things are stressed. Phillips further explained that when an overall positive attitude of acceptance and plenty is in place, the result is enthusiasm, positivism, and generosity. Students, parents, and teachers all benefit when an attitude of abundance rather than scarcity is projected.

In a similar manner, Jardine et al. (2006) discuss abundance primarily as a positive approach to rethinking the social structure in schools. They explain that an attitude of abundance emphasizes the value of understanding that revels in the intricacies of the world where relationships and interdependencies are explored and where curriculum topics are fluid and wide open to possibilities. Pointing out that abundance is not something that simply happens, they suggest the following:

Experiencing the abundance of things must be cultivated, and this process is often long and hard and full of its own dangers. Abundance…is a practice that not only takes abundant time, but takes living and working in a…context that exemplifies and embodies such abundance…In the face of abundance, we are called upon to act carefully and vigorously. We are called upon to venture…curriculum topics become vivid, alluring, interesting, provocative and…pleasurable. (p. 10, original emphasis)
In schools that are practicing a concept of abundance, experimentation with new ideas and different ways of doing things is encouraged, opportunity to play with no stringencies is possible, questioning and exploration is embraced, and richness abounds. With an outlook of abundance, learning is an exciting and rewarding adventure for students and teachers rather than the tightly controlled and assessed experience of scarcity.

As I examine a dominant narrative through a theoretical perspective of abundance, I search the shadows and depth in each portrait, particularly the dominant one with its tiny details. I look for bold brushstrokes of encouragement, open-mindedness, tolerance, and generosity, along with an embracing of cooperation, helpfulness, understanding, and forgiveness. I also look for exciting brushstrokes that emphasize choice, hope, difference, acceptance, and new possibilities.

Continuing my thorough examination from this theoretical perspective, I contemplate the possibility of an outlook of scarcity juxtaposed to that of an outlook of abundance. In doing so, I specifically ponder over the language of the dominant portrait as I attempt to decipher any message that may be present. I consider the following questions while doing so: Has the dominant portrait been predominantly accepted as the masterpiece—the grand narrative? Does the dominant portrait project an attitude of scarcity filled with harsh, judgmental, intolerant, castigating brushstrokes? Or is the dominant portrait painted with exciting hues of abundance, where the brushstrokes are bold bright colors with explicit statements of tolerance, caring, generosity, plenty, cooperation, and understanding? Are there accompanying portraits that support and reinforce the more compelling dominant portrait? Do any accompanying portraits question or contradict the dominant portrait?

Scarcity
narrow-minded, ungenerous
Abundance
open-minded, generous

Theoretical perspective
Which will it be?

**Sorting Through the Narratives: Considering Each Layer in the Portraits**

Having combined my understanding of poststructuralism with the concept of socially constructed knowledge, I have a rich background to draw from as I study the portraits of adolescence/juvenile delinquency within the theoretical context of scarcity and abundance. Having the strong combination of such valuable perspectives will be helpful in completing a thorough inspection. Going through this process, I do so from a metaphorical framework as if I am walking through a large art gallery, looking at an assortment of portraits, and evaluating each one’s content using terms related to painting and other artistic venues. I first analyze what is being emphasized in the dominant portrait and consider whether or not its portrayal of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is from an outlook of scarcity or abundance. I then do the same with every other portrait in the art gallery. As I contemplate different aspects of each portrait, I collect my findings and consider the possibility of needing to re-write a new narrative, to paint a different portrait. Issues that I consider significant in each of the portraits and that I believe will add value to this study are thoroughly examined and questioned. I do this with the zest and determination of the Latin verb *currere*, meaning “running the race course” (Kincheloe, 1998, p. 130). For this study requires the endurance and strength of mind of a marathon runner and the spirit, single minded focus, and determination of a sprinter.

These issues, along with additional information, will be carefully sorted through and thoroughly analyzed in the following chapters: Chapter 2 is called “A Methodological Narrative that Encourages Portrait Adjustments and Change.” This chapter includes an explanation of the method and research design selected for use in this study, with the goal of encouraging new ways
of thinking. Drawing upon the power inherent in the openness of qualitative research to a variety of techniques, I adopt a methodology that emphasizes narrative inquiry. Several different types of stories are presented and thoroughly examined. The stories are presented as portraits on display in specific portions of a metaphorical art gallery. I use various techniques to look at information in the stories from several different angles. I consider all available data from different perspectives in order to enhance and extend understanding.

Chapter 3 is called “A Historical Narrative of Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency: What Do the Brushstrokes Emphasize in the Portrait?” The basis of this chapter is historical analysis. It involves metaphorically visiting a large art gallery that contains several portraits in an attempt to learn as much as possible by spending time circulating in and about several displays. These displays include vignettes that provide historical descriptions and explanations concerning each portrait in the art gallery. My purpose in visiting these displays is to investigate how the sociology of knowledge becomes established, accepted, and passed on as a grand narrative. I have chosen Hall’s portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency as the dominant portrait not only because of its content, but also because of its size and grandiose placement in the large art gallery. Its imposing position cannot be missed. The gallery also features several portraits by Foucault. This particular display includes a historical account of discipline and treatment of juvenile delinquents. In addition, several portraits in this art gallery variously support and reinforce Hall’s dominant portrait or question certain concepts that his portrait promotes. The portraits in this collection are separate from other portraits that will also be inspected—they are all conveniently located for purposes of contrast and opposition.

Chapter 4 is called “A Social-Psychological Narrative with Varied Textures that Enable Constructed Labels and Identity Formations of Adolescents.” This chapter examines the effect
of constructed labels and identity formations, with the purpose of showing how they determine, contain, and manipulate concepts of the self as well as expectations and behavior. Specific attention is given to race, gender, class, and culture in terms of how each is influenced separately as well as in varied combinations. This chapter also considers how constructed labels and identity formation play a contributing, reinforcing role to the current narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency due to the added textural effect they provide to different portraits.

Chapter 5 is called “Poetic Narratives of Life Experience Stories: An Artistic Representation of Reality.” In this chapter I discuss what is involved in writing “I” poems and narrative poems that are based on four interview transcripts with one participant. To protect his identity, I refer to the participant by the pseudonym Michael. Michael was a student at the juvenile prison school for about two years while I worked there. For each recorded interview, I have listened to and transcribed as closely as possible Michael’s actual words. Using the transcripts as a basis, I then create poems. Creating the “I” poems involves highlighting and pulling out every “I” phrase that appears in the transcript. Keeping them in the same order as they appear in the transcript, I then arrange them in poetic style. Creating the narrative poems involves selecting more complete phrases that tell a fuller story. I arrange them in a style that reflects emotion and meaning through the use of rhythm, repetition, rhyming, and varied verse lengths. I have created these poems in order to demonstrate the value of poetry and aesthetics in research.

Chapter 6 is called “Re-writing the Narrative on Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency: Visualizing Unique Sketches, Projecting Fresh Approaches: Conclusion.” In this chapter I revisit the metaphorical art gallery along with its adjoining annex and review my thoughts from
previous visits. I conclude with a discussion of whether or not there is a dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and which theoretical perspective of scarcity or abundance is most pervasive. I present new ideas and possibilities for re-writing a narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, painting a different portrait—depending on the outcome, necessity and support for re-writing the specific narrative.

Also appearing in each of the six chapters are segments of my autoethnography, which I have written from a chronological perspective. I do not tell my entire life story—just the thirty-three year period I spent working for the Department of Corrections at the headquarters office as well as at the juvenile prison. I also include stories that provide information about a large number of students who attended the juvenile prison school where I worked. Each chapter begins and ends with an autoethnographic segment. In addition, some chapters include an extra autoethnographic segment in the middle as lagniappe. I have chosen this period in my life because while working at the juvenile prison I learned about and grew to sincerely like and care about students as separate individuals who fit within the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and had been placed in a juvenile prison. They are a very important part of my life. Knowing them and remembering them helps me to view my life in new and different ways. I value my time working with them and will never forget them.

Examination of dominant narrative
methodological narrative, historical narrative
social-psychological narrative, narrative of life experiences
possible re-writing of a new narrative

Dominant portrait in place
possibly to be replaced

Exhibits III

Sorting through memories of those first few years working at the juvenile prison, I realize that I was in the process of finding or developing a portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency
with which I could feel more comfortable. I was no longer content to fall in line with the mindset of the majority of others who worked at the prison. I remember feeling bothered, annoyed, frustrated, and disappointed with their attitudes of indifference. Yet at the same time I also wondered why such an attitude was so pervasive. Had my coworkers become hardened in their attitudes because of the environment in which they worked? Was it a means of survival so that they wouldn’t take disturbing thoughts home with them? Had they ever thought or felt differently, or was such an outlook simply something they accepted without question?

Perhaps negativity was encouraged by the assembly line mentality that existed in the day to day work at the juvenile prison. Maybe everyone was so caught up in getting all of their work completed as quickly as possible that they began seeing all of the young people as objects; as if their job simply involved adding a bolt, tightening a screw, or making certain a specific part was added as the object passed their work station. Whatever the reasoning for the pervasive judgmental attitude, it seemed to be locked securely in place. There appeared to be no space for other types of thinking. They were quite happy and content with their narrow outlook on life.

Assembly line mentality
negative
indifferent
judgmental

Pervasive attitudes
unaccepted
CHAPTER 2
A METHODOLOGICAL NARRATIVE
THAT ENCOURAGES PORTRAIT ADJUSTMENTS AND CHANGE

Not always, but oftentimes, the extent to which we grasp another’s world depends on our existing ability to make poetic use of our imagination, to bring into being the ‘as if’ worlds created by writers, painters, sculptors…and composers, and to be in some manner a participant in artists’ worlds reaching far back and ahead in time. (Greene, 1995, p. 4)

The story of a life is less than the actual life, because the story told is selective, partial, contextually constructed and because the life is not yet over. But the story of a life is also more than the life, the contours and meanings allegorically extending to others, others seeing themselves, knowing themselves through another’s life story, re-visioning their own, arriving where they started and knowing ‘the place for the first time.’ (Richardson, 1997, p. 6)

Exhibit IV

I spent the first four years of my work as a guidance counselor at the juvenile prison in Lilac, a two story building that was originally constructed and used as a dormitory for young people. Located close to the infirmary, which is the first building inside the front gate, Lilac had been converted into several small offices both upstairs and down that housed administrative offices as well as offices for institution counselors, social workers, and psychologists. It also had one large room on the first floor that I used for administering the many tests that I gave weekly to each new group of young people or students as I called them. The only windows in Lilac were located at the top section of the walls next to the ceiling. They were rectangular in shape. It was impossible to see outside unless you stood on a chair. Located farther into the campus and on the other side of Lilac were Rosebud and Ivyleaf, two dormitories for newly incarcerated male students to reside in while they were being processed. Each of these dormitories had space for 40 students, for a total of 80 if every bed was filled. The few female students who were newly incarcerated were housed in Bravo, a dormitory located in a separate area of the campus. Students were often brought directly from court if there was space for them in the dormitories. They were also sometimes brought from group homes or from their own home.
The campus was divided into three primary areas. The Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center (JRDC) where I worked was in Area II. It was also sometimes referred to simply as the diagnostic center. Another area designated as the Louisiana Training Institute (LTI), contained a traditional school for students who had been transferred from JRDC to serve their court prescribed period of time. The LTI was located in Area I along with the dining hall and maintenance building. Area III housed a few smaller programs plus the newly incarcerated female students. Each of these three areas had separate leadership and separate financial budgets. They functioned as if they were physically located at a great distance from each other but all used the same front gate and the same dining hall. I seldom, if ever, left the JRDC area to go to another part of the campus. If female students were needed for testing purposes or some other required activity they were transported in a state owned vehicle and accompanied by a security guard.

Whenever new female students arrived at JRDC and I needed to test them along with newly arrived male students, I called a security guard in Bravo to request that they be transported to Lilac as soon as I reached my desk on the morning I planned to test. The reason for this urgency to call early was because female students seemed to take three times as long to arrive as male students did. Since there were several tests that all students were required to take during a two week period and the results of the first educational test determined the level of a second and much longer one that was given on a different day, to save time everyone was tested initially in a large group. The educational and psychological tests I administered to each student included the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), California Achievement Test (CAT), Bender Gestalt Test, Draw-A-Person Test, and a questionnaire with 100 true or false items that I read aloud as students circled their responses on a duplicated copy
of an answer form. I also scored all of these tests and recorded the information on required forms that accompanied students when they were transferred to one of the four Louisiana Training Institutes in the state.

I spent my first year adjusting to the daily, grueling work load that left little time for lunch or anything else; developing a personal comfort level while working with incarcerated students about whom I felt uncertain and unprepared; becoming accustomed to competing with co-workers as well as the medical staff in the infirmary in terms of procuring a specific group of students for testing; adapting to the idea that security guards were ever present and sometimes inconsiderately as well as unnecessarily noisy; and having my car searched for contraband every time I entered or left through the front gate—occasionally I had to get out of my car so my purse could be searched and my body could be patted down. These personal adjustments and adaptations were challenging and sometimes felt overwhelming. As such corroborating with the attitudes of co-workers towards the population of incarcerated students with whom we worked was easy at first. Although the portraits that my co-workers painted of the students were often harsh, uncaring, and unappealing, they seemed to make them with self-assurance and certainty—there was nothing to be concerned about from their viewpoint. I was so busy trying to meet all of my deadlines that I had neither the time nor energy during that first year to consider otherwise. It was not until later during those first few years that I began to feel uncomfortable about such negative attitudes and to realize that the widely accepted painted picture was one that I could no longer appreciate or accept.

Juvenile prison, JRDC
car, purse, body searches
tests, tests, tests
adjustments, adaptations

Corroboration first
unacceptance later
Qualitative Research: A Method of Framing Portraits

The primary focus of this study is on the dominant narrative of adolescents who are primarily referred to as juvenile delinquents. This particular population is the motivational force that tantalizes and reinforces my interest throughout the research process. It is the stories that have been spoken, written, and accepted about them that I am interested in and closely examine throughout the study. In this process, I continuously ponder what makes this discourse possible as I also consider the possibility of re-writing a new and different narrative. For the purpose of clarification and simplicity, I refer to this population as adolescents/juvenile delinquents or adolescence/juvenile delinquency when writing in general terms and as students when I am discussing the youths at the juvenile prison where I worked. It was during my time there that I got to know these students as individuals with varying feelings, worries, and expectations. It was also during this time period that I developed a tolerant and caring attitude for each one of them.

I use qualitative research methods in this study because they provide a space for exploring a problem or issue, for listening to voices that have been silenced, for promoting understanding, and for writing “in a literary, flexible style that conveys stories…or poems, without the restrictions of formal academic structures of writing” (Cresswell, 2007, p. 40). I also use qualitative research methods because, as Cresswell (2007) states (and I agree with this assessment), “quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem… To level all individuals to a statistical mean overlooks the uniqueness of individuals” (p. 40, original emphasis). Because these terms are sometimes used interchangeably causing some confusion, Ellis (2004) describes qualitative methods as being “the more general and inclusive term” (p. 25). She clarifies more extensively by pointing out that qualitative methods refer to the following.
[A] variety of research techniques and procedures associated with the goal of trying to understand the complexities of the social world in which we live and how we go about thinking, acting, and making meaning in our lives. These research practices emphasize getting close to those we study, attempting to see the world through participants’ eyes, and conveying the experience in a way faithful to their everyday life. (p. 25)

It is with this awareness that I use qualitative research as the overall framework for this study: openness, flexibility, and new meanings are promoted and different types of possibilities are supported. I see qualitative methods as valuable to my research in that they provide an opportunity for self-questioning and self-understanding that grows, shifts, and changes.

Creswell (2007) points out important considerations concerning qualitative research by writing that it “begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37). His detailed description of qualitative research follows:

Qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action. (p. 37)

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p. 4). They state that qualitative research “consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p. 4). And they point out that these practices assist in understanding and transforming the world. It is this precise possibility of understanding and transforming the world that I promote in this study. I do so by broadening and extending an understanding of myself and others through the use of various techniques that qualitative research promotes and embraces.

On a related note, Ellis (2004) mentions that qualitative research does not privilege any specific methodological practice and also does not belong to any particular discipline. She
suggests looking at qualitative research as a continuum that goes from science on one end to art and literature on the other end. On the science end, Ellis (2004) explains, “researchers approach qualitative research as an extension of quantitative inquiry…[who] take an objective, neutral stance and use formal methods to produce knowledge and predict subsequent behavior” (pp. 27-28). However, on the art and literature end of the continuum the emphasis is on experience. Ellis (2004) explains:

[R]esearchers seek to tell stories that show bodily, cognitive, emotional and spiritual experience. The goal is to practice an artful, poetic, and empathic social science in which readers can keep in their minds and feel in their bodies the complexities of concrete moments of lived experience. These writers want readers to be able to put themselves in the place of others, within a culture of experience that enlarges their social awareness and empathy. (p. 30)

The research method that I use falls on the art and literature end of the continuum. I believe the goals of my methodology coincide with the goals that Ellis (2004) emphasizes: “evoking emotional experiences in readers…giving voice to stories and groups of people traditionally left out…and improving readers’, participants’, and authors’ lives” (p. 30). Using qualitative research can be complex, but the possible approaches are full of richness, emotional connections, unexpected findings, and varied techniques.

Throughout this study, I attempt to understand what and how others think about the adolescent/juvenile delinquent population, the self-understanding of those individuals who fall within this designated population, as well as my own thinking. Keeping in mind that the old accepted portraits are social constructions, I believe a vital role in comprehending and also instigating a different painting of the portrait can be accomplished through telling stories: a specific student’s story based on interviews, my story, and generalized stories of other students based on my memories of them. In telling stories, Munro (1998) suggests, “[t]his means including aspects of life stories that have been traditionally dismissed” (p. 5). She points out that
it is the “manner of the telling, the authoring of oneself through story, [that] provides a space for understanding” (p. 5). I seek just such a space as I slowly and carefully maneuver my way through the research process.

Qualitative research
layers of meaning
new understandings
contradictions, openness, flexibility

Methodological framework
varied possibilities

Narrative Inquiry

I use narrative inquiry, a method within qualitative research, because it promotes a gradual unfolding of new understandings, different meanings, shared experiences, and open-ended viewpoints. Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2008) state that narrative inquiry lends itself to being “able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about the individual and social change” (p. 1). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) similarly view narrative inquiry as being multilayered and having multiple strands; they believe that narrative inquiry is “stories lived and told” (p. 20). They see it as the preferred way to represent and understand experience, suggesting that from a broad perspective, experiences are temporal, that meanings change with time. It is with this awareness that I use narrative inquiry as the overall method for this study: openness, flexibility, and new meanings are promoted and different types of possibilities are supported.

For Richardson (1997), “narrative is quintessential to…understanding and communication” (p. 27). She explains more completely in the following:

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5 Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research method and differs in meaning from narrative defined in chapter one as a grand narrative by Lyotard (1979).
Narrative displays the goals and intentions of human actors; it makes individuals, cultures, societies, and historical epochs comprehensible as wholes; it humanizes time; and it allows us to contemplate the effects of our actions and to alter the directions of our lives. Narrative is everywhere; it is present in myth, fable, short story, epic, history, tragedy, comedy, painting, dance, stained glass windows, cinema, social histories, fairy tales, novels, science schema, comic strips, conversation, and journal articles. (p. 27)

Richardson (1997) extends her thinking on narrative further by adding that it is “both a mode of reasoning and a mode of representation” (p. 28). Somewhat similarly, Riessman (2008) suggests that narrative “carries many meanings and is used in a variety of ways by different disciplines, often synonymously with ‘story’” (p. 3).

According to Andrews et al. (2008), narrative inquiry has a disputed definition, with neither a precise starting point nor a precise finishing point, and no specific rules concerning acceptable materials or forms of investigation. I see this method of inquiry as valuable to my research in terms of providing an opportunity for questioning, reflecting, and understanding that grows, shifts, changes, and then changes again.

I use narrative inquiry in this study to examine as well as to tell several different types of stories. They are presented as portraits in a large art gallery and are thoroughly examined. The stories or portraits include the following: historical stories that contain the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency; stories that discuss the influence of constructed labels and identity formation; the story of an individual who was a student at the juvenile prison school for a period of time and who was willing to share his story in four interview sessions that I later transcribe; and my own story—an autoethnography based on the years I worked in a juvenile prison culture. This also includes generalized students’ stories with whom I worked in the juvenile prison school.

I use a variety of techniques in examining the different stories in an attempt to look at every possible angle. In the process of telling stories and talking about stories as I examine
them, I use portraiture in an endeavor to make each story interesting and appealing while also informative. All of these stories are metaphorically viewed, examined, analyzed, and discussed as if they are portraits that are on display in a large art gallery with an adjoining annex.

Narrative inquiry
gradual unfolding
no precise rules
social dialog

Diversity, convergences
meanings change

**Portraiture**

I use portraiture as a process for representing the narratives, the different types of stories presented in this study. I also use it as I analyze portraits in the art gallery. In essence I create portraits through the words I use as I analyze and make interpretations of every story I examine in addition to the ones I write. My endeavor is to uncover and share meanings and understandings in an artistic style that is attractive, inviting, and tantalizing to readers.

Portraiture is a technique that involves using detailed descriptions to present a fuller, richer picture. It is also helpful in attracting and maintaining the interest of readers by presenting stories in a pleasant, readable style. Portraiture, according to Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997), “is a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life” (p. xv).

Portraiture provides a pleasant way for the writer to communicate with the reader by using a language that is understandable, inspirational, and enjoyable to read while also being informative. Focusing on “narrative, with its use of metaphor and symbol, portraiture intends to address wider, more eclectic audiences. The attempt is to…speak in a language…that will
seduce the readers into thinking more deeply about issues that concern them” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 10)

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) defines portraiture as:

a genre whose methods are shaped by empirical and aesthetic dimensions, whose descriptions are often penetrating and personal, whose goals include generous and tough scrutiny. It is a sensitive kind of work that requires the perceptivity and skill of a practiced observer and the empathy of a clinician. (p. 369)

As I use portraiture to narrate stories, I realize the complexity involved. I hope to convey meanings and understandings that would otherwise be indiscernible by documenting “human behavior and experience in context” (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 11).

Portraiture
detailed descriptions
penetrating, personal
documents human behavior, experience

Sensitive work
perceptivity, skill

Research Design

In an effort to develop a comprehensive understanding of the dominant narrative or portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and how it relates to other types of portraits representative of the culture of adolescence/delinquency, I analyze a multitude of stories. This includes historical stories, stories related to constructed labels and identity formations, the student Michael’s story, and my autoethnographic story. Thoroughly searching these stories or portraits from a poststructuralist stance, and taking into consideration the social construction of knowledge, I carefully analyze every story, every portrait in an attempt to determine whether it represents a perspective of scarcity or of abundance. Each component is equally important, and as I approach each one, I do so with an understanding and approach of currere: it is my responsibility to run the course, to find as many pieces of information as possible, and to analyze
them thoroughly in order to better understand portraits in the art gallery. Pinar and Grumet (1976) provide a definition of currere in line with the way I am using it:

[C]urrere refers to…[an] existential experience of external structures. The method of currere is a strategy devised to disclose this experience, so that we may see more of it and see more clearly. With such seeing can come deepened understanding of the running, and with this, can come deepened agency. (p. vii)

The ideas of reflection, interpretation, and close scrutiny of meanings embedded in this definition of currere are appealing because they emphasize deeper understandings and active involvement (Pinar, 2004). As I am coming from a poststructuralist outlook that believes there are no absolute truths—everything is open to interpretation: currere will prove valuable in allowing me to thoroughly analyze my research.

With currere playing a major role in the overall discourse analysis, which is ongoing throughout this study, I attempt to leave nothing unquestioned or ignored. Keeping in mind that there are no grand truths—just interpretations, provides a driving force to uncover any hidden motivations. Reality is constructed through stories, with language playing a major role. In order to interpret language, precise and attentive deconstruction is needed. In his discussion of deconstruction, Derrida (1995) emphasizes that “the movement of deconstruction was first of all affirmative—not positive, but affirmative. Deconstruction…is not demolition or destruction…The point is not to remove oneself from this process but to give it the possibility of being thought” (p. 211). Reinforcing Derrida’s point that deconstruction is not destructive, Egea-Kuehne and Biesta (2001) suggest “the necessity and the possibility of thinking again, through destruction…in terms of ethics, politics, and responsibility” (p. 5, original emphasis). Peeling back the layers of meaning with the mindset of currere will be helpful in deciphering and analyzing, but it will not be destructive.

Research design stories
Data Collection

The data in this study revolves around different types of stories which are looked at, examined, and discussed as portraits in an art gallery; what they are saying, how they say it, and what the hidden meanings are. They include 1) the primary historical stories of Hall and Foucault as well as the secondary ones of Baker, Lesko, Winfield, and several others; 2) stories that contribute to the portraits by considering the social/psychological effect of constructed labels and identity formations; 3) Michael’s story, which is based on four interview transcripts which I have in turn used to create poetry; and 4) my story, which I tell in autoethnographic segments and which includes generalized stories of students based on my memories of working with them at the juvenile prison school.

Historical Stories. The historical stories in this study are portraits that feature the dominant narratives of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. G. Stanley Hall and Michel Foucault provide the primary portraits and vignettes that are the dominant texts. Additionally, there are several portraits and vignettes that support and reinforce the dominant texts that are located in the four main divisions of the art gallery. The divisions are conceptualization of adolescence, conceptualization of juvenile delinquency, treatment techniques of crime/delinquency, and contemporary studies of adolescence/juvenile delinquency.
Historical stories, portraits
G. Stanley Hall
Michel Foucault
dominant texts

Dominant narratives of adolescence/juvenile delinquency
supported, reinforced by others

**Stories Concerned With Labels and Identity.** These stories contribute to the historical stories by focusing on the different types of constructed labels and identity formations that have been affixed to adolescence/juvenile delinquency and that may play a major role in the over-all social/psychological effect. They contain information related to race, gender, class, and culture that is capable of playing a colonizing role that controls and limits.

- Constructed labels
- identity formations
- affixed
- effect

- Colonizing role
- controls, limits

**In-depth Interviews.** I realized when I first met Michael, the young man who participated in the interviews, that he was an unusual person in many ways. He was sixteen years old when I first met him at the juvenile prison school. He was small in stature and had a pleasant attitude. He was reserved, polite, well-mannered, and sensitive, and he was fully aware of why he was in a juvenile prison. He was very intelligent and was basically prepared to take the GED test when he first arrived, having scored very high on all the qualifying tests that I gave him. After passing the GED test, he quickly became certified in the small engine repair trade. He scored very high on the ACT. Because of his exceptional performance on both the GED and the ACT, he was easily accepted at Louisiana State University. In fact his acceptance at LSU helped speed up his judge’s decision to place him on probation so that he could leave the juvenile prison, live in a group home setting, and attend classes.
I believe the in-depth interviews for this study are an important source of data because they represent marginalized voices that are seldom heard. I chose to use only one participant and to hold several interviews over a period of time. I believed using in-depth interviews with one individual would prove valuable in terms of establishing a strong connection between researcher and participant, and in terms of obtaining a better understanding and deeper comprehension of the participant’s story—his thoughts, beliefs, hopes, and concerns. As Creswell (2007) suggests, I find “[t]he elements of focusing on a single individual, constructing a study out of stories and epiphanies of special events, [and] situating them within a broader context” (p. 88) is meaningful and substantially important. It brings a depth that would otherwise be impossible to achieve.

I also find it helpful and valuable to keep in mind a statement by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) that “the way an interviewer acts, questions, and responds in an interview shapes the relationship and therefore the ways participants respond and give accounts of their experience” (p. 110). When I first started this study my participant was in his early twenties and a student at Louisiana State University. He graduated in December, 2011. The participant and I already knew each other and kept in touch periodically via emailing, so I felt confident that the atmosphere during the interviews would be relaxed and informal. Keeping in mind that quietness, comfort, and being undisturbed are all high priorities, the actual location of where we taped each of the interviews was jointly determined. We held the first interview outside, with us sitting on a bench in the quad by several large oak trees. This interview took place one evening during the fall, when it was more comfortable to be outside than inside. The other interviews were held inside—one in a small conference room at Middleton library and another in my small
office on the third floor of Peabody. I conducted the last interview via email, with me emailing him questions and him sending me a response.

Using open-ended questions for each interview, I emphasized that he could talk about other things he wanted to include in addition to the questions I asked. During each of the interviews I was aware that along with my open-ended questions I was also continuously giving feedback by nodding my head, facial expressions, murmurs of understanding, encouraging comments, occasionally laughing, and at times brief conversations. During the first interview I attempted to gather his story and find out about his childhood, the values and beliefs his family had when he was growing up, his own personal values and beliefs as a teenager, and whether or not they had changed now that he was in his twenties from what they were when he was younger. The second and fourth interviews followed the same pattern, with a few open-ended questions about his current and future feelings, hopes, and expectations. For the third interview we discussed his trip to several cities in the United States to examine different boxing gyms. For the most part I allowed him to simply talk about his experiences on the trip and asked him as few questions as necessary. At each interview I encouraged him to talk freely about what he believed was important. I believed that he should feel comfortable with providing whatever information he decided to give me. My rationale for this approach coincided with Creswell (2007), who argues that being a “good interviewer…[involves being] a good listener rather than a frequent speaker during an interview” (p. 134). This was my aim throughout all four interviews.

According to Reissman (2008), “most narrative projects in the human sciences today are based on interviews of some kind” (p. 23). I believe interviews are particularly effective in this research study. Hoping to encourage the feeling that the interview encounter was a pleasant experience and to promote the idea of its being a joint process, I encouraged the involvement of
the participant in the active shaping of the interview (Andrews et al., 2008). I wanted the interaction between the participant and myself to flow naturally and the interviews to be as non-directed as possible. My endeavor was for the total research process to be one of cooperation and collaboration with ongoing interaction between the participant and myself.

After I completed the interviews, I transcribed each as closely as possible to the actual words spoken in the interview. In addition, I noted pauses, chuckles, and facial expressions. As I probed the transcripts, made interpretations of the data, and shared them with the participant, I thought it was important to keep in mind that the meanings we make are, as Andrews (2008) suggests, “always…connected to the vantage point from which we view the world” (p. 86). At the same time, however, Andrews points out that we are always changing. I saw value in the collaborative effort in many ways but particularly in terms of maintaining a checkpoint on each other throughout the interpretative process.

Having met with the participant prior to the interview process, I discussed my study with him and asked if he was willing to participate. I explained that my hope was that the interview and interpretative process would be collaborative. His interest was piqued at the prospect, and he seemed interested in learning more. I also stressed that trustworthiness would be assured throughout the research study: that nothing would be included if it made him feel uncomfortable in any way and that he should let me know if that was ever the case.

In-depth interviews
open-ended questions, recorded responses, transcriptions
his story, thoughts, concerns, interests
asking, telling, listening, remembering

Fact, fiction, relationships, emotions, ethical issues, new understandings collaboration, cooperation

**Autoethnography.** I became intrigued with the idea of using autoethnography as a research technique when I first read *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel About*
Autoethnography, written by Ellis (2004). In this book, the author points out that autoethnography involves “research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social, and political” (p. xix). The different elements within autoethnography promote a style in which I can closely examine the layers of what has been socially constructed about the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and in which I can share my memories by telling my own story as it relates to that culture. However, as Ellis and Bochner (2000) caution, I realize that in telling my story, I make myself vulnerable. I may experience fear, doubt, even emotional pain as I remember, relive, and write. I also know that once I have written these words they cannot be erased and that I ultimately have no control over how they will be interpreted by my readers. Ellis and Bochner (2000) define autoethnography in the following way:

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations. (p. 739)

I choose the technique of autoethnography because the process of moving back and forth between considering the students’ thoughts, concerns, and experiences as they tell their stories along with expectations of others on the one hand, and my own personal thoughts and feelings while telling my story and weaving their stories with mine on the other hand, can be rewarding. And with these rewards comes a possibility of understanding myself in deeper ways. Ellis (2004) suggests that by better understanding myself, I can also better understand others, and that the value of autoethnography is that it “provides an avenue for doing something meaningful for yourself and the world” (p. xviii). This quote conveys a meaningful message that helps express my intention throughout this study to develop increased understandings and to open up avenues
that allow for the possibility of adjusting and changing one’s perspective to such a degree that new and different narratives can be viewed and constructed, new portraits can be painted. Through this alternative discourse, perhaps a change in attitudes and expectations toward the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency can develop and grow.

As the researcher, I situate myself as an autoethnographer interacting with different narratives of social constructions. I first focus my perspective on cultural aspects of adolescents/juvenile delinquents and then look inward as I move through the culture, refracting and resisting narratives of social construction. I draw from my years of work experience for my personal story and interact with the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency through the stories of students with whom I worked. I spent the bulk of my working career at the juvenile prison, and it is there that I first became introduced to this culture, worked closely with students for a number of years, and began to know, respect, and care for them as separate individuals with many differences. Although a culture does exist within a juvenile prison, it is not the primary focus of this study. I am instead concerned with the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency more generally—how it has been socially constructed and the effect this construction has on those who fall within the parameters of this culture. I continuously move back and forth between my personal story while working at the juvenile prison and at the headquarters office, the culture of the juvenile prison where I developed a caring relationship with the students, and the stories of students who spent a significant period of time in the juvenile prison culture, as I seek to understand their stories and consider the possibilities of constructing new narratives. As I negotiate through the process and continually shift back and forth from my story to student stories, broadening and adjusting the scope of consideration to help provide a softer, gentler understanding, I suggest brushstrokes that are less harsh and
condemnatory in their detail and delineation. I also advocate a less stringently judgmental view toward adolescence/juvenile delinquency and share tidbits of hopefulness, helpfulness, and new possibilities. This allows the perspective to gradually shift and change as new understandings develop and grow and provides a space for the possibility of re-writing the narrative with changed social constructions, of painting a portrait that glows with tolerance and caring.

Using autoethnography allows me as the researcher to articulate an understanding of myself and others, and also to interweave students’ stories from the juvenile prison with my own story. As I move through this process, I keep in mind that stories are not created but are, as Munro (1998) emphasizes, “fashioned from the discourses available to us” (p. 2). She also points out that a space for understanding the relationship that exists between self and culture is provided by the “manner of the telling, the authoring of oneself through story” (p. 5). Ellis and Bochner (2000) similarly suggest that “[s]tories show us that the meanings and significance of the past are incomplete, tentative, and revisable according to contingencies of our present life circumstances, the present from which we narrate” (p. 745). As I weave together my story and stories of students with whom I worked, I focus on the following quote by Andrews (2008):

All of us bring to our research knowledge which we have acquired through our life’s experiences, and indeed how we make sense of what we observe and hear is very much influenced by that framework of understanding. This positioning is not static, but evolves over the course of our lives. New experiences, and new understandings of old experiences, bring with them a new perspective not only on our own lives - our present, as well as our past… - but on the way in which we make sense of the lives of others…human reality is always the reality of interpretation. (p. 86)

Whenever the perspective is directed toward stories of students with whom I worked in the juvenile prison, I find that understanding their thoughts and experiences affects my perspective not only towards them but also towards myself and others. This helps me to be more tolerant and generous in my attitude; it enhances my realization of the importance of both concern and respect, and it assists me in the development of a more open-minded outlook about future
possibilities. Ellis and Bochner (2000) emphasize that “stories activate subjectivity and compel emotional response” (p. 744).

Autoethnography involves memory—in telling and writing stories—and I draw on memories in writing my story. Thinking back to the many years I worked for the Department of Corrections, both at the headquarters and the juvenile prison, I have many memories stored away that I easily remember. They appear to me like portraits in my mind. I can look at them, inspect them, and scrutinize them as if they are on display in an art gallery. Smith and Watson (2000) mention that in the process of remembering, we create a meaning or understanding of the past. I find this important and valuable because these concepts help make stories based on memory both interesting and valuable.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that memory is frequently perceived as factual and is reduced such that remembered events and feelings are described as if they are exact and true. However, they caution that “memory is selective, shaped, and retold in the continuum of one’s experiences” (p. 142). This is true for both researcher and participant. Memories can be shaded by time, emotion, and experience. Clandinin and Connelly also emphasize that narrative is “a way of understanding experience” (p. xxvi). Experience is the stories people live and tell, the modifications and changes they make, the new ones experience creates, and much of this process is related to memory. Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett (2008) similarly observe that “connections among memory, notions of the self, and personal narrative are close and multidimensional” (p. 39). They additionally point out that “autobiographical memory is…an active, constructivist process” (p. 39). Keeping these points in mind, I am cognizant of the fact that as I tell my story I am drawing on personal memories that I believe to be true and factual. But I realize memories are tinged with time, emotion, and changeable perspectives.
Telling my story is a valuable experience for me in terms of understanding myself and others. Stories are, as Ellis (2004) points out, a way of making sense of one’s world. Autoethnography, as Miller (2005) suggests, can help me to sorting through a comprehension of the past and to examine my own identity when I consider that the specifics of memories can and do continuously change. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) similarly point out that it is possible to write about the entire context of one’s life, even though it is a retelling, a narrative construct, and that there could be other possible reconstructions.

Autoethnography
stories of myself, stories of others
telling, writing
reading, changing

Memory—fact, fiction
relationships, ethical concerns, new understandings

Data Analysis

Analysis plays a major role in this study, and due to the difference in the varied types of data that I collected, I have used a different method of data analysis for each type of story in order to promote knowledge and understanding and to uncover multiple hidden meanings. I use historical analysis to search and examine each of the historical stories, with particular scrutiny and concentration given to the portraits by Hall and Foucault. I use this same intense analysis to carefully examine the stories related to constructed labels and identity formations in order to discern as many small details as possible. I use crystallization to analyze the content of the in-depth interviews that are presented in the “I” poems and narrative poems. Storytelling is used to analyze the autoethnographic story that I have presented in chronological segments throughout the chapters.

Another form of analysis that I conduct throughout the study is the six line poems I write at the end of every segment following a heading of some type regardless, of the level of
subordination of the heading. I do this for myself as well as for the reader. The overall purpose of these brief poems is to analyze, clarify, and summarize. I also believe these poems tell a valuable story themselves.

Data analysis  
major role  
search, examine  
knowledge, understanding  

Historical analysis, crystallization, storytelling  
multiple

**Historical Analysis.** Searching through the portraits of Hall, Foucault, Baker, Lesko, and others as well as through the portraits concentrating on constructed labels and identity formations demands thoroughness and dedication to details. To conduct such a historical analysis, I follow Foucault’s (1970) lead when he states “the historical analysis of scientific discourse should…be subject, not to a theory of the knowing subject, but rather to a theory of discursive practice” (p. xiv). Foucault (1972) suggests that “the use of concepts of discontinuity, rupture, threshold, limit, series, and transformation present all historical analysis not only with questions of procedure, but with theoretical problems” (p. 21). He emphasizes the importance of questioning things that appear to be “a community of meanings…and symbolic links… which allows the sovereignty of collective consciousness to emerge as the principle of unity and explanation” (p. 22). Foucault additionally points out that “discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to the language…and to speech” (p. 49, original emphasis). He stresses that “it is this ‘more’ that we must reveal and describe” (p. 49).

Poststructuralism, with its emphasis on discourse and discursive formation, makes it possible to view the dominant portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency from several angles in order to determine what is involved in making its construction possible. Looking at the
discourses on adolescence/juvenile delinquency from a Foucauldian perspective, I am reminded of the wise counsel of Baker (2001), when she emphasizes the importance of the utility of discourse being “the ‘what’—for it is the ‘what,’ discourse, that produces categorization, recognition, and judgments of ‘who’ and their relevance” (p. 13).

The historical analysis process is a thorough endeavor that is carried out repeatedly by closely examining the portraits and accompanying vignettes of both primary and secondary sources that are located in the art gallery.

Throughout the historical analysis process, I attempt to decipher not only the constructions of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, but also the what of each as emphasized by Baker (2001, my emphasis). The portraits and accompanying vignettes are carefully studied, questioned, and inspected, and this process is repeated over and over in an attempt to miss as little as possible.

Historical analysis
  scrutinizing
  questioning
  decyphering

  Constructed narratives
  revealed, described, deciphered

**Crystallization.** I use crystallization in order to analyze the data I collected from the four interview transcripts. I apply crystallization to this information primarily because of its multiple possibilities. According to Richardson (1997), crystallization allows the researcher to generate “alternate theories and perspectives for writing and for living, deconstructing traditional notions of validity, glancingly touching some projects, lighting others” (p. 136). For Richardson (2000), crystallization is an analytical approach rather like the image of a crystal: it “combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach” (p. 963).
In the crystallization process, I study and connect various memories and thoughts that have been selected from each of the in-depth interview transcriptions. Using these selections, I created “I” poems and narrative poems that tell Michael’s story. For the “I” poems, I pull each “I” phrase from the transcripts and create poems from them. The “I” phrases are kept in the same order as they appear in each of the transcripts. Many of these “I” phrases are incomplete thoughts while others express a total meaning. Although the narrative poems are also based on the transcripts, I use a somewhat different process to compose them. For these I pull phrases from the transcript and connect them in different ways to create verses. I do not necessarily keep the phrases in the same order, but I try to use the original words from the transcript as much as possible. Reading both types of these poems, silently or out loud, provides a pleasing sense of rhythm, repetition, and rhyme that is emotionally charged and meaningful. I use crystallization as an analysis process because it provides a means of looking at what is said in the interviews from new and different perspectives. I find the process of creating poems to be rewarding, reassuring, as well as inspirational—it allows me to look at multiple understandings from a perspective filled with compassionate interpretations, glowing with rich connections and undisguised possibilities for me as well as for other readers.

The crystallization process is like looking through a crystal—there are multiple truths and only parts of several truths can be captured. Richardson (1997) describes crystallization in the following way:

Crystallization, without losing structure, deconstructs the traditional idea of “validity” (we feel how there is no single truth, we see how texts validate themselves); and crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. (p. 92)
For Richardson (1997), and I fully agree, crystallization provides the possibility of generating alternate theories as well as varied perspectives for both writing and living. It touches on certain aspects, causes different reflections, and then lights up others. In contrast to triangulation, crystallization makes possible moving “from plane geometry to light theory, where light can be both waves and particles” (p. 92, original emphasis). It provides unique insights that might otherwise be missed.

Ellingson (2008) additionally points out that with crystallization many forms of analysis can be combined, a multitude of genre representations are made possible, and a space is provided for adapting to various needs and goals. She emphasizes the value of crystallization in achieving depth “through the compilation not only of many details but also of different forms of representing, organizing, and analyzing…details” (p. 10). The framework it provides helps in balancing claims of truth with those recognized as being subjective.

- Crystallization
  - like looking through a crystal
  - multiple truths, varied facets
  - deep, complex, thorough

- Unique aspects
  - many forms of analysis

**Storytelling.** Using memory to tell my autoethnographic story opens up many avenues for exploring the values and complexities of memory in connection with stories. Using an “un-analysis” process, I suggest that storytelling is in itself worthwhile. In telling my story, I attempt to uncover rich and unexpected discoveries, interpretations, and understandings. In place of analyzing stories, I follow Ellis and Bochner (2000), who suggest using stories and talking about them rather than drawing conclusions, with the ultimate goal being to encourage compassion. Stories allow their readers to involve themselves in the story’s narrative from their own personal perspectives, to become part of the story, to broaden their horizon, and to become empathetic.
For Ellis (2004), “nothing [is] more theoretical or analytical than a good story” (p. 194).

She explains her thinking more clearly in the following:

I…argue that a story’s generalizability is always being tested—not in the traditional way through random samples of respondents, but by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know. Readers provide theoretical validation by comparing their lives to ours, by thinking about how our lives are similar and different and the reasons why. Some stories inform readers about unfamiliar people or lives. (pp. 194-195)

I adopt the outlook described above as the type of “un-analysis” for my story. My primary hope and expectation is that my story will successfully provoke “communication…[;] evoke readers’ responses…[;] open up the possibility of dialog, collaboration, and relationship…[;] change institutions…[;] promote social justice and equality…[;] lead us to think through consequences, values, and moral dilemmas” (p. 195). If I have met these expectations, then I suggest that I have carried out the “un-analysis” more thoroughly than I could have done with any type of sample response.

| Storytelling                                      |
| memory                                           |
| encourage compassion                             |
| readers involved                                 |

| Provoke communication                             |
| promote social justice, equality                 |

Ethical Concerns

As I tell my own story in conjunction with stories based on interviews and the remembered stories of students, I realize that there are ethical issues involved, and as the researcher it is important to keep this uppermost in my mind at all stages of the research.

According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), ethical matters play an important role in narrative inquiry throughout the entire process, sometimes shifting and changing as the process unfolds. They emphasize that it is the researcher’s responsibility not to cause any harm to the participants
and always to be thoughtful. The participants should continuously be considered the most important audience.

Meeting the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University is both important and necessary, but that is only one small portion of the overall ethical concerns and responsibility of the researcher. Another area of concern is that of keeping the identity of a participant anonymous. In this study I use a fictitious name whenever I refer to the student who I interview while telling his story. I do not ever want there to be any type of repercussions or problems as a result of telling his story in this study.

One important element of ethics in research is that of fidelity and caring. Building on research by Noddings, Schultz, Schroeder, and Brody (1997) suggest that one way of ensuring that fidelity and caring are not ignored is to emphasize collaboration between researcher and participants. They see collaboration as a “close relationship akin to friendship” (p. 474). These relationships are not stagnant but rather unfold and change over time. In order for everything to be successful, a certain level of trust is needed at all times. These authors also point out that caring for persons should be accompanied by telling the stories of participants in a meaningful manner. Reissman (2008) similarly suggests that researchers should try to take what we have written back to individuals who have participated. I agree that collaboration is valuable and sharing what has been written with participants is desirable. Such collaboration and sharing is something I sincerely strive to accomplish throughout this study.

Fidelity
caring
collaboration
anonymity

Ongoing
researcher responsibility
Additional responsibilities were gradually but permanently added to my work load: my propensity for perseverance in getting the job done was recognized and “rewarded.” With so much to do, I seldom took a break even when I ate lunch. Work was non-stop from the moment I arrived each morning until I left nine hours later in the evening. There was definitely no time for socializing. I really didn’t mind being so busy because I enjoyed most of what I needed to do and took pride in doing it well.

Although there was a principal and myself as the guidance counselor, there was no school per se, and there were no teachers at JRDC. We had many students but they were only passing through: their mandatory two week limit for staying at JRDC went by in a blur of flurried activity. Emphasis was not on getting to know the students but in getting the work completed. At one point, the principal and I attended a conference in Oklahoma City about neglected and delinquent children. The conference included staff from similar juvenile prisons in Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. It was a great opportunity to meet people with similar jobs, compare notes, and learn how things were handled differently in other institutions. Six of us from Louisiana attended: representatives from each institution plus one person from the headquarters office. Other than the principal with whom I worked, I had not met anyone from Louisiana, so meeting the people to whom I regularly sent information and with whom I occasionally talked on the phone was nice.

Although I did not realize it at the time, discussions at the conference also paved the way for moving my jobsite. We talked a lot about work during our free time at the conference. Ideas were tossed around about adding new reports and ways of being more productive. The ultimate outcome was that more people were needed in order to accomplish our tasks more efficiently.
After several months of administrative work, three new jobs were created and people were hired and trained to do the work that I once did by myself.

I was moved to the headquarters office during the early spring of 1980. The move was easy since I took nothing with me except my purse. I was excited about the change: I was ready for different challenges and new expectations. My new location was on the second floor of a building on Main Street in downtown Baton Rouge. I shared a small office with another person. Parking was available in a lot close by or on the street, and there were no guards to search our cars, purses, etc. as we came and went from work or to lunch. Although still officially a guidance counselor according to my contract, my working title changed to Coordinator of Testing. I was responsible for all testing that was conducted statewide in the juvenile prison schools (Louisiana Training Institutes or LTIs). Rather than working directly with students in this newly created job, I worked with the educational testing staff at JRDC and the teachers and guidance counselors at the juvenile prison schools spread throughout the state.

There was some traveling involved in this job, particularly trips to the different schools at the prisons. Having never visited the other juvenile prisons in Louisiana, I was excited about the prospect and looked forward to going each time. There were three other locations in addition to the one on the outskirts of Baton Rouge where I had spent the few previous years. The closest one was in Bridge City close to the Mississippi River. It was relatively small and was designated for the younger male students. Once a convent, the tiny campus looked attractive with its several large oak trees and azaleas. The lack of a fence on the perimeter made it not seem like a prison. Another juvenile prison was centrally located in the gently rolling hills of Ball. This beautiful campus looked like a small college with red brick buildings nestled in the midst of many tall pine trees. Completely open with no fence anywhere, this campus was rather small and was
designated for all female students. The oldest juvenile prison located farther north in Monroe was also situated on an attractive campus and was comparatively larger in size than either Bridge City or Ball but not as large as Baton Rouge. Although surrounded by a high wire fence, there was no razor-wire running along the top. This prison was designated for older male students whose homes were located in the northern part of the state, just as the one near Baton Rouge was designated for older male students whose homes were located in the southern part of the state.

In addition to traveling regularly in a state vehicle to all the juvenile prison schools around the state, I also attended several meetings and conferences. A few conferences were out of state, so flying became a necessity. I actually became involved in the organizational activities of two conferences, one at the state-wide level and another one at the nation-wide level, which required me to attend multiple planning meetings at various locations. I did not voluntarily seek out this level of involvement. Rather, I was asked to participate by established members of the planning groups. Getting to know many interesting people and taking in different types of information became something that I thoroughly enjoyed. Having the opportunity to travel in connection with my job was a new and very pleasant experience. I visited places I had never had the pleasure of seeing prior to this time.

I enjoyed all of these fresh exposures, but I particularly relished all the visits to the prison schools. These visits gave me an opportunity to be with students once again and to observe the types of interactions that existed between staff and students at the different prison locations. I remember the joyful feeling I experienced whenever I witnessed exchanges of pleasant conversations or heard about proud accomplishments: realizing that not everyone who worked with these students was intolerant and judgmental was a positive experience.
As in life, not everything was perfect in this new job. There were also disturbing times. The one I remember most clearly is when the decision was made to close the juvenile prison for females located near Alexandria. This institution had become my favorite place to visit because the setting was so pretty and peaceful: it seemed like a small college campus. Everyone seemed happy to be there and were proud of their accomplishments. The people were a close knit group and had mutual concerns for each other. Students and staff alike were upset when they were told the prison was going to close. Female students were being moved to places about which they did not feel comfortable and to which they did not want to go, including their own personal homes. Many of them felt happier and safer at the Alexandria institution than they ever had before in their lives. And every staff member was losing their jobs, many of whom had been working there since the institution had first opened. Nobody at the headquarters office who was in a decision-making position seemed to care. It was political maneuvering at its best, with justifications for the decision based on some type of need or lack of it projected as if it were reality. There were several rumors about the actual reason at the time, but the truth was never made public.

New job
different location, down town
convenient parking, no searches
altered responsibilities, travel, fresh experiences

Disturbing closure, sorrow, sadness
political reasoning
CHAPTER 3
A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE OF ADOLESCENCE/JUVENILE DELINQUENCY:
WHAT DO THE BRUSHSTROKES EMPHASIZE IN THE PORTRAIT?

Power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the ‘privilege’, acquired or preserved, of the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions—an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. (Foucault, 1977, pp. 26-27)

Adolescence is a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born…The child comes from and harks back to a remoter past; the adolescent is neotatavistic, and in him the later acquisitions of the race slowly become prepotent…Some disorders of arrest and defect…may…be said to be established as peculiar to this period…There is not only arrest, but perversion, at every stage, and hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice seem not only increasing, but develop in earlier years in every civilized land. (Hall, 2005, pp. xiii-xiv)

Although an idea of adolescence had existed for a long time, social and political changes in the late 1800s and early 1900s offered new possibilities for youths and for those who would define and provide for them…Adolescence became a handy and promiscuous social space…a place that people could endlessly worry about, a space that adults everywhere could watch carefully and that could be imagined to have many visible and invisible instabilities. (Lesko, 2001, pp. 5-6)

Exhibit VI

I remember so clearly the day I returned to work at the juvenile prison. It feels as if it happened just yesterday. As I accelerated after going around the curve in the road that led toward the entrance of the juvenile prison, I noticed that an additional layer of razor-wire had been added to the top of the tall pre-existing razor-wire fence surrounding the outer circumference of the prison’s campus. It was late morning on a beautiful summer day, and my position at work was being relocated once again. The day was June 16, 1991. As was typical of the time of year in the Deep South, the temperature was already quite high, and not a cloud was in sight to bring the hope of a light shower to cool things off and freshen the air.

Earlier that morning one of the maintenance workers from the juvenile prison had appeared in my headquarters office doorway and politely announced he was there to transport whatever things I wanted taken with me to the prison. His sudden presence startled me from my
early morning musings as I sat at my desk thinking about the future. When I indicated that everything was to go, his reaction was less than eager, since my office was full of furniture and packed boxes. He gave me a disgruntled look because he hadn’t expected me to take that much, and he stalked away saying that he would be back as soon as he could find someone to help him. I remember feeling a mixture of emotions: anger, frustration, helplessness, as well as sadness and disappointment. My feelings were not aimed at him but at the unfair, manipulated situation in which I found myself. I had never felt so helpless and naïve in terms of how everything had been so maliciously and successfully concocted.

I had already said all my good-byes to the many people I considered friends and after everything had been removed from my office, I walked out on the balcony from my office door for the last time to enjoy a beautifully manicured courtyard. I realized this was my last chance to savor the spectacular view below: this would no longer be my job site. I had made several other moves to different buildings during the last few years with the Department of Corrections, but none had been brought about by such unpleasant circumstances directly aimed towards me.

The past year’s trauma at work, with its murky undertones, had caused me to feel uneasy and insecure. The whole experience had been like I was going through a nasty divorce with ongoing deceitful behavior and malicious planning. Jealous and insecure supervisors, one of whom I considered a friend, were the cause of this particular move. My job responsibilities had been gradually and deliberately eliminated without my being directly told so. I found out when teachers had called to inquire why they were no longer expected to send me certain reports. When I questioned the supervisor I was told the reports were no longer needed. The top administrator of the state agency ultimately called me in and informed me that my supervisor had recommended that I be either fired or sent back to the prison to work since I was no longer
needed at the headquarters office. I was shocked and dismayed at his words. Even though I realized the workplace atmosphere had become quite chilled—I had been marginalized with no communication—I had not expected such a development. He said he didn’t want to use either of the recommendations, and suggested I develop a couple of proposals for how I could be used in a different capacity at the headquarters office. He was pleased with both of my proposals but the ultimate decision was that there was no way either program could be justified in the financial budget. He would have been required to create a completely new position at headquarters in order to use one of my proposals and that was not possible.

I fretted and worried, trying to figure out the cause of the turmoil but could think of nothing that was real, only an imaginary something that had been constructed and magnified into a substantial issue. I wondered whether or not it could have had anything to do with my involvement with the conferences. I had been selected rather than the supervisor to serve on the committees, and she might have been displeased. The last few times that I had been scheduled to attend she refused to approve for my expenses to be paid.

I remember when I first arrived at the headquarters office that someone who had worked there for a number of years had advised me not to trust anyone and to keep track of everything in writing, but I never took the warning seriously. I thought I knew the people with whom I was working and that their motives were honorable and trustworthy. When I moved to the headquarters office, I was excited and eager to learn new responsibilities, and until that last year the experience had been rewarding and enjoyable. Although I definitely was not euphoric about the relocation back to the prison, I was aware that it removed me from what had become an unpleasant, unfriendly work setting.
I was returning to the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center (JRDC), where I often felt like a prisoner myself. However, the headquarters office atmosphere had become strained, stressful, and filled with a sense of unpleasant undertones. It had become a prison-like situation of its own, with a hidden network of plots and plans and once familiar faces suddenly became masked with cold indifference, as if the faces belonged to strangers. I was uneasy about what could possibly lie ahead. I really didn’t know what to expect. I didn’t know whether or not I would be welcome or wanted.

When I think back to that day in my life, the portrait fixed in my mind is filled with mixed emotions: sadness, embarrassment, apprehension, along with anxious anticipation. My outlook on returning to the juvenile prison was somewhat dismal after having been away for close to eleven years. I really didn’t want this work assignment but as a single parent I felt I had no choice. I needed the job.

Layers of manipulation, control
swirls of deceitful lies
devious agendas
ongoing surveillance

Life in institutions, bureaucracies
life in prisons, life

**Browsing Through the Art Gallery: Investigating the Portraits**

The primary focus of this portion of the study is to explore these questions: What is the history of the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency? How is this discourse made possible? To study these questions, I examine the general tone and attitude of the narrative towards this particular culture, how the concept first developed, and whether or not changes or adaptations have occurred since then. Adolescence/juvenile delinquency has been given lots of attention for more than a century. It has been thought about, talked about, written about, and researched by professionals in assorted fields as well as by common individuals on the street.
Books and academic journal articles are initially selected for use in this study based on their relevance to the research questions. Initial interest is triggered by various readings connected to previous research I conducted in several different graduate level classes. After reviewing, nibbling on, and slowly digesting this information, I peruse indexes to find writings of additional authors whose work is related to the topic. Additional books and journal articles are also selected based on the suggestions of peers and mentors and by perusing vertical files, on-line catalogs, and databases in the East Baton Rouge parish library, the state library of Louisiana, and the Middleton library at Louisiana State University.\(^6\)

In this research, I am primarily interested in culling together descriptive information about how the concept of adolescence/juvenile delinquency was first conceived and later established, how it was perceived, who was included in its conception, how they were described, and what was expected of those who were classified as part of that group. Although I spent a great deal of time searching databases and online catalogs as I discovered a large assortment of relevant journal articles and books, I acknowledge the possibility that another researcher with different interests and using a different approach and techniques would discover contrasting information or make selections based on divergent criteria.

While conducting research, I carefully examine the narrative in terms of how understandings are shaped and what is being implied. I question how reality is constructed and what makes that construction possible. I analyze the portraits to determine whether or not they are painted with perceptions grounded in specific viewpoints. Using a theoretical perspective of

\(^6\) Articles presented on the internet through Google Scholar were researched, but EBSCO was primarily used for the online database search in the specific fields of sociology, psychology, and law. Search terms used were adolescent and juvenile delinquent, separately as well as combined, and truncated versions of adoles*, juven*, and delinq* combined.
scarcity and abundance, I search for hidden meanings that could easily be invisible to the naked eye without deep, fervent questioning. I ask whether the brushstrokes are representative of narrow-minded impoverishment, restrictiveness, or carefulness. Does the texture imply limitations and perceptions that promote the necessity to monitor, manipulate, control, and limit differences? Are brushstrokes used that suggest an open-minded perspective or represent feelings of generosity and hopeful possibilities? Does any texture indicate plenty, forgiveness, acceptance, understanding, and positive thinking?

As I ready myself for this close scrutiny of vignettes associated with portraits of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, I eagerly move towards the entrance of the large art gallery. It is soon evident that although the historical narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is being viewed jointly, the portraits are organized into four main separate divisions with some overlap within them. The breakdown of the divisions includes the following: conceptualization of adolescence, conceptualization of juvenile delinquency, treatment techniques of crime/delinquency, and contemporary studies of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. In addition, smaller sections of the gallery that have been partitioned off contain a miscellaneous collection of smaller pictures. All are interesting and contain significant information worth pursuing in terms of what is presented in the portraits as well as in the accompanying vignettes that are helpful with their descriptions and explanations.

Narrative—tone, attitude
Adolescence/juvenile delinquency
Research, perceptions
Understandings, implications

Theoretical perspective
Scarcity, abundance

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7 Scarcity and abundance are terms borrowed from Jardine et al. (2006) and were previously described in chapter one.
Conceptualization of Adolescence

Deciding to look first at the division containing portraits of adolescence, I spot a noticeable portrait by Pinar et al. (2004) with an accompanying vignette that suggests that a discourse on adolescence emerged sometime in the late 1800s or early 1900s due to an intersection of “certain psychological, judicial, and medical discourses” (p. 462). The portrait subtly points out that as a result, a construction of the adolescent was established—one which had not existed prior to that time.

The portrait by Pinar et al. (2004) appears to be somewhat of an introductory one that focuses on G. Stanley Hall. The accompanying vignette provides interesting information that should prove beneficial to better understanding Hall. The following contains excerpts from the vignette:

[H]all regarded child study as a means of educational reform…[He] was referred to as ‘the Darwin of the mind’…In 1883 he founded the first psychological laboratory in the United States, at Johns Hopkins University. In 1887 he launched the American Journal of Psychology, the first such journal in the United States. Like many in his generation, Hall envisioned the coming of a new era in which the intellectually elite—especially social scientists like himself—would design a better social world. The leadership position he imagined for academicians generally, and for psychologists more narrowly, would replace that of church leaders…Hall’s status as a leader of the child-study reform movement is unquestioned…The curricular influence of his work was recorded in the growing acceptance of a developmental scheme of ‘stages’ in the child’s evolution…Hall’s concept of developmental stages helped legitimate administratively convenient school organizations by grade…Hall employed measurement and other quantitative data to support his curricular position…As a social Darwinian, Hall believed that social change occurred in slow, evolutionary fashion. Education could not accelerate changes in human nature, nor could it retard them. He believed that heredity, not environment, was the essential factor in producing the fit and the unfit…Hall was interested in individualization because he saw it supporting the doctrine of laissez-faire…For Hall, the purpose of individualization was not to provide opportunities for maximal development of each individual. Rather it was to identify the gifted child…[he] insisted that a child-centered curriculum was a laissez-faire curriculum. (pp. 88-90)
Pleased with this thorough explanation about Hall’s beliefs and accomplishments, I am eager to learn more by viewing his portrait and accompanying vignette, which I can see from this position is just ahead.

**Additional Background Information on Hall.**

I notice that a great amount of space is devoted to G. Stanley Hall. There is a picture of him along with an introductory vignette that features background information about his life and conditions that existed in the United States at that time. Since I believe it is valuable to know and understand as much as possible about influential factors that possibly contributed to the construction of the adolescent, I linger in this spot and carefully read all that is written. I do not want to miss a single word or phrase that might be helpful as I seek to comprehend everything more fully.

Hall was born in 1844 in Ashfield, Massachusetts; he lived there through turn of the century, and died a number of years later in 1924 in Worcester, Massachusetts (Ross, 1972). He was, according to Pruette (1926), “a son of New England, born and reared in the austere, Puritanic atmosphere of the poor farmer family of that period” (p. 35). Pruette (1926) describes the people of New England as moral, pious, persevering, shrewd, and calculating. In terms of family history, Hall (1924) discloses that several of his relatives were interested in pedigrees and gathered together genealogical material that indicated an English ancestry “with a slight admixture of Scotch and Irish” (p. 27). He states that his mother, Abigail Beals, and his father, Granville Bascom Hall, “were most ideally mated, the qualities of each supplementing and evoking the best traits in the other” (p. 85). He additionally shares that he felt relief when his father was absent, that he turned to his mother for sympathy, and that “she alone was…[his] confidante in nearly everything” (p. 85).
Regarding Hall’s boyhood, Bederman (1995) states that he “was repeatedly taught that manliness was based on ‘character’ and vigorous self-restraint” (p. 79). Bederman continues:

Stanley was raised in a typical Yankee Protestant family in a small, not too prosperous, western Massachusetts farm community. His parents…strove diligently to help their son develop a strong and manly ‘character.’ Stanley learned he must control his instincts and deny himself momentary pleasures. Only a well-developed character—the strength born of total self-mastery—could make the boy strong enough to be a real man. (p. 79).

Hall’s parents stressed that by continuously holding to good resolutions and not permitting himself any brief pleasures, he could develop “a manly character” (p. 79). However, if he was habitually unsuccessful in fighting off temptation, “he would grow up weak and unmanly” (p. 79). Bederman (1995) writes that as Stanley worked more and more “to repress his illicit desires, the more attention he focused on those desires and the more real they became…Chiefly among…[his] illicit desires…was sex…The dangers of sex pervaded his childhood” (p. 80).

With additional repression came additional interest in sex, and Stanley began to see “himself as a vile, unmanly boy who harbored unclean desires” (p. 81). He ultimately became “addicted to masturbation…[that] led to anxiety…all his parents’ warnings about the dangers of a flaccid character seemed to be coming true in the most horrifying way possible” (p. 81). Bederman (1995) adds the following about the overall effect that Hall’s upbringing had on his life:

When he matured, G. Stanley Hall, like an increasing number of his contemporaries, felt oppressed by this ideology of manly self-restraint, yet he had little else to put in its place. After he graduated from college he sneaked off for a year of study in Germany, where he developed a taste for beer, dancing, socializing on the Sabbath, and courting pretty girls…Yet he could not entirely jettison his belief that manliness was based on iron self-mastery. It was entrenched in his identity, including his most intimate assumptions about the workings of his own body. It was the way he understood the sources of male power and authority, both of which he passionately desired…Despite his ambivalence, the young man remained enmeshed in his vision of manly power as the ability to restrain male sexuality, and of male sexuality as a dangerous drain on nervous energy. (p. 83)
Dissatisfaction with ideologies that concerned manly self-restraint started to develop in many at this time—the Victorian culture was losing its hold, Darwinism was challenging religious thinking, and “the United States was beginning to develop a bureaucratic, corporate economy” (p. 84).

In terms of the conditions that existed in the United States during the latter half of the nineteenth century, Savage (2007) suggests that cities developed and grew as industrialism became more and more a defining factor. He reports that “many children and adolescents were left to fend for themselves” (p. 34). With juvenile delinquency already at an extreme level, Savage (2007) states that between the years “1880 and 1910, the total urban population…tripled from 14 to 42 million” (p. 36). According to Savage (2007), many slum children tried to survive in the harsh environment of the city streets. His explanation follows:

Thanks to its very high levels of immigration and its peculiarly compressed environment, Manhattan was very tough on its young. Children were routinely abandoned on the streets: many died, while the luckier found sketchy employment as newsboys or flower sellers, [or] joined a gang…There was no welfare infrastructure, no safety net. (p. 37)

Social problems grew as did the number of immigrants, and their living conditions were difficult as well as grim.

According to Ross (1972), Hall “is remembered best, perhaps, for bringing Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung to America in 1909 to lecture to an influential group of psychologists…Only a few years before in 1904, in his major book Adolescence, Hall had formulated, for the first time, the modern concept of adolescence” (p. xiii). Ross also points out that a number of years later Hall “was especially attracted to Spencer’s attempt to bring all of nature…under the laws of evolution” (p.59). Adding to this general information, Ross (1972) writes that “important themes of Hall’s intellectual life emerged from personal experience, and…the subject of sexuality became one of Hall’s chief intellectual concerns” (p. 255). She
additionally emphasizes that it is not known to what extent any of this relates to “personal problems with homosexual desires, abnormal manifestations of sexuality, or a pervasive sexualization of experience” (p. 255).

Ross (1972) writes about Hall’s turn to child study, which she states was influenced by a great interest in it among educators. She explains more clearly in the following:

Hall’s new enthusiasm was clearly related to his personal situation. He recognized that ‘this new and great movement should be preeminently the woman’s science’ and his conception of childhood and adolescence was rooted in those aspects of human nature he associated with femininity. Most important, child study promised success…the praise and publicity his child study aroused in educational circles must have been enormously gratifying…Probably the greatest hope Hall saw in child study was its potentiality to effect a ‘scientific reconstruction.’ (pp. 260-261)

Hall considered physical development and health to be “the proper foundation for mental development” (p. 293). His child study program actually revolved around this premise. Clinging to his Victorian views, Hall “also found psychological evidence to support the importance he attributed to the biological distinction between the sexes. As evolution advanced, Hall believed, the sexes had diverged more and more sharply. The special role of women as childbearers…colored his analysis of sex-related differences from childhood onward” (pp. 301-302).

Ross (1972) writes about Hall’s studies on lies, fear, and anger and states they were not meant to be only about “emotional patterns but also of what Hall called juvenile ‘faults and vices.’” (p. 304). She states the following about Hall’s views:

Just as feelings of fear and tendencies to lie were seen as inherited adjustments to an earlier animistic and savage past, now somewhat dysfunctional in modern civilization, the more extended range of faults from truancy to swearing, fighting, and even stealing were given a similar interpretation. With many of the minor vices, Hall took an even more lenient attitude, believing that if they were not allowed some juvenile expression, the natural means of controlling them would not then be developed. Hall did not always make clear whether the child must give them direct expression or only ‘vicarious cathartic expression,’ but he did argue that boys, at least, had to be allowed mild exploratory lies, truancy, slang, swearing, fighting, and the like. (p. 304)
Ross (1972) suggests that Hall’s thoughts might be an echo of his “own childhood as an imaginative boy, living out his fantasies among the primitive pursuits of the farm, terribly conscious of how out of place and misunderstood his feelings and dreams were in the adult world immediately around him” (pp. 307-308). She points out that although Hall believed that adolescence should be prolonged, “he also wanted to establish suppression, sublimation, and control…[his] treatment of sexuality was the key item in determining where the balance would finally be struck between freedom and control” (p. 328). She continues by mentioning that Hall was undoubtedly influenced by the social setting in the United States in the late eighteen hundreds when everyone and everything was disturbed by “fear of the new urban, industrial society and its destruction of the older rural and village ways which most…still knew…” (p. 335).

As an adult, Hall (1924) mentions the value of experiencing childhood in the country. Although he acknowledges that he did not always appreciate it when he was younger, he nonetheless states, “I would not now exchange my boyhood experiences with nature and the primitive social and industrial conditions under which I was reared…for any environment or training I could devise” (p. 177). He goes on to say that just such an environment would be just as ideal for the “closing years of life” (p. 177).

More than one hundred years after his career peaked, Hall is still widely read and accepted. His proclamations about adolescence and the possibility of easily sliding into juvenile delinquency if behavior is not directed and controlled continue to play an influential role in many writings and studies. Hall wrote numerous books and articles, including a two volume set on adolescence, first published in 1904. Esman (1990) emphasizes that these books were
considered an “established source for conceptualization and description of adolescent behavior for generations to come” (p. 21).

After thoroughly reading the introductory vignette on G. Stanley Hall and the conditions that existed in the United States during his lifetime, I am better prepared for a tour of the art gallery. I am eager to concentrate on all that is shown in the portraits and to read interesting explanations in the accompanying vignettes.

G.S. Hall—New England, Puritan
stern, loving parents, discipline, self-control
Child-study
influences—sexual concerns, evolution, Germany

United States—conditions
industrialism, growing cities, crime

**Perusing Vignettes, Surveying Portraits**

The vignette that accompanies Hall’s (2005) constructed portrait of adolescence implies that he had strong beliefs and firm convictions about adolescence. He describes adolescence as being a new birth and emphasizes that adolescence is a time period in which individual differences in all areas increases, that the future of life is dependent on how all of this is managed and directed, and that everything during this period is plastic and malleable. His accentuating brushstrokes point out that never before has youth been so exposed to the dangers of perversion, a concern he credits to the temptations of urban life, industrialization, and other conditions in the environment. He emphasizes that if young people fail to develop normally and are unable to reach their maximum maturity and sanity, the results could be harmful and degeneration could be proportional to the lack of development. Stressing that criminal behavior increases between the ages of twelve and fourteen, he adds that the number of juvenile
delinquents has increased everywhere, resulting in a large number of juvenile reformatories in many countries.\footnote{Hall states that “in the 58 juvenile reformatories of the United States, according to the eleventh census of 1890, there were 14,846 inmates, of which 3,311 were females. The average age of both sexes was 14.23; of the males 14.09, and of the females 14.71 years” (vol. I, p. 327). He also states that “6,930 were for offenses against society, of which 4,515 were against property, petty larceny being the predominating form of crime” (vol. I, p. 328).} Strong brushstrokes emphasize his thoughts on juvenile crime:

Juvenile crime shows…the great difficulty which youth finds in making adjustment to the social surroundings, and…very often begins as the outcrop of the vagrant instinct…Next and closely connected with the reversion to nomadic life, in the evolution of the antisocial life of crime, comes resistance to the institution of property. In passing from home to the new conditions of industrial life with its severer code, control is increasingly difficult, and this epoch for the boy is not unlike that of the sudden emancipation of the negroes in the South, when, instead of being members of the planter’s family where pilfering was treated leniently or punished at home, they found themselves liable to arraignment and imprisonment for every petty theft. Third, and later, as a rule, are evolved crimes against person. (vol. I, pp. 333-334)

Hall (2005) sees criminality as a possibility for anyone during adolescence, and he believes that criminal tendencies are augmented by normal instincts, particularly when inhibiting and repressive powers do not develop. He suggests that many crimes and immoralities are due to impulses to which the adolescent has little conscious awareness.

For Hall (2005), adolescents respond to all suggestions plastically; they tend to do whatever comes into their heads and are content with becoming juvenile criminals during adolescence. He stresses that adolescence is a period of emergence, and that juvenile degeneration is an important characterization of failure in development.

Hall (2005) suggests that during adolescence individual differences become more noticeable and that “[t]he interval between the strong and weak, the dull and bright, beautiful and ugly, became far greater than it was before” (vol. II.1, p. 363). He points out that this is also a time period when different types of social and political organizations develop, when specific groups or gangs are formed. Hall emphasizes that some adolescents even emerge into hoodlumism because of no family discipline, and if “unreduced later…a semisavage state of
society results” (vol. II.1, p. 399). Suggesting that athleticism is a good way to channel an adolescents’ wild instincts and to transform them into harmless and more wholesome behavior, Hall also promotes the idea that a sense of honor needs to be cultivated. He stresses that doing so can be very effective at this age.

Hall (2005) emphasizes that there are characteristic differences between females and males in every organ and tissue of their bodies. Arguing that the female mind is conservative, he views the female “as a magnificent organ of heredity” who is “less prone to specialization” (vol. II.2, p. 562). He elaborates:

Her peculiar organs, while constituting a far larger proportion of her body than those of man, are hidden and their psychic reverberations are dim, less localized, more all-pervasive. She works by intuition and feeling; fear, anger, pity, love, and most of the emotions have a wider range and greater intensity. If she abandons her natural naivety and takes up the burden of guiding and accounting for her life by consciousness, she is likely to lose more than she gains, according to the old saw that she who deliberates is lost” (vol. II.2, p. 562).

Hall (2005) asserts that females are more generic creatures than males and because of this that the best education for a female is “essentially liberal and humanistic” and that the law of sexual differences should be respected (vol. II.2, p. 617). He further states that it could be injurious for females if they are held “to the same standards of conduct, regularity, severe moral accountability, and strenuous mental work” applied to males (vol. II.2, p. 623). According to Hall, females who are around eighteen and from a good background have reached a stage of maturity where they take adolescent males seriously. He suggests that if they are not married by some time in their twenties “there is lassitude, subtle symptoms of invalidism…aimless dissatisfaction with life…[and] by thirty she is goaded into more or less sourness…” (vol. II.2, p. 630).

Hall’s (2005) analysis of the practice of masturbation is thorough. He states that not only humans masturbate but rather that many other species do as well. He mentions that there are
well-authenticated cases where children of both sexes under two years of age have practiced it, and far more cases are on record for still later childish years” (vol. I, p. 435). He adds that “the early years of puberty, from twelve to fourteen, are those in which…masturbation is most common” (vol. I, p. 435). After he discusses other scholars thoughts on the subject, Hall affirms the following about masturbation:

One of the most direct moral effects is lying, secretiveness, and hypocrisy which conceals or denies a whole area of interests very real to the subject, and this is closely connected with cowardice, timidity, egoism, and frivolity…Self-control and will–power, purposive self-direction, resolute ability to grapple with difficulties mental or physical, to carry work that is begun through to its completion are certain to decline. (vol. I, p. 443).

Masturbation is a topic that is misunderstood, studied, written about, and practiced by many. Bederman (1995) alludes to Hall’s addiction to masturbation as a child. Although the dangers of sex pervaded Hall’s childhood, he became interested and eventually “was fatally addicted to masturbation” (p. 81).

Hall (2005) suggests that many influential factors are involved in the ultimate development and outcome of all adolescents. These factors include growth of height and weight, growth in parts and organs, growth of motor power and function, diseases of body and mind, and, most of all, heredity. He also believes that because of their plasticity, malleable adolescents are dependent on the family, school, and church to mold them into their proper place. He points out that “young children grow despite great hardships, but later adolescence is more dependent upon favoring conditions in the environment, disturbances of which more readily cause arrest and prevent maturity” (vol. I, p. 47). He adds that “adolescence is the nascent period, and their failure to develop marks an important characterization of juvenile degeneration” (vol. I, pp. 323-324).

Hall (2005) adds a texture of restrictiveness to the portrait through advocating a scientific approach that emphasizes testing and monitoring and compiling the results in order to categorize,
eliminate, and control. He stresses that adolescents need to be molded and shaped into the desired image of an adult with maximum maturity. However, he focuses his thoughts on the importance of becoming civilized men exclusively on white males. His portrait depicts degenerates and juvenile delinquents as a demographics that is incapable of developing into civilized men and that does not need an education or other types of attention. Hall’s brushstrokes paint the future of society as depending on the proper direction and successful development of adolescent white males because they are the only ones capable of developing properly.

Hall’s (2005) portrait on adolescence is life-size and takes up an entire wall. Using brushstrokes that include information dealing with the development of children from an early age to early adulthood, he covers a comprehensive amount of pedagogical subject matter in a very authoritative manner. His techniques of expertise and proclamations concerning volatile adolescence are so convincingly expounded upon that they were generally accepted by most at the time of his writings, and they continue to still play an influential role today.

In my view, Hall’s thoughts and proclamations concerning adolescence/ juvenile delinquency fall strongly on the side of scarcity. If this was a contest between portraits showing bold, influential brush strokes of manipulation, confinement, and control, Hall could definitely be considered a potent competitor for the winning trophy. Hall made adolescence a funnel for tracking and labeling with emphasis on race, gender, class, and culture: he objectified them, depersonalized them, turned them into categories, and used them for scientific study. He did this for the sake of developing an idealistic, specific type of adolescent—white males who could be considered capable of repressing sexual drives and emotions and ultimately become manly and civilized.
G. Stanley Hall’s adolescent  
plastic, malleable  
increased criminal behavior  
needing controlled development  

Future of society  
only adolescent white males

**Alternative Considerations**

Feeling overwhelmed by a pervasive, influential outlook of scarcity portrayed in this division of the art gallery, where Hall’s (2005) portrait of adolescence is powerfully displayed, I am convinced that my theoretical lens has only been exposed thus far to an outlook of impoverishment, implied limitations, excessive manipulation, and control. He is tenacious in his concern for molding adolescent white males into what he considers the perfect image—manly, civilized—and in his dismissal of others due to their race, gender, race, class, and culture. Because I want to see alternative portrayals of adolescence, I head towards the partitioned-off area to the left where they are located. Although I realize the narrative established by G. Stanley Hall’s thinking and writing continues to be blindly accepted, I am interested in learning about differing viewpoints. This smaller, more insignificant location, which holds these kinds portraits and their accompanying vignettes, offers a somewhat oppositional perspective.

The first small portrait on display in this section is by Lesko (2001), who presents a different and rather counteractive perspective to G. Stanley Hall’s. The vignette accompanying her portrait suggests that adolescence has been constructed by the culture and is viewed by many as being problematic. She argues that Hall “popularized adolescent storm and stress and utilized a romantic idea of youth potential and problems that mandated increasing supervision of young lives” (p. 50). She points out the primarily generalized thinking about teenagers due to Hall’s influence:
Typically teenagers appear in our cultural talk as synonymous with crazed hormones, as delinquents, deficiencies, or clowns, that is, beings not to be taken too seriously. They are most often spoken of with familiarity, sometimes with affection, and regularly with some hostility or displeasure. (p. 1)

Lesko (2001) explains that adolescence experts have prescribed a slow coming of age, and they have developed the accompanying idea that adolescence is a state of becoming rather than existing. She emphasizes that “discursive analysis of adolescence is a strategic one” (p. 89). She carefully demonstrates that this form of governmentality or control promotes such things as manipulating emotions, asexuality, dependency, and intellectual capacity.

Lesko (2001) suggests that Hall, along with his colleagues, continue to exert a tremendous amount of influence with regard to the discourse on adolescence. She interrogates this dominant discourse as she attempts an interpretation of adolescence and challenges the commonly accepted construction of adolescents as problematic. Pointing out that, at the end of the nineteenth century adolescence experts focused mainly on white middle-class males, Lesko (2001) explains that the theories and programs designed for the benefit and development of this particular group became the basis of the discourse on adolescence as a whole. Fears of degeneration and social decay were prevalent, and health and disease were major topics of discussion. Adolescence was defined as “becoming,” and the major concern was “progress” (p. 21). In short, adolescents became a site to study and diagnose in a group setting.

Although she takes a different view of the subject herself, Lesko points out that “adolescent development became a space for reformers to talk about their worries and fears and a space for public policy to enact new ideas for creating citizens” (p. 21). She stresses that “adolescence became a kind of switching station in which talk of racial degeneration could easily be rerouted to issues of nation or gender” (p. 22).
One of Lesko’s (2001) main objectives is to bring to the forefront the realization that adolescents are described in general with the implied understanding that adolescents are the same and possess the same characteristics. Adults view adolescence both as a problem and as a source of worry and concern with respect to their peer-oriented behavior. Because they are considered a public problem, adolescence remains an ongoing subject of conversation among adults.

As I move on to another portrait with its accompanying vignette, I see that Baker (2001) takes issue with Hall’s pervasive standpoint. She points out that Hall exerts his influence from a perspective of power in relation to Child-study. Her brushstrokes accentuate the point that “power has been sustained and made available as a concept for explaining human interiority, relations, and knowledge” (p. 430). Baker describes Hall’s relationship to Child-study in the following way:

That Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924) felt confident in asserting Child-study as a break from all previous educational traditions indicates something of the milieu in which it made an entrance...The Child-study movement emerged during the 1880’s and burgeoned in the 1890s and early 1900s. Hall is not an originary point of Child-study’s emergence. Rather, he was an extremely prolific member of the dominant stream within it. He was one of the first Americans to self-identify as a psychologist and the only American who could persuade Sigmund Freud to visit the continent for a series of guest lectures. (p. 468)

Baker (2001) adds that Hall and the Child-study movement assumed that “children must be studied.” (p. 468, original emphasis). On the basis of this crucial assumption, children became objects. Baker further stresses that, because the key premise of Child-study was the necessity to study children, the movement reasoned that from the information it garnered “a curriculum could be constructed in relation to their nature” (pp. 470-471). She points out that Hall’s viewpoint asserts an order of importance that placed teachers as the first priority, then children, and “third for teachers to do service to science” (p. 469). In darker tones, she stresses that this assumption applied only to public school children, not private. An uneven gaze was
directed toward children who had the potential to cause degeneration. These children ultimately became scientific objects requiring observation, questioning, and examination.

A discussion of the relationship between degeneracy and race emerged in the nineteenth century. In adding texture to the portrait, Baker (2001) states that measurement and observation became the central task of Child-study research as they related to qualities of race, which in turn led to a desire to organize and regulate life, with the ultimate goal of promoting the development of individuals who represented ideal types. The direction of discussions of race tended to be negative, as it emphasized the possibility of degeneration. Evolution was considered of utmost importance. From this interest in evolution and the accompanying racism that pervaded Child-study, a eugenic philosophy grew and spread in the 1890s.

Pausing in front of Winfield’s (2007) portrait, I look carefully at the accompanying vignette to see its message. The brushstrokes that reflect Hall’s thoughts are heavily tinted with eugenics, which Winfield states was the operational ideology throughout the first half of the 1900s. She explains that within this ideology, the “so-called well born, representing the ‘superior stock’ of the nation, felt themselves to be under imminent threat of ‘race suicide’ from abundantly fertile throngs of ‘unfit’ and ‘feebleminded’ poor, non-white, non-Protestant segments of the population” (p. 1). Eugenics philosophers primarily concerned themselves with heredity, but even more so with what to do with the results of their studies. The ideology’s premise was that the worth of an individual could be ascertained by looking at their race and class and where they fit within the social hierarchy.

Using dark shadows, Winfield (2007) emphasizes that Hall and others self-identify “as eugenicists on the development of curriculum theory and resulting practices in schools” (pp. 10-11). She points out that many current practices, such as testing, bear the marks of eugenic’s
influence on ideology. Testing provides legitimacy (considered to be scientific) and permeates both education and psychological fields, thus justifying the belief that innate inequalities exist, and reinforces the assumption that schools need to address the situation. Adding to the texture in the portrait, Winfield (2007) emphasizes that Goddard, a student of Hall’s, “was the first American psychologist to recognize the potential of intelligence testing for furthering eugenic ideals” (p. 117). Tests would ultimately determine an immigrants eligibility to enter the United States and be used to justify sterilization laws to prevent interracial breeding. The primary goal of many who believed in eugenics was to purify the white race.

The next portrait, by Deegan (1988), features Jane Addams. Deegan’s painting is particularly interesting because it displays a compassion for adolescents as well as the elderly. Addams saw both groups “as structurally related: both were undervalued in the market place; both tended toward idealism…and both were close to the effects of aging…Both groups also have little financial control over their everyday life…” (p. 296). Although most adults view adolescents as some type of problem that needs to be controlled, Addams adopted a nurturing attitude and saw them as having potential “for both idealism and growth” (p. 296). Her outlook toward delinquency was that it was “a product of social malfunction and…[its lack of adapting] to the spirit of youth, and not as a result of the evil nature or pathology of the young” (p. 296). The portrait generates a feeling of warmth, acceptance, and understanding.

Coming to the last portrait in this partitioned-off area, I am surprised to see that the accompanying vignette features a Samoan texture in the background while the main theme provides an alternative to Hall’s thinking. The brushstrokes of Mead’s (1961) portrait depict a nine month ethnographic study of teenagers in Samoan culture. Reflecting a belief that social environment plays a tremendous role in an individual’s life, this painting offers an
anthropologist’s doubtful reaction and response to the generally accepted view toward adolescence that G. Stanley Hall generated. It questions whether or not “these difficulties [were] due to being adolescent or to being adolescent in America” (p. 5). Mead concludes that all adolescents were not the same: culture played a strong determining factor in both attitudes and behavior.

After looking at the portraits in this small section, I am convinced that, although they cannot wholly represent a theoretical perspective of abundance towards adolescence/juvenile delinquency with an emphasis on generosity, understanding, forgiveness, and cooperation, they do punch a meaningful hole in the pervasively accepted ideas that Hall first put forward. These portraits and accompanying vignettes challenge the scarcity-driven aspects of Hall’s research on adolescents, aspects that emphasize control, manipulation, and assessment. At the same time, however, these vignettes suggest that researchers continue to view adolescence/juvenile collectively and fail to encourage difference or emphasize the importance of individuality. In short, these arguments are still weighed down by elements of scarcity.

Interrogate dominant discourse
criticize research
associate eugenics
emphasize effect of culture

Discourse on adolescence
ruptured

Conceptualization of Juvenile Delinquency

Just as the concept of adolescence has a long and rich history, so too does the concept of juvenile delinquency. The main difference in this section of the art gallery is that a number of different portraits have been assembled together like a collage, which provides a comprehensive vignette that describes the various insights of different contributors collectively. One portrait presented by Clement (1990) suggests that young people have always been viewed as guilty of
misbehaving. She adds that the nature of such misbehavior has been defined in different ways according to the time, place, and culture: “Whatever crimes that a society has found most threatening, when knowingly and intentionally committed by youths deemed old enough to know better, have been defined as juvenile delinquency” (p. 7). Adding darker shades to this base, Clement (1990) mentions that delinquent acts even occurred in prehistory when some young people “refused to participate in the giving of gifts (including themselves or their prospective mates) between tribes” (p. 9). One concern Clement discusses is how adolescence/juvenile delinquency has been dealt with and by whom, adding that juvenile offenders who committed serious crimes were at times prosecuted in the courts, and when convicted were punished in the same way as adults until the 19th century.

Cohen (1990) further adds texture to the portrait by pointing out that the precise point when young people came of age in the Middle Ages varied according to time, place, and context. However, she states the age for criminal liability was generally considered to be fourteen or fifteen—“the ‘age of understanding’” (p. 209). This criterion gained such wide acceptance that “more than one authority stressed that notoriously criminal children, or those who had acted with malice [sic] were liable to the gallows” (p. 209). The picture is clear that, for a serious enough offense, no special consideration was given to age for prescribing the appropriate punishment. Young criminals were treated the same as adults.

One portrait indicates that juveniles, unlike adults, can commit crimes called status offenses, which include such things as disobeying one’s parents, truancy, and incorrigibility rather than the more violent crimes of rape, murder, armed robbery, and assault. Punishment for status offenses has been questioned, and there appears to be some discrepancy in how status
offenders are legally handled, with some receiving more lenient treatment than others depending on age, gender, and offense (Clement, 1990; Jensen and Rojek, 1980).

According to Sander (1991), the rough texture in most portraits of teenagers strongly suggests that they continuously define themselves, experience changes in their self-concepts as well as physical changes in their bodies, and typically feel anger and a sense of rebellion toward parents and other authority figures as they seek to become more independent. Some teenagers find this to be a troublesome period in their lives and exhibit antisocial or illegal behavior. Similarly, Fenwick and Smith (1994) provide a portrait, with brushstrokes that hint at a somewhat limited perspective, that argues that young children who display antisocial behavior such as aggression and disobedience frequently become delinquents when they reach adolescence. They project that many delinquents come from either deprived or unstable backgrounds, that they are frequently more impulsive, defiant, and resentful of authority than normal, and that they often feel wronged and justified in getting even.

Newton (1995) portrays individuals under eighteen years of age as receiving little or no special consideration simply because of their age. This picture rings true with respect to the history of the legal system in particular, in which offenders were once given the same penalty for crimes committed regardless of age. Attitudes regarding adolescents began to change, when it was argued that giving harsh punishment to young people merely increased their likelihood of adopting a life of crime. Rawls (1971) presents a similar portrait that suggests that the indiscriminate incarceration of juveniles along with adults who were confirmed felons provided a training ground for future criminals. In an effort to change this situation, the first step was to physically separate the youthful offenders from adult offenders, although little emphasis was placed on how these youths should be treated.
Mennel (1973) sketches the portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency in the early nineteenth century, which portrays the image that “[t]he first organized efforts to treat juvenile delinquents as a distinct social problem centered around the founding and development of houses of refuge in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia during the 1820s” (p. 3). To this picture Rawls (1971) adds that Houses of Refuge received two types of residents: children of all ages who had committed a crime and had been convicted with a sentence, and children of all ages who had not been convicted of committing a crime but were destitute and/or neglected and were considered potential delinquents. Jensen and Rojek (1980), provide yet more detail and emphasize that the development of these institutions “was intimately connected with the push for compulsory public education…[which] grew out of the efforts of middle- and upper-class reformers to deal with new problem populations through the extension of state control over children” (p. 25). Adding color for more depth, Hawes (1971) points out that the House of Refuge in New York, which opened in 1825, was America's first institution for juvenile delinquents. The House “began its operations…with six boys and three girls. By the end of the first year, a total of seventy-three children had come to the Refuge, fifty-four boys and nineteen girls” (p. 41). The schedule for these children provided two hours of instruction each day. They spent the rest of their time working. Mennel (1973) gives some texture to the portrait with respect to how special interest groups sought to manipulate the system by pointing out that one reason why the Houses of Refuge was founded related to “social awareness and concern that family discipline was no longer sufficient to control the neglected and abandoned children” (p. 3). The House was funded by philanthropists who were “in general, descendants of established families and prosperous members of the merchant or professional classes” (p. 4). Smoothing out some of the
roughness in the texture, Rawls (1971) further observes that Houses of Refuge were gradually taken over by local governments.

Careful inspection of the portrait of the Houses of Refuge reveals that they were “a legal institution with certain well-defined powers. Primarily, it was an institution designed to reform youthful criminals, but it also functioned to prevent crime by accepting young vagrants who were potential juvenile criminals” (Hawes, 1971, p. 59). Mennel’s (1973) strong brushstrokes point out the following:

White female delinquents and Negro delinquents of both sexes…suffered from acute forms of prejudice. Girls were usually committed to refuges because of alleged promiscuity…Negro children were either excluded from the refuges or, if admitted were treated as inferior to the white children. (pp. 16-17)

In placing some final touches on the portrait, Rawls (1971) states that the Houses of Refuge were very similar to the prisons of that period. “Buildings were usually surrounded by high walls or fences, and institutional programs were characterized by strict regimentation” (p. 7). Silence was generally required at mealtime, everyone was relegated to separate cells at night, and children were frequently contracted out for labor to private citizens. Adding one extra brushstroke, Abbott (1938) mentions that state institutions for both male and female juvenile delinquents started to multiply: first called “‘houses of refuge,’ then ‘reform schools,’ and later ‘training and industrial schools,’ they all emphasized work and rigid discipline as the method of salvation” (p. 327).

The manipulative and controlling brushstrokes in Brenzel’s (1983) portrait present an image of “the first state reform school for girls” (p. 1). This institution opened in Lancaster, Massachusetts, in 1856 and “embodied new theories about the reformation of youth” (p. 4). It provided a home-like atmosphere and offered a therapeutic program that gave girls “the main thing missing from their wayward lives: Christian family life” (p. 6). The main purpose was to
provide an institution which would reform girls who were perceived as potential criminals or prostitutes. Most of the girls came from poor and destitute families; many were committed by parents who had learned to manipulate the system in order to help both their daughters and themselves.

One outstanding portrait with brushstrokes of hope depicts the first Juvenile Court that was established in Chicago on July 1, 1899. Jane Adams and the other women of Hull House were the source of this accomplishment: their goal was to create a special, separate place for children in crisis situations. Similarly, the court provided separate hearings and confinement for children in crisis (Ayers, 1997).

In a different portrait with unique brushstrokes, Lesko (2001) points out that the purpose of juvenile courts was to determine what was going on in a young person’s life that would lead him or her to delinquent acts. Boys were deemed the main problem initially, but girls also began to be considered trouble by the end of the 1800s: “Girls were brought to court almost exclusively for alleged early sexual exploration and received harsher punishment than did boys“ (p. 82). This harsher treatment was justified and looked upon as a means of preventive intervention since girls were considered so vulnerable to various temptations. Delinquent girls were kept isolated from males, as it was hoped that isolation might help to rehabilitate them. Chesney-Lind and Shelden (2004) add additional brushstrokes to this same portrait that suggest that isolation could be used to train girls in feminine skills. They also emphasize that many girls who were labeled as delinquent were incarcerated “during the early years of the court.” even though they did not exhibit any criminal behavior (p. 169).

The collage of portraits in this division of the art gallery projects an image of the culture of adolescence/juvenile delinquency as being problematic: everyone within this population is
viewed as being the same, and all are judged to need fixing. I suggest that this perspective is somewhat similar to that of G. Stanley Hall’s and falls firmly into a narrow-minded grand narrative steeped in scarcity: one that promotes monitoring, manipulation, control, and change. There is no emphasis on anything positive such as tolerance, understanding, forgiveness, hope, or new possibilities that can be found in a theoretical perspective of abundance.

Young people
guilty of misbehaving
anti-social, illegal behavior
defiant, resentful

Houses of refuge, institutions
designed to reform the young!

Treatment Techniques of Crime/Delinquency

Closely associated with the conceptual development of juvenile delinquency is the narrative on how punishment has emerged and changed over the years for juveniles found guilty of committing crimes. Foucault (1977) thoroughly investigates this topic as indicated in the vignette accompanying portraits in this division of the art gallery. Foucault’s discussion focuses on power. Power, Foucault states, is conceived as a strategy, and should be deciphered as “a network of relations, constantly in tension…rather than a privilege that one might possess…” (p. 26). He emphasizes that power is something that is exercised, and the overall effect can be both manifested and extended by the ones who are dominated. Not only does power produce knowledge, in actuality the two imply one another and are the basis of all means of punishment. The power of punishment is a pervasive discourse which manipulates and controls the behavior of individuals, but the methods and objectives of punishment are not static or locked in place.

Punishment

In discussing punishment, Foucault (1977) presents a portrait that suggests there were three different stages in the history of punishment in terms of how the punishment of crime was
handled. Referring to them as “three ways of organizing the power to punish,” he suggests that the processes took place between 1760 and 1840, in both Europe and the United States (p. 130).

The brushstrokes of the first stage of punishment depict the monarchial law system, which associated punishment with public spectacle. When public executions took place, they were “understood not only as a judicial but also a political ritual” (Foucault, 1977, p. 47). The ceremony of the public execution reconstituted the injured sovereignty, and punishment for the offender was performed in a manner that created a spectacle. Imbalance and excess were purposefully evident, and the intrinsic superiority and affirmation of power were emphatically reinstated to the sovereign. This form of punishment was “an exercise of ‘terror;’” its purpose was “to make everyone aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign” (p. 49). The public execution did not re-establish justice; it reactivated power” (p. 49). Torture was firmly fixed in this legal practice: it revealed the truth and displayed the operation of power. Foucault (1977) emphasizes that the relationship between truth and power is the basis of all systems of punishment.

In the second stage of punishment brushstrokes depict reforming jurists. Foucault (1977) suggests that punishment tended “to become the most hidden part of the penal process” (p. 9). Rather than torturing the body, the emphasis of punishment shifted to suspending rights: execution began to affect the life of the offender rather than the body. What was forbidden and what was permitted according to legal code did not change, but judgment additionally passed on such things as “passions, instincts, anomalies, infirmities, maladjustments, [and] effects of environment or heredity” (p. 17). More than crimes were judged under this system. Rather, moral judgments could be made about the criminal’s soul. As such, the overall goal was “not to
punish less, but to punish better” (p. 82). The strategy involved in punishment was the technology of representation: the example was based on the lesson—the representation of public morality.

The firm brushstrokes of the third stage of punishment highlight imprisonment. Regarding this, Foucault (1977) states: “The idea that imprisonment might…cover the whole middle ground of punishment, between death and light penalties” took time (p. 115). Plans were made for an enclosed prison structure that was envisioned as a place to transform individuals. Behavior could be controlled and transformed by developing a complete knowledge of the individual. The prison could serve as a permanent observatory with the capability of functioning as an apparatus of knowledge. The purpose of incarceration became not only punishing, but also manipulating, controlling, and changing the behavior of those determined to be guilty of a crime or of those who did not fit into what was considered as acceptable within the state of affairs at that time. Foucault (1977) explains that the prison, as a way station between an individual’s crime and return to society, provided a place for the transformation of individuals, restoring them to be acceptable members of society. Prisons designed to modify an individual were referred to as reformatories. They were designed to prevent the repetition of crime by transforming the criminal. Corrective techniques were prescribed with the punishment.

The power to punish contained within the portrait of all three stages of punishment appears to be grounded in overwhelming brushstrokes of scarcity. Although the aspects of scarcity here differ somewhat from those found in G. Stanley Hall’s Child-study movement, there is a similar emphasis on manipulation and control. The rough texture of the three stages of punishment indicate that punishment has been designed to manipulate, control, and change the behavior of those determined to be guilty of a crime or of those who simply do not fit into what
is considered as an acceptable social pattern. The power to punish does not emphasize understanding, caring, compassion, forgiveness or any other form of abundance.

- Power, knowledge
- punishment
- torture
- suspended rights

- Imprisonment, transformation
- manipulation, control

**Discipline**

Accompanying punishment as a treatment technique of crime/delinquency is discipline. According to Foucault (1977), strict discipline refers to “an art of correct training” (p. 170). He emphasizes in this portrait that the primary purpose of all disciplinary power is to train the individual by using simple instruments such as hierarchical observation to ensure success. Such an observational hierarchy functions well as a disciplinary apparatus; it allows the observer to constantly see everything with a single gaze. Surveillance can become a continuous and ongoing entity.

Foucault further describes discipline as a “type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising…of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a…technology” (Rabinow, 1984, p. 206). He emphasizes that discipline can be applied by not just prisons, but by all institutions such as schools, hospitals, and even families. According to Foucault (1977), “Bentham’s Panopticon” is an architectural structure capable of providing a major effect (p. 200). It is capable of inducing “in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (p. 201). He points out that surveillance needs to impose a sense of permanence, even if in actuality it is not permanent. The perfection of power is capable of making the exercise of observation unnecessary. Ultimately,
inmates become their own self-regulators, their own bearers of control. A description of the panopticon and how it works follows:

The panopticon consists of a large courtyard, with a tower in the center, surrounded by a series of buildings divided into levels and cells. In each cell there are two windows: one brings in light and the other faces the tower, where large observatory windows allow for the surveillance of the cells. The cells become ‘small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible.’ The inmate is not simply visible to the supervisor; he is visible to the supervisor alone—cut off from any contact. This new power is continuous and anonymous…even if there is no guardian present, the power apparatus still operates effectively. The inmate cannot see whether or not the guardian is in the tower, so he must behave as if surveillance were perpetual and total. If the prisoner is never sure when he is being observed he becomes his own guardian. (Rabinow, 1984, p. 19)

The concept of discipline and power found in the structure of and possible workings in the panopticon can be extended throughout society. This portrait suggests that the concept is capable of spreading everywhere, becoming a network of mechanisms that are never interrupted: “The panoptic arrangement provides the formula for…the basic functioning of a society penetrated through and through with disciplinary mechanisms” (Foucault, 1977, p. 209). The presence of these disciplinary mechanisms attempts to create a standard of uniformity. Anyone who does not conform is considered to be a delinquent, degenerate, or uncivilized person within the disciplinary society—a society with control and manipulated direction at its forefront.

I suggest that the portrait of discipline is filled with a narrow-minded, dominating theoretical perspective of scarcity with a goal of unscrupulous control. It appears that the rough texture is bursting with harsh brushstrokes of monitoring, manipulation, prediction, and alteration quite similar to the edicts of G. Stanley Hall in his pronouncements about adolescence. There are no bright hues in the portrait of discipline to indicate any type of open-mindedness that promotes understanding, hope, generosity, or plenty.

Discipline
network of mechanisms
Contemporary Studies of Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency

Having considered the historical narrative of adolescence found in the portraits of the conceptual development of adolescence, the conceptual development of juvenile delinquency, and treatment techniques of crime/delinquency, I will now examine the narrative that portrays newer, ongoing perceptions about adolescence/juvenile delinquency in terms of descriptions, predictions, and other considerations. Most of these contemporary studies were published in academic journals from the 1950s until the present, and I suggest they are all strongly influenced by the grand narrative constructed by G. Stanley Hall more than 100 years ago. Adolescents/juvenile delinquents are perceived in each of these portraits as a homogeneous collection of young people with no concern for individuality. The overall concern is with describing them or making predictions about them with an emphasis on changing, fixing, and improving them to fit societal expectations. The portraits in this division of the art gallery are also displayed as a collage, and the accompanying vignette represents a collection of research studies conducted by assorted contributors.

Descriptions of Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency

Several attention-getting portraits in this section feature brushstrokes that describe juvenile delinquents in terms of cause, involvement, treatment, and gender differences. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (1954) reports that a combination of factors cause delinquency, such as poor home conditions, lack of religion, improper and unguided youth activities, an inadequate school system, and unpunished delinquent behavior. Coming from more specific standpoints, Ezinga, Weerman, Westenberg, and Bijleveld (2008) report that misbehavior and
delinquency are related to low self-control along with the psychosocial development during the years of childhood and adolescence. Corwyn and Benda (2002) argue that there is a relationship between alcohol and drug use and delinquent behavior, and Sherman (2006) emphasizes that criminal behavior exists mostly in inner-city neighborhoods.

According to two different studies, antisocial behavior, often found in delinquents, is a developmental trait that can start during early childhood and continue into adolescence. Certain family variables may contribute to antisocial behavior and delinquency. Positive results are more likely to be retained when parent training is provided for families of young antisocial children. Likewise, preventive measures work best when they are detected early, before behavior patterns are firmly established (Loeber, 1982; Patterson, DeBaryshe, and Ramsey, 1990).

With respect to gender, Hagan, Simpson, and Gillis (1979) find that male and female delinquents, are treated differently in terms of how they are controlled socially, with females being prescribed a more informal, familial or community based program with their established traditions, and with males being prescribed the more formal, judicial oriented program. On a somewhat different note, Landsheer, Oud, and Dijkum (2008) report that over time males and females demonstrate delinquency to differing degrees. Females are less delinquent, while the types of delinquency males engage in changes much more rapidly. Differences between the sexes increase up to age sixteen, but from that point on these differences decrease. In a separate study, Martin, Martin, Dell, Davis, and Guerrieri (2008) state that males committed violent crimes, were truant from school, and missed probation appointments on a regular basis. Males are also likely to be repeat offenders who leave and later return to the justice system. In contrast,
females report more sexual and physical abuse, have angry feelings toward others, and often want to hurt themselves.

In two unrelated studies, Houghton, Carroll, and Hopkins (2008) report that loners involved in delinquent activities do not appear to desire a nonconformist reputation: although they do wish to be nonconforming, they want to keep their nonconformity private. And Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1977) suggest that “collective efficacy, defined as social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good, is linked to reduced violence” (p. 918). They believe common values and maintenance of effective social control is the capacity of a neighborhood to regulate its members, rather than forced conformity by the police.

Sedlak (2009) conducted a more generalized study with a group of young people who were incarcerated at the time. Sedlak’s findings indicate that the characteristics and backgrounds of “[y]ouths in custody are predominantly male, ages 16 and 17…Custody rates are highest for males; youths who are black, Hispanic, or of mixed-race; and youths who do not live with two parents” (p. 92). In terms of educational status, almost half are below their age-expected grade level, a large number have been diagnosed with learning disabilities, and many do not have a high school diploma and are not enrolled in school when taken into custody. Emotional and mental health issues include “[p]roblems with anger, depression and anxiety” and a large number have used drugs and alcohol (p. 93).

Crime, delinquency
combination of factors
differential behavior, treatment
antisocialism, low self-control

Nonconformity, aggressiveness
inner-city, slum districts
Predictions About Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency

Brushstrokes made on portraits in this section concern making predictions about adolescence/juvenile delinquency. According to Stoutyamer-Loeber and Loeber (1988) predicting delinquency can be valuable for the following reasons: formulating child development theories, recognizing early markers of deviant behavior, and providing preventive efforts for children recognized as being at risk. Predicting delinquency may also play an influential role in both judicial and clinical decisions. Stoutmayer-Loeber’s and Loeber’s findings indicate that aggression, drug use, problem behaviors, poor educational achievement, and certain family factors all predict later delinquency. In a similar study, Nagin and Tremblay (1999) report that disruptive or troublesome behavior during childhood is a good predictor of criminal behavior during adolescence, and that physical aggression is a good predictor of physical violence as well as serious delinquency, but that opposition is a better predictor for theft.

Understanding the causes and development of crime and delinquency along with its prevention and treatment is important to Farrington’s (1988) study. He suggests that longitudinal research is more valuable than cross-sectional research because of the information it can provide about changes within subjects. He believes that the best predictors of delinquency are parents with poor child-rearing techniques, antisocial behavior of child, and poor educational achievement.

According to Levine and Singer (1988), risk taking attitudes of middle-class adolescents are good predictors of delinquent behavior as well as the use of drugs and alcohol. They find that males report their own delinquent behavior more frequently than females, that males and females resort to using alcohol and drugs at about the same level, and that most adolescents who
have an alcohol or drug related problem would turn to peers for assistance before parents, teachers, or counselors. Levine and Singer suggest that, unless treatment programs provide an element of the excitement or danger, they will not influence young people who are potential delinquents and substance users. In a different study, O’Donnell (2003) argues that delinquent behavior among juveniles is influenced more by environment than genetics and suggests the key factor is peer influence. He emphasizes that, regardless of racial groups, adolescents put a lot of trust in their friends and tend to turn to them first whenever problems occur. Coming from a different angle, Tharp (2003) suggests that “cultural variables…are less predictive of delinquency than are features of the general youth culture” (p. 4). Delinquent behavior of young people, Tharp argues, is often due to a lack of self-control combined with the influence of peer group activity, and peer influence becomes even greater in the absence of adult supervision.

Although Schwartz, Rendon, and Hsieh (1994) suggest that available evidence does not substantiate claims that maltreatment of children causes delinquency, they emphasize that addressing juvenile crime is urgent and that resources should be put into its study and prevention. They point out that delinquency has different meanings for different people and that it is “universal and a normal part of adolescence” (p. 651). They also emphasize that many studies related to this topic are flawed and that too little money is made available for research.

Crime, delinquency predicted
disruptive, troublesome behavior
physical aggression, opposition
weak parenting skills, education

Risk taking attitudes, drugs, alcohol
environmentally influenced, research needed

Other Considerations Related to Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency

The brushstrokes on the two portraits in this section are interesting and unique in their approach. Using the interactions of students and teachers in an alternative school setting as a
basis for poetic transcriptions, Kennedy (2009) portrays the experiences and emotions of those who participated, which allows readers to develop a deeper understanding of these experiences. She uses these poems to advocate for both students and teachers.

On a different note, Lewis and Petrone (2010) argue that how educators understand adolescence often determines how they group and teach the young people in their classes. They believe that “conceptions of adolescence oftentimes shape and justify teachers’ thinking” about students “and their own roles in classrooms” (p. 398). They suggest that a better understanding of adolescence needs to be used when planning curriculum and preparing for instruction.

As I consider the collage of portraits found in these contemporary studies of adolescence/juvenile delinquency division of the art gallery, I find once again that the brushstrokes are predominantly heavy with dark shades of scarcity. Although two portraits from this last section do suggest a glimmer of abundance as they rupture the more predominant picture of manipulation, control, and change. However, they still view adolescence/juvenile delinquency as a large homogeneous group rather than take difference and individuality into consideration.

Delinquency, other considerations
alternative schools
poetic transcriptions
problematizing
Conceptions of adolescence
influence curriculum

Summary

Throughout my stroll through the art gallery, it has become evident to me that the historical narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency provides a portrait that is steeped in scarcity. Heavily dominated by the influence of G. Stanley Hall, it is apparent that a judgmental, controlling perspective pervades the grand narrative regarding the culture of
adolescence/juvenile delinquency. The portraits I have examined, along with their accompanying vignettes, present a generalized outlook in each of the four divisions of the art gallery (conceptual development of juvenile delinquency, conceptual development of adolescence, treatment techniques of crime/delinquency, and contemporary studies of adolescence/juvenile delinquency). The narrative suggests that all who fall within this population can be considered problematic or something that needs to be dealt with, fixed, or changed. The underlying attitudes and perceptions throughout the historical narrative come from a predominantly negative stance that views adolescents as a troublesome group comprised of individuals who are primarily the same. They are considered the negative “other” who is unknown and unacceptable, the foreigner, the stranger (Kristeva, 1991). No consideration has been given to individual differences: all are lumped together as a homogeneous, troublesome group, and the pervading brushstrokes in the portraits strongly suggest that they need to be managed, manipulated, changed and controlled.

Historical narrative
steeped in scarcity
dominated by G. Stanley Hall
generalized outlook

Individual differences
not considered

**Exhibit VII**

I felt awkward and ill at ease and didn’t know exactly where to go when I arrived at the prison. I checked in with the superintendent to let him know that I had arrived. He greeted me warmly and informed me that I would be working in the education building. It seemed that everyone knew I was coming and where I would be located, including the maintenance worker with my “headquarters office belongings.” All of my stuff had been unloaded from the truck and
plopped down in the middle of a large classroom used for testing purposes. In fact I had brought so much stuff that it monopolized the entire room.

Upon entering the education building with the fortitude of a minnow, I soon realized that my feelings of embarrassment and uneasiness could be set aside. The four other people who worked in this building seemed happy to see me, and several other staff members who worked in other buildings had gathered in the library. I remembered a few familiar faces from when I had worked here years before, and there were also several new faces. They had prepared a pot luck lunch, a regularly scheduled monthly occasion as I found out later, and invited me to join them. They quickly let me know that I would also be expected to bring a dish the next time. The warm camaraderie among everyone helped me relax and enjoy their company.

I spent the rest of the day unpacking, organizing, and arranging all of my things in a portion of the classroom that I would be sharing with another staff member. My belongings looked out of place in a large corner of the room, since they were originally meant to be in an office. I’m not sure how the other person, whom I had just met, originally felt about sharing her space with me, but she appeared to be fine. The fact that she would also be sharing her work load with me probably helped.

Much to my surprise and chagrin, by the next morning a lot of my stuff had disappeared. Anything that could be easily squirreled away by others was missing from my corner of the room. One of the staff members with a sense of humor immediately said, “I bet if you check in the dorms you’ll find some of the furniture.” Sure enough, much of it did show up in the dorms, but some of it also made its way to the offices of other staff members. This made me wonder how welcome I really was. Disappointed and somewhat angry, I realized there was probably
nothing I could do. The room had been locked but that was not a problem for anyone who wanted to go shopping without paying.

There was no time to dwell on the loss because I heard a loud banging on the exterior doors to the building and young male voices calling out 1, 2, 3, 4 as they numbered off. A group of new students was marching towards the testing room for their scheduled test. The gender make-up of the group was something new for me: all of the students were male. Previously testing groups had included both male and female students. However, the administration had closed down the female juvenile prison about five years ago, having said there was no need for it. To prove their point, they reduced the population of 150 females to zero at that particular juvenile prison within just a few months, having sent them to group homes, foster homes, or their own homes. I have since wondered how they decided who a juvenile delinquent was and who needed to be imprisoned: the decision appeared to be wholly subject to political whims and who was doing the deciding.

As the students filed into the room, I remember feeling a little apprehensive but also a little excited. I had not worked directly with students for quite a while. A total of fifteen students waited to be assigned their seats. They were quiet, no doubt due to the fact that they were escorted and carefully watched by two large security guards with frowns on their faces and body language that screamed control. When the students saw me they looked a little surprised since they had never seen me before. I smiled encouragingly but didn’t say anything.

I simply observed that day. I wanted to see how the testing process was currently handled because I knew a few changes had been made. The students being tested were new intakes to the system. They were all sizes and ranged in age from nine to twenty. Many looked apprehensive and scared while others appeared to be nonchalant or disgruntled, as if they had
gone through this routine before and did not view it as important or as something they wanted to do. There were only two White students in this particular group: the rest were Black.

As I think back to that day and remember observing the testing procedure so carefully, I now realize that we were carrying out the edicts of G. Stanley Hall. We were doing exactly the types of things emphasized by the proponents of the Child-study movement without questioning the reasoning behind such usage. We were blindly following along as if we believed in the value and importance of each test. Although some of the tests had changed over the years, with some being dropped and others added, the results were used in much the same way, as if they were the answer to some great mystery, as if they were capable of solving problems or improving situations.

I remember walking around the room and watching the students as they took their tests. I wondered about each student’s personal life and why they happened to be there. What was their home life like? What were their interests, hopes, and dreams? What were their concerns, or their fears? How did they feel about being in prison? What did their future hold? What were their stories?

Looking back, looking forward changes, adjustments different expectations re-acquaintances, new faces

Students come and go stories to tell.
CHAPTER 4
A SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL NARRATIVE
WITH VARIED TEXTURES THAT ENABLE THE CONSTRUCTED LABELS
AND IDENTITY FORMATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS

Individuals can find the security and protection that are prerequisites for freedom only in association with others—and then the organization these associations take on, as a measure of securing their efficiency, limits the freedom of those who have entered into them. (Dewey, 1989, pp. 126-127)

Acknowledging themselves as situated in a particular place in a social world, given opportunities to find out what can emerge from communication with others, the young may be sometimes enabled to escape the weight of kitsch as well as an unbearable lightness. They may find themselves unexpectedly able to deal with the forces that seem to determine and condition, that make them feel powerless (and, in their powerlessness, irresponsible and disengaged). Freedom is an achievement in the midst of life and with other human beings. People achieve whatever freedom they can achieve through increasingly conscious and mindful transaction with what surrounds and impinges, not simply by breaking out of context and acting in response to impulse or desire. And it seems clear that most people find out who they are only when they have developed some power to act and to choose in engagements with a determinate world. (Greene, 1995, pp. 177-178)

The impulse behind institutional labeling and classification, however toxic the effects, may well have generous roots in professionals’ wanting to help…But fixing is such a dangerous enterprise. It seeks to eradicate difference; but it also eliminates openings and possibilities, especially the unhesitant, grotesquely self-certain fixing we have come to expect…‘Fixing’ has a dark, colonial shadow that…[we] do not always acknowledge. (Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2003, p. 43)

Labels. We are haunted at times by labels that surround and potentially condemn many due to societal prejudices…We live in a world saturated by labels. And it is truly difficult to distinguish, at times, our own inner thoughts, in our own inner voice, from the continuous barrage of media images that assault our consciousness daily. (Hudak and Kihn, 2001, p. 3)

Exhibit VIII

While thinking back to that period of time in my life when I was trying to adjust to my recently changed work site, I remember so clearly mulling over and over in my mind while driving to work each day the many negative experiences that I had at the headquarters office during the previous year. The route to the juvenile prison was familiar and traffic was so light that I could almost put my car on automatic pilot. After spending several weeks at my changed...
work situation, I gradually began to feel more and more comfortable and actually looked forward to going to work on most days. Although I still experienced moments of sadness and sorrow that things at the headquarters office had somehow soured without my completely understanding the reasons, I was making progress in my adjustment. I realized more and more that I enjoyed interacting with my co-workers, and I found working with young people again on a regular basis both rejuvenating and rewarding. I gradually accepted that I was experiencing a mourning type process that I needed to go through and that I would be stronger in the end.

I soon became aware of how much certain things had changed at JRDC from what they had been like when I first started working in the juvenile prison. There was no longer the continuous pressure to get each student tested and all his or her paper work processed within a short, prescribed period of time in order for students to be quickly moved to a permanent prison assignment. The stress of the harried work pace that once existed seemed no longer to be present, and because of this the general atmosphere seemed a little more relaxed.

During the years that I had been working at the headquarters office, the entire Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center had moved from the front of the large campus where it was originally housed in Lilac to the back of the campus where assorted smaller programs along with newly incarcerated female students were previously housed. Since the juvenile prison for females in the central part of the state no longer existed, space was not needed for newly incarcerated females at the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center. Decision makers decided that incarcerated females at this point in time were not considered a large enough issue or threat to society for them to take up space in the juvenile prison system. Change seemed to be a
constant in the state agency dealing with juvenile prisons, if for no other reason than it continuously occurred—sometimes to people and sometimes to programs.

A major effect of what I originally assumed was a changed attitude towards testing, processing, and movement of students was that the majority of students were spending much longer periods of time at the diagnostic center, and because of this the total number of students was gradually growing. The delay in moving students from the diagnostic center to the more permanent juvenile prisons actually had nothing to do with a changed or relaxed attitude toward testing and processing. Other issues such as bed space and overcrowding were involved. Currently, more than double what had once been the typical number of students were at the diagnostic center. Concern was growing that these students were not receiving adequate educational services during such an extended stay. It was becoming a problem that had never existed during my early days of working at the juvenile prison.

By this time there were three of us who were considered educators working at the diagnostic center. We were all certified teachers as well as certified in additional areas. One person was initially hired as a principal. Another was hired as a school librarian. And I was hired as a guidance counselor. About four to six weeks after I had been relocated, we were all called to attend a meeting at the headquarters office where we were told how problematic everything had become since students were remaining for such long periods of time at the diagnostic center. Having already been aware of some of the problems, we were not surprised that a meeting had been called in regards to this issue. However, we did not expect to be included in the meeting since the superintendent and assistant superintendent were there, nor did we anticipate the ultimate outcome of the meeting. After much discussion—some of it heated with questions, accusations, and explanations—the break for lunch was announced and that we should
be back in an hour. Later, after we had all re-gathered, everyone had settled down, and the room grew quiet, one of the top supervisors calmly said that a decision had been made during the lunch break: the three educators from JRDC were being given the responsibility to develop some type of educational program for all students housed at the Juvenile Diagnostic and Diagnostic Center. Looking at each other in surprise and no doubt horror, the three of us initially just sat there. We were shocked at the announcement, but later we were even more astounded to learn that we were to have this program in full operation within two months. Most everyone who attended the meeting was surprised. No additional funding would be made available and all planning and preparation for this program was to be done in addition to our existing duties. The one positive thing we learned was that one vacant state funded teacher position could be used.

Realizing that the development of some type of education program was needed on the one hand, but also feeling that the attitude in terms of how it was to be carried out seemed rather harsh on the other hand, the three of us started brainstorming immediately after returning to JRDC. We were determined to come up with a workable plan that could be successful and worthwhile for everyone involved. Although several levels of supervisors had been at the meeting, the idea for the three of us to develop an education program came from the same two supervisors who previously demonstrated negative behavior towards me at the headquarters office and who were the source behind my relocation. I was a little suspicious about whether or not any of this was connected. The attitude they had exhibited at the meeting was negative and judgmental, which was not too surprising to me. However, the attitude and outlook of these two supervisors towards us was not the dominant one, since several other supervisors in attendance had offered words of positive encouragement and support. In terms of our directive to develop an education program, not only did we come up with an educational program for students at the
diagnostic center, we developed one that worked out more effectively than anyone had anticipated. We had a creative approach, and the students and staff looked upon our efforts as a success.

Memories, adjustment
change, directives
education program
creative, successful

Black, White
conceived differences, perceived privilege

A View of Constructed Labels and Their Effect

The lyrics from “You Don’t Own Me,” a song recorded by Lesley Gore in the early 1960’s, still strongly affects me in many ways. The song became popular when I was young and idealistic, and I felt that it expressed my own way of thinking. Listening to the lyrics today can still evoke an emotional response from me that is filled with strength and determination. These particular lyrics represent the ageless cry of a female teenager in some type of romantic friendship or relationship to be free to do what she thinks is right, to what fits in with her own self-worth and identity. This could easily be a plea from any teenager with similar or even different issues. Most of us desire a sense of freedom to decide who, what, and how we want to be, think, talk, and act. We do not want to be placed in a predetermined caste, where our choices are limited or non-existent. But do we really have such freedom of choice? Is making unfettered decisions really possible? Does the freedom these lyrics express truly exist, or are we controlled, regulated, managed, and manipulated by certain established stereotypes and constructed labels with parameters and restrictions that influence us in many ways? Are we “owned” by authoritative discourses which are invisible, yet very influential? Do we fall into pre-determined categories with constructed labels that limit and manipulate our personal
identities? If so, how do they affect us, how do they make us feel about ourselves, how do they influence our behavior?

Just as the lyrics for “You Don’t Own Me” was written from a teenager’s perspective, portraits of adolescents in books, magazines, movies, and songs frequently centered around teenagers and depicted everyone who falls in this age group as the same, as a fixed culture in which everyone exhibits the same emotions and same wild, narcissistic, and undesirable behavior. The concept of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is associated with a wide array of labels and their associated descriptions, expectations predictions and limitations. These labels can be placed by parents, teachers, school administrators, friends, enemies, as well as many others. In this study I seek to interrogate these constructed labels in terms of who is labeled and how the labels operate, to consider what is involved in the formation of adolescent identities, and to examine the effects of a social-psychological narrative on the culture of adolescence.

I have visited the art gallery filled with various portraits depicting the historical narrative of how adolescence/juvenile delinquency was and is conceptualized by assorted scholars. I have investigated how the conceptualization of juvenile delinquency is situated in our society and how it is made possible, along with the development of institutions and the use of disciplinary measures. After a period of time passed, I revisit the same art gallery and this time while carefully examining each portrait and accompanying vignette I concentrate more specifically on the constructed labels and identity formations that have been affixed to adolescents/juvenile delinquents. While doing so I also consider the possible effect constructed labels may have on identity formation. I find a wide assortment of constructed labels that range from terms that appear to be complimentary or positive, almost suggesting a sense of privilege, to those that suggest the extreme opposite. Regardless of which end of the spectrum I choose, and I suggest
that the negative end is weighed down like an unbalanced teeter-totter—these labels, I argue, control how adolescents/juvenile delinquents view themselves, how they behave, and how they perceive others. My concern here is with the social-psychological narrative; what is involved in, supports, and enables construction of these labels and how do labels relate to or affect identity formations among adolescents.

- Constructed labels
  - control, manage, classify
  - limit, manipulate
  - pre-determine behavior

**Constructed Labels in Relation to Scarcity**

Labels are constructed for different reasons—some positive and others negative. They are the result of different causes such as confinement or grouping to meet the specific needs of individuals. Baker (2001) points out that “[i]mperatives to isolate the child and to perceive the young as possessing peculiarities that require special, different, and segregated treatment…predate publicly-funded common schooling in North America” (p. 441). She adds that dividing children into types “might…be understood as emerging out of the opportunities that such preexisting confinement afforded” and in connection with this divisiveness that it “might be said that from the depths of confinement, the…movement of Child-study, of studying children *en masse* and scientifically, became plausible (p. 441, original emphasis). Confinement is discussed more fully by Baker (2001) in the following:

Confinement, then, might be understood at a different level as not simply institutional or geographical borders or incarceration in a built prison, but part of being put in a
populational ‘box’—often a different kind of prison—and being forced to bear, and sometimes to transgress, its assumptions. (p. 445)

She also points out other possibilities as follows:

If confinement is to be reduced, ironically then, to the spread of formal institutions and their buildings, it gave to the watchers and the activists many more ‘lived spaces’ for investigating a preexisting fascination and turning it into something else again. (pp. 446-447)

According to Baker (2001), this movement was accomplished by those involved in Child-study who saw confinement in public schooling as an “opportunity to record detailed observations of a child’s activity, issue surveys and questionnaires regarding where honey comes from or where milk comes from, and measure the body parts of the young” (p. 447). She points out that it was G. Stanley Hall and his influence on Child-study “that most explicitly delineated what a child was” (p. 9).

While conducting this examination, I view constructed labels and adolescent identity formation through a theoretical perspective of scarcity and abundance. I believe the concept of adolescence has been dominated by a colonizing viewpoint filled with restrictive and controlling concepts of scarcity, just as certain populations have historically been exploited and colonized by strong geographic powers. According to Asher (2008), critiquing colonization involves looking at it from a perspective that examines “marginality, oppression, difference, identity, and representation” (p. 13). I suggest that adolescents are affected and controlled by issues connected to scarcity as they navigate their colonized existence and at times participate in the structures that constrain them.

Viewing adolescence as representative of colonization is appropriate, I believe, due to the hegemonic forces that play a role in the construction of labels that have been assigned to adolescents and in turn have set the parameters for the formation of identities. Lesko (2001) suggests that adolescence is viewed as a technology of whiteness, masculinity, and domination,
and that this “perspective on adolescence is framed, in part, through colonial relations and through sciences such as anthropology that originated in colonial settings, with their racism and sexism” (p. 11). She points out that this thinking is a result of a meaning-making structure which pits the idealized against the inferior. Just as certain populations have been and continue to be dominated, shaped, and exploited by colonizers, I believe the concept of adolescence also suffers a similar treatment. I use the terms colonizer or colonialism to describe hegemonic, authoritative attitudes and behavior toward others. According to Cesaire (2005), colonization is associated with “relations of domination and submission” (p. 62), which I argue has been entangled in the construction and use of labels for adolescents.

I see the culture of scarcity as being deeply embedded in the colonization of the concept of adolescence. A culture of scarcity maintains dominance and submission through the construction and use of labels, which are capable of placing restrictive limitations on identity formations. A culture of scarcity is one which represents a narrow outlook of impoverishment and extreme carefulness, as opposed to a culture of abundance which views generosity, forgiveness, and open-mindedness to be important as well as valuable in opening up new avenues of being. If white / male / straight / American / middle or upper class is seen as neutral, then labels are needed to cement what is lacking in people who don’t meet that standard.

For Pinar (2006),

[a] culture of scarcity is a culture of literalism. It is no accident that biblical literalism—and the religious zealotry it reflects and supports—accompanies political conservatism…Educationally, such literalism takes the form of curriculum guides to be covered as if they were so many Internal Revenue Service…income tax regulations and procedures. (pp. xviii- xix)

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9 “The white, middle-class boys…depended on girls, on working-class youth, and on youth of color, against whom they were defined as masculine, pure, self-disciplined, and courageous.” (pp. 10-11)
As a central concept in colonial discourse, scarcity dominates ways of seeing the world, ways of thinking, and ways of producing. Scarcity implies limitation, and controls identity formations and perceptions of adolescence through manipulating constructed labels. Labels are needed to monitor, manipulate, and control, thereby limiting individual differences. According to Jardine et al. (2006), scarcity is restrictive and creates different types of impoverishment; in terms of gender and race, the culture of scarcity is masculine and white.

I see the culture of scarcity as being closely related to Bhabha’s (1994) concept of fixity. Bhabha argues one of the defining features of colonial discourse “is its dependence on the concept of ‘fixity’ in the ideological construction of otherness” (p. 94). He explains his concept of fixity in the following way:

Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated…. (pp. 94-95)

The possibility that the concept of fixity might be tightly secure within a culture of scarcity seems to fit snugly like the missing piece of a puzzle, one which plays a major role in how individuals, particularly adolescents in this context, are viewed, portrayed, and labeled by a dominant discourse.

For Bhabha (1994), colonial domination or authority “required the production of differentiations, individuations, identity effects through which discriminatory practices can map out subject populations that are tarred with the visible and transparent mark of power” (p. 158). He points out that different modes of discrimination such as gender, racial, class, etc. are required in order for colonial authority to work. Taking into consideration the control and manipulation found within colonizing discourses and the effects that can breed, produce, and
develop as a result, it is not surprising that this is discovered in multiple categorized groups, and firmly entrenched in commonly accepted societal beliefs, values, and expectations.

When the large arm of colonial discourse envelopes a concept of fixity and a culture of scarcity in relation to adolescent identity formation and constructed labels, it functions to limit and manipulate race, gender, class, and culture. Jardine et al. (2006) point out that under a regime of scarcity there are few options; things became taut, and emphasis is placed on security, monitoring, and management. It appears that a dominant discourse of scarcity pervades western society, making us “less generous, less forgiving, less variegated, less open to interpretation” (p. 58). Scarcity seems to be a driving force in the colonizer’s need to construct labels; labels that compartmentalize and dictate how certain categories or groups are viewed, monitored, maintained, and managed. This pervasiveness applies to adolescents in particular, with their affixed labels that create both fixed similarities and fixed differences, all due to the colonizer’s need to direct, manipulate, and control.

Culture of scarcity/colonization
constriction, oppression
exploitation, domination
fixity, rigidity, repetition

Constructed labels
compartmentalize, dictate

Exhibit IX

One consideration I have not previously mentioned but which plays a meaningful role in the overall picture of my job situation over the years is that the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center where I was first hired and have recently been relocated back to has always been considered a “White” institution. This was in comparison to Louisiana Training Institute (LTI), the juvenile institution located on the same campus where students served their full sentence and that was considered a “Black” institution. The superintendent and most of the
employees of the diagnostic center have always been primarily “White” and the superintendent and all of the employees at LTI have always been “Black.”

I’m really not certain of the reasons that helped create this uncomfortable racial situation, but it could have had something to do with how and why the original institution, at some point called LTI, was initially thought about and later built. I’ve heard a little about the beginnings of juvenile correctional institutions in Louisiana from various sources, so I’m not certain what part of the story is correct and what is not. However, I will share with you stories that I have been told. My understanding is that the first juvenile prison was built during the early nineteen-hundreds in Monroe, a small city in the northern part of the state. The prison was originally designated only for young, white men who were deemed in need of incarceration. Probably close to twenty years later, a juvenile institution was built near Alexandria in central Louisiana for young white women who were likewise categorized as in need of incarceration. It was not until sometime in the mid nineteen-forties that work began on an institution near Baton Rouge for black young men or as they were no doubt referred to at that time, negroes. In fact, I was told by someone at one point of my employment that the institution was originally called “The Industrial School for Colored Youth,” and that the need for such an institution was so great that the numbers grew quickly, which in turn quickly led to overcrowding. Also, at some point black female youths were added to the population. The original intent for the institution, as I understand it, was to provide these female youths a home, a school, and a religious center. I am not certain how the Black male and female youths were treated prior to the building of the institution near Baton Rouge—it’s possible they were kept in jail for a while or simply let go.

I believe that integration of the institutions occurred statewide sometime in the late nineteen sixty’s or early seventies, about the same time as enforced school integration. I believe
that the idea for and establishment of the Juvenile Reception Center occurred about the same time period. If that is the case, then the JRDC had existed for only a few years before I started working there. JRDC was not only responsible for testing and interviewing students. It also determined which institution each student would spend their incarcerated time allotment, which was not supposed to be determined by race at this point. As I close my eyes and think back to my beginning days, hoping that I remember correctly, I had no idea that so many complications existed—and it’s possible there are other complications about which I still do not know.

Since I started working at JRDC, and I assume for a few years prior to that, the racial makeup of the student population has had the potential of being the same at all institutions. But after taking all of that into consideration, feelings of jealousy, resentment, and unfairness regarding the budget, programs, and opportunities toward the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center remained. From the beginning it has had a privileged reputation, and no place in the state wide system is as deplored or disliked as much as by employees who work at its sister institution on the same campus, the Louisiana Training Institute-Baton Rouge. Such feelings existed at the other institutions throughout the state, but they don’t compare to the animosity that LTI-BR has directed at JRDC.

Segregated institutions
White males—later White females
much later Black males—much, much later Black females
Louisiana juvenile prisons

Integrated institutions
Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center

Implications of Constructed Labels

In this section I examine what various scholars have written about constructed labels and how they operate from a broad perspective. I later break this down by race, gender, class, and culture in order to view each more specifically and to consider how these categories relate to an
outlook of scarcity. While considering how various scholars view discrimination and differences within each of these categories—categories, I would like to point out, that are labels themselves—I also relate personal and professional experiences during my work in a juvenile prison with adolescents bearing the constructed label “juvenile delinquent.”

Constructed labels may have different implications depending on what is spoken or written and what is emphasized. Asher (2001) has the following to say about this subject:

Just as unconsciously as we use (or get used to) labels, we come to see these signifiers as ‘true’ in and of themselves. Labels get reified, become ways of knowing. They serve as identifiers that help us to know and situate ourselves in relation to others (and vice versa) in the larger social construct. Labels become boxes, representing categories and criteria that we can check off to define ourselves and others. (p. 76)

She additionally describes labels as being a convenience: they act as a framework that allows us to believe we understand those we consider different from us and to draw conclusions based on race, gender, class, culture, etc. According to Asher (2001), labels help us justify our assumptions about others.

Greene (2001) observes that labels are heartlessly and immorally manipulated, creating notions of ethnicity, diversity, and difference as problems. She points out that their construction carries “messages of power: they demean; they exclude; they create stereotypes” (p. xvi). She additionally stresses that this often occurs in schools and that, although labels do not always function as stigmas, they sometimes do and the result is a sense of rejection and recognizing difference, of feeling isolated.

For Apple (2004), the process of using labels in schools is viewed as language that sorts “abstract individuals into preordained social, economic, and educational slots” (p. 120). The process of labeling in this instance serves as a means of social control. When categories are used to classify students, he suggests that students are viewed as institutional abstractions instead of concrete persons. Apple further argues that these categories are social constructs which “imply
the notion of the power of one group to ‘impose’ these social constructions on others” (p. 126). For Apple (2004), the classification process is a moral and political act, and he implies that labels are more often applied to children from poor families and ethnic minorities than to children whose parents are both economically and politically advantaged.

Hudak and Kihn (2001) are in agreement about the negative effect of labels and argue that labels are not generally sought by individuals or groups, but rather that they are “affixed to us” (p. 2). Hudak and Kihn emphasize that a label is a product as well as a process, that it is historically in place, and that it is a blatantly used tool which seems to be everywhere. They explain that labels are capable of condemning people because of social prejudices and can act as a form of oppression: one effect of labeling is to isolate us from each other. These authors also point out that labels are “difficult to replace or remove” (p. 9). Even if a label is changed to a different word the stigma remains.

Viewed from an adolescent’s perspective, the construction of labels no doubt play a defining role—sometimes for the sake of a convenient way to perceive others, particularly for those doing the labeling. Broadly speaking, however, these constructed labels are probably viewed more frequently as negative, unsought, oppressive, and isolating. Labels are seldom self-assigned. Rather they are affixed by others and imply that those who affix them do so from a position of power. Labels are used in order to categorize and often serve as a basis for discrimination and social control, even though they are frequently disguised as beneficial for educational, moral, or social purposes. Labels are constructed by individuals about others whom they view as different, by institutions under the guise of helpfulness or clarification, and by specialized groups about those who they do not consider to be part of their group.
Labels always carry with them an implied sense of power. According to Muharrar (2002), “[l]abels were simple words, but they had a powerful impact” (p. 11). They narrow impressions and divide into categories. Kaufman (2001) points out that the power of labeling is so strong that labels often represent reality more than the individual bearing the affixed label. She believes that some labels, particularly those regarding race and gender, are applied more rigidly than others, and this rigidity depends on what those in power consider beneficial. On a similar note, in his discussion of differential treatment in schools, Morris (2005) argues that how students are perceived by educators is influenced simultaneously by their attitudes about race, class, and gender rather than each of these category separately. He argues that decisions are made and disciplinary program implementations put in place based on this intertwined perception.

I suggest labels are frequently constructed as a tool within the narrow-minded and controlling realm of scarcity, with its tightly maintained boundaries, categories, and limiting expectations. I believe this is particularly true when considering all constructed labels, particularly with respect to the categories as race, gender, class, and culture, a point which I discuss in depth in the following sections. Each of these categories has its own set of labels that act as much like controlling devices as someone being electronically monitored by the law, but they also often act like a boomerang, reflecting and deflecting off each other and sometimes becoming larger and more explosive because of this contact and connection.

Implications of constructed labels
reification, identifiers, categories, sorting boxes, criteria, convenience, framework rejection, isolation, social control, process

Difficult to replace/remove stigma remains
Race

Bederman (1995) emphasizes that historically the discourse of civilization has been linked to white supremacy and male dominance and has been used in order to legitimize various claims to power. She states the following in explanation of turn of the century thinking:

In the context of the late nineteenth century’s popularized Darwinism, civilization was seen as an explicitly racial concept. Civilization denoted a precise stage in human racial evolution—the one following the more primitive stages of ‘savagery’ and ‘barbarism.’ Human races were assumed to evolve from simple savagery, through violent barbarism, to advanced and valuable civilization (p. 25).

However, Bederman observes, it was only white races that “had, as yet evolved to the civilized stage” (p. 25).

Bartol and Bartol (2005) note that arrests for juvenile crimes indicates preferential treatment along racial lines. Based on a study in 2002, these authors point out that Black juveniles were proportionately overrepresented in arrests made related to violent crime. They also mention that racial profiling is reported as occurring much more frequently for Black individuals in comparison to Whites. They define racial profiling as “police-initiated action that relied on the race, ethnicity or national origin rather than the behavior of an individual or information that leads the police to a particular individual who has been identified as being, or having been, engaged in criminal activity” (p. 335).

On a different note, Fanon (1967) argues that race is both defining and confining, and that it is capable of keeping one from being anything else. He points out that race is used in descriptions, identifications, introductions, and angry accusations and he emphasizes that race sometimes causes fear and uneasiness within. Fanon (1967) stresses that as a Black man he is “overdetermined from without” (p. 116). He explains that the gaze of a white man brings a sudden realization of inferiority, and a sense of burden.
In terms of race being defining and confining, hooks (2004) writes that in the United States most Black males have been imprisoned in some way. Elaborating further she states:

[He] has been forced at some point in his life to hold back the self he wants to express, to repress and contain for fear of being attacked, slaughtered, destroyed. Black males often exist in a prison of the mind unable to find their way out…all males learn a role that restricts and confines. When race and class enter the picture…then black males endure the worst impositions of gendered masculine…identity. Seen as animals, brutes, natural born rapists, and murderers, black men have had no real dramatic say when it comes to the way they are represented…As a consequence they are victimized by stereotypes that were first articulated in the nineteenth century but hold sway over the minds and imaginations of citizens of this nation in the present day (p. xii).

For McCarthy and Crichlow (1993), issues related to “identity and representation directly raise questions about who has the power to define whom, and when, and how” (p. xvi). They emphasize that minorities frequently have no “control over the production of images about themselves in this society” (p. xvii). They argue that the racial identity is elusive and affects Blacks, Whites, as well as other ethnicities differently, resulting in instability. Pinar (1993) likewise discusses the complexity of race as a construct and asserts that it is dynamic, changing, and determined by political circumstances. He suggests that a central concept in understanding curriculum as racial text is identity: a construct that is gendered and racialized, and is conveyed through representation.

McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) discuss the existence of differential treatment of students in schools. They point out the vast discrepancy in differential placement of students in school programs based on race, in which both male and female minorities are more frequently assigned tracks considered to be low or non-academic than White students. Teachers give less encouragement and have lower expectations of academic performance for Black and Latino students; Black students are provided less access to instructional opportunities than their White counterparts; and Black, Latino, as well as Native American students are more likely to drop out of school than White students. These authors additionally suggest that the reason Black students
fail is that their identities are assaulted by the schools and that “their sense of self and agency” have been destabilized (p. xv).

Apple (2001) suggests that adolescents are seen as a problem, and that they are also seen in particular, differential ways. He explains:

While many white male middle class youth may be seen as ‘troubled’ or alienated, many black and Latino males are seen as violent and predatory and as apt to be criminals. At the same time, black and Latina young women are sexualized; their bodies are out of control and are, in essence, baby-producing machines (p. xi).

In relation to both identity and label formation, Apple (2001) emphasizes that racial stereotypes play a major role in both educational and social policies, and argues that this is reinforced by the bell curve.

It is evident that issues such as class, race, gender, and culture play an influential role in how teenagers are generally viewed, categorized, and labeled by individuals, institutions, and society. The differential considerations in place are glaringly apparent and tightly secured, helping to create strength in the hegemonic effect. Kailin (1999) observes that a large number of teachers are white and that they are teaching a rapidly approaching majority of students of color. She points out that issues of racism—hidden and unacknowledged—exist and often create tensions related to differential expectations and treatment of students.

Smith (2001) discusses the politics of identity formation, and points out problems related to the “formation of an African American male’s identity in special education” (p. 110). Such issues include passivity, apathy, low self-esteem and self-perception, and negative attitudes about oneself. Being labeled as a “special ed. student” also frequently promotes stereotypes created by teachers and other students. On a related note, Moule (2009) discusses bias and racism and points out that stereotypes as well as prejudices are at the root of biases, which are frequently
unconscious and often “lead to racism” (p. 321). She adds that these unconscious biases can affect assorted relationships in different types of school situations.

Race, gender, class, and culture are frequently intertwined in terms of how constructed labels and identities relate to different types of discrimination and differential treatment. As a single category, race is a rigidly-applied label for adolescents that can separate, limit, manage, monitor, and confine. This label is capable of functioning as a mechanism within the culture of scarcity: it assists and promotes a colonizing effect. Race is also the issue most directly related to historical colonization: perceptions of racial otherness are tied to the history of colonial relationships.

The majority of students I worked with at the juvenile prison were Black. Less than five percent of the students were White. Several years ago, when the total population was close to six hundred, the maximum number of White students was seldom more than twenty to twenty-five, and the number was often less. The student population was constantly changing because some of them would be sent home, to be replaced by others, yet the racial make-up generally remained the same. Many of these students had stopped attending school or had dropped out for various reasons prior to being sent to the prison. When they were found guilty of breaking the law and therefore sent to the juvenile prison, they were labeled juvenile delinquents, with all of that title’s lasting negative connotations. As I consider the many observations and arguments scholars have made about differential and discriminatory treatment of students based on race in school situations, I reflect on what I view as differential treatment of the “juvenile delinquent” students with whom I worked in the prison school. Although education programs were always in place, the materials at our disposal were out of date, we had limited supplies, and the classes we taught offered little variety. It seems as if the overriding attitude that those with decision making power
held was that the students (labeled “juvenile delinquents”) attending the prison school were not important enough to have access to state of the art materials, programming, and opportunities. Although students were required to attend school, there was little concern for what was taught, how it was taught, and whether or not it was useful. The label “juvenile delinquent” had been firmly affixed to these students who were predominantly Black, a situation which no doubt contributed to the differential and discriminatory viewpoint towards them.

Race
differential treatment, defining, confining
racial profiling/arrests, school treatment
identification, accusations

Racial identity
elusive, over-determined from without

Gender

Bederman (1995) argues that gender is historical and ideological, as well as continual and dynamic. She points out that gender “was an essential component of civilization” (p. 25). The greater the degree of sexual differentiation, Bederman asserts, the more easily a given civilization was identified as an advanced one: “Savage (that is, nonwhite) men and women were believed to be almost identical…gender differences …seemed to be blurred” (p. 25).

In order for women to be considered civilized according to the discourse of civilization, they had to be “womanly—delicate, spiritual, [and] dedicated to the home. And civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved—firm of character, self-controlled, protectors of women and children” (p. 25). White men were considered the epitome of all human existence, the perfect example of being civilized. This conception of civilization was the driving motivation in Hall’s concern about white male adolescents. He wanted those capable of accomplishing such a feat to be molded and manipulated for that ultimate outcome.
From a different standpoint, Giordano, Deines, and Cernkovich (2006) describe various reasons why females become involved in delinquent behavior, and why they are ultimately labeled “juvenile delinquents.” Some of reasons they give are sexual abuse by relatives, running away from home to avoid abuse, illegal survival activities such as prostitution, and the dominant influence of males. The reasons they give for delinquent behavior among males are poverty, attitude, associations, and weak links to conventional institutions. Giordano et al. (2006) point out that this does not mean that any particular reason is exclusive to either female or male; rather, any of them could apply to either gender. They also mention there could be other factors associated with delinquent behavior.

Arnett (2001) believes that gender socialization is differential and begins early in life. He points out that differential treatment is evident in dress, toys, and room decorations. He also mentions that children are encouraged to conform to gender roles assigned by parents, teachers, and peers. Those who deviate from these roles are often ridiculed and less popular. Arnett adds that the process of gender socialization appears to intensify during adolescence, with additional pressure to conform to prescribed gender-specific roles.

According to Heath and McLaughlin (1993), gender is central to self-image and strongly affects how young people begin to know and understand themselves: how they “become attached to certain behaviors, norms, and evaluative frames” (p. 25). They point out that, generally speaking, gender hierarchies exist in most domains of social behavior, making it apparent that cultural as well as class differences exist in dress, demeanor, interests, relationships, and behavior roles. Heimer and Kruttschnitt (2006) similarly suggest that gender plays a major role in shaping human behavior. They argue that gender affects all areas of life, including crime as well as victimization. They point out that females are much more likely than
males to be victims in intimate relationships. On a similar note, McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) assert that gender and racial issues complicate many school situations. They point out that although black female students perform better academically than black male students, they do not receive equal recognition, academically or socially, when compared to their white female and male counterparts.

Looking at her situation in terms of gender issues and specific labels, McDonald (2001) shares her complex, personal reaction to the label “lesbian,” and explains that her initial “discovery of the label had a negative connotation,” primarily because of its relative invisibility when she was growing up (p. 163). She states that as a lesbian, there is sometimes fear and risk in using the label because of the possible reactions of others. Taubman (2001) similarly emphasizes that heterosexuality is naturalized in schools, while homosexuality is stigmatized and denaturalized. He points out that because of this, students who are gay or lesbian face the harsh reality of inequities. He also emphasizes that the “organization of sexual identities in schools” impoverishes lives and oppresses those not identified as heterosexual (p. 194).

Gender frequently gets tangled up with race, class, and culture in terms of the prospect of discrimination that goes along with constructed labels. Gender, as a single category, also carries certain rigidly placed labels for adolescents, particularly for those carrying the additional label of juvenile delinquent. These labels carry the power to isolate, monitor, discriminate, and justify differential treatment. The gender category fits comfortably into the impoverished view of confinement and limitation embedded in cultures of scarcity: this view leaves little space for mobility, change, or positive consideration.

Gender differentiation was evident in my experience while working at the juvenile prison. While male students were continuously present and were the initial reason for the
institution’s foundation, populations of female students came and went based on the ebb and flow of the political tide. When females were present, their total number in the student population was always much smaller than the total number of males. The maximum number of females at the institution was never more than 175 and was often less than that. If having females at juvenile prison was deemed necessary or important, then an institution for females was put in place; if delinquency among females was not deemed important, the corresponding institution was closed. Whenever they were considered important enough to be there, females were required to wear the same clothing as male students: the same boxer shorts, jeans, t-shirts, and tennis shoes. The education programs provided for females were basically the same as those provided for male students, with little concern for the programs’ value or interest in them among the female students. During the thirty-three years I worked at the juvenile prison, an institution for females was opened and later closed four different times. Females were considered so unimportant that the need and justification for their provision could either be created or erased, depending on the political climate at the time.

Gender
begins early, socialization, process
central to self-image
shapes human behavior

Gender differentiation
rigidly placed labels, influential power

Class

Bederman (1995) observes that discourses of civilization obscure the importance of class by emphasizing the biological effects of race and gender. She points out that class issues are implicit in ideas related to civilization. The most privileged classes are associated with the highest degree of civilization, in contrast to the lower ranking masses. Bederman also mentions that, in terms of civilization, the middle-classes depict their personal preferences and ways of
doing things as biologically determined—they possess traits that are racially superior due to evolution.

According to Bartol and Bartol (2005), poverty is strongly connected to persistent as well as violent crime, and is a good predictor for both female and male adolescent violence. They add that this connection is true for both victims and offenders: when living in dire economic conditions, young people “are more likely to be victims as well as offenders” (p. 53). At the same time, however, Bartol and Bartol point out that the actual relationship that exists between violence and poverty is complex and not wholly understood. Not only do inequities in resources accompany poverty, but also discrimination and unsafe living conditions. Young people living in poverty often attend inadequate schools and frequently drop out of school. They are more likely to carry weapons and witness violent events. Living in poverty also influences interactions between parents who aggressively seek to control their children, sometimes this approach requires less time and energy. These authors are careful to point out that “the strong correlation between low socioeconomic class and delinquency does not mean that poverty causes or inevitably leads to serious delinquency” (p. 54). They mention that the majority of people living in poverty are law-abiding citizens, and that many individuals with a high economic status are involved in serious delinquency and crime. They also emphasize that law enforcement practices target children from low socioeconomic classes more than they do middle and upper classes: the former are more frequently taken into police custody as well as referred to juvenile courts.

For Heimer and Kruttschnitt (2006), social class, in addition to race, class, and ethnicity, contributes to shaping individual perceptions and experiences in day to day situations. On a similar note, Currie (2004) points out that differential treatment and expectations are frequently
based on class: students who come from questionable or deteriorated neighborhoods are targeted by teachers and principals as trouble-makers more frequently than students who come from middle class neighborhoods. These students from lower class backgrounds are viewed as potential problems and are constantly under the watchful gaze of those with authority. A label gets attached to them before teachers and principals ever meet them.

Although often linked to race and gender, class as a single category is also a socially-constructed label in its own right that can be damaging and limiting, particularly when it is affixed to adolescents. Social class has been frequently associated with delinquency: simply living in a certain neighborhood can brand a teenager as suspicious and a probable troublemaker. Constructed labels depicting class are generally meant to be derogatory. They can cause isolation, confinement, and inhibition. And these labels reduce or eliminate any possibility for flexibility, mobility, and change. Within the realm of scarcity, class labels compartmentalize and inhibit perceived ways of being.

According to Joseph, (2000), minority youth are overrepresented in juvenile prisons. She discusses the relationship that has been constructed between minorities, their social class, and delinquent behavior in the following way.

Minority youths are often from neighborhoods plagued with poverty, high unemployment and underemployment, family dysfunction, low education, and crime. The minority youth is, therefore, marginalized, and such marginalization engenders delinquent acts. These delinquent acts create and reinforce stereotypes of the marginalized minority youth as highly ‘delinquent.’ Consequently, some people believe that minority youths commit a greater number and more serious delinquent acts than white youths, thus, their overrepresentation in the juvenile system. (p. 230)

In my experience, the vast majority of students I worked with who had been labeled “juvenile delinquents” came from low income and single parent homes. Many lived in extended family situations with grandparents, a grandmother, an aunt, or other relative because the parents were financially unable to take care of them. Most relied on food stamps and other social
programs in order to survive. Some students were incarcerated for crimes related to their poverty: they had stolen something, for instance, so they could sell it for money they would then use to buy food and other necessities; or they sold drugs because they were helping a parent pay bills. Many times parents and other family relatives were also incarcerated. Several students went without visits from family members on monthly visitation days simply because their relatives did not own a car or could not afford transportation. However, a few students appeared to be content in prison because they knew what to expect on a daily basis. They had three meals a day plus snacks, a bed to sleep in each night, a place to take a shower, clean clothes to wear, television to watch, and either air conditioning or heat depending on the weather—none of which they were always assured of having at home.

Class poverty, discrimination, unsafe living conditions inadequate schools, high drop-out rate, crime parental control often aggressive

Class shapes perceptions, experiences, differential treatment, expectations

Culture

According to Bartol and Bartol (2005), culture is viewed from a perspective as broad as a country or as small as a group of people. They explain that within each culture a psychosocial context exists that encourages the development and expansion of certain behaviors. They point out that in the United States people of specific groups sometimes believe certain dominant values are not consistent with the beliefs and values held by their own group.

Stating clearly their combined view of culture, McCarthy, Crichlow, Dimitriadis, & Dolby (2005) critically state that culture is “still commonly treated in education as a preexistent, unchanging deposit, consisting of a rigidly bounded set of elite or folkloric knowledges, values,
experiences, and linguistic practices specific to particular groups” (p. xix). Believing that such an attitude regarding culture is inadequate, these authors emphasize the following:

We conceptualize culture as a set of dynamic, productive, and generative material and immaterial practices in the regulation of social conduct and social behavior that emphasize personal self-management (i.e. the modification of habits, tastes, style, and physical appearance) and the expanded role of civil society in the state and vice versa in the rule of populations—‘rule at a distance’ (p. xix).

Along similar lines, Asher (2001) states that labeling is a way of achieving a certain sense of order, and explains that “it allows us to create common parameters in order to make recognizable what is around us and find shared bases for our judgments” (p. 75). Adding that labels are pervasive, Asher discusses the negativity of the constructed label “model minority” assigned to Asian American students. She argues that this construct is hegemonic and “succeeds in co-opting those thus labeled” (p. 76). According to Asher (2001), the model minority label affects the development of these students’ identities.

On a different note, Lew (2006) argues that there are differences in the achievement and success of Asian American students. She emphasizes that not all students are positive representatives of the model minority stereotype of high achievers with successful upward mobility. Lew (2006) points out that there are some Asian American students who are school drop-outs, and who possess minimum goals and aspirations. She also mentions that the socioeconomic level of families play a major role in achievement rates.

Dillon (2001) emphasizes that labels are sometimes used to control or marginalize those who are powerless. He discusses the needs of immigrants along with the difficulties associated with learning the English language, and points out the displacement of power and the contradictions of labels imposed upon him in his experiences with English as a second language (ESL) programs. He explains that while ESL students have access to specialized teaching which
is designed to meet their needs, they do not have access to knowledge in other contexts. Their opportunities are limited because they carry the ESL label.

While working in the juvenile prison system, I soon discovered that prison is capable of maintaining a culture of its own—an institutionalized prison culture. Its strong effect can be pervasive and rather overwhelming at times. The labels that accompany being incarcerated in this particular culture can influence thoughts, behavior, self-perception, and attitudes. The effect of this culture and the labels associated with it can control and manipulate without the people who comprise the culture being aware of it; and it can promote a restrictive outlook. In order to survive, incarcerated individuals need to be able to acclimate themselves to prison culture: existence can be difficult without previously formed or new friendships. Becoming strong and self-assured about defending one’s personal property is often a necessity. The effect of a prison culture can be pervasive for those who are employed there as well as for those who are incarcerated.

Although sometimes linked with race, gender, and class, culture by itself is a very broad category carrying varied labels. The labels associated with culture are often limiting and detrimental, particularly for adolescents. Labels related to culture carry specific expectations that are unrealistic, problematic, and often make life difficult for many. The narrow outlook often attributed to those who are assigned specific labels as representative of their culture confirms that this category fits unquestionably within the realm of scarcity with its emphasis on manipulation, precise expectations, and control.

The broad overview of constructed labels defines and explains their function and operation as they are affixed to adolescents. The more detailed discussions of specific categories of race, gender, class, and culture, which are constructed labels themselves, present information
about how each affects adolescents in a troublesome and often confining manner. I have related each of these categories in terms of their constructed labels to the concept of scarcity as it plays its role within the larger framework of colonial discourse. In the next section I look at adolescent identity formation and consider its relationship with constructed labels in terms of whether or not identity can be developed or changed in a culture of scarcity.

Culture
broad to small perspective
psychosocial, hegemonic
immigrants, stereotypes, difficulties

Cultural expectations
varied labels, limiting, inhibiting

Identity Formation

Identities play a critical role in our lives—they represent who we think we are as well as who others think we are. We may even have identities attached to us that we are unaware of. Most of these identities are related in some way to the constructed labels of race, class, gender, and culture. According to Yon (2000), some people believe that these identities are fixed, and that they come from within. Yon, however, believes otherwise. He argues that identities come about through an emergent process, that they are situational and shifting, and that they fluctuate and change to meet the needs and desires of those involved in their formation.

I see identity formation as a mechanism that individuals use in order to survive within the confining parameters of the constructed labels affixed to them. I agree with Yon (2000) that identities emerge, shift, and change based on situations and expectations. Identity formation appears to be an avenue that individuals can use to make them feel they can choose who and what they are and how they behave as they maneuver through an existence governed by a confining attitude of scarcity.
Yon (2000) conducts an ethnographic study that concerns how high school students in an inner-city school located in Toronto negotiate both the construction of racial labels and identity. Based on his findings, Yon suggests that experimentation and imagination are both involved in identity formation. He believes that experimentation and imagination are “free floating and a matter of choice for some, but they [are] also the results of encounters with boundaries of exclusion for others” (p. 2). He explains that “meaning is essential to this whole process of identity-production, but [it] is always an open weave to be reinflected and reappropriated” (p. xi). Yon (2000) goes on to state that identities and border crossings are fluid and changeable, and he suggests that the ongoing process of “making identifications [is] continuous and incomplete…structured and open-ended” (p. 13).

In my work with students at the juvenile prison who carried the label “juvenile delinquents,” I often wondered who they really were, how they felt about themselves, and what their interests included. There were, of course, no clearly defined answers that fit them all. However, I believe each individual was influenced and controlled by his or her personal identity. The factors involved in this process of claiming an identity are varied and complicated but are probably not too dissimilar to the ongoing process of “making identifications” that Yon (2000) describes (p. 13). I am convinced the fluctuating identities of these students were often a matter of survival for many of them as they maneuvered through each day’s experiences at home as well as in the juvenile prison.

Narayan (1993) suggests that identity is influenced by the interplay of such factors as religion, class, history, culture, and power. Emphasizing that identities are constantly undergoing some type of transformation, she also argues that our identities are determined by our subjectivities and which “facet of our subjectivity we choose or are forced to accept as a defining
identity can change, depending on the context and the prevailing vectors of power” (p. 676). In terms of the effect it has had on the construction of her personal identity, Pratt (1984) describes the almost daily soul searching and uneasiness she experiences because of her personal need to speak out about racial, gender, religious as well as other issues she feels strongly about but realizes may be unpopular or unaccepted by friends and family. Experiencing vulnerability as she walks down the street of a neighborhood near where she lives, Pratt (1984) states that she feels conscious of her difference and uncertain of who to speak to and how to speak to them. She also wonders why some people choose to speak while others do not. She states that “speaking to another person has become fraught…with the history of race and sex and class” (p. 12). On a different note, Anzaldua (1987) emphasizes the importance of being alert to the undesirable but “entrenched habits and patterns…within” that sometimes influence us to react rather than act (p. 79).

The transformation of one’s identity is an ongoing emerging process that involves crossing various borders that are divergent, overlapping, fluid, and changeable. Negotiating these borders involves reworking meanings, images, and understandings. For Lugo (2005), understanding the political and practical importance of border theory must be considered within the concept of power. In connection to this concept of power, Lugo mentions the issue of gender oppression as it relates to “family, community, culture, religion, race, and nation” (p. 44).

In linking this discussion of identity formation to the students with whom I worked, I feel certain that each of their identities went through a transformation process when they first entered the juvenile prison and were firmly locked inside the razor-wire-topped fences. After crossing the border that separated them from the outside world, they no longer saw themselves as individuals who were free to come and go at will. They had become prisoners who were told
what to do and how it was to be done on a daily basis. As individuals who had been labeled “juvenile delinquents,” within the confines of the prison, their divergent and changeable identities could be influenced by various factors such as how they were treated by staff members, rules and regulations, and the attitudes of their peers. Keeping in mind that each was an individual with different ways of viewing their own identity, they possibly went from thinking of themselves as a leader who was tough and strong to someone who felt vulnerable, weak, timid, and dependent.

For Yon (2000), context and history are the basis for shaping identities. He points out that talk and practices regarding identity become merged. He states that “identities cannot be separated from the knowledge and representations which they express and repress…[p]eople act upon knowledge, even as it acts upon them” (pp. 2-3). Yon (2000) also discusses the influential role that discourse plays in identity formation and states that it shapes one’s thinking, produces new knowledge, and can facilitate shared understandings. Yon (2000) emphasizes that discourse can also be constraining, “as it sets up the parameters, limits, and blind spots of thinking and acting” (p. 3). In short, discourse has the capacity both to enable and also to confine.

Considering identity formation as something that functions in a colonizing discourse where labels are constructed within a culture of scarcity, I see some small space for freedom and flexibility where identities emerge and change. A sense of fluidity and mobility that provides a feeling of freedom appears to exist; however, this freedom is monitored, controlled, and restrained by the parameters that have been set firmly in place. These parameters are determined by constructed labels that, in addition to locking us firmly in place with assorted limitations and management, can create feelings of vulnerability that limit us as well.
Behar (1996) discusses what vulnerability means to her when she describes how she felt when, as a child, her cast was removed from her leg and she was expected to learn to walk again. The fears and sense of inability that she felt at that time, and then later as a grown woman the realization that “the girl in the cast grows up to be a woman in a cast” is difficult to comprehend and accept (p. 130). Behar is still trapped, she argues by her fears and thoughts, and realizing this tells her that vulnerability can be long lasting or even permanent. Such feelings can be maintained, controlled, and sustained within the narrow parameters of a culture of scarcity, whether the need to control comes from the self or from an outside source.

Identities
related to constructed labels
emerge, shift, change, cross borders
exclusion, reinfection, reappropriation

Identities – ongoing process
continuous, incomplete

**Constructed Labels and Identity Formations:**
*Influential Factors on the Discourse of Adolescence*

As I discussed in my exploration of the large portrait in the art gallery, G. Stanley Hall, more than anyone else, has influenced how adolescence is conceptualized. Viewing Hall’s understanding of adolescence as problematic, Lesko (2001) argues “that a dominant set of assumptions and ideas…affects and influences all adolescents’ lives. All youths become adolescents and are subject to its ideas and expectations” (pp. 11-12, original emphasis). Everyone is subject to the expectations and predictions simply by being adolescents. I suggest that this discourse of adolescence falls within the narrowly defined parameters of a culture of scarcity and that the discourse is held in place by constructed labels.

According to Savage (2007), youth have been charged for quite some time with being the representatives of the future. He explains that “mass-media typecasting of the adolescent as a
genius or a monster continues to encode adult hopes and fears about what will happen” (p. xx). In this way, typecasting feeds the already existing near-hysterical outlook of adults concerning adolescence. On a different note, Hersch (1998) asserts that the discourse concerning adolescents has developed into a shrill and frightened outlook, such that adolescents are labeled and classified merely according to their looks and behavior. She also emphasizes that many theories have been put forward as to how teenagers should be managed, fixed, and improved. According to this generalized outlook, adolescents are a problem and need guidance and direction, and this attention is not directed toward the individual adolescent, but rather at the aggregate.

Lesko (2001) interrogates and critiques dominant interpretations of adolescence, and rather than view them from the typically accepted perspective that suggests they are irrational, uncontrollable, or delinquent, she tries to unravel how these commonly accepted perceptions of adolescents are connected to power relations. Lesko explains that teenagers are commonly viewed as belonging to specific groups: “sporting hair, clothes, piercings, and attitudes…mark them as belonging to ‘another tribe’” (p. 1). Teenagers are all viewed the same way simply because they are adolescents.

Hersch (1998) likewise argues that adolescents are grouped under the broad category of the tribe, saying that adults and children alike view adolescents as strangers. She writes:

They are a tribe apart, remote, mysterious, vaguely threatening. The tribal notion is so commonplace that it is hard to know whether it derives from the kids or from adults, but the result is that somewhere in the transition from twelve to thirteen, our nation’s children slip into a netherworld of adolescence that too often becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy of estrangement. The individual child feels lost to a world of teens, viewed mostly in the aggregate, notorious for what they do wrong, judged for their inadequacies, known by labels and statistics that frighten and put off adults. (p. 14)
Many adults see adolescence as something necessary to tolerate for a certain period of time. They view it as being like a large, complicated obstacle course they are required to struggle through and somehow survive its complications.

On a similar note, hooks (2004) points out that the most unloved group in the United States is teenagers. She asserts that teenagers “are often feared precisely because they are often exposing the hypocrisy of parents and of the world around them. And no group of teenagers is more feared than a pack of teenage boys” (p. 50). Going into more detail, hooks states the following:

Emotionally abandoned by parents and by society as a whole, many boys are angry, but no one really cares about this anger unless it leads to violent behavior. If boys take their rage and sit in front of a computer all day, never speaking, never relating, no one cares. If boys take their rage to the mall, no one cares, as long as it is contained…Eruptions of rage in boys are most often deemed normal, explained by the age-old justification for adolescent patriarchal misbehavior, ‘Boys will be boys.’ (pp. 50-51)

Lesko (2001) likewise scrutinizes commonly accepted views and assumptions about teenagers, which she states can be found in both scholarly and popular talk. Referring to these views and assumptions as the “‘confident characterizations’ of adolescents” (p. 2), Lesko identifies four dominant characterizations, emphasizing that these categories are not exhaustive. The first suggests that teenagers are in a transition period, emerging as if from an evolutionary process and outside societal influences. Although this characterization assumes that adolescence has some importance, it also positions scientists and educators as superior to their charges. The second dominant category that Lesko discusses paints adolescents as grounded in biology, making adolescence beyond social intervention. The third promotes the idea that teenagers are strongly affected by the ideas and influences of peers. Teenagers are positioned as immature and inferior in comparison to adults. The fourth and last characterization fixes adolescence within a certain period of time. The term age becomes code for evoking significant meanings. Lesko
(2001) concludes her interrogation of these descriptions of teenagers by explaining that they function in many professional fields such as “education, law, medicine, psychology, and social work, as well as in popular culture, such as movies, television, and literature” (p. 4).

In terms of the discourse of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, a culture of scarcity subtly emphasizes the value and necessity of confining individual adolescents to membership in a categorized group or tribe, an aggregate of individuals with similar ways of looking, thinking, and acting. And although they can experience a small sense of freedom and flexibility in shifting and changing their identities, adolescents are closely monitored and contained by constructed labels. In this sense the culture of scarcity seems to fit snuggly and supportively within a colonial discourse that is judgmental, controlling, manipulative, and restrictive.

Adolescence—a tribe
problematic, remote, mysterious
something to tolerate
unloved, misunderstood

Confident characterization
Teenagers positioned by adults

Implications

As I reflect on the textured outlook concerning constructed labels, identity formations, and their relationship to the narrative on adolescence/juvenile delinquency from a social-psychological stance, I am convinced by the many additions, highlights, and explanatory touches to the portraits in the art gallery that the narrative is enmeshed in an oppressive colonial discourse—one in which a culture of scarcity plays a major role via dominant attitudes of control and manipulation. I am more and more convinced that rethinking the discourse of adolescence and constructed labels that contribute to the existing narrative on adolescence/juvenile delinquency is needed. I see evidence for this in the various facts and opinions related to social-psychological issues that I have discussed throughout this endeavor.
Having considered the viewpoints of several scholars as they mesh with my own professional experiences while working with students bearing the constructed label “juvenile delinquent,” I can more clearly interrogate constructed labels in terms of who gets labeled and how labels operate; I can more easily see the ongoing process of adolescent identity formation, and I can examine the culture of adolescence and the existing discourse of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. I can also comprehend race, gender, class and culture more fully in terms of the extensive role that each alone or in different combinations has played in the construction of labels. As I carefully reexamine the different portraits, I am convinced that everything related to these concerns is a complex, convoluted process of colonization, an intricate web woven from convincingly authoritative knowledge that permits a limited and controlled amount of individual choice. I am quite convinced that a culture of scarcity underlies this process. With this realization I suggest that such a construction of reality is both tragic and difficult to ignore.

Culture of scarcity
oppressive colonial discourse
control, selfishness, manipulation
narrow, confining outlook

Culture of abundance
openmindedness, generosity, cooperation, dignity

Exhibit X

The speed at which things can change in the political system is amazing, particularly with respect to the state agency that controls the juvenile prison system. Just when everything appears to be well organized and running smoothly, something occurs to upset the apple cart, something that disturbs the people, places, or things, and sometimes all three. When I think back to the period of time when the politicians were secretly making plans to close the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center, I remember that none of us who worked there had the slightest clue that something as drastic as closure was a remote possibility. The education program at the
diagnostic center was successfully in place and everything had been going well for close to a year. Although the superintendent had seemed rather moody for several weeks and had been conspicuously enforcing previously ignored petty rules (like no more pot luck lunches), he let the education staff know how pleased he was with everything related to the school and how it was functioning. He was frequently absent from the diagnostic center because of the many meetings he had to attend, but that was not really unusual.

The entire staff at the diagnostic center was informed by a hand-written note that had been left next to the sign-in book that a meeting would be held in the school library. The spot was a good place to gather because of the pleasant atmosphere and also because there were enough tables and chairs for everyone to sit down. Some of the staff even speculated that refreshments might be served. The note clearly stated that attendance was mandatory and that everyone should be in place by ten o’clock that morning. This was on a typically hot Monday early in August. Everybody who had walked down the sidewalk in the hot sun to get to the school library from the other buildings was complaining about the heat, and everyone was relieved that the air conditioning was working. Not knowing what the meeting was about, most people arrived early and selected a chair to occupy. None of us knew what we were about to hear, but we all felt certain that, whatever it was, some type of change was inevitable, particularly since attendance was mandatory.

The assistant superintendent walked through the door to the library at exactly five minutes after ten and everything became so quiet you could have heard a pin drop. He was frowning and had a serious look on his face, which was a little shocking since he normally has a nice smile and something pleasant to say. This made all of us feel a little uneasy. He quickly got
our attention when he said that he had an announcement to make that he wanted everyone to hear at the same time. He then proceeded to say that it had been decided that the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center would be officially closing on September 1st. He went on to say that the superintendent’s position had already been terminated and all personal possessions of the superintendent had been removed over the weekend. He would not be returning to the campus.

The assistant superintendent went on to explain that he would be in charge of all supervision from the present until that point, which was about a month away. At that time, all Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic staff members would become part of Louisiana Training Institute’s staff, and most of us would be moved to that part of the campus, referred to as Area I, and absorbed as part of their staff in some way.

Everyone was in shock: there were gasps, exclamations—even a few cuss words escaped peoples’ mouths—then there was absolute silence as realization hit home. Questions started coming from all parts of the library. The assistant superintendent held up his hands in an attempt to quiet everyone so he could be heard again. He said he had a few more details to discuss that he felt everyone should hear. When everyone became quiet enough for him to continue, he explained that initially all students would continue to live in the same dorms, new students would still be housed in these dorms, and officers who were currently assigned to those dorms would remain. He added that all students would be attending the same school. He also mentioned that he would need to talk to certain individual staff members who were in positions that required special arrangements. He assured everybody that no one would be terminated unless they made that choice themselves. He said he was as shocked when he was informed of all of these decisions as we probably felt at this moment and that he still did not know exactly what his future position at work would be—he just hoped he had a job. We were all concerned about the
superintendent, how he was doing and what exactly had happened to him, but when we tried to ask questions about the superintendent, the assistant superintendent simply said he did not know. He simply shrugged his shoulders and told us that he had not been given any information other than that he had been removed from his position.

We all walked around in a daze for a while trying to comprehend exactly what all this actually meant. We had become comfortable in our setting and with our own small school program. Everything was going to change, including our location on the campus. I was also selfishly concerned about my remaining furniture: I wondered whether or not I could take it with me. However, I wasn’t fearful of being part of the changed, larger staff. I felt that I had known a few of the teachers and teacher-aides through the many experiences I shared with them while working at the headquarters office. We had traveled together, had attended meetings several times each year, had shared ideas and informal discussions at meetings, and had even enjoyed several “happy hours” together. I liked them and thought that most of them liked me. I also knew the principal and assistant principal and thought we could work easily with each other. I wasn’t certain yet what exactly I would be doing, but I hoped that everything would work out satisfactorily.

Many others did not feel the same way. They were distraught at the news and vowed they were not moving to Area I. They said they would quit before they would move to that part of the campus. Since I had only been back to JRDC for about a year, I thought maybe they knew something that I didn’t, but I decided that I would just wait and see. The move was still a month away and a lot could happen before then.

Although I was shocked at this sudden news, I was not alarmed. However, my reaction to the larger picture was much more horrific. Once again the political hegemonic force had
come into play: decisions had been made based on selfish and political reasoning. Just as the institution for females was closed because of selfish thinking and personal vendettas, I was convinced that the same type of calculated planning and manipulation had occurred in this situation even though I did not know exactly what was involved. Another institution was closed and more people were displaced—some permanently, others temporarily. Students were treated like they were meaningless objects rather than human beings, and employees were treated with the same carelessness or possibly even worse. Even though no one was supposed to immediately lose their job, the situation was drastically changing and ultimately some would choose to go elsewhere for employment.

Change
juvenile prisons
politically contrived
secretly handled

Closure
shock, amazement, emotional feelings
CHAPTER 5
POETIC NARRATIVES OF LIFE EXPERIENCE STORIES: AN ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF REALITY

[Poetic representation reveals the process of self-construction, the reflexive basis of self-knowledge, the inconsistencies and contradictions of a life spoken of as a meaningful whole for two reasons. First, a poem is a whole that makes sense of its arts; and a poem is parts that anticipate, shadow, undergird the whole. That is, poems can themselves be experienced as simultaneously whole and partial, text and sub-text, the ‘tail’ can be the dog. Second, an experiencing person is a person in a body. Poetry can re-create embodied speech in a way that standard…prose does not because poetry consciously employs such devices as line length, meter, cadence, speed, alliteration, assonance, connotation, rhyme and off-rhyme, variation, and repetition to elicit bodily response in readers/listeners…Thus, poetry built as it is on speech as an embodied activity, touches both the cognitive and the sensory in the speaker and the listener. [P]oetry gives us a greater chance of vicariously experiencing the self-reflexive and transformational process of self-creation than do standard transcriptions. (Richardson, 1997, p. 143)

Crystallization provides a framework in which to balance claims of truth with recognition of the intersubjective nature of all knowledge claims. At the same time, surrendering objectivity does not mean that we cannot make claims to know, recommendations for action, pragmatic suggestions for improving the world, and theoretical insights…While acknowledging that there is always more to know about our topics, we nonetheless produce extremely rich, evocative, useful accounts through crystallization. (Ellingson, 2008, p. 14)

Exhibit XI

Thinking back to that disturbing August Monday morning and remembering how, after the initial shock of finding out about the closure of the Juvenile Reception and Diagnostic Center and the firing of the superintendent, I recall that we all felt at a loss as to what to do next. But we did not have long to wait before we were informed what we would be doing. The very next day the superintendent of LTI paid us a visit. She was a nice, pleasant person as far as I knew—mainly from occasional encounters at the headquarters office whenever she happened to be there for a meeting. She had already walked all around Area III. Her last stop was the education building. When she walked inside, she was smiling and greeted each of us in a friendly way. She quickly singled me out and told me she wanted me to be the guidance counselor in the school at LTI, called Scenic High. She then went up to a few others and told them what they
would be doing. I learned while I worked at the headquarters office that she was the first female superintendent in the history of the juvenile prison schools.

The next day both the principal and assistant principal of Scenic High also paid us a visit. They came straight to the education building to meet all of the education staff and to have a brief meeting. They told us that the school would be closed until after Labor Day and that until then the teachers would all be taking their vacation time. They explained how the school calendar operated and that the day after Labor Day would be the first day of the upcoming school year. They also talked about the subjects that would be offered and the teachers who taught them, the scheduling process, and other things of interest. They knew I was going to be the guidance counselor and seemed fine with that. They even asked if I needed help with making the new schedules. Since the previous guidance counselor had retired, they had been using a teacher aide who had worked with the guidance counselor and who knew how to do everything. I thanked them for offering but told them I wanted to do it by myself. I felt like I needed to learn the process.

That is how I spent my last month at JRDC that summer of 1992: making hand-written schedules for approximately 600 students and making certain that the number of students each teacher was assigned did not go over the limit. These tasks took every single minute of every single day, and sometimes I had to make changes in order to synchronize everything. Three separate copies also had to be made of each student’s schedule, but at least they could be made on the copy machine. Everyone else involved with the education program at JRDC was busy moving furniture and file cabinets over to the Scenic High school building in Area I—we had finally been told where we were going to be physically located. I was pleased with how that particular part had turned out. All of my furniture and other belongings were coming with me. It
turned out that I continue to sharing an office with the assistant principal, an arrangement that began at JRDC the previous year. He was going to be an additional assistant principal at Scenic High. Our office was going to be in one of the original buildings on campus, so it was fairly old. I believe there were three buildings built originally: two dormitories and the building in which my office would be located. The architecture in each of these buildings had lots of character, with its attractive woodwork and other interesting amenities. The buildings were large, with red brick exteriors. Our building had majestic double doors at the front, side, and back entrances. The interior had high ceilings, hardwood floors, and a beautiful light fixture in the foyer just inside the front entrance. At some point I learned that our building, which they called the elementary building, originally housed everything: all administrative offices as well as classrooms.

The day after Labor Day arrived and it was time for school to start. We had all parked our cars close to the school in Area I. I felt strange to not continue to the back where I had become used to parking during the past year. The day was typically sunny, hot, and humid, with no refreshing breeze. I remember feeling excited but also a little nervous that something could go awry. I wondered what to expect from students, teachers, and staff: what they were going to think; how they were going to act. All of the schedules were ready so I felt prepared, but at the same time a little apprehensive. The small group of us who had been moved to LTI walked over to the gym where the beginning of the new school year was to take place. We had no idea how we would be received by the Area I faculty, staff, and students. I had all the schedules neatly organized in a box, with separate sheets of paper listing each teacher with his or her assigned subject and the first period students who were also their homeroom students.
The gym was a huge building about one hundred and fifty yards from the school buildings. There were two doors at the entrance that led to a full length basketball court, with an additional raised stage at one end. The ceiling to the gym was quite high, and the light emanating from the gym’s many windows gave the place a cheerful and attractive atmosphere. The principals and teachers arrived first that morning; followed by the students, who were brought in dorm by dorm. They were a little noisy when they first entered the gym, but the security guards quickly maintained order without any problems. The principal spoke for a short while and then introduced those of us who were new. He then asked me to call out each teachers name so students assigned to their first period class could be called one by one to receive a schedule, line up behind the designated teacher, who they then followed to a class room. All of this took a long time and there were a few complications, but nothing major happened that I knew of at that moment.

Louisiana Training Institute (LTI)—Area I—Scenic High superintendent—asked me to be guidance counselor principal and assistant principal visited school closed until day after Labor Day

Schedules, schedules—move to Area I
first day of school—meeting in gym—Scenic High

**Sharing the Research Experience**

Using interviews as my method for gathering information, I hold four different interviews with Michael at periodic intervals throughout the study. The process is challenging but rewarding: it stirs up my thoughts, memories, emotions, and outlook on life just as much as the process of writing the autoethnographic segments in each chapter of this study has. Knowing the young man who participates in the interviews is helpful. We feel comfortable working together during the recording sessions: we openly laugh and cry together at certain points about something he says.
The only time I have felt trepidation throughout the entire research process involved the interviews. This occurred when I was unable to make any contact with Michael. I did not have a phone number where I could reach him, so I depended completely on emails. Sometimes I would email him several times without hearing back from him. This sometimes went on for months, and I felt like I was on needles and pins the entire time. This lapse occurred sometime prior to the second interview. I had almost reached the point of deciding on an alternative plan for the interview portion of my research, although I had no idea exactly what that would be, when suddenly I received an email from him. I was so relieved, so excited: it’s really difficult to explain the feeling. I felt like some long lost friend with the missing clue to a mystery had unexpectedly appeared and made solving the mystery possible. When we finally had a chance to talk about everything, and I had an opportunity to express my concerns and fears regarding all of this, he said he was truly sorry and explained that he had not responded to my emails because he was ashamed that he was not enrolled in school at that time. During this time he had been working full time as a manager at the sushi restaurant that he mentions in the second interview. Once we were comfortably back on track, having made sure that he knew I was not judgmental about anything concerning him, his decisions, his life, his family, or anything related to any of that—we were able to move forward and make progress.

Each of our recorded interviews took at least one hour and possibly longer. We met in different places each time, and I believe all of the interviews were relaxed and enjoyable for both of us. I think he appreciated the fact that I was interested in what he had to say and that he had the opportunity to talk about himself; his memories, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. He seemed honest and straightforward about all that he said, and he also seemed concerned about answering each question completely and in depth. The only exception to this pattern is the fourth and final
interview that we, out of necessity, conducted by email because he had moved to the Washington D.C. area to pursue his passionate interest in boxing about a month after he graduated from Louisiana State University in December, 2012. Although we had emailed back and forth and had talked on the phone prior to his writing his response to the questions I sent him, the outcome was not the same. In my view, his written responses appear to be a little too pre-meditated and edited when compared to our face to face encounters, as the latter provided him with facial and verbal feedback and allowed him to give more straight-forward answers. Be that as it may, I believe the fourth interview is valuable and should be included in this study because it offers significant insight into his current thoughts and beliefs, how he perceives his overall college experience, and his future expectations for his life.

**Promoting a Sense of Rhythm, Understanding, and Compassion Through “I” Poems**

As I listen to the recorded interviews and transcribe them, I feel eerily transported to a space where we are in the same room as I type what he says. The experience seems to repeat itself over and over as I listen and re-listen in an attempt to transcribe every word and phrase correctly. Once I complete that lengthy process for all four of the interviews, I proceed to the next step, which is to put crystallization into practice as I began the analysis process. Feeling eager to begin, I recall that, according to Ellingson (2008), “[n]o formula for crystallized design exists” (p. 73). Keeping this in mind I feel confident about moving forward. Hoping ultimately to produce many different perspectives, I first create an “I” poem for each of the transcriptions. Carrying out this process involves going through each transcript and selecting each phrase that begins with “I” or a rendition of “I” such as “I’m,” “I’ve,” etc. Keeping each transcript separate, I then type each “I” phrase in the order that it appears in the transcript. Nothing is changed in any way: I type each “I” phrase exactly as it appears in the transcripts. The results provide
emotional and meaningful “I” poems that are full of cadence and rhythm and that have different voices that indicate self-realization, assertiveness, fear, sadness, regret, hope, and future plans.

The four “I” poems are shared in the following:

“I” Poem One (Based on First Interview Transcript)

I guess
I spent the beginning of my life in Franklinton
I was in third grade, I was in junior high, I moved to Houston
I went to school, I went to two or three different junior highs
I played football
I guess
I’m just kind of rambling
I’ve got an older brother
I’m in the middle
I didn’t find out until I was like in high school that we had a different dad
I guess I never stayed in one place, I went to four different high schools
I never really had a steady group of friends that I keep in contact with
I have more associations with people
I guess that’s one thing why me and my brothers and sister are so close
I was in high school, I went to that high school in Sherwood
I went there, and then we moved back to Ponchatoula
I had pretty much given up on school
I was going to school and I was either sleeping all day or smoking weed
I’d smoke, and then whatever
I never, I would
I always saw myself going to college
I guess I saw that as something I was supposed to do
I always figured my life would work out
I never did anything to make it happen
I went to Jetson, I was just sixteen
I wasn’t socially integrated
I just, I was drinking and smoking weed
I was content
I don’t really know what came first
I know when I was younger, I moved, I was in third grade
I don’t remember much before that
I remember when I was young
I had taken it (mom’s drink) and I was drinking it, I had smoked cigarettes
I was really young
I knew I was doing things I was not supposed to do
I could go to sleep and not pay attention in school
I would always get good grades
I remember, I started tenth grade, and if I went to school
I was in class either high or sleeping
I got one report card where I got all A’s
I’m not doing anything, I kind of felt bad
I guess you could say he rewarded me, for my accomplishments, I guess
I went to a Catholic church for a while
I’m a very polite person
I have a strong family
I have almost sixty cousins that I always got to see before we moved
I appreciate my family a lot
I guess values means having a good family, knowing people care for you
I just was along for the ride
I didn’t really have any specific direction in life
I’ve never been the type of person to hurt anybody
I’d go with the flow
I was always the type who just don’t want to make any waves
I’ve been the kind of person to kind of find my niche and flow with it
I realize I’ve had different phases
I’m in school right now and I’ll flow with that
I’m working and doing all that
I was a young teenager, I was smoking and drinking
I’m not doing any of that now
I can’t blame it on moving
I guess I was just being lazy
I don’t know, I guess it was a lack of direction
I never wanted to be attracted to a crowd that was really hyped
I did try out for the football team
I went to three days of practice, I threw up everyday
I never went back
I tried different things, but I guess—I don’t know
I guess I got around with the crowd that was into a relaxed atmosphere
I guess their parents didn’t really care
I guess I was attracted to it
I would just hang out
I didn’t have to do anything to keep up with anyone
I guess when I was younger
I always saw college as what a good person does
I can remember, I had just slipped in the house and my mom was mad
I started crying and I just told her
I just want to help people—that’s all I want to do in my life
I had got arrested and went to Jetson
I realize that, and I see the direction I was going in
I did end up where I was
I could put energy into doing nothing
I could put energy into doing something positive and get positive results
I decided I wanted to make something out of my life
I could be proud of myself, make my family proud
I just guess college was the automatic thing for me to think of
I’m here, I’ve been here for four years
I want to help people
I’m taking Arabic
I think it will open a lot of doors for me to see people who need help
I have the heart, the conscience, and the willingness to do right
I can help people
I was sixteen years old and had just got a new gun
I was so proud—I thought I was a man—I had a gun
I sold marijuana at the party; we were driving around shooting at signs
I wanted to show him my new gun
I showed him my new gun, he tells me to put it to his head
I put the gun at his temple, I pull the trigger, it fires
I had always put it on safety, I forgot we’d been shooting at things
I remember my parents getting there, my dad hugging me
I had gotten my mind switched
I’m ready to do these things with my life, I’m ready to do something
I changed my whole mind frame, I got my GED, I took the ACT
I’m going to be my own self and do my own thing
I’m going to protect my self—you have to set those kinds of standards
I was very naïve to that when I went to Jetson
I wasn’t overly nice, but my personality has never been mad or mean
I was fighting a few times a week to keep my things
I was completely naïve to an institution like that, I adapted
I think it could have been a million times better
I was influenced—it helped me realize that it’s not black and white
I realize that there’s a right decision and a wrong decision
I thought I had to make the right decision every time after Jetson
I have realized over time, I don’t always have to make the right decision
I think being at Jetson helped me define my goal, my main focus
I don’t want to be at a point in my life
I will regret the last ten years, the last decisions I’ve made
I want to put more positive than negative in the world
I just can’t go out and start doing things today
I have to set myself up to do greater good in the future
I think I’m just trying to define who I am as a man, a mature person
I feel like my values today haven’t much changed
I’ve been able to realize them more, make them more something I value
I value good people, everybody respecting and treating everybody decent
I look at how we are separated—this is how I look at the world
I look at myself as being a world citizen
I don’t understand people wanting to kill or harm each other for no reason
I guess my values are just the utopian love
I value peace and everyone just getting along
I don’t go out often, but when I go out
I guess I can’t be around large groups of people
I guess I get defensive if people bump into me, I get like, eh—
I just value everybody getting along, treating everybody with respect
I work for Hello Sushi, and if I need time off, they’ll just let me off
I have a lot of problems with the juvenile justice system
I have overall disdain, but I can’t say
I made these decisions and became a better person by myself
I’m glad there is a juvenile system, not just an adult system
I wouldn’t be here
I think there are a lot of positive aspects
I cannot say it didn’t have a positive influence
I cannot say I would be here without it
I would like to do some time in the Peace Corps after I graduate
I would like to be able to use the Arabic language skills that I’m learning
I would like to get into different programs and meet people
I think I would like to work for the UNHCR
I would like to work with and help people on the ground types of things
I want to try to find placement for people
I would love to do something like that, it goes with who I am
I guess as a nation right now—it’s war for peace or democracy
I don’t know politics, I do know humanitarian aid is important
I want to use Arabic to take me where I can make a difference
I want to make an impact on peoples’ lives in a positive way
I really, really want to see the world
I want to do that for however long I can
I’m getting my degree in sociology, after I do that
I may move back to New Orleans and become a social worker
I am contemplating graduate school at different points
I kind of want to get out and see other things
I don’t think I’ll do graduate school immediately after I graduate
I guess the most important thing is keeping on track, keeping those goals
I need to stay focused on my day-to-day goals, not my struggles
I have a car note, I have rent to pay, I have insurance
I don’t want to lose sight of my goals—what have kept me going since
I was at Jetson—since I was sixteen
I can reach them now
I’ve used excuses in the past to keep me from being the best I can be
I’ve reached a point where
I’m not going to let daily troubles keep me from achieving what I want to achieve
I remember a worst thing, and then there is a second worst thing
I was sixteen
I shot and killed one of my best friends—it’s the worst thing I remember
I guess it was February of 2007
I was coming back from a Saints game with two of my friends
I was intoxicated, the two guys I was with were intoxicated
I offered to drive, the other guy said no
I remember putting my seatbelt on, I ended up falling asleep
I woke up on the median, we hit them head-on, the lady driving the other car died
I lost some of my small intestine
I was involved in two deaths in my life that I could have prevented
I look at it like, if that wouldn’t have happened when
I was sixteen, where would I be today
I would be in a worse position that I am
I wouldn’t have learned things and matured in ways that
I have if that wouldn’t have happened to me last year
I feel I could learn some things about how I feel about things
I’m really grateful that I’m where I am in life right now
I feel that if everything happens for a reason, then what makes me so special
I love him to death (only nephew)
I really like every time my family gets together—it’s my fondest memory

“I” Poem Two (Based on Second Interview Transcript)

I guess a lot
I’ve started boxing again
I did
I was younger, I was twelve years old
I’ve been doing that for about two years now
I’ve moved back in with my parents
I live there with my sister, my mom, and dad
I’ve quit smoking cigarettes.
I drink a lot less often
I’ve made
I just really enjoy doing the boxing thing
I can with that
I’ve been in school continuing my education at LSU
I took a year off to run the sushi restaurant
I say to run the restaurant
I was in myself—which was financially satisfying
I got from that job at all
I didn’t enjoy
I was doing
I was spending my time, I felt like
I wasn’t going to invest all the time
I’ve spent
I have a niece and nephew
I guess, I felt like
I had to get back in school
I’ve been back in school for three semesters now
I think it’s been
I have seven—ten hours left until
I graduate
I’m pretty excited about that
I guess
I had two babies wake me up at eight o’clock this morning
I guess, I’m starting to see
I don’t know
I guess
I’m just maturing every day
I learn
I guess
I learn
I realize what’s going on in the world around me
I am psychologically
I guess physically
I’m learning about food
I don’t want to just say diet
I eat along with the desire to eat good for boxing
I said, my health—
I couldn’t run a half a mile
I run a lot farther
I make
I find myself being
I enjoy really being around people who like boxing
I can’t say that
I’ve met some people who
I guess
I changed
I trained with
I think she’s twenty-two now
I celebrated
I got in a fight with my older brother
I’ve really
I’ve been getting
I do decide to have a drink
I kind of realize what
I’m putting at risk
I kind of realize
I have things to risk in my boxing career
I didn’t before
I really
I don’t know
I just enjoy
I’ve become more disciplined
I mean it’s not easy to not
I realize why
I’m doing these things
I can go out and have four beers tonight
I can just say
I’m not even going to consider
I spend less time actually with my little brother and my sister
I like hanging out with them
I don’t smoke cigarettes
I don’t want to go sit in a smoky bar
I spend most of my time with myself anyway
I continue to think about it
I think
I’ve been around
I think
I told you before
I box with
I don’t know someone personally
I’m going to go check it out myself
I’ve known my whole life
I’ve come to realize that there’s more
I see that character trait
I’ve boxed with more than anyone else
I’ve realized
I understand the situation
I’ve experienced it and understand my experience
I got into an argument
I spoke to one of the fighters who he trained
I was talking to Tommy
I was telling him about the problem
I was having with Coach David
I looked at that was
I don’t know how happily or unhappily
I took that as a positive
I need to humble myself
I have in my head that may be misconceptions
I had with Coach
I said you know
I was talking with Tommy
I’ve got to realize
I’m going to be
I’m going to have to realize
I have to be willing to understand
I might not be
I said were
I’m going to have to realize
I’m going to be wrong more times
I’m right
I’m just hard headed
I don’t want to listen
I’m like that’s not
I consider about you
I was feeling
I’ve learned from people I box with I think it should I see as the truth I understand to be real I—it’s like I train with now I train with I work out I really respect that about you I just see it as I didn’t think about it like that I just love doing it I have a desire to do it and that desire just kind of dictates I go I’ve been making lately I was training I’m saying I know that from him I see that the way I feel about boxing might not always be there I don’t want to take for granted I have it I don’t think he’ll ever fight again I realize I want to learn from that I want to learn from his experiences I kind of see him throwing away I’ve always said I’ve adopted I’ve put enough negative into this world I want to end my life having put more positive than negative I’m not sure how that really ties in I’ve learned from his actions I’ve got this guy Chris I’m not sure what his standing is I kick his butt and it feels really good I can keep up with doing really good things and really enjoying I was telling you about I was just speaking about his career I was like, I think I don’t have to have I like to be successful, I do I’m not mistaken I heard this guy I think it might have been
I to tell you how to live your life
I think about my dad
I’ve been alive
I’ve never
I tell another adult
I mean it’s impossible
I can’t tell him
I can do is
I don’t know
I mean best case scenario
I can do
I feel about it
I think with adults
I say adults
I was going to say
I, uh, guess
I say adult
I mean mature adult
I can do it
I know
I don’t want to smoke cigarettes
I live with my parents and my older sister
I think well once
I could just come down the hallway
I have to spend money on gas
I said
I was gone
I got home
I was out of town
I sat down on the couch
I left his house he gave me a kiss
I said
I didn’t know
I guess
I want people to show it
I think
I can give some insight
I’m leaving
I think if she gets an opportunity
I think she’s more than willing
I don’t think
I think she sees it
I appreciate because
I wish she would
I never met him
I mean
I guess
I needed a little space at that point
I don’t think are conducive
I think she sees a lot of connections to her husband
I really think
I think she needs to find something else to
I guess I’m kind of venting right now
I was like, whoa that would be a big change
I’m like
I tried to get him to help
I had come up with
I think fireworks
I don’t know how the situation
I went to the parking lot where we could see the fireworks
I had realized why
I was speaking to my mom
I did water skiing for the first time
I’m thoroughly impressed
I said his wife’s a preacher
I was skiing behind the boat
I thought that was a compliment
I’m sharing
I met
I guess
I know this isn’t true
I do have a stereotype in my head
I hope to take that situation with me into the future situations
I go to and not bring that stereotype with me to the situation
I understand
I see myself as an open-minded person
I can see
I would still see myself as being a very open minded person
I notice
I do it more than
I would like to admit even to myself
I can say no also
I have new plans
I’ve known for a while
I’ve opened up for myself
I’ve competed all around the south
I go to
I can use to accomplish
I have for the future
I’ll be getting in December
I want a career or job
I get both moral and spiritual satisfaction out of
I still
I can get that from
I still feel like
I can have the opportunity to do things
I mean to travel
I was saying earlier
I put quotation marks around gym because it’s kind of like a barn
I was saying
I do
I have
I’m paralleling that
I want myself
I’m doing the right things and being a strong person
I see it or not
I plan to go to some cities
I’d like to spend the next however long
I mean
I used to think
I wanted to live in a city
I consider
I don’t have much experience with traveling
I would like
I would like to have a couple of acres
I would like to grow my own produce
I have for the future
I put into my body
I don’t like
I learn about our economic-political system
I would like to be able to just separate myself
I guess you could say
I don’t see
I don’t want to be
I heard last week
I was watching a documentary
I can’t attest to the truth of it
I would like
I can’t hold anyone responsible
I’m
I try to work
I try to be conscious of the impact
I make
I’m not thinking
I’m just thinking and sharing
I eat
I consume
I’ve, I can tell you
I have feared most of my life
I kind of feel fear is arbitrary
I’d like to get past it
I injured my elbow
I was like
I don’t want to take time off
I was like
I am
I was scared people would think
I was just making up
I’ve really feared
I am
I fear most
I fear, you know, going to prison
I think there are things that are righteous
I think are worth going to prison
I’m scared of being the type of person
I’ll tell you one of the fears
I’m most fearful of
I’m most fearful of is allowing my emotions to overpower my intelligence
I’ll regret
I should
I’m drunk
I’m just speaking my mind
I’m scared of doing things
I was at Jetson
I was a smaller guy
I mean in reality
I don’t have
I don’t want
I don’t have that
I realized
I don’t know
I’m going to
I don’t want
I don’t want
I feel like our
I’ve been
I guess that fear
I guess
I fear what could happen
I wasn’t willing to do things
I’m not going to agree to that
I’m going to get beaten, stabbed, raped, or something
I don’t want that to happen
I defend myself
I try to educate myself
I rely
I believe
I see
I don’t fear being by myself
I guess some people might
I don’t know
I like me a lot more
I like
I don’t abide by all the rules and laws
I—it’s not a rebellious thing
I guess it could be seen that way
I didn’t ask to be born
I didn’t agree to follow by these laws
I didn’t agree to my life being governed
I feel like something’s right or wrong
I don’t see supreme authority
I do break the law based on those
I’m not breaking my moral code or doing anything that
I think that aren’t right
I do things that are illegal
I smoke marijuana
I ride
I don’t know
I saw this in the news
I’m not sure
I’m not
I don’t steal
I don’t commit violent crimes
I don’t drink and drive
I wouldn’t consider myself to be a deviant
I guess as far as breaking
I don’t know
I believe
I don’t believe
I mean he believes
I think
I go to get a loan at the bank
I’m paying the bank
I’m paying them interest
I don’t appreciate that system
I don’t know
I disagree with
I think that’s absolutely bogus
I’ve watched a lot of film footage
I think are unbecoming of a civil servant
I get to base that off
I see but
I don’t agree with the fact
I shouldn’t have that authority
I think it’s completely ridiculous
I don’t agree with
I want
I’m scared
I make one decision one time
I’m scared
I might do something that might send me to prison
I appreciate that question
I think smoking marijuana
I don’t think the impact is anywhere near what it is in cigarettes
I can say
I had three snicker bars a week
I think
I’m doing my body way more of a disservice
I don’t grow marijuana
I don’t know anybody who does
I can’t say what has or hasn’t been done
I’m ingesting
I don’t think that’s any different
I don’t know what pesticide has been put on
I think it’s the only parallel
I can draw to marijuana and cigarettes is the fact that you can smoke both
I can pronounce marijuana the key ingredient
I don’t see a strong connection between those two at all
I haven’t had any real problems yet
I’m not
I have a twenty pound weight on my shoulders
I’m trying to work out
I’m not smoking cigarettes
I’m not eating wrong
I’m not drinking as often or as heavily
I was drinking every day or drinking heavily
I drink
I don’t want to give that misconception
I guess my point being
I am doing myself a disservice by smoking
I don’t think it’s a really big deal
I’m feeling
I guess, psychologically or emotionally
I wake up
I don’t feel like exercising
I smoke
I’m doing
I think that marijuana has a lot of social stigma
I think that comes from the main stream media
I think we’ve been pushed
I personally feel
I’ve been pushed to think a certain way
I encounter
I’m looking for
I think about it
I really don’t see all the negative statements
I don’t
I guess it’s just me lying to myself
I justify it
I think
I don’t know man
I just really think that
I understand it correctly
I believe that as a general public
I don’t think the truth has made it out
I think that in a lot of ways
I’m discovering that when you
I actually look for things
I like what this is saying
I guess
I’m reading this book right now
I’m really enjoying it
I live day to day
I continue to grow
I get over these things that hold me back
I’m around new people
I’ll get anxious
I’m not really a very sociable person
I’m in a group or in a class
I’m really interested
I’m more
I kind of exclude myself
I let my own insecurities dictate
I think my insecurities dictate
I continue to grow by my insecurities
I make
I think that goes hand in hand with fear
I think
I let fear kind of dictate a lot of things
I do
I’ve been consciously aware that fear shouldn’t dictate
I do
I’m not necessarily thinking this
I do think about it
I hope that as
I continue to grow
I don’t want to go back to experiencing
I look in the mirror
I see
I hope
I don’t get to that point ever again
I hope that
I hope my dad quits smoking cigarettes
I’m thinking he’s worked for Shell
I would say and
I have to say
I won my childhood
I won the opportunity
I won payback
I didn’t ask to be born in America
I didn’t ask to be born to my parents
I’m very grateful for it and the way my parents are
I definitely think my parents are good parents
I hope my dad gets to enjoy his retirement
I hope my mom, you know
I hope to never fear death anymore
I have no point in fearing it
I sit and think about it in bed sometimes
I’m a little fearful about going into Chicago
I was like
I hope that my little brother finds
I hope that everybody can find something
I get out of boxing
I hope that, I can continue to box
I hope that, I can continue to compete
I hope that, I hope that
I don’t spend the rest of my life
I hope
I live a life of satisfaction not dissatisfaction
I think that
I may be seeing a lot of people
I’m not sure whether this is true or not
I understand
I’ve lived half of my life
I kind of did this with it or whatever
I don’t ever want to live like that
I don’t want to regret my life
I can’t remember the exact time it hit me
I can remember what hit me
I don’t want to be sitting at a bar
I’m 45 years old watching fights
I was twelve years old
I could have been a boxer
I’m talking to people
I’m sitting here with what
I could have been
I’m not going to look at my life and wish
I would have tried to get back into boxing
I did, I gave it everything
I have
I hope that if I move to Seattle
I hope that doesn’t happen
I’m there or not
I hope

“I” Poem Three (Based on Third Interview Transcript)

I’d like to talk about the trip
I took this summer
I guess
I got the idea from
I was at that gym
I had injured my elbow
I wasn’t currently training
I had trained
I got to talking with the boxing coach
I guess
I’ve always kind of wanted to travel
I ‘m not sure of the exact word
I guess
I’ve never been content with just staying in Louisiana
I always wanted at least to experience life beyond
I guess for a few months
I tossed the idea around in my head
I would go about, you know, getting out of Louisiana
I’ve always wanted to travel
I’ve mentioned and it’s kind of like boxing provided the avenue or excuse
I guess
I had talked it over—the idea with my dad
I ride the Amtrak and that’s kind of how
I decided to do that
I wanted to go
I researched some gyms on the internet
I also knew there were places
I wanted to go
I know
I really wanted to visit Seattle and Portland
I’d kind of already made up my mind
I took the trip
I wanted to live in the Pacific Northwest
I guess the preconceived attitude
I had about the life style of people there
I decided to
I decided
I want to move to Maryland
I visited, you know
I got there—well as soon as
I got there
I had to wait on the coach and the rest of the guys to show up
I showed up a little early
I could tell that he had a lot of experience
I was an adult
I want to at least go and train in the northeast
I wanted to train with the best and compete with the best
I don’t want to regret not trying that
I have—being happy knowing that
I gave it everything
I had and not regretting
I could have done that
I could have done this
I don’t want to pretend to myself or anybody else
I can or how good of a person
I can be
I really think it’s just—it’s about wanting to prove to myself
I’m worthy of things and that
I can do these things just as anyone else
I was sitting next to this one guy
I went up through Maryland and into
I’d never been on a train before
I didn’t realize there’s a reason that they sell Amtrak blankets on the train
I had on shorts and a tee shirt
I really appreciated that and then later on in the trip
I was able to return the favor
I met—it was cold on the train
I knew it would be
I was able to offer him something to keep warm
I got to the train station and got my things
I walked to the hostel which was across
I guess, down town Philadelphia
I’m not sure what word would best describe
I thought about
I thought, you know, how long can these vendors drive there each day
I thought that was cool and interesting
I train
I’m trying to think
I did train
I found out
I got to the hostel
I left my bag and things
I barely would eat and with the train being so cold and uncomfortable
I didn’t get very much sleep
I walked a few miles to the hostel
I ended up walking
I had to have stayed in Philadelphia the first night without training at the gym
I got there in the evening
I didn’t train
I wouldn’t have had time to do all of the walking
I did do
I walked to the address
I had for one gym that was about seven miles from the hostel
I ended up walking to another gym which was on the other side of town
I would stop and ask people for directions
I found people in most cities to be really nice and helpful
I didn’t have any problems with anybody
I asked directions except for in some place
I guess, maybe a survival technique or something
I was homeless or something
I had my book bag with me and my tennis shoes on
I did finally get to the gym after walking all day and not really eating very well
I talked to the coach who was there
I had anybody who was going to watch me train
I explained to him
I was there
I had been in contact with somebody at that gym
I had
I don’t think it was the gentleman
I had been speaking that afternoon
I had before
I left on the trip
I had about it—to get there and not be able to train or work out
I felt pretty low that afternoon
I ended up walking a part of the way back to the hostel
I was with a group
I guess the ghost tour wasn’t that much of a bummer
I met a gentleman that night—he was in his late forties, he was of Indian ancestry
I left to go to the gym that day we were in the kitchen
I went down to the kitchen that was in the hostel
I got back and he was drinking some brandy and he offered me a glass
I’m not exactly sure what it was that he did
I believed that
I’m not sure about this now
I thought it was a part of China
I think they call it
I told somebody something a few weeks ago
I told my mom—my parents—both of them
I probably have the worst memory of anybody on this side of fifty
I revised that statement to maybe seventy years old
I don’t know—because the conversation
I had with that gentleman—it went along for a couple of hours
I guess this is my pride and my vanity
I do remember him speaking highly of me, you know, as a young man
I conducted myself in our conversation
I expressed to him
I felt
I understood and thought things
I went to sleep and the following morning
I had to be on the train to Washington D.C.
I met last July at the Women’s National Golden Gloves
I trained is just north of D.C. and Maryland
I was able to stay at the house where she and her roommates live
I was in town
I think it was the capital
I didn’t really
I didn’t do any touring of D.C.
I was there
I went from the train station to the taxi, from there to Maryland
I took the Amtrak to the train station the next morning
I experienced in D.C. was waiting for my luggage for about two hours
I checked my luggage on that trip
I left my information with one of the ladies at Amtrak
I ended up walking to Subway and on my way there
I guess it was a homeless guy
I had some drinks in my bag
I stopped him and gave him a drink
I had with me
I had checked two of my bags
I had one bag
I carried with me.
I had some assorted nuts, some drinks, and some other snacks in this bag
I gave him a drink
I hadn’t opened yet
I went over to Subway and got my sandwich
I guess because of pollution
I’m not exactly sure what the direct cause of it was
I know it’s something positive
I guess
I got my sandwich
I didn’t get the plastic bag
I went outside on a park bench across the street and was eating my sandwich
I was able to go pick up my luggage just a couple of hours after it was misplaced
I was happy
I took
I’d say it was roughly 4:30 in the afternoon
I’d say between fifteen and eighteen minutes just to get up to the gym
I was waiting there for the coaches
I talked
I got there and was waiting on the coach
I sat down
I was having this conversation with this lady
I was speaking to her about my trip and she was talking to me about her daughter
I guess the fall semester would have been her first semester
I had any type of conversation with on my entire trip
I got positive reaction from almost everyone
I spoke to
I can’t remember all the details
I don’t know how he was affiliated
I told them—they asked me
I was coming back the next day
I let them know
I didn’t know
I was ever going to be back
I wish we’d have had a camera so we could take pictures with you
I didn’t have anything, any accolades or anything
I didn’t have a reputation, or a history
I had met
I was and that was a really cool, uplifting thing
I still am not as outgoing or as confident in my actions
I’d like to be
I got a lot of positive feedback in that way on this trip
I think will help me build to be a stronger person in the future
I like the way that sounds and it makes perfect sense to me
I got there
I felt the same way
I had to be on a train to Chicago
I went to Chicago and that wasn’t too far from D.C.
I guess
I couldn’t tell you how long, maybe it was a seven or a ten hour trip
I got to Chicago—where did I go
I met this kid who was about the same age
I thought that was a pretty interesting job
I’ve seen that happen on movies before
I’m not sure how far away New Jersey is from D.C
I thought that was interesting
I mean
I don’t doubt it
I mean
I believe it’s possible—
I’m not sure of what military academy he was in
I went to the one
I was going to
I was at the gym in Chicago
I didn’t get the call
I needed anything or was stuck anywhere
I could get in touch with him and they could give me a ride
I needed anything they would be there in town to give me some help
I needed
I really appreciated that
I got on the metro station
I got to the hostel
I thought
I was booked to stay and it ended up
I was booked at another one across town
I was able to stay there that night
I took the metro
I walked to the boxing gym in Chicago
I guess it was their secretary
I’m not sure what university it was in Chicago
I can’t recall
I stayed at that gym
I worked out for a couple of hours
I did both of those
I guess
I think
I could teach him some things as well as he could teach me some things
I’ve decided against the gym in Chicago
I’d kind of not had the opportunity to work with the coach in Philadelphia
I got to work out
I really enjoyed my experience
I could either take it or leave it
I want to be there
I belong
I finally made it to the hostel via the metro and walking
I went to a little grocery store down the street
I didn’t really talk to many people at the hostel
I was making and said it looked really great
I said all you do is just throw some oil in the pan and just stir it around
I’ve got a wok at home
I had that night
I got on a train and was on a train for about thirty-six hours to Seattle
I was not a happy camper
I wanted to rip my hair out
I learned about Washington
I want to say that the mountain range that goes through Washington state
I’m not sure
I don’t know if that’s a part of the Rocky mountains
I made it to Seattle
I got back on the right path
I don’t think she had ever been to Seattle
I’m not sure if she had any acquaintances or friends there
I was there we ended up having lunch together
I was there, so the first day
I was there
I walked the wrong way
I ended up getting to the hostel
I went that night to a sushi restaurant
I ended up having
I had seventy dollars’ worth of sushi
I had two beers and the rest of the money
I spent on sushi
I was just eating and the food was really great
I’d heard about how good the fresh fish was
I was barely able to walk back to my bed in the hostel
I just went to sleep
I had sushi
I did go to the market in Seattle—the Pike’s Place Market
I walked around there—it was pretty awesome
I had plans to meet up with Mary
I was up about seven o’clock
I was outside stretching on the building
I said yeah
I said, I have no idea
I’ll tell you what to do
I guess it was the Pacific
I did
I guess it was about a good forty-five minute or so run
I guess in forty-five minutes
I could probable run up to five miles
I made it back to the hostel
I took a shower, then walked back to the Pike’s market
I was going to get some food to cook
I got some fresh salmon, some bok choy
I had never seen before
I went back to the hostel and cooked
I had lunch outside
I was waiting on her
I walked inside to get some coffee
I was waiting in line so
I guess we were paying customers at that point
I got back to the hostel it had stopped raining
I guess she was a frequent patron
I went back to the hostel
I went to the gym in Seattle
I took the city bus there
I guess that’s how they know
I was leaving the down town area
I paid
I got off
I wouldn’t have had to pay
I’d have gotten off sooner
I got back on
I had to pay
I got to the boxing club in Seattle and nobody was there
I waited around for them for about an hour or so
I introduced myself to him then some of the fighters showed up
I stretched out and got through with the work-out regimen
I guess for Coach Bumblebee
I was going to run with the team because everyone was running
I kind of stayed back between them
I kept trying to encourage him to keep up
I ended up catching the other guys who were in front of us
I was the first one who did the whole run to finish
I was behind all of those guys running with the younger kid and his brother
I felt like my legs were just so tight and still hurting so bad
I got to the top and got a little bit of straight away and got my second wind
I couldn’t stop my legs
I did some shadow boxing in the ring
I’ve had surgery on my left elbow
I’m not able to use it doing anything
I never
I wasn’t even sure
I’d ever be able to use my elbow again in boxing
I—I—it was cool
I’m really glad
I went now
I got to Portland
I’m still in Seattle at this point
I catch the bus back to the hostel—went back, went to sleep, went to bed
I had to be on a train going to Portland
I got to Portland
I noticed outside the train station to Portland
I thought was a trash receptacle on the sidewalk
I thought that the idea of it just to be conscious of it
I saw syringes on the sidewalk as well
I assume they weren’t used in proper medical fashion
I got to the hostel in Portland
I did any sparring
I probably had
I was in there with a guy
I could only use my right hand so I was moving around a lot
I learned
I think head is cabeza
I learned by him saying no head shots over and over
I learned what head was in Spanish
I wanted to say in Portland
I left the gym
I was running
I left
I knew it
I don’t know it now
I was able to do it
I left
I thought that was really cool
I had a nice work out
I did the only quasi sparring of the trip
I got back outside on the patio of the hostel
I was staying at they were having live music
I guess some local people and some people who were just staying at the hostel
I went to the gym
I was making myself some fried eggs and some mushrooms and some other things
I had got at a local store to eat before
I went to the gym
I was doing that
I got done cooking
I had eaten my plate of food
I was washing my pots and pans to clean up after myself
I was doing it
I say young lady—she was retired
I don’t know why she was staying at a hostel or why she was at a hostel
I didn’t ask
I was from—she made a comment
I was doing my dishes
I ate and she said somebody else was in here earlier
I ended up having to do his dishes behind him
I could just use his pan to make my own food
I did just because
I was being myself
I think that was cool
I got from this trip
I just keep being myself and keep trying hard
I’m doing then
I’ll be okay
I’m not a bad person
I got back from the gym that night and they were having live music outside
I got there it was the last guy on the set
I guess he was in his fifties or sixties
I was out there maybe for about twenty minutes or so
I caught the end of the show
I was gone for most of the evening
I am
I started to help fold up the chairs
I kind feel
I don’t feel right going off
I don’t even like to be served in a restaurant
I would
I do that at the restaurant where my little brother works
I was helping clean up a little bit and there were some folks around my age
I noticed the girls had an accent
I think
I was sitting at the table by myself
I was having a local beer that was brewed in Oregon
I said
I’d never had it before and she asked if she could try it
I’ve still got tennis shoes on, socks that are full of sweat from working out
I think I had on shorts
I can’t recall what pants I had on
I had on my wind breaker and a muscle shirt under it and they were all wet
I said no
I don’t want to go, thank you—
I knew as our conversation was going on
I don’t know how
I became
I don’t know why this conversation came up
I can’t just have this conversation about nothing
I don’t know, it’s weird
I see that with relationships
I like to think
I don’t pretend too much
I didn’t eat anything after the workout
I had a perfect American accent
I hear my voice
I’m like
I talk
I didn’t catch anyone else talking faster
I do talk slower
I learned that, that night
I would go running with them in the morning
I told them I would
I got up and had breakfast and showered
I didn’t see them at all the next morning
I don’t know if they were hung over or if they had left
I got back another thing was strange, well not strange, but remarkable
I’m going to make a remark about it
I had got back to the hostel after we had been at the bar
I was making myself some food in the community kitchen
I had gotten
I just put on it
I was sitting down eating
I said yeah, it took me less time to make this than it took you to go to McDonald’s
I can’t imagine just actually cooking myself
I didn’t comment anything about that
I do because they were saying the guys from the upper west side
I didn’t ask anything
I can’t remember what city we were in that we finally got off these buses
I’d met a girl who was from
I want to say Wisconsin
I say
I’m not sure what capacity she was working in
I’ve ever met of my generation who was talking about hitchhiking
I’d heard of AmeriCorps
I graduate
I’m doing now
I’ve submitted an application to one job
I met the girl and she was really cool
I can remember
I met in the dining car on the train
I was like
I voted for President Obama
I didn’t vote for him to continue these wars or to start new wars
I wanted to talk about
I’ll tell the chef it was because of this reason
I said it because
I don’t want that lie on me
I got from that
I’ve been thinking about since then
I guess you should go to more
I don’t want the—she thought of it in the way
I understood it was a karma
I don’t want any negative attached to me
I’ve been thinking about that
I consider
I think it’s helped me act more maturely
I’ve thought sub-consciously
I got the conscious thought of
I would be cheating myself
I didn’t listen to it and consider it
I think that’s been something
I’ve been consciously trying to do
I just have to practice it
I was listening to an NPR report yesterday
I can’t remember what country it was in
I was in
I was okay—it’s relative
I didn’t know that
I guess
I kind of thought of that
I hope
I didn’t come off whining
I didn’t know that
I am very blessed to be in this country
I left D. C.
I don’t think any of the
I felt like the gym in D. C.
I kind of decided that that was the bottom line
I think will be for
I’ll live long enough
I was watching some of my teammates boxing in Gonzales
I’m the biggest cheerleader
I know
I think
I’ve decided
I’ll be going to D.C.
I was experiencing it—the top was D.C.
I had decided
I did that
I think it’s going to be like that
I think we’ll see each other
I made it to where
I’m at
I’m going to be happy
“I” Poem Four (Based on Fourth Interview Transcript)

I can say my life as a college student
I lived a lot of life
I spent as a college student
I cannot think of much
I learned
I was able to take some classes
I am
I think
I’m not trying to imply
I took full advantage
I can honestly say
I learned
I can say
I’ve learned some interesting facts
I’ve had teachers
I consider purposely skewed
I generally feel apathetic
I felt objectivity
I learned a lot about myself
I’m becoming
I’m learning the values
I want to live
I can be proud of
I can’t help but hear
I want to live a long life
I want to live a full life
I want to gear my mind and attitude
I died today
I be proud
I lived my life
I owe myself, my spirit, my God
I currently spend
I see this as a side effect
I hope for a day
I dream of a day
I can have
I hope for a day
I can put
I put forth
I want to live a lifestyle
I interact with
I want to be in a position
I want to live a lifestyle
I want to live a laid back lifestyle
I’ve spend most of my life

175
I want to have
I’m not sure
I want to bring
I don’t care
I’ll adopt
I want to lead
I don’t want
I want to have enough
I want to one day
I, and my family
I hope to be
I hope to be healthy
I’ve made in this life
I hope to be
I will cherish
I hope to not
I hope to be
I hope to be putting
I hope to be
I’m proud
I don’t know
I’ve lived
I’ve treated
I want to be able to look back on my life
I haven’t lived in vain

Exhibit XII

After all the teachers, assistant principals, and most of the students had left the gym, the principal and I gathered those students who were still there to find out the reason. A few were new and I had not been informed about them, and the others had not been paying attention and didn’t hear their name called. Schedules were given to each student who had not heard his name called, and I took the remaining few students to my office so they could be tested and given a schedule. Everything was still disorganized in my office after the move but I found places for them to sit and gave them the WRAT, the initial placement test, so I could use the results to make each of them a schedule.

It seemed that the beginning day of school was off to a good start and nothing too traumatic had happened. The established Scenic High teachers had been formally polite to all of
us transplants when we were in the gym, and everyone seemed to be going about their business. I worked in my office the rest of that day trying to make it better organized. The office was not very big so furniture for two people made for a crowded work space. We tried several different ways of positioning everything with the help of a couple of students and finally came up with something that satisfied both of us. I also managed to make schedules for the new students and send them on to their classes.

You could tell that the students were curious about us and, generally speaking, they were friendly and cooperative. The teachers remained somewhat aloof and kept to cliques they had established at lunch and at faculty meetings. The behavior of the teachers didn’t bother me because I was busy with all of my work and trying to be receptive and helpful to students when they came to the office, so I generally brought my lunch and ate by myself while I was working. None of us left campus for lunch unless for an emergency or some unusual request. We worked eight hours, and lunch was considered part of the schedule as a planning period.

The students soon learned that I was willing to retest them on the TABE when they felt confident that they could make a higher score so they could be promoted. I remember one student in particular who came to me and asked to be tested. He was in a special education class, and his teacher considered him to be one of the lowest level readers. He told me that the only things she would give him to read in class were for a 1st or 2nd grade level. I agreed to give him the test and he scored as high as was possible on it. The next day I gave him a more difficult test and he topped out on that one as well. He was so proud of himself and wanted to share the news with his teacher. I walked him down the hall to his classroom so I could give her the information. She was furious when I showed her the results. She loudly said that he couldn’t read and that I didn’t know what I was doing. She followed me out of her classroom and down
the hallway screaming, “Why don’t you go back where you came from!” I made it back to my office and burst into tears as soon as I was inside the door. I think I realized at that point that I definitely was not welcome at the school and that probably most of the teachers felt the same way as she did.

However, I was not ready to give up because of that uncomfortable experience. I pursued trying to see if something could be done for the student and encouraged him to be patient. Changing his schedule was more difficult to accomplish since he was in special education classes and I had to consult someone in that department. Eventually it was decided that he could be moved from that classroom into one where he could be given more challenging work. He worked hard and ultimately achieved his Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED), which is what the majority of students are interested in doing while they are serving time at an LTI and are required to attend school. He was extremely proud and happy. He told me many times how much he appreciated what I had done for him. He even called me several times after he was released to let me know how he was doing and tell me about the accomplishments he was making in life, and he always added that I had made it all possible. He ultimately graduated from Southern University and started his own business. I can see his face so clearly when I close my eyes and think about him.

Scenic High
testing, re-testing, schedules
aloof teachers
interested students

Rude, uncaring teacher
successful student

**Continuing the Research Experience**

Creating the “I” poems accounts for only a portion of the crystallization methodology that I have adopted as part of my analysis process. The poems were interesting and produced
meaningful results that were uncommonly rhythmic and well balanced. Although the process took a long time, I did not have a great amount of difficulty putting the poems together. In fact I very much enjoyed every step of the process. When I shared each completed “I” poem with Michael, he was surprised and pleased with the results. He had not expected them to be as emotionally stirring and comprehensible as they turned out to be.

**Extending Richness and Clarity Through Narrative Poems**

An additional sample of the crystallization methodology that I have adopted for my analysis process involves creating a narrative poem from each of the interview transcripts. I keep the “I” poems close by for consultation and consideration as I create the narrative poems, but I primarily draw my material from the interview transcripts. Going through the process of determining the portions I want to use and how to arrange them is challenging. I want to capture Michael’s sincere thoughts, beliefs, and ideas as well as reflect the strong emotions that he expressed during each interview. At the same time, I want to achieve a flowing sense of rhythm, repetition, and cadence. I hate to leave any word or phrase out because everything seems equally important, but I realize some sentences do not carry as much meaning as others. Creating narrative poems is much more arduous and time consuming than creating “I” poems because of the many decisions that need to be made, but the process is also fun and rather exciting. Throughout the creative process, as I draw segments from the transcript, I try to display as many angles and reflections as possible. I want readers to grasp as much as they possibly can from reading the poems. I want to engage their empathy and emotions as they develop a better understanding of Michael. As I go through this process, I keep in mind what Richardson (1997) has said about the narrative poem she wrote about Louisa May. The narrative poem, Richardson
states, “is both a poem masquerading as a transcript and a transcript masquerading as a poem” (p. 139). She explains more completely in the following:

The subtext is political. My intent is to display through Louisa May’s story an interpretative framework that demands analysis of its own production, distribution, and consumption as a cultural object and of itself as a method for linking lived, interactional experience to… research and writing enterprises…” (p. 139).

My intent in writing these narrative poems that present Michael’s story is very much the same as Richardson’s—the poems tell his story and he is the center of them; “not the interviewer, the context, or their relationship” (Richardson, 1997, p. 141). As I create the narrative poems, I use Michael’s exact words and phrases as much as possible, although there are a few exceptions for the sake of clarity.

**Michael’s Hopes and Memories** (Narrative Poem Based on First Interview Transcript)

I spent the beginning of my life in Franklinton, Louisiana
we moved to Ponchatoula when I was in third grade
we were there till I was in junior high
My dad worked off-shore on an oil rig
they transferred him to an oil refinery in Houston

I went to two or three different junior highs
we did a lot of moving
there were six of us
living in a one-bedroom apartment
then we moved
and had a two-bedroom apartment
we lived there for a little over a year

I played football
me and my little brother
were on a football team together
skateboarded together
were really close.
My older sister did her thing
my older brother moved out
got an apartment

We were always together
a close family
I didn’t find out
until I was in high school
that me and my older brother had a different dad
he lives in Mandeville
he used to live in Utah
my mom and everyone would go visit him

It was different growing up
never stayed in one place
went to four different high schools
three different junior highs
never had a steady group of friends
that I keep in contact with up until this day

I have more associations with people than—
it’s like we spent all these years together
or grew up together
I guess that’s one thing that contributes to
why me and my brothers and my sister are so close—
it’s always just been our family

The reason we moved back to Louisiana
it was while I was in high school
my dad claimed he liked the food better in Louisiana
but you could tell
especially with my sister
that we were all kind of—homesick
we didn’t adjust well to Texas
we came back here
we moved back to Ponchatoula

I had pretty much given up on school
if I was going to school
I was either sleeping all day or
smoking weed and getting high before class.
I always saw myself going to college
saw that as something I was supposed to do
always figured my life would work out that way
but I never did anything to make it happen
then I went to Jetson—
when I was just sixteen

Maybe the fact that I wasn’t socially integrated
drinking and smoking weed had me disinterested
not getting into a broader social spectrum
kept me from getting into different things
I was content with that
I remember when I was young
we lived in Franklington
my dad was at work on an oil rig
my mom was home with us kids
she had a drink—
liquor and water—whiskey on the rocks or something
I had taken it and was drinking it
had smoked cigarettes a few times before
was really young
knew I was doing things
I was not supposed to do

What’s really weird is in school
I could go to sleep
not pay attention
but get good grades
I remember we moved back to Ponchatoula
I started tenth grade
if I went to school
I was in class either high or sleeping
I got one report card…got all A’s
My dad bought me a stereo
told me to keep up the good work
I kind of felt bad
he rewarded me for my accomplishments

The things my parents taught me
especially my dad
still sticks with me today—
never put my hands on a female
I’m a very polite person.
That’s something my parents always taught me—
respect everyone
be a courteous person
never put your hands on a female.
I have a strong family
I appreciate my family a lot
I guess values means having a good family
knowing people care for you
appreciate you

My early teenage years
I was along for the ride
didn’t have any specific direction in life
I would wake up
go to school
go to somebody’s house
go somewhere
I never liked to hurt anybody
or cause any harm

I was always like
go with the flow
don’t make waves
find my niche and flow with it

I’m in school right now
I’ll flow with that
see where that takes me
that’s a positive thing
working and doing all that

I was a young teenager
smoking weed and drinking
I’m not doing any of that now

I can’t blame it on moving all those different places
I was just being lazy
sitting beside somebody in class
talking to them
hanging around with this person
it was a lack of direction

I never wanted to be attracted to a crowd
hyped on anything like social clubs
or anything like that

I did try out for the football team
when I came back to Ponchatoula
that didn’t work out
it all came down to conditioning

I went to three days of practice
threw up everyday
never went back again

I got around with the crowd that was—
into a relaxed atmosphere
there were never too many rules
their parents didn’t really care
were never home
I was attracted to it—it was easy
I would just hang out with these people
not worry about anything else
I didn’t have to do anything to keep up with anyone
or anything else like that

I always saw college as what a good person
or someone who was trying to become something does
go to college and make something of your life
become a productive person in society

My goal has always been—
I just want to help people
that’s all I want to do in my life
just help people

I had got arrested
went to Jetson
see the direction I was going in
slacking off…just being a slacker
going with the flow and everything

When I decided I wanted to make something out of my life
make myself somebody
be proud of myself
make my family proud—
college was
the automatic thing for me to think of

Now that I’m here
you get to see a lot of windows opened
I’m taking Arabic right now
it will open a lot of doors
for me to see people who need help

I can help people—with the heart I have
the conscience I have
the willingness to do right I have—
college opens a lot of doors
to help you obtain what you want to do

I was sixteen years old
had just got a new gun
I was so proud—so happy
thought I was a man because I had a gun
Me and Chad were driving around—
we’d been to a party
sold some marijuana at the party
started shooting at signs and stuff like that
just having fun

We decided to go find Dustin—
I wanted to show him my new gun
Dustin comes outside
I showed him my new gun
he tells me to put it to his head—
it’ll only hurt for a second

I put the gun right there at his temple
pull the trigger
it fires

I had always put it on safety—
I forgot—
we’d been shooting at things

Dustin fell to the ground
everyone left
except for two girls I didn’t know
we carried Dustin inside
he was still breathing
there was just a little hole in the side of his head
there was hardly any blood

We called the EMS…the police
the police arrested me for second degree murder
Dustin had died
his parents pressed charges against me
it was pretty awful

I remember my parents getting there
my dad hugging me
saying he didn’t know what happened
whatever it was we were going to get through it

Being there was—
once I had gotten my mind switched
changed my whole mind frame
I got my GED, took the ACT
You had to learn what to say
what not to say
around certain people
how to protect yourself—your things
against certain things

You have to set yourself up to where
I’m going to be my own self
do my own thing
you have to let them know
if you try to take something from me
or do something
I’m going to protect my self
you have to set those standards

I was very naïve when I went to Jetson
it took me a few months to learn
I wasn’t an overly nice person
but my personality has never been a mad or a mean person

Your kindness is definitely your weakness
until you’ve set yourself to that standard
it took me a while to get adjusted
I was fighting a few times a week
to keep my things
to where people would keep their distance
knew on what levels we could interact

I was completely naïve to an institution like that
how people act
how you’re supposed to carry yourself
it wasn’t a very productive place to be
from my point of view now
on the outside looking in
it could have been a million times better

It helped me realize that it’s not black and white—
that you have two paths in life you can choose
a right and a wrong decision

For a while I thought I had to make the right decision
every time after I had been at Jetson
over time I have realized—
I don’t have to always make the right decision
like smoking a cigarette
staying up late
drinking a beer
or not studying when I have time
so right or wrong
making those decisions is an everyday thing

My goal or main focus in life is
and I think being at Jetson definitely helped me define this—
later in life I don’t want to be at a point
where I will regret the last ten years
the decisions I’ve made

My philosophy in life right now is
put more positive than negative in the world
set myself up to be able to do greater good in the future

I’m just trying to define who I am as a man
realize what it is to be an adult…a mature person
I feel like my values today haven’t much changed
I’ve been able to realize them more
make them more something I value

What I value today is good people
respecting and treating everybody
in a very decent manner
I value peace and everyone getting along
yet in my day-to-day life when I go out
I can’t be around large groups of people
I get defensive if people bump into me…

I just value everybody getting along
treating everybody with respect
it’s just good people treating everybody
the way they want to be treated
on a daily, hourly basis

I have a lot of problems with the juvenile justice system
from my personal encounters
but it would be stupid and naïve for me to say
or even proud for me to say
that I made these decisions
became a better person by myself—
that the people at Jetson didn’t help me
I’m glad the system is in place
a juvenile system and not just an adult system
or I wouldn’t be here today
There are positive aspects to it
I cannot say
it didn’t have a positive influence on me
the people who helped me didn’t make a difference
the things I achieved
have made a difference
as much negative as I can say
I cannot say
I would be here without it

I would like to do some time in the Peace Corps
be able to use Arabic language skills
open doors in other parts of the world
be able to get out and do humanitarian things

My dream job is
getting into different programs and meeting people
helping people get where they’re going
it goes with who I am
wanting to help people

My goals are to graduate
use Arabic to take me to parts of the world
where I can make a difference
it doesn’t have to be a great thing
I just want to make an impact on peoples’ lives
in a positive way
I want to use the Arabic language
I really, really want to see the world

I am contemplating at different points
maybe graduate school
right now undergrad school has really been taking a toll
I want to get out and see other things
if I do graduate school
I don’t think it will be anything immediately after I graduate

School is just dragging on
but it’s just such a small thing
the most important thing is
me keeping on track

I need to stay focused
on my goals day to day
not get caught up in day-to-day struggles
not losing sight of my goals
not getting trapped
in day-to-day financial, emotional, physical problems
to where I pick up my head
and regret that when I was twenty-one or twenty-two,
I didn’t do something because I was worried about this

I don’t want to lose sight of my goals
my goals are what have kept me going
since I was at Jetson
since I was sixteen
for the past seven years
me having the determination to achieve them
and now that I can reach them…”

I’ve used excuses in the past
to keep me from being
the best person I can be
but I’ve reached a point
I’m not going to let daily troubles
keep me from achieving
what I want to achieve

There is definitely a worst thing that I remember
then there is a second worst thing

When I was sixteen
I shot and killed one of my friends——
it’s the worst thing I remember

Two February’s ago
coming back from a Saints game
with two of my friends
we had been drinking
I was intoxicated
the two guys I was with were intoxicated
we were going to drive back to Baton Rouge

I offered to drive
the other guy said no
I woke up on the median of the interstate
we hit them head-on
the lady driving the other car died
my spleen was ruptured
I lost some of my small intestine
I was involved in two deaths in my life that I could have prevented

Sometimes I look at it like
if that wouldn’t have happened
where would I be today?

More likely than not
I would be in a worse position than I am
if that wouldn’t have happened
maybe I wouldn’t have learned things
matured in ways that I have

I’m grateful I’m where I am in life right now
I feel—
if everything happens for a reason
then what makes me so special
that two people had to die for me
to get where I am

My fondest memory is…
my older brother had a son last year
he’s my nephew, my only nephew
He’s very special
I love him to death
seeing him for the first time
and every time I get to see him
get to hold him is good

And every time my family gets together
everyone’s behaving
everyone’s sitting down together
in a good mood
I really like that—
it’s good
it’s probably my fondest memories
time with my family

**Michael’s Thoughts** (Narrative Poem Based on Second Interview Transcript)

What has changed—
one of the most important things
I’ve started boxing again
which I did when I was younger
when I was twelve years old
I’ve been doing that for about two years now
I’ve moved back in with my parents about three miles from campus. I’ve quit smoking cigarettes. I drink a lot less often. My diet is a whole…it is really strict. Those are all life style decisions I’ve made that go along with my choice to be a boxer to compete right now as an amateur.

I just really enjoy doing the boxing thing. So kind of putting other things in line in my life to help me do the best I can with that.

I’ve been in school continuing my education at LSU. Well actually—
I took a year off to run the sushi restaurant kitchen manager was the position I was in which was financially satisfying but that was the only satisfaction I got from that job at all. Getting a nice pay check every two weeks. I didn’t enjoy what I was doing. How I was spending my time.

I felt like I wasn’t going to invest all the time I’ve spent going to school trying to provide a better future for myself to be a role model for my younger sibling, niece, and nephew.

Well, long story short, I guess I felt like I had to get back in school I’ve been back in school for three semesters now. I have seven—ten hours left until I graduate. I’m pretty excited about that.

My older brother had my nephew the last time we spoke. My niece was just born in May. They’re staying at the house right now. They came over last night and are going to be here until tomorrow. It’s pretty exciting—except I had two babies wake me up at eight o’clock this morning wanting to come and play in the bed.

What else has changed—
I guess I’m starting to see—well not starting to see. I guess I’m just maturing every day.
it seems like the more I learn
the more my mind frame changes—alters
maybe it’s my consciousness
it seems the more I realize what’s going on in the world around me
it’s pretty interesting
it’s shaping who I am psychologically
and I guess physically
because when I’m learning about food and things
we put into our bodies
it’s helped me—helped me adjust my—
I don’t want to just say diet
but the life style about how I eat along with the desire to eat good for boxing

My health—
two years ago I couldn’t run a half a mile
on a treadmill—without stopping
now I run a lot farther than that
and right afterwards not be exhausted by any stretch
the decisions I make as far as moral or social decisions
food and health decisions that influence boxing
I find myself being—
I enjoy being around people who like boxing
well I can’t say that—
I’ve met some people who, I guess—
you know any interest that you have with somebody
doesn’t necessarily mean you’re on the same plane
or in the same stage of development in your lives, but uh—

For example—like we went to Miami last year
for the Women’s National Golden Glove Tournament
the young girl I trained with
I think she’s twenty-two now
after the tournament her and I celebrated
we went and got drunk on the board walk
it was raining—she was running—
she ended up hitting her head
busting her head
dealing with that situation and—like
I got in a fight with my older brother just over a year ago
both of those situations
drinking heavily beyond social drinking
drinking to get drunk played a part—
a really big part in both of those decisions
not that I’ve been getting wasted every night
wasted weekly or anything like that
it’s just when I do decide to have a drink
I kind of realize what I’m putting at risk
well, it’s not that I kind of realize
but I have things to risk in my boxing career
and things like that
not that I didn’t before

I’ve become more disciplined
it’s not easy to not eat candy bars, not eat cake, not have cold drinks—
but the more I realize
why I’m doing these things
what the impacts are for them both in the short term and the long term becomes
easier to where you get to the point
you don’t even have to weigh—
hey, I can go out and have four beers tonight
stay up till two in the morning
the training’s going to be horrible the next day
I can just say—well, no—
I’m not even going to consider going to the bar

I spend less time actually with my little brother and my sister now
it’s often they’ll go to a pub and just have a pint or two
it’s cool—
I like hanging out with them
but I don’t smoke cigarettes
I don’t want to go sit in a smoky bar and be around people drinking beer—
but that’s not really much different than how it’s impacted my life
just in the sense that I spend most of my time with myself anyway

I’ve been around—
sometimes you get around people with certain personalities
this one guy that I box with
he’s just a compulsive liar
it’s kind of helped me put it in more perspective—
if I don’t know someone personally
it’s not like be so skeptical or pessimistic
as a person—carry that with me
but it’s like—
if this guy tells me the sky is blue
then I’m going to go check it out myself
and that’s something that I’ve known my whole life
but I’ve come to realize that there’s more—
I see that character trait in someone
I’ve boxed with more than anyone else

My old boxing coach—
he’s someone who
the way I understand the situation—
the way I’ve experienced it and understand my experience
he’s someone who has to be—
it’s kind of his way or the highway
for example—him and I got into an argument and
I spoke to one of the fighters who he trained for three or four years—
telling him about the problem I was having with Coach
Tommy was like—dealing with Coach
you’re going to have to understand—
you’re going to be wrong more times than you’re right
and at that time, you know
the way I looked at that was—
you have to understand that you’re a young man
that you have lots of things to experience
you have lots of ways that you have to mature
Coach is a fifty year old man
he’s raised kids, he’s had a daughter who died of cancer
he has a wife—he’s been married
you have to accept
you’re going to be wrong more times than your right with Coach

I took that as a positive—like you know what—you’re right
I need to humble myself and try to see where he’s coming from
more so than be stuck with these conceptions that I have in my head
that may be misconceptions
so in a later conversation I had with Coach
I said you know I was talking with Tommy
he gave me some great advice
then I said—Tommy told me that with you Coach—
I’m going to have to realize I’m going to be wrong more times than I’m right

Coach’s reaction was—so what’s Tommy saying—
I’m just hard headed—don’t want to listen to other people’s opinion
and in my head I’m like that’s not what I consider about you
but now that you say that—
that’s actually what I was feeling

That seems to be what I’ve learned from people that I box with—
learned that they’ll see things their way
no matter what the facts are—no matter what reality is
it doesn’t influence people as much as I think it should—
as much as what I see as the truth—
of what I understand to be real—
doesn’t necessarily hold the power
that just because you hold something in front of someone that is the truth
doesn’t mean that they’re going to automatically accept
go with what you’re saying—and accept that as the truth

It’s like the guy I train with now
the manager of the fighters I train with
he was telling me—you’re like my hero, man
you know, you’re dealing with an injury—
you’re steady coming to the gym
you’re steady working hard—and you know—
you don’t know when or if
you’re going to be healed and you’re still giving your one hundred percent
waiting for your time to come, and I really respect that about you and admire it—
and to me I just see it as—
that’s the thing about boxing
that’s what attracts me so much to it
I didn’t think about it like that
I just love doing it—
I have a desire to do it
that desire just kind of dictates where I go
it dictates a lot of the life style decisions I’ve been making lately

Also, this guy John is a pro fighter
born and raised in Baton Rouge
he started fighting when he was young
he’s been boxing for pretty much his whole life
and now he’s got these opportunities—he’s fighting on ESPN—
his lost his last three fights and he had the ability
he had the talent and the skills and the know how to beat these guys
to really be a prominent fighter if he wanted to
he told his girlfriend that he really didn’t want to box anymore

I know from him—
I see that the way I feel about boxing
might not always be there—
it might and it might not
boxing is something I don’t want to take for granted now that I have it
I realize I want to learn from that
I want to learn from his experiences
what I kind of see him throwing away
and not do that with anything in my life

It’s one thing I’ve always said
or one thing I’ve adopted
over the past five to seven years
I’ve put enough negative into this world—
I want to end my life having put more positive than negative
This guy Chris who was training at the gym
he’s a mixed martial artist, he fights as a pro
I’m not sure what his standing is—
he’s—like he punched this guy in the first round
and this guy was asleep before he fell and hit the ground
Chris is like 155 pounds—he’s got twenty pounds on me
we spar and I kick his butt
it feels really good
to see people who I can keep up with
doing really good things—
really enjoying themselves—
it’s cool—
I like to be successful at what I do
and it’s really good to have success against people
who are doing good things with their careers in boxing

Well there is something that’s recently change
within the last couple of weeks
my dad just found out that he has emphysema from smoking
a pulmonary, which if I’m not mistaken, is a lung disease along with emphysema
he’s on a steroid regimen—an inhaler regimen
and he’s steady smoking cigarettes
might be smoking more than he was three weeks ago when they told him
so that’s pretty sad

But I heard this guy talking
I think it might have been one of Muhammad Ali’s old trainers
Muhammad Ali was getting a little older, late in his career
a lot of people thought that’s not the best thing to do
put yourself in a boxing ring against the young, hungry guys
who can do some serious damage at your old age—
and his trainer was saying
you can tell them this and you can tell them that—
or you’re an adult—who am I to tell you
how to live your life—
what decisions you need to make

And, you know
that has a significant influence
on how I think about my dad
my dad’s been smoking the whole time I’ve been alive
the reason that I’ve never went more than two days without a meal
is because he’s been working his entire life—
not to take anything away from my mother and what she has done
as far as raising me, being a stay at home mom, working when she’s needed to—
to have supplemental income for the family
But it’s kind of like—
how do I tell another adult
how they’re supposed to live their life
when he’s quite—I mean it’s impossible
it’s a fact that he’s as informed about the consequences
of his actions as anybody else
I can’t tell him anything that’s new to him
all I can do is—
I don’t know—
I mean best case scenario
I can let him know how I feel about it—
keep reminding him about the consequences of his actions
but it’s something that he has to make on his own

I think with adults— especially with mature adults
by mature I guess that might sound arrogant
when I say adult I mean mature adult
not because most people act like children—
people see me and might see me in certain days, hours, or moments of my life
and think that’s a really immature thing you just did or
that shows your immaturity
so it’s really easy for me to judge an adult as being mature or immature
just because I can do it doesn’t mean it’s valid

I know—I don’t want to smoke cigarettes
my sister doesn’t smoke any longer
my older brother doesn’t smoke
my younger brother smokes a lot, and
my mom smokes less than both of them

Me and my mother just went on a trip for about ten days
we just came home last Sunday
we went to Tennessee with her friend that she went to college with
and her younger son who is fifteen

My sister sent me a message over face book saying she missed me
then when I got home we went straight to my little brother’s house
my little brother’s been borrowing my car while I was out of town
he was having problems with his
we were talking for a while—
I sat down on the couch
he came and sat down on the couch right next to me
he was telling me about how he told his boss and everybody at work
how much he was ready for me to come home
before I left his house he gave me a kiss—
I said—you don’t kiss me—what are you doing
it feels good to be missed at best
and you know
that may be a prideful thing
it’s not like I didn’t know that they love me—
but I guess
maybe it’s an ego thing
I want people to show it
it made me feel good

I think I can give some insight into my mom
what she’s doing as far as her career
she’s been working at a retail place—the Hanes place in Tanger Mall
she’s been a manager for about a year—she’s worked there for about three years
they’re sending her to Oklahoma City
to help set up a new store out there
she’s really excited about it
I think if she gets an opportunity to relocate
she’s more than willing to do that
I don’t think that comes from wanting to separate herself from my father
I think she sees it as—
she’s gotten four kids from birth to in their twenties
she has an opportunity to do something like that for herself
she’s more than willing to take advantage of it
which I appreciate—
she enjoys doing it
she doesn’t have any other hobbies she engages herself in
which I wish she would
she doesn’t exercise hardly at all
she’s aging faster than she should and that’s pretty sad
but we were talking about my dad earlier—
we’re all responsible for our lives as adults

On the trip
my mom’s friend—
they met up recently at my mom’s job a little over a year ago
they’ve been close since—
her adopted son’s not completely developed
he has a mental handicap
she’s never taken him to a doctor to get a diagnosis
he’s very—he’s as close to a fully functioning fifteen year old
pretty much as you can be
I mean in the sense that he has the intelligence—
he can read, he can get on facebook, text message, call people
those are not too much physical—
but psychologically he’s very capable of communicating when he wants—
his mom babies him
every problem

When we were in the Smokies
he could walk for a couple of miles and walk back without having any problems
but his mom babies him
one day we were staying in Gatlinburg in the hotel room
this was the third of five nights that we stayed in a hotel in Gatlinburg
a one bedroom with all of us there
it was getting a little—

I needed a little space at that point
he slept till about noon
the first thing he did when he woke up—
grabbed a box of donuts that she had bought
she said let me warm them up for you
he snatched the box from her and laid down on the bed
he’s sitting there eating donuts—
his mom comes up to him and puts his socks on his feet
puts his shoes on his feet
he stands up and she puts a clean shirt on him
she really babies him in ways
I don’t think are conducive to his growth—
when he goes to the restroom
she goes in the restroom with him
she runs his bath water for him
these are all things that he could easily do on his own

He would eat—
I guess I’m kind of venting right now for the whole trip—
he would eat nothing but hamburgers, cheeseburgers, and french fries
it was just really discouraging to me to see that

When we got to Charlotte, North Carolina
to my mom’s friend’s first cousin
we unload the back of the car
Mr. Ken says—Martin, why don’t you grab some bags and help everybody out
I was like—whoa! that would be a big change for Martin
I tried to get him to help with the door for his mom instead of her helping him
Mr. Ken says—I don’t cut Martin any slack when he’s here
the whole trip he was just messing with him, verbally poking at him
it was good to be around Mr. Ken

I had come up with the thought
if Martin stayed in Carolina with Mr. Ken
when Martin wants to go ride in the boat
Mr. Ken could tell Martin—at least you can pick up the gas can
take it to the boat, put gas in it, help set the table, little things like that
Martin really enjoys Mr. Ken’s company—
I think it’s because he treats him as a young man
he doesn’t put his handicap first—he sees him as a young man

Another example of how she treats him—
the 4th of July we were sightseeing in the Smokies
came back to Gatlinburg for the fireworks
Martin had taken a shower before we went to the fireworks
his mother helped him get dressed
I don’t know how the situation came about—
his shorts didn’t get buttoned
my mom, Miss Angel, and I
went to the parking lot where we could see the fireworks
Martin came out a little pouty
stood away from us
I realized why—
Martin’s pants were unbuttoned
his mother didn’t button them for him
he wasn’t going to button his pants
he was going to be in a pouty mood all day

I did water skiing for the first time when we were in Charlotte
that was pretty awesome
Mr. Ken told me that I was skiing behind the boat
better than anyone he had ever pulled before—
I thought that was a compliment

Mr. Ken and his wife Miss Jeannie were gracious hosts to us
treated us so well—
they’d never seen us before
spoken to me or my mom
it was just so great to be with them—
be with people like they were
with the attitudes that they had

I guess—I know this isn’t true as far as the reality of the situation—
but I do have a stereotype in my head
about a lot of people who have money
to be uppity or snobbish—
that was the complete polar opposite of the case right there
I hope to take that situation with me into future situations
not bring that stereotype with me to the situation
And I see myself as an open-minded person
but situations like that
kind of puts a mirror in front of you—
it lets you see that mirror
it’s an opportunity to see about yourself—
I can see how
if I had never met them and their family—
I would still see myself as being a very open minded person
a very non-judgmental person
as far as without getting to know someone
the columns or the categories we want to put people into—
personally, I notice I do it
more than I would like to admit even to myself—
this tendency we have to categorize people
it’s kind of stupid
for lack of a better word

Yes, I have new plans for the future—
but no, my plans have kind of stayed the same
I’ve known for a while one of the things
I want to do with my life is travel
see different places
make positive impacts in people’s lives

There have been new avenues
I’ve opened up for myself through amateur boxing
I’ve competed all around the south—
in a sense boxing’s one vehicle
I can use to accomplish
a lot of the goals and plans
I have for the future

Also with my sociology degree
I’ll be getting in December
that hasn’t too much changed
as far as being a vehicle for achieving another goal
to be a positive influence on people
the goal still being—
I want a career or job I can get both moral and spiritual satisfaction out of
I still—maybe that’s me being naïve that I can get that
working with kids or families or even on a larger scale
doing humanitarian things, working with refugees
I still feel like I can have the opportunity to do things of that nature—
I mean to travel and give me the opportunity to—
Those are really two big goals in my life—
to be able to help people out or to dedicate my daily routine
to making a positive impact
it’s like what my old boxing coach told me—
when someone really wants to be a boxer
someone really wants to do something
they’re going to be training
even when they don’t think anybody’s looking
or the coach isn’t on them to do it—
so that’s kind of—I’m paralleling that to trying to make positive decisions
being the type of person I want myself to be
no matter who may be watching or not watching
not just do things strictly for the fact to influence other people
if I’m doing the right things— being a strong person
that influence is going to get through
whether I see it or not—
it doesn’t necessarily have to be a conscious effort
to hold myself in a different light for other people

On the 17th I plan to go to some cities
figure out if I’d like to spend the next however long—
which is really cool—really exciting—I mean—
I used to think I wanted to live in a city but the more I consider—
I would like for—in a couple of years I would like to have a couple of acres—
I would like to grow my own produce to be able to eat—
which would be a great end goal
to not have to rely on food that’s been processed, sprayed
or animals have been injected or treated certain ways
that’s a goal or plan I have for the future—
to know everything I put into my body
know everything there is to know about it
to be able to live a self-sustaining life style—
with my family, future family, future community

I don’t like putting in—
the more I learn about our economic-political system
the more I would like to be able to just separate myself from the bigger system
in the sense of not feeding the beast I guess you could say—
our economic system is built on consumption
if we’re consuming the economy’s doing good and
if we’re not consuming the economy’s not doing good
I don’t want to be a part of the
consume, throw away system—
we’re using up finite resources
we’re having people work in dangerous conditions
for us to get these products so we can consume them
then usually they’ll just go into a landfill

I would like for my niece and nephew’s grandchildren
to be able to live on this earth
without worrying about rationing of certain resources
because my generation, other generations before and after
chose to live, eat whatever we wanted
to be as luxurious and comfortable as we wanted
without regard to the world we’re creating for future generations—

So my plan is to change in the sense of—
I try to be conscious of the impact of every decision that I make—
and like right now I’m not thinking of the impact of these words—
I’m just thinking and sharing—
for example in areas of my life in terms of what I eat
what I consume
buying clothes and things of that nature
there’s so much material stuff just produced
there’s absolutely no reason for me
to go to any department store and buy new clothes
unless its underwear or socks
all the extra clothes are sitting places and rotting away
just taking up space in the world—
it’s like go shopping at Goodwill that’s second hand—things of that nature

I can tell you what I have feared most of my life
I kind of feel fear is arbitrary—
I’d like to get past it—
like when I injured my elbow I was like—
I don’t want to take time off from the gym—
I was scared people would think
I was just making up this injury as an excuse—
I’ve really feared that people would make a false judgment on who I am or
the nature of my injury—
just based on the fact that they would do it just because—
fear of what people may think of me
my old coach was telling me and that’s what precipitated this—
let the truth ease all that—
you know what the truth is
just let the truth calm all that
that’s all that is necessary

But what I fear most—
I fear, you know, going to prison—
that’s not my biggest fear because I think there are things that are righteous—
that I think are worth going to prison for—
that being said
I’m scared of being the type of person
who could really just commit crimes—
I’ll tell you one of the things I’m most fearful of—
allowing my emotions to overpower my intelligence
doing things that are irreversible and I’ll regret—
that comes with inducing more alcohol than I should—
I’m scared of doing things that you can’t take back
but you can’t take back anything that you do, kind of, in a sense

It is because, like for example, when I was at Jetson
I was a smaller guy, of the minority race in the sense that
not many people were from where I was from—
being small and from the country—
I mean in reality the strike’s against you—
the population to an extent is perceived as a prey
I don’t have a mentality to where—I don’t want to be a wolf
I don’t have that in me very strongly
but I realized—
I don’t know if this is actual fact or what’s in my head about going to prison—
I’m going to have to defend myself and I don’t want to live like that—
I don’t want to live to where one of us—
it’s your well-being or mine—
it’s weird—

If you’re there for reasons—
I feel like our social situation is a lot of the reason a lot of people are in jail
if people in prison would understand that a lot of them are victims
of the same situation or the same system and work together
then a lot of positive things can come out of that—
there was no more of a lack of intelligence
inside the confines of any detention center or jail or prison
I’ve been in than any population—any random population
I guess fear stems from not being able to relax in the sense of—
I fear what could happen to me in prison
if I wasn’t willing to do things to other people to prevent it from happening—
like in the sense there might be this gang or group of guys
threatening people to put money in their commissary—
if not, a lot of bad things are going to happen to you—
personally I’m not going to agree to that so
I’m going to get beaten, stabbed, raped, or something of that nature—
I don’t want that to happen
So whether you defend yourself
or you defend yourself and you get more charges for that—
you’re just in prison for longer—
but a lot of that’s what you see on TV and things of that nature—
so the more I try to educate myself
the less I rely on mainstream media or the less I believe in what they’re saying—
the more gap I see in what they report and what is the truth—
I don’t fear being by myself
I guess some people might
you know, that lonely thing—
I don’t know—
I like me a lot more than I like a lot of other people

I don’t abide by all the rules and laws of our local state or federal government
I—it’s not a rebellious thing but I guess it could be seen than way
I didn’t ask to be born into America into this system
I didn’t agree to follow by these laws, regulations, restrictions put on me
I didn’t agree to my life being governed by these people in power—
if I feel like something’s right or wrong
I don’t see supreme authority lying in government, political, judicial officials
sometimes I do break the law based on those beliefs—it’s not—
I’m not breaking my moral code
doing things that I think that aren’t right or things of that nature—

I do things that are illegal
I smoke marijuana, which is illegal
I ride without my seatbelt and that’s illegal
my inspection sticker’s expired and that’s illegal

Well, picture this—this guy from New Orleans
got caught with marijuana on two separate occasions—
received probation for both of those offenses—
on a third offense he got caught with a large amount of marijuana—
I saw this in the news—I’m not sure what the amount was—
he received life in prison for possession of marijuana after two probations—
he was convicted twice, got probation for those times—life in prison
that’s pretty stiff
I don’t steal
I don’t commit violent crimes
I don’t drink and drive
I wouldn’t consider myself to be a deviant
we’re adults—
we should be able to decide what we do and don’t want to do
Granted not everyone’s going to make the right decision all the time we’re spending billions of dollars to fight drug wars and drug cartels and things of that nature it’s pretty sad—
but the federal reserve—if I go to get a loan at the bank—they put the number in the bank now I’m paying the bank, I’m paying them interest, they’re making money off of nothing besides having control of dispersing the money I don’t appreciate that system I don’t know—there’s a lot of things that I disagree with—
I want to speak out about—but—

My fear of going to prison doesn’t always stem from me breaking the law—it stems from—I’m scared that I make one decision one time in maybe not even thirty seconds—I’m scared I might do something that might send me to prison

I think marijuana can and does have an influence on my cardio capacity I think smoking marijuana—weekly, daily, a couple times a month it’s going to have a negative effect on cardiovascular—um, that being said—I don’t think the impact is anywhere near what it is in cigarettes as far as harmful to your body the one thing I can say is—if I had three snicker bars a week I think I’m doing my body way more of a disservice than maybe smoking three joints a week in the sense that the plant just came straight out of the ground—it didn’t need any help—it needed dirt, sun, and water there’s nothing that’s not one hundred per cent natural about it—granted I don’t grow marijuana I don’t know anybody who does I can’t say what has or hasn’t been done to cultivate the plant itself but I don’t think that’s any different from going to Winn Dixie eating a tomato that I don’t know what pesticide has been put on it—but, uh, as far as—I think the only parallel I can draw to marijuana and cigarettes is the fact that you can smoke both of them there’s also other ways that you can ingest marijuana without smoking it so it won’t, uh, hurt your lung capacity but I don’t see a strong connection between those two at all—as far as smoking

I haven’t had any real problems yet—if I’m not smoking cigarettes, if I’m not eating wrong
I’m not drinking as often or as heavily
which that’s not to say
I was drinking every day or drinking heavily every time I drink
I don’t want to give that misconception
but I guess my point being is that—
there’s a distinct possibility that I am doing myself a disservice by smoking
but I don’t think it’s a really big deal

It does help me
it helps with the way I’m feeling—
psychologically or emotionally
to be honest with you
sometimes if I wake up and I don’t feel like exercising
I smoke—it’ll help get me more ready and in the mood to do what I’m doing—
kind of waken me to the day—so to speak
I think that marijuana has a lot of social stigma that it doesn’t deserve
I think that comes from the main stream media—
our social and political world that we’ve grown up in
I think we’ve been pushed—

I personally feel like I’ve been pushed
to think a certain way about pretty much everything I encounter
trying to take everything on its own merits without any outside—
me and this product and the way I think about it
I really don’t see all the negative statements that comes along with it—
I don’t, uh—
I guess it’s just me lying to myself and how I justify it and maybe it is that—

I just really think that—
it’s like Barak Obama in the White House—
they came out with a statement last week
that said marijuana had no medical benefits—
and then like if I understand it correctly a couple of days later
they came out with—well it does have some medical benefits—
so they don’t know and if they do know
I don’t think the truth has made it out to the general public
I think that in a lot of ways

I’m discovering that when I actually look for things
look for alternative types of information in terms of sources of information
it’s like seeing the other side of my hand—it’s all black and white
it has been really exciting, informing myself
either watching documentaries or reading certain articles that—
I like what this is saying and it kind of gives me an excuse to do this or
it sheds light and helps me look at something in a certain way—
but everybody has an agenda I guess—
I’m reading this book right now by Carl G. Jung—he’s a psychologist it’s about the unconscious mind and the development of the unconscious mind the role it plays in both modern societies and more primitive societies it’s really interesting this book seems to me if it’s bringing what the true meaning of psychology is—psychology is pretty sweet I’m really enjoying it

My main hope or biggest hope—is as I live day to day I continue to grow in the sense that I get over these things that hold me back—that when I’m around new people—like for example in class or on campus or something I’ll get anxious—I’m not really a very sociable person—when I’m in a group or in a class and we’re doing a project together—unless it’s something that I’m really interested in—I’m more—I kind of exclude myself

I let my own insecurities dictate—one of my biggest hopes is to be influenced less and less as I continue to grow by my insecurities let them dictate less of my decisions that I make not allow insecurities and I think that goes hand in hand with fear—I think I let fear kind of dictate a lot of things that I do—even though I’ve been consciously aware that fear shouldn’t dictate anything I do—it’s easy to say that when you’re in your comfort zone then when you get out of it it’s there, you know, you’re not really thinking—get over this real quick—and even when I do think about it—it’s easy to say

I hope that as I continue to grow that there is never another day where—and it’s not this way now—I don’t want to go back to experiencing I look in the mirror and don’t like what I see, you know—I hope I don’t get to that point ever again

I hope that—I hope my dad quits smoking cigarettes I’m thinking he’s worked for Shell—worked off shore for about 25 years he’s been in the oil refinery for some time now—a little over 30 years you retire with your benefits and everything
you die two years later
who wins—
why did you just work your whole life for this company
do all these things

Granted I won my childhood
I won the opportunity—
well I say I won payback
I didn’t ask to be born in America
I didn’t ask to be born to my parents
I’m very grateful for it and the way my parents are
there’s good parents and there’s bad parents
I definitely think my parents are good parents, you know
they’re not the Cosby’s but they’re good parents
I hope my dad gets to enjoy his retirement
I hope my mom—

It seems like they’re in this funk like in this second half of their life
they’re like—going about it until it’s going to end
I hope to never fear death anymore
I have no point in fearing it
I sit and think about it in bed sometimes—
about this trip—
I’ve a little fear about going into Chicago
not being familiar with it and things of that nature
but a lot of that’s really calmed down
a friend of mine posted on face book the other day—
life begins when your comfort zone ends
and I was like—well—oh man

I hope that everybody can find something
they get fulfillment out of like I get out of boxing
I hope that I can continue to box—
I hope that I can continue to compete, you know, with this injury—
if not, then it wasn’t meant to be
I hope that—

I hope I live a life of satisfaction not dissatisfaction
I think that what I may be seeing in a lot of people
I’m not sure whether this is true or not or just based on my observation
the way I understand—
things they do in the first 30 or 40 years of their life have kind of—
that second half of life they kind of reflect on that and disappointment
the mid-life crisis—you hear the phrase and it’s like—
I’ve lived half of my life
my youth is gone
I kind of did this with it or whatever
that kind of like puts a cloud over some people
I don’t ever want to live like that
I don’t want to regret my life—
that’s one thing that got me into the boxing gym two years ago
I can’t remember the exact time it hit me
but I can remember what hit me
I don’t want to be sitting at a bar when I’m 45 years old
watching fights and like—man when I was twelve years old
I could have been a boxer, and you know
I’m talking to people who’ve never seen me without a belly
smoking cigarettes, getting drunk at a bar at noon
and I’m sitting here with what I could have been

If this injury keeps me from competing again—
I’m not going to look at my life and wish
I would have tried to get back into boxing
because, you know, I did
I gave it everything I have—
and that’s for all time—
I hope that if I move to Seattle, none of that radiation from Japan
comes and causes cancer to the population
disease and things like that—
well I hope that doesn’t happen whether I’m there or not
I hope that my niece and nephew grow up in a world
where the opportunities that have been available to me are available to them

Michael’s Experiences (Narrative Poem Based on Third Interview Transcript)

I took a trip this summer via Amtrak
to a few different cities across the country
to check out boxing gyms—
to experience the trip in the different cities—
and to just get away from home
all being the experience itself
not just visiting new places, seeing different gyms, and meeting new people

I got the idea from a coach in a gym in Gonzales, Louisiana—Felix Gym
I was at that gym because I had injured my elbow
I wasn’t currently training at the gym that I had trained at the year prior
my sister’s boyfriend works out at this gym so he invited me to go with him
I got to talking with the boxing coach there
we got to do a little work out together—
he was telling me a little bit about his history as a fighter and a boxer
his life in the sport and away from the sport
things he remembered that he appreciated and things that he regretted—
he said things he regretted was things he had not given to the sport
when he was physically able to
when he didn’t have any responsibilities
such as a family or anything to tie him down—
one thing he told me—
if you’re serious about boxing and you want to take it serious
you should consider getting away from Louisiana
to where there’s a lot more events going on
boxing is getting practiced on a higher level
and people are achieving greater success

So that kind of planted the seed in my head to want to leave town
pursue boxing and life outside—
I’ve always kind of wanted to travel and not be so sedentary
I guess I’ve never been content with just staying in Louisiana
I always wanted at least to experience life beyond
so I tossed the idea around in my head about how I would go about
getting out of Louisiana, experiencing new things
boxing being the vehicle for that

It’s really cool because I’ve always wanted to travel
it’s kind of like boxing provided the avenue or excuse or an opportunity
to do that at least in this one small instance—
and it has the promise of doing that in the future
I guess I had talked it over—the idea with my dad—
about leaving Louisiana and going different places—
he got the idea to look at the Amtrak routes and things of that nature
he came across a two week deal
where you could get up to eighteen different destinations for this one special

My dad suggested that I ride the Amtrak
that’s kind of how I decided to do that
I researched some gyms on the internet—
but I also knew there were places that I wanted to go—
I really wanted to visit Seattle and Portland
I’d kind of already made up my mind before I took the trip
I wanted to live in the Pacific Northwest
because of the natural landscape, environment—
and I guess the preconceived attitude
I had about the life style of people there—the priorities that they held
and that my priorities would line up with theirs—
it did match up with my preconceived notions about the Pacific Northwest
as far as the natural beauty of the landscape, the scenery,
the way people consciously as a whole in the general population
care more about cleaning up after themselves
take care of the place where they live
appreciate its resources—show that in their everyday actions

But, of course, I decided to—
I decided that I want to move to Washington D.C.
the coach left me with the impression that he was very sincere—
he had a lot of wisdom, a lot of experience—
he’d been around boxing his whole life and life experience in general
the way he was willing to share what he learned and knew about boxing
what he’d learned about how to live his life—try to be happy and be successful

He talked with me—he shared his knowledge and wisdom with freedom
he shared it with me and he’d never met me before—
he talked with me like I was an adult—
it was a really good situation—
and with the background of the fighters that he teaches or that train at the gym—
they’ve all had a lot of national and international success
that also led me to decide
I want to at least go and train in the northeast
at least in the area around Philadelphia, Maryland, New Jersey, and New York
that would give me the most opportunity to be around all of those—
there’s a whole lot more boxing activity there
there are a lot of people with high ambition and work ethic
it seems like that’s the place to go if I wanted to train and compete with the best—
then that’s the place to be

You know I don’t want to regret not trying that—
not giving it everything I have—
being happy knowing that I gave it everything I had
not regretting that—you know saying—
well I could have done that or I could have done this
but then never really giving it a shot

I don’t want to pretend to myself or anybody else
with how good of a boxer
how good of a person I can be
I really think it’s just—it’s about wanting to prove to myself—
a lot of it is about me wanting to prove to myself that I’m worthy of things
and that I can do these things just as anyone else—
it just takes the effort and the desire to do it

My younger brother drove me to the Amtrak station in New Orleans
from there we went to Philadelphia—
it was about an eighteen hour ride
we left in the A.M. and arrived late afternoon or evening of the next day
I was sitting next to this one guy in his late twenties from west Louisiana
I’d never been on a train before—
I didn’t realize there’s a reason they sell Amtrak blankets on the train—
it gets absolutely frigid on those cars at night on the train
I had on shorts and a tee shirt
the guy next to me gave me a jacket to wear throughout the night
I really appreciated that
then later on in the trip to get home
there was a girl who was on the train with me—
we had been talking and became acquaintances
I was able to return the favor to her—
and actually there was another kid on the way from D.C. to Chicago
it was cold on the train and I knew it would be
I was able to offer him something to keep warm with

Then we got to Philadelphia and I got my things
I walked to the hostel which was pretty much across downtown Philadelphia—
it took me a good hour or so to walk there
it was a nice sunny afternoon
it was really cool—funny—I’m not sure what word best describes my thoughts
they had vendors selling “Rocky” tee shirts on the corners in Philadelphia
you know, like the movie—Sylvester Stallone tee shirts—
I thought how long can these vendors drive there each day
sell these tee shirts to people about a movie
that has been out there at least a couple of decades
I thought that was cool and interesting

So that night—did I train—I’m trying to figure out—
on the whole eighteen hour train ride I barely would eat
I didn’t get very much sleep with the train being so cold and uncomfortable
then I walked a few miles to the hostel
set all my things down there and was there for about a half an hour
then I ended up walking—
I had to have stayed in Philadelphia the first night without training at the gym
I didn’t train—I wouldn’t have had time to do all of the walking that I did do

I walked to the address that I had for one gym about seven miles from the hostel
there was nothing there but an abandoned building
I ended up walking to another gym on the other side of town
I would stop and ask people for directions
which may be something you don’t want to do—
ask people that you don’t know in a city where you don’t know anybody
or have any resources—
kind of don’t want to let people know you’re gullible—
I found people in most cities to be really nice and helpful—
I didn’t have any problems with anybody that I asked directions
except in Chicago in one place and this also happened in Portland—
you know you’re walking beside someone on the street
you’re walking past them side by side six inches from you and you’re talking
they act like you weren’t there at all
which is maybe a survival technique or something—
maybe they thought I was homeless
I had my book bag with me
and my tennis shoes on

So in Philadelphia when I did finally get to the gym after walking all day
not really eating very well, not really sleeping very well the night before
I talked to the coach who was there
he asked me if I had anybody who was going to watch me train
when I explained to him why I was there
that I had been in contact with somebody at that gym
he said he would watch me train, give me pointers, things of that nature—
but about fifteen to twenty minutes after jumping rope and hitting the heavy bag
my legs just cramped up so bad on me
from not taking care of my body the previous day
that was really bad—
really not a great feeling—
having traveled all of that distance—
through the train, through walking,
even the fears that I had before I left on the trip—
the anxiety I had about it—
to get there and not be able to train or work out—
it was a pretty bad feeling—
I felt pretty low that afternoon
I ended up walking part of the way back to the hostel
and riding public transportation

We ended up going on a ghost—the hostel was hosting a ghost tour—
almost like they have in New Orleans
they’ll take you to places, tell you that they’re haunted
tell you the history of it
we were walking around in Philadelphia talking and enjoying ourselves
the ghost tour wasn’t that much of a bummer
I met a gentleman that night—he was in his late forties, of Indian ancestry
he was from Singapore—he worked there
we had met prior to this evening in the kitchen
after the ghost tour he was drinking some brandy
he offered me a glass—so we sat down and talked
he worked with a luxury real estate—rental hotel properties, things like that
I’m not exactly sure what it was that he did
one thing he commented on about Americans—
everything is—he used a couple of curse words that we use all of the time—
almost every other word in his conversation
was “shit”, “fuck” and things of that nature
we talked about how we communicated with each other
in general as Americans
he was telling me in China the percentage of people in poverty is high
if you drive along the interstate the Chinese government had built—
everything along the interstate looks nice—
buildings, homes, things of that nature—
then the farther you get away from the interstate
you see how the common people live

I told somebody something a few weeks ago—
my mom—my parents—both of them
I probably have the worst memory of anybody on this side of fifty—
but then I revised that statement to maybe seventy years old
because the conversation I had with that gentleman
it went along for a couple of hours and it was really interesting
after the conversation—I guess this is my pride and my vanity—
one thing I do remember is him speaking highly of me—
as a young man—
the way I conducted myself in our conversation—
the things I expressed, the way that I felt, understood, and thought things

The following morning I had to be on the train to Washington D.C.
which was only a few hours away—a three or so hour train ride from Philadelphia
one of my friends who trained in the boxing gym with me in Baton Rouge—
has a friend named Kimmie who now lives in Alexandria, Virginia
I was able to stay at the house
where she and her roommates live while I was in town—
it was in the heart of the district—
I didn’t do any touring of D.C. while I was there
the first thing I experienced in D.C.
was waiting for my luggage for about two hours
then it not coming out of the carousel from where the luggage was coming from—
it was the last time I checked my luggage on that trip
I left my information with one of the ladies at Amtrak

I ended up walking to Subway
on my way there, there was a gentleman—I guess it was a homeless guy
looking around the trash can—
he pulled out a clear plastic container with two tablespoons left of liquid in it
he was going to drink it out of the straw—
I had some drinks in my bag so I stopped him and gave him one
I had checked two of my bags but I had one bag I carried with me
I had some assorted nuts, some drinks, and some other snacks in this bag—
I gave him a drink that I hadn’t opened yet
then I went over to Subway and got my sandwich—
they charge you like five cents or so for plastic bags at Subway in D.C.
I guess because of pollution
I’m not exactly sure what the direct cause of it was
I know it’s something positive—
I got my sandwich and went outside on a park bench across the street to eat
Amtrak called and said they had put my bags on the train going to Chicago
they had gotten them off before they left
I was able to go pick up my luggage
just a couple of hours after it was misplaced
I was happy

It was roughly 4:30 in the afternoon on a week day—
it took from the heart of D.C.
to the driveway of the boxing gym less than twenty minutes—
Capital Heights, Maryland is right there—
so that’s pretty cool

I was waiting there for the coaches—
the gym there’s actually a big shed on about an acre of property
that’s owned or leased by the church that sits on the property—
one of the coaches was in Las Vegas for a special fight for a tournament
the other coach hadn’t arrived yet—
a gentleman who worked at the church let me in
I sat down and was having this conversation—it wasn’t hard—
there was about a half dozen people or so—
I was having this conversation with this lady
who had just sent her daughter to the University of Arizona
she was a really nice, genuine person
that is the story for most of the people
I had any type of conversation with on my entire trip—
I got positive reaction from almost everyone that I spoke to—
it was cool—it helped—
it was good being away from home and being comfortable around people

So long story short, coach showed up at the gym
I can’t remember all the details or it wouldn’t be so short, as short—
we worked out—we did a little bit of talking
one of the guys who was at the gym—
I don’t know how he was affiliated
he was really familiar with everybody who was there
they asked me if I was coming back the next day—
so I let them know that I didn’t know if I was ever going to be back
the man said, oh man—
I wish we’d have had a camera so we could take pictures with you
they wanted to take pictures with me—
and that was a real heartwarming moment—
it was cool—
and I didn’t have anything, any accolades or anything—
I didn’t have a reputation, or a history, or know anybody who was familiar
with anybody who talked me up to any of these people who I had met
they all met me for the first time on face value—
the people told me they enjoyed me
they appreciated who I was

That was a really cool, uplifting thing about the trip is that—
I still am not as outgoing or as confident in my actions as I’d like to be
I got a lot of positive feedback in that way on this trip
it shows, you know—that’s one of those things—that I think will help me
build to be a stronger person in the future

That night instead of taking the metro back to Virginia—
the coach wouldn’t hear any of that
he gave me a ride in his car—he took me to Virginia—
we were just talking about boxing—talking about life
one of the things he was telling me that he had read on a tee shirt
that apparently stuck with him and has stuck with me since then—
hard work beats talent that doesn’t work hard every day—
so I like the way that sounds and it makes perfect sense to me—
maybe that’s the criteria for me to remember things—
it has to be like spot on for a situation

Kimmie was outside smoking a cigarette when we arrived
she helped me get my things out of the trunk as well as the coach
so she met him—they introduced themselves
we had a couple of words of conversation, not very long at all
afterwards she said that she had gotten the impression
he was a real sincere person and a nice guy—I felt the same way

So that night, me, Kimmie and her roommates bar-b-que'd chicken kabobs
and just kind of hung out for the evening
the next morning I had to be on a train to Chicago
Chicago wasn’t too far from D.C.—seven or ten hour trip—

On the way to Chicago, I met this kid who was about the same age—
he was from Arizona and was stationed in New Jersey—he was in the navy
they assigned us seats on that train
we ended up sitting right next to each other
we talked for most of the trip
he said he looked forward to me moving to D.C.
us hanging out together—
I’m not sure how far away New Jersey is from D.C.
maybe a couple of hours—that was pretty cool
he was in town for his cousin’s graduation from a military academy in Chicago
neither one of us had ever been to Chicago before
we got off the train and figured out together
where we were each going via the metro
we walked with each other to the Walgreens which sold metro passes

He went to the metro station he was going to and I went to the one I was going to
we had exchanged contact information
while I was at the gym in Chicago later on that evening
he had sent me a text saying his family was in town
they had rented a car
if I needed anything or was stuck anywhere I could get in touch with him
they could give me a ride or help with anything I needed
I really appreciated that

So I got on the metro—got to the hostel where I thought I was booked to stay
it ended up I was booked at another one across town
they had a bed available so I was able to stay there that night
from there I took the metro and walked to the boxing gym in Chicago
the girl who worked behind the desk at the gym
was a sociology major—graduating this semester
that was a pretty cool coincidence—

I stayed at that gym, worked out for a couple of hours—
well actually there were two training classes that lasted an hour and a half a piece
I did both of those—
one was for a beginner amateur, the other one was for more experienced amateurs
the guy who was teaching the class for the experienced amateurs
was an amateur himself
I think I could teach him some things
as well as he could teach me some things—
that’s one reason that I’ve decided against the gym in Chicago—
the guy who would have been teaching me
wasn’t as experienced in life or boxing
nor had he been able to take advantage of that experience
to build his knowledge
as far as the coach in D.C. had—that’s for sure

So up to this point
I’d kind of not had the opportunity to work with the coach in Philadelphia
in D.C. I got to work out and I really enjoyed my experience
in Chicago I could either take it or leave it—
you know there wasn’t anything about Chicago that said—
I want to be there—that’s where I belong
so that night I got back to the hostel, took a shower,
got to a little grocery store down the street
got some fresh vegetables, fresh ingredients
cooked dinner that night—
I didn’t really talk to many people at the hostel—
the following morning I got on a train
was on it for about thirty-six hours to Seattle—
no, it was scheduled to be thirty-six
it ended up taking forty-eight hours
I was not a happy camper—
the last two hours I wanted to rip my hair out

Washington was interesting—something I learned about Washington
the mountain range that goes through Washington state—the Cascades—
on the eastern side of the mountain range
it’s arid, dry, and sunny
on the western side of the mountain range
it’s overcast, green, chilly, windy, and rainy

I made it to Seattle and ended up walking about four miles
in the wrong direction from the train station—
then I got back on the right path—
I ended up getting to the hostel
I went that night to a sushi restaurant
two or three doors down from the hostel
I ended up having—like my bill—I had seventy dollars’ worth of sushi—
I had two beers and the rest of the money I spent on sushi
the bill came out to about seventy dollars with the tip
I was just eating—the food was really great there
you know I’d heard about how good the fresh fish was in Seattle
it definitely didn’t disappointment me
the sun was still up and I was barely able to walk back to my bed at the hostel—
I just went to sleep

Before I had sushi I did go to the market in Seattle—the Pike’s Place Market—
I walked around there—it was pretty awesome
the next morning I was up about seven o’clock
I was outside stretching
this guy pulls up and says are you about to take a run
I said yeah
he said do you know where you’re going
I said I have no idea
he said I’ll tell you what to do—
run down to the water and when you get down to the water take a right
it’s a sculpture park
you’re running on a cement path along the ocean—
I guess it was the Pacific—so that’s what I did—
it was about a forty-five minute run—
it was a nice run
on about half way back it started to drizzle
I made it back to the hostel—
took a shower, then walked back to the Pike’s market—
I was going to get some food to cook
I got some fresh salmon, some bok choy—
they had baby bok choy which I had never seen before—
it was really good—you know bok choy has a lot of white on the stem
but it was really green—it was great
they had these peaches that were really huge—like soft balls
they were really sweet—they were awesome
so I went back to the hostel and cooked the salmon and the bok choy

I went to the gym in Seattle—it’s called the Bumblebee Boxing Club
I took the city bus there—
if you stay within the downtown area you don’t have to pay any bus fare—
I got to the boxing club in Seattle and nobody was there—
I waited around for them for about an hour or so
then the assistant coach showed up—
I introduced myself to him then some of the fighters showed up
he showed me the work-out regimen that they went through every day—
I stretched out and got through with the work-out regimen
by then the head coach showed up—he was probably in his early sixties—
he was really nice, called himself Coach B—
I guess for Coach Bumblebee
they had a secret handshake that all the fighters and coaches do with each other

We had a good work-out and then we ended up running
we had to run from the gym
I was going to run with the team
there were these two brothers—
one must have been eight, the other one was twelve
he wanted his older brother to slow down and run with him
instead of pushing himself and running with the guys
I kind of stayed back between them—closer to the younger brother
he was behind
I kept trying to encourage him to keep up
there was a shortcut which the younger brother and the older brother took

I ended up catching the other guys who were in front of us
we went down this one hill—we’d already gone up one hill—
it was all hilly running
we went down one hill then back up a hill—
it was a nice little run
I was the first one who did the whole run to finish
coming up that second hill I felt like my legs were just so tight
still hurting so bad
once I got to the top and got a little bit of straight away and got my second wind
I couldn’t stop my legs from churning—
we made it back to the gym
I did some shadow boxing in the ring—
and this whole time in all these gyms, you know—
I’ve had surgery on my left elbow
but I’m not able to use it doing anything so—
even taking this trip being injured it was weird because I never—
I wasn’t even sure that I’d ever be able
to use my elbow again in boxing and be okay with it
but I—I—it was cool—
I’m really glad I went now
we finished working out in Seattle and the coaches were really cool there—
everybody was, but the coaches especially—
you know open arms—more so than anyone

I caught the bus back to the hostel—went back, went to bed, and went to sleep—
I had to be on a train going to Portland
I got to Portland and the first thing I noticed outside the train station was—
there was what I thought was a trash receptacle on the sidewalk—
it was a three or four tier recycling can—
it was something strange—it was cool though—
I thought that the idea of it just to be conscious of it by the general population—
well also in Portland—
it was the only place I saw syringes on the sidewalk as well
which I assume weren’t used in proper medical fashion

I got to the hostel in Portland and set down my stuff next to my bed
got lost walking towards the metro
got directions a few miles later and took the metro to the gym
got off and walked the rest of the way
worked out with the rest of these guys
this is the only place I did any sparring
I was in there with a guy who is probably about 165 pounds
he outweighed me by at least thirty pounds
we were only hitting each other in the body, no head shots
but I could only use my right hand so I was moving around a lot—
it was a cool experience—we did two rounds
the whole time the coach talked to him in Spanish—
I learned—I think head is cabeza
I learned by him saying no head shots over and over—
I learned what head was in Spanish

The coach in Portland spent almost an hour or more just talking to me
about maturing in life and mistakes we make—
mistakes he’s made and mistakes he’s seen other fighters make
and other people who don’t have anything to do with boxing—
just things that have the potential to take away what we’re working towards
keep us from achieving what we want to

But I wanted to say in Seattle before I left the gym
both the head coach and the assistant coach
and two of the guys that I was running with—they made me do—
they wouldn’t let me leave without at least attempting
the secret hand shake with them—
by the time I left I knew it
I don’t know it now
but I was able to do it before I left and that was something—
they wanted me to be a part of that
I thought that was really cool too

So in Portland I had a nice work out—I did the only quasi sparring of the trip
when I got back outside on the patio of the hostel
they were having live music—
some local people and some people who were staying at the hostel—
also while staying at the hostel
before I went to the gym
I was making myself some fried eggs and some mushrooms to eat
as I was doing that, you know after I got done cooking
before I had eaten my plate of food
I was washing my pots and pans to clean up after myself
and as I was doing it this young lady, I say young lady—
she was retired
she told me she had just moved to Portland
I don’t know why she was staying at a hostel if she had just moved there
I didn’t ask—
she asked me where I was from—she made a comment—
you’re one of those people that you read about but never see—
just because I was doing my dishes before I ate
that was just something that I did just because I was being myself—
she thought it was something extra ordinary
I think that was cool

That is one thing I got from this trip—
if I just keep being myself
keep trying hard at whatever I’m doing
I’ll be okay because I’m not a bad person—
it’s cool to know

So I got back from the gym that night
they were having live music outside when I got there
it was the last guy on the set—just him and his acoustic guitar—
I guess he was in his fifties or sixties and he had a head full of long grey hair—
he was singing—it looked like he was enjoying doing his singing
we were enjoying hearing him playing music and singing
afterwards everyone was getting up to go
again me just being the type of person I am—
I started to help fold up the chairs and put them away—
I don’t feel right going off and letting somebody else be doing something—
I don’t even like to be served in a restaurant—
if they’d let me go fill my own drink up I would—
actually I do that at the restaurant where my little brother works
so I was helping clean up a little bit and there were some folks around my age—
two young girls and a couple of young guys having a conversation
I noticed the girls had an accent—

I was sitting at the table by myself at this point after cleaning up—
and they were sitting at another patio table
I was having a local beer that was brewed in Oregon
one of the girls asked me about it and I said I’d never had it before
she asked if she could try it—
we ended up having a conversation
they invited me to come sit with them and—
I’ve still got tennis shoes on, socks full of sweat from working out
sweaty shorts—wind breaker and a muscle shirt under it
all wet from working out—
they invited me to come to a bar—
I said no, I don’t want to go, thank you—
they said—oh, come with us—
the two young girls were Dutch from Holland, the two guys were from New York
I knew as our conversation was going on—
before they invited me to go out with them
we were talking about political and economic issues and things of that nature—

I don’t know why this conversation came up
I can’t just have this conversation about nothing
I don’t know
it’s weird—
that chit-chatty conversations without any substance to them
have never really been my strong suit
some people can do this for a goal—
they’ll pretend to go along with the conversation to—
maybe in a manipulative manner just to get what they want out of it in the end—
I see that with relationships sometimes too—
people will go along with certain things just for the back end of the benefits
when it’s really a facade kind of thing the whole time for something else
I like to think that I don’t pretend too much—
my idea of this conversation was to convince me to go with them—
We walked about four blocks down from the bar—we had a good time—
we sat outside—just talking and having a good time
one of the guys from New York told me
I had a perfect American accent—
apparently we do talk slower in Louisiana—
I got back to the hostel after we had been at the bar
I was making myself some food in the community kitchen
the guys from New York had walked to McDonald’s and came back
they saw me eating—
fried eggs with chives, red onions
dehydrated mushrooms, a couple of pieces of toast
they came back while I was sitting down eating
they came in and said—oh, man, that looks so good
I said yeah, it took me less time to make this than it took you to go to McDonald’s
one of the guys said—I can’t imagine actually cooking myself something to eat

I didn’t comment anything about that—
but while we were at the bar the girls—
apparently they knew more about the American culture in New York than I do
day were saying the guys were from the upper west side—
they made it sound like an upper class type of environment—
I didn’t ask anything about family economic background or anything like that—
with that comment combined with what the girls were talking about
maybe he never did have to cook for himself
I went to bed that night, woke up, and had to catch a train to Chicago

Something was wrong with the tracks or the trains
so we had to get on a bus from Portland to—
I can’t remember what city we got off the buses and got onto a train—
we got on the buses around 1 P.M. and got on the train about 8 P.M.—
I’d met a girl from—I want to say Wisconsin
she told me about AmeriCorps where she was working—
she was working on the eastern half of Washington
where there are apple orchards
with migrant workers who were working in some capacity with apple orchards
she had gotten to Portland from there and was headed towards Minnesota
she got off and was hitchhiking to someplace
where her sister was having a wedding

I’d heard of AmeriCorps before
but it was something she put in my head
about looking towards them for a career in the future—
I’ve submitted an application to one job since then
So I met the girl—she was really cool, we talked and played cards
we met some other people
around our age and some older people as well
we were playing cards and having fun—
one thing that I remember besides the coach telling me
hard work beats talent that doesn’t work hard
was one of the ladies I met in the dining car on the train—
she was real liberal and from Seattle—
she was talking about people blaming President Obama for things
I was like—well, I voted for President Obama
but I didn’t vote for him to continue these wars or to start new wars—
she agreed with me—

The main thing I wanted to talk about my experience with her was
she wanted a special request with her meal—
she asked this of the waitress and the waitress was like—
sure I’ll tell the chef it was because of this reason
and she told the waitress—
you can tell whatever you want to
just don’t tell them I said it because I don’t want that lie on me—
and what I got from that is—
if little white lies aren’t necessary, you know little things you don’t even—
there’s no point in even lying about the smallest thing—
just to have that principal—
I don’t want any negative attached to me being put out
a lie or something of that nature

I’ve been thinking about that and I consider—
I think it’s helped me act more maturely in some situations—
even minute situations
that don’t have a big impact on the grand scheme of things—
but do in the sense of how you train is how you’re going to fight at the gym
how you act in little situations
how you act consistently is going to affect how you act on the grand scale

So talking to her and also talking to the coach in Portland—
if anybody is ever willing to share what they understand
to be wisdom and understanding
or knowledge from life experience
or something that they’ve implemented into their life
or learned in their life and if they’re willing to share that with me—
I would be cheating myself if I didn’t listen to it and consider it—
you know you don’t have to take everything as truth
that somebody wants to impart
some wisdom or knowledge that somebody wants to give to you—but to not listen to it, examine it would be to cheat myself—
anytime anybody has anything they want to share
as far as knowledge or wisdom goes—
I think that’s been something I’ve been consciously trying to do—
listen to it, try to understand it
and don’t write it off because of who’s saying it—
make a real point not to write off any knowledge without considering it—
I just have to practice it

By the time I left D. C.
it was kind of like something’s got to top D. C.
it wasn’t the city of D.C.—
it was the gym, the coaches, the fighters and their attitude, ambition
I felt like the gym in D. C.
would give me the most opportunity for success in boxing
I kind of decided that that was the bottom line with the trip
one of the top priorities in my life and I think will be for—
as far as for a fighter maybe for up to the next decade
and as a part of my life maybe, God willing—
I’ll live long enough to have a long, enjoyable boxing, coaching
because even as a fan I’m the biggest cheerleader—
you know cheering for the guys that I know and my team—that’s really cool

So, yeah I think I’ve decided that I’ll be going to D.C.
because of everything they had to offer—
it was just like that was the scale that everything else
had to get measured against—nothing topped it—
as I was experiencing it—the top was D.C.

The coaches at all the gyms asked me to get in touch with them
I did that
they hoped to see me in the future at events
I think it’s going to be like that when we see each other in the future
I think we’ll see each other
they’re going to be happy that I made it to where I’m at
I’m going to be happy that they’re still doing what they’re doing
it’s—you know a great thing

Michael’s Future Expectations (Narrative Poem Based on Fourth Interview Transcript)

Overall
my life as a college student
was a positive experience
I lived a lot of life
learned a lot about myself
outside the classroom
I cannot think of much
I learned in the classroom
that will benefit me

Being a sociology major
I was able to take classes
that helped me understand
fully embrace
the part of my personality
that cares about
spends time
thinking about society
and social issues

My care for social issues
started long before university
is a major part of who I am
how I think
maybe that’s
what drew me to sociology

I’m not trying to imply
I took full advantage of
everything LSU had to offer
in terms of opportunities to grow
develop as a person—
looking back
my favorite part
was graduating

I can honestly say
there are few lessons I learned
in the classroom
that have prepared me for life

I’ve learned interesting facts
about history
that have been hidden
from most of the public
on the other hand
I’ve had teachers
teach history in a manner
I consider purposely skewed
to portray
people, nations, and historic events
in a less than
fully honest light

I generally feel apathetic
toward my classroom experiences in college
with the exception of a few
literature, sociology, and religion classes
where I felt objectivity and
having students engage in self-reflection
were major goals of the instructors

Outside of the classroom
in my “real” life
I learned a lot about myself
made many mistakes
that have helped
on my continuing development
into the person
I’m becoming

I’m learning the values of
hard work
honesty
positive desires
family
friendships
determination
being conscious of trying to limit mistakes

I want to live a
healthy
meaningful
fulfilling life
I can be proud of

I can’t help but hear
MLK Jr.’s voice in my heard (paraphrased):
I want to live a long life
but longevity has its place
I want to live a full life
as far as age goes
instead of putting so much emphasis
on longevity
I want to gear my
mind and attitude
to making everyday
a day to be proud of
and not counting on me being here
50 years from now

I owe myself
my spirit
my God
and this world
more time and effort
toward selfless thoughts and actions than
I currently spend

I see this as a side effect
of our society
a person with a fulltime job
and a hobby
and/or family
hardly has time
to make a real effort
to get out and
make an impact

Granted
we can all
do small things
to make a difference
in our daily lives
but too much
of our focus is geared toward making money
acquiring goods

I hope for a day
when drone strikes don’t kill innocent civilians
while they’re at a funeral
for innocent civilians (their friends and family)
who have been killed
in drone strikes

I dream of a day when
international corporations
can’t donate millions of dollars
to the only two candidates running
for the U.S. presidency
so no matter who wins
their guy is in
I dream of a day
when I can have
peace of mind
peace of heart
without exception

I hope for a day
when I can put forth
satisfactory effort
and can be satisfied
with the effort I put forth

The future is a
very broad span of time
I want to live a lifestyle
that includes
sharing and receiving
a lot of love
with the people
I interact with

I want to be
in a position
to have wisdom
from my experiences
in this life
and have an avenue
to share that wisdom
with younger
or less experienced people

I want to live
a lifestyle
conducive to genuine laughter
and happiness
I want to live
a laid back lifestyle
not out of laziness
but because
I’ve spent
most of my life earning it

I want to have a family
and live to see generations
under me grow
I’m not sure
I want to bring
a child/ children
into this world
because I don’t
care for the direction
the powerful are leading
and don’t want
to subject anyone
to the future this world might hold
maybe I’ll adopt

I want to lead
a simple lifestyle
in the future
but I don’t want
to have to worry
about a warm bed
or where my next meal
will come from

I want to have enough
to live a harmonious lifestyle
to put that hope into action
harmonious with people and the earth
I want to one day be producing
from seedling to the dinner table
all or most of the food
that I and my family eat

In 10 years
I hope to be
within a couple years
of retiring
from a successful
boxing career
or possibly
just have had retired

I hope to be healthy
sharing my experiences
with the younger
less experienced
helping them develop
into successful people
and boxers
I hope to be enjoying
and sharing happy memories
that I’ve made in this life
I hope to be continuing
to make memories
that I will cherish
and hope to
still be learning from my mistakes

I hope to not be
paying rent or a mortgage
I hope to be spending time
with my mother, father,
brothers, sister,
niece, nephew,
and my other relatives

I hope to be putting
my positive thoughts
and desires into action
I hope to be of a
more mature state of mind
and will have a
better understanding
of my capabilities
and limitations
as an individual
and an actor in human society

I’m proud
of the way I’ve lived
I don’t know that
I’ll live to 70
but one of my biggest fears
is dying unhappy
dying with a large sense of regret
about how I’ve lived
and how I’ve treated myself
and others in this life

I want to be able
to look back on my life
with a certain
sense of satisfaction
that I haven’t lived in vein
and allowed my life
to be caught up in
and defined by the inconsequential

Discussion

I composed the four narrative poems while simultaneously conducting research for this study. They represent what I believe was important at the time I wrote them. When I shared them with Michael, he reacted positively. He felt comfortable with the overall arrangement and information that was included. At some future time I may write new narrative poems in different styles or with more creative nuances. My hope in having compiled these narrative poems closely resembles a point that Richardson (1997) makes regarding one of her poems: “They model…a way of telling that creates a bodily and emotional response” (p. 166). I end this chapter with a meaningful quote from Richardson (1997) who influences me greatly.

By settling words together in new configurations, the relations created through echo, repetition, rhythm, rhyme let us hear and see the world in a new dimension. Poetry thus suggests a way out of the numbing, disaffective, disembodied, schizoid sensibilities characteristic of phallocentric social science (p. 166).

Richards words provide inspiration throughout the whole analytical process, particularly the portions that include creating narrative poems. If I accomplish any of the points that Richard makes in any of my poetry, then I am satisfied.

Exhibit XIII

As time went by, I became more and more consumed by my duties as a guidance counselor at Scenic High. I had several additional confrontations with teachers, and they complained about me behind my back. These altercations always hurt me. At the same time, however, other teachers accepted me and respected my positive attitude towards the students as well as my work ethic. I had also started to develop a tougher skin and kept reminding myself that most of the negative feelings and behavior towards me were racially induced. Some of the teachers really did not want me at Scenic High simply because I was White. I experienced first-
hand a reverse form of racial discrimination—I was the hated minority and it definitely was not pleasant. It was a very lonely existence at times but somewhat easy to ignore when I was working with students who did not seem to notice or care that I was White. I think the students realized that I liked them and was there to be helpful, considerate, and empathetic.

The teachers who resented me viewed me as someone who had power simply because I tested students and made schedules, and this affected their opinion of me. A few teachers even accused me of placing the “bad” students in their classes on purpose. I feel certain that they would not have had felt the same way if I had been Black. At times certain teachers would go to the principal and complain. Although I don’t think he believed them, he felt obligated to call me in to discuss these complaints and to assure himself that nothing they were saying was true. I let him know that I was aware of most of the complaints but that they were not founded on anything other than that particular teacher’s imagination and resentment. I explained that I didn’t have time to do all of the plotting and scheming that would be necessary to accomplish what I had been accused of, but more importantly I wasn’t that type of person. I also let him know that I really wanted to work cooperatively with all of the teachers if they would be willing. I explained that my main concern and concentration was to be kind, understanding, and helpful to each student in any way possible. And what I said to him was wholly true—I really cared about each and every student and enjoyed working with them. I felt the same way toward the students at JRDC and carried those same interests and concerns with me to Scenic High, and these feelings and concerns grew in leaps and bounds as time went by and I got to know and understand each student better as an individual.

Within a couple of years of JRDC being closed and most of us having been moved to Area I for various jobs, the political decision makers at the headquarters office decided to begin
housing female students again and to do so at the LTI, Baton Rouge campus. The numbers of female students were few at first, but they gradually grew. Initially the females were housed and went to school in Area II, the area where JRDC had been originally located. As the number of female students grew to be too great for the space available in Area II, they were moved to Area III, the area where JRDC had been when it was closed. I was responsible for testing and making schedules for female students as well as male students. Over the years, as the number of students grew, a few more teachers were hired; most were Black but a few were White. The newly hired White teachers were not totally accepted, but they never seemed to be as hated and resented in the same way that I was.

Teacher complaints and confrontations
reverse racial issue—White minority
principal involvement
importance of students made known

Female students return
more teachers hired—mostly Black, a few White
CHAPTER 6
RE-WRITING THE NARRATIVE OF ADOLESCENCE/JUVENILE DELINQUENCY:
VISUALIZING UNIQUE SKETCHES, PROJECTING FRESH APPROACHES:
CONCLUSION

To call for imaginative capacity is to work for the ability to look at things as if they could be otherwise…To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real. It is to see beyond what the imaginer has called normal or ‘common-sensible’ and to carve out new orders in experience. Doing so, a person may become freed to glimpse what might be, to form notions of what should be and what is not yet. (Greene, 1995, p. 19)

What will it take us to break out of the 19th century institutions that imprison us…? What will it cost to refuse a shadow life—to demand a seat at the banquet, not just a menu in the waiting room? What will it cost us as a society if we do not break free of the chains that we drag behind us into the millennium? What if we do nothing? What if policymakers, administrators, parents, teachers, and students continue to stare steadfastly into the mirror, weaving and singing to no purpose as life passes us all by? (Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2003, p. 110)

“Caring involves stepping out of one’s own personal frame of reference into the other’s” (Noddings, 1984, p. 24).

“As human beings we want to care and to be cared for. Caring is important in itself” (Noddings, 1984, p. 7, original emphasis).

“When it is said that education is development, everything depends upon how development is conceived. Our net conclusion is that life is development, and that developing, growing, is life” (Dewey, 1997, p. 49, original emphasis).

Exhibit XIV

It is amazing how quickly the many years I worked at Scenic High flew by as new students constantly came and went. As students were released or placed on probation and went home or elsewhere, new students immediately replaced them. Occasionally students returned within a year or so because they broke the conditions of their probation or they got into new trouble with the law. However, all parties generally had good reason to celebrate regardless of whether the student was coming or going. Sometimes after leaving students kept in touch with friends they had made while staying in the juvenile prison, and when this happened their news was generally shared with everyone else. Students also sometimes contacted me to get school
records or other information they needed, but in some instances we never had contact again. Losing all contact with a student and having no idea how they were doing was always a sad affair.

Throughout the years changes continued to take place: the principals changed a couple of times and the superintendents changed more frequently than that. Even the title changed from superintendent to warden at one point, and this changed once again to director quite recently. The name of the juvenile prison, Louisiana Training Institute, also changed, first to Jetson Correctional Center for Youth, and more recently to Jetson Center for Youth. Most of these changes were politically induced for some reason that was never shared with anyone except for the principal. Along with the name changes came new rules regarding employee parking. A new parking lot had been built outside the border of razor-topped wire fences, and most employees were required to park their personal vehicles there. A few people were able to continue parking on campus, but I was not one of them. I didn’t mind, however, because I liked to walk. That was not the case for most employees, who were carted in on a bus, a golf cart, a work truck, or sometimes a trailer pulled by a tractor.

Quite a few different activities or functions had been set up for the students to participate in each year such as career day, graduation, fun day, softball games, basketball games, and track and field events: students, teachers, and staff all attended these events. Each of these activities involved lots of work and preparation but everyone seemed to enjoy them. The two activities that I was responsible for planning and organizing were the career days and graduations. Time, careful preparation, and well thought out organization were necessary for each activity or event, but they were fun and exciting for everyone—teachers as well as students.
Career Day was generally held early in March, and we tried to make the event bigger and better each year. We contacted representatives from technical schools, businesses, colleges, government agencies, and other job related units and invited them to participate. Many were eager to have the opportunity and enjoyed the experience enough to ask to be invited back. We tried to include other areas like New Orleans, Hammond, and Lafayette in addition to Baton Rouge since we have students from all of all those locations. Career Day was held in the gym. Everything started around eight in the morning and lasted until about three in the afternoon. Tables were set up in a big circle around the periphery of the gym, and each participant had a separate table for setting up their display and hand-outs. Students were brought to the gym according to the dorm they lived in, which kept group sizes to around forty. Students were encouraged to roam freely and to ask questions or talk with the participants. A few students would not seem interested but the majority seemed to enjoy themselves and took advantage of the opportunity to talk to different people. Both breakfast and lunch were provided for the participants by the dining hall staff. Everything was set up in the coach’s office, which was conveniently located just off the main part of the gym. Breakfast generally included orange juice, coffee, hard boiled eggs, and freshly baked cinnamon rolls. Lunch consisted of whatever was on the menu for the day plus soft drinks and milk. The guests appreciated the food, as did the few students who feasted on the leftovers. These particular students had helped set up the gym the day before and also helped take everything down after all the activities were finished.

Graduation was always a special day that was both hectic and exciting. Many teachers were involved in the preparations: making corsages for mothers of the graduates, finalizing the programs, and helping set up the gym. The ceremony was usually held during the afternoon on the last Friday of May, and parents, friends, and family were invited. Every student who had earned
their GED during the year since the previous graduation was eligible to march in the ceremony. Students who had been released were invited to come back to participate, and students still living at LTI ate lunch early and were given free time to take showers and dress in clothes for the occasion (white shirts, black pants, black shoes, and navy blue tie). Even the teachers and staff members dressed up for the ceremony. The program included the drill team presenting flags; the Scenic High choir singing several songs, a guest speaker; speeches by both the valedictorian and salutatorian; and distribution of the diplomas, with each student’s name being called while he or she walked up to receive their diploma. Family members and friends cheered and whistled for their graduate, as did the students who were also in the audience. Then following the ceremony a small feast, which had been arranged in the back of the gym, was served to the graduates and their guests by all the teachers and staff members.

I loved the total experience of graduation each spring, but something else that also gave me great joy throughout the years was handing out the GED test results whenever I received them in the mail. The GED test was given by an outsider who worked in the adult education department of either the East Baton Rouge Parish school district or the state department of education. They came on campus several times during the year after I had tested and re-tested students to see if they could qualify to take the exam. All of the students were nervous after taking the GED test, so by the time the results came they were quite apprehensive. For most of them, passing the GED was probably the first positive accomplishment they had ever experienced in their life. Regardless of whether they were male or female students, when I handed them their test results showing they passed they hollered and screamed, lifted teachers and friends up in the air and whirling them around, and ran around the school celebrating with whoever they happened to see. For those who did not pass, I tried to keep up their spirits by
pointing out which subjects they did their best in and encouraging them to continue studying so they could try again. I always felt so proud of them regardless of whether they passed or not: at least they had hope and courage to strive for something they believed was important and they had tried to do their best.

Additional reasons for celebration and recognition occurred whenever students took and passed exams that certified them in the vocational trade they were enrolled in as part of their school schedule. These were positive accomplishments the students were proud of and that quite often were the only one they had ever experienced. They had worked hard to achieve the knowledge and skills that they could use in the future if that was what they chose to do with their lives. The vocational trade classes were a high priority for all students who were sixteen or older, which was a requirement to enroll in them. Although the variety was limited, each vocational trade class was popular and always had a waiting list. Students the requisite age could choose from the culinary arts, carpentry, horticulture, small engine repair, and welding.

Another popular class was art. Many students were artistically talented and others simply enjoyed the class. The art students produced many beautiful and interesting projects, and their art work was displayed in the hallways and the library. The art teacher also set up a display of various students’ art work in the gym at the annual career days and graduations. They always drew positive attention from career day participants and as well as from the families and friends of graduates.

Many students also participated in the choir. It was a source of enjoyment for many students because they had talent and liked to sing, and quite a few others favored this time simply because both male and female students were involved together, which was rare. They definitely were a joy to hear whenever they sang at functions. At those times several staff
members joined in and sang with the choir, sometimes acapella and sometimes accompanied by someone playing the piano. The audience often clapping their hands and sometimes even sang along.

I’ve mentioned some of the many happy occasions that I enjoyed celebrating with the students, but there were sorrowful times as well. At times news would come that a family member or friend of a student had died because of an illness or because that family member or friend had been killed. The news was especially difficult to bear since they were locked up and couldn’t be with their families and friends to mourn. Many staff and faculty members tried to comfort the grieving student but it was always a sad and difficult experience for everyone. Probably for me, the most dreadful news to receive was when one of the students who had been released was killed, either accidentally by a friend or on purpose by an enemy. This happened several times during my years of work and each was heart breaking and difficult to accept.

| Celebration time—students coming, going |
| Career Day, Graduation |
| softball, basketball, other activities |
| vocational trades, art, choir |

| Sorrowfull times |
| death, killings |

**Revisiting, Relooking, Reviewing**

While attempting to review that I have seen, read, and thought about, as I conduct the historical analysis of the portraits, I decide that revisit the art gallery one more time for a quick walk-through would be helpful. In order to be thorough, I reassess the research questions so that nothing is forgotten or overlooked and quickly record them as follows:

- What is the dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency in twentieth-century America and what makes this discourse possible?
• How do constructions of labels and identity formation within this dominant narrative become regulatory in terms of race, gender, class, and culture?

• How might a narrative on adolescence/juvenile delinquency be rethought and rewritten?

As I reappraise the portraits, they appear to reflect everything that I remember from previous visits: a dominant narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency that is firmly entrenched and has been for quite some time. The brushstrokes in the portraits that focus on the conceptualization of adolescence are applied primarily with strong, heavy emphasis on carefulness, limitations, and confinement: all of which represent an attitude of scarcity. This is particularly true of the large, imperious, and overpowering portrait painted by Hall, with his subtle accent touches relating to race, gender, class, and culture where he emphasizes the need to control, manipulate, and mold the malleable adolescents/juvenile delinquents. The prominent placement of this portrait close to the entrance of the art gallery seems to set the tone for everything that follows.

A few of the portraits in one area of the art gallery have been painted with interesting elements of inquiry, doubt, and challenge. They touch upon issues concerning Hall’s style and certain of his concepts with which they disagree, but one crucial missing factor in most of these unique portraits is that there are no contrasting shades that emphasize the value of individual differences between adolescents/juvenile delinquents. The texture of these portraits concerning adolescence/juvenile delinquency is still primarily conceived of and portrayed as a unit or group with generalized outlooks and concerns. Adolescents are not conceived of as individuals with unique thoughts, needs, fears, and dreams.
The portraits in the section of the art gallery that focus primarily on juvenile delinquency are heavily influenced by a perspective of scarcity. Their conceptualization of juvenile delinquency, presented as a collage of the work of an assortment of scholars, as well as the treatment techniques of crime/delinquency that Foucault presents in detailed explanations, all project an image of adolescence/juvenile delinquency as a problematic group. All the portraits in the collage are drably painted: they emphasize the sameness of the group while demanding improvement and change. The narrow-minded outlook of scarcity toward punishment and discipline is evident in the harsh brushstrokes that repeatedly promote monitoring, manipulation, and control.

For the most part, all the contemporary portraits located in the art gallery are also presented as a collage. They are supportive, accepting, and admiring of Hall’s masterpiece. They not only apply additional highlights and technical points of interest for enhancement purposes, but also incorporate related elements to embellish and confirm Hall’s dominant narrative that is overwhelmingly steeped in an attitude of scarcity. The few exceptions to this strong support of Hall’s ideas are weakened by the lack of concern that the contemporary portraits express regarding individual differences: adolescents/juvenile delinquents are viewed and discussed as members of a group or unit rather than as unique individuals with specific needs, concerns, and interests.

The narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, grounded in an outlook of scarcity, is strongly reinforced by the constructedness of labels and identity formation. The imposition of constructed labels provides a constrictive, limiting, and controlling influence that supports every angle of scarcity that might exist. Identity formation, which sometimes appears to lend some flexibility, also contributes at times to the controlling mechanism of constructed labels, thus
adding to the overall culture of scarcity that exists in the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency.

Portraits reappraised  
attitude of scarcity represented  
projected, accepted  
upported by imposing labels

Narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency  
culture of scarcity

**Considerations/Conclusion**

I have established that the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency has historically been and continues to be one wholly connected to a culture of scarcity: it is presented as a way of knowing and thinking and has been traditionally accepted and used as a dominant way of thinking. I believe it is valuable and important to include something as juxtaposition to reinforce the idea that re-writing a narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency is needed, that a new and different portrait is crucial.

One juxtaposition involves the included “I” poems and narrative poems that I have based on the interviews I held with an individual who once bore the label “juvenile delinquent” when he was incarcerated in a juvenile prison. His story, which is portrayed in both sets of poetry, strongly suggests the need for a serious interrogation of the entire concept of the traditionally accepted narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. Reading and thinking about him as an individual—realizing what his hopes, fears, thoughts, beliefs, values, and integrity include—evokes an emotional response. But, more importantly, the poems also demand a need to do something that could create a change in thinking, that would allow us to develop a different outlook towards adolescence/juvenile delinquency. If understanding and empathetic feelings towards Michael as an individual are possible, then the feasibility for this being extended to all adolescents/juvenile delinquents demands serious attention and action.
Against the dominant narrative I also juxtapose the autoethnography that I have included in each chapter and the generalized stories of students in the juvenile prison school that depict sincere feelings of joy, excitement, exuberance, sorrow, shame, pride, and hope for future fulfillment. These students deserve the same consideration: if they can be viewed as individuals with separate interests, yearnings, and feelings unique to each one of them, perhaps understanding and empathy can grow and spread for them also as well as for all adolescents/juvenile delinquents. I use the term empathy from the same perspective as Noddings (1984); one that “does not involve projection but reception,” (p. 30).

In considering these issues, I believe that I have established the need to rewrite the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, to paint a new portrait. This portraiture will not include the thoughts and attitudes that belong to the culture of scarcity, nor any hint of colonial discourse. A new portrait would present brushstrokes using vibrant colors that reflect happiness, security, acceptance, opportunity, and success. The surface will show a texture that is smooth and shiny with enough space for individual difference.

I realize there are many who have worked and continue to work in an oppositional endeavor aimed at the manipulative and limiting effects of a culture of scarcity, of colonization. I also realize the danger of each of us being a colonizer, as Fine (1994) warns can occur in the relationship between researcher and participants or subjects. It is the researcher who defines, decides, and controls, and who has the potential to oppress. Villenas (1996) also discusses the danger of becoming colonizers in the work of ethnography. She states that in making interpretations and giving descriptions there needs to be an awareness of the authoritative voice that sometimes creeps in, and she warns against assuming a privileged position as the researcher.
Just as the potential for oppression can slip into ethnography as well as other types of research, I believe this possibility lurks in multiple instances.

Just as Freire (1993) discusses the dominating effects of oppression, where the oppressed internalize opinions of the oppressor and emphasize the importance of interrogating one’s own experiences as an emancipatory effort, I believe the existing discourse of adolescence/ juvenile delinquency oppresses and needs to be changed. Similarly, Gore (1993) writes about pedagogy as a “process of knowledge production” (p. 11). She points out that the ultimate concern is a liberating, freeing, emancipatory process, and that is my belief as well. Luke’s (1992) concern is also from an emancipatory viewpoint. She suggests that the seemingly patriarchal approach taken towards gender is problematic. Bhabha (1994) discusses the idea of “transmutations and translation of indigenous traditions” (p. 48). He suggests that these transmutations assist in demonstrating “the…struggle against dominant relations of power and knowledge” (p. 48). The connecting theme among all these scholars’ thoughts is the importance of continuing emancipatory efforts toward colonial discourses. Authoritiveness and oppressiveness are the mainstay of the culture of scarcity, and in re-writing the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, I hope that these aspects of the culture of scarcity can be eradicated.

Narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency
historically filled with attitude of scarcity
traditionally accepted
dominant way of thinking

Juxtaposition I Poems, narrative poems
new portraits crucially needed

**Re-writing the Narrative of Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency: Painting a Fresh Portrait**

I respond to all oppositional efforts toward a culture of scarcity and colonial discourses, as is evident in the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, with applause and commendation. In an attempt to promote different thinking and adjusted outlooks, I suggest the
necessity of rupturing and deterring the colonial gaze of scarcity by re-writing the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency. I believe that a different narrative that finds empowerment in the culture of abundance could eventually transform thinking on a social level: that is the basis of my thoughts as I prepare the canvas for a fresh portrait.

The concept of abundance could act to deter the thoughts and behavior that are related to scarcity or colonialism. Just as Greene (2001) suggests replacing constructed labels with the “true word” that can be generated by lived experience, I view abundance as a means of social transformation from a broad, all-encompassing perspective. And just as Gore (1993) argues that pedagogy is integral to all learning, I see the culture of abundance as a pedagogy, a learning activity that involves an accepted approach that everyone practices with respect to oneself, each other, everyone else, and everything that exists. The concept of abundance is an attitude that could extend to a curriculum for life as a whole. Rather than being controlled by a dominant culture of scarcity which judges, competes, controls, and manipulates, I suggest working towards a transformation that is reachable in a culture of abundance. In a culture of abundance, respect, generosity, and kindness are highly regarded along with understanding, sympathy, tolerance, encouragement, and forgiveness.

Goals for which to strive in this pedagogy of abundance include an encouraging open-mindedness and generosity; embracing a spirit of cooperation and helpfulness, adopting an attitude of understanding and forgiveness, and emphasizing the value, importance and possibility for every individual to be treated with dignity. In order for a pedagogy of abundance to successfully exist in our society, certain elements are necessary. These are time, practice, and patience. If a concept of abundance becomes the dominant narrative for our society, the underlying assumptions and attitudes built into our curriculum and pedagogy could radically
change: constructed labels that contain and control would no longer be an issue because there would be no compelling need to categorize or constrain. Adolescents/juvenile delinquents, as well as all labeled “others,” would no longer be constructed as a category or group of unsavory sameness that needs to be controlled, manipulated, confined and changed. Identity formations would be free-floating, limitless; and a given individual’s identity would be accepted regardless of its perceived strangeness or uniqueness. In the discourses that would be formed in a culture of abundance, individual differences would be equally owned, respected, and honored. No one would be ignored, forgotten, unaccepted, or made to feel unwanted.

Oppositional efforts
applause, commendation
rupture, deterrence necessary
re-write the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency

New canvas, fresh portrait
culture of abundance

Caring in a Culture of Abundance

An effort toward realizing a culture of abundance would profit from an attitude of caring that Noddings (2002) states “requires attention to individuals…[who] have different needs and interests” (p. 31). Noddings (1992) believes that “to care and be cared for are fundamental human needs” (p. xi). She adds that the primary emphasis in caring is relational and involves “a connection or encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for” (1992, p. 15).

For Noddings (1984), caring “is always characterized by a move away from self” (p. 16). She adds that instances of caring are not all alike, and that sometimes conditions change. She emphasizes that engrossment is a necessary part of all caring. Explaining further, she states that engrossment does not have to be intense or pervasive for the carer, but that it must occur. She does say, however, that this engrossment can be latent for periods of time.
Noddings (1992) describes engrossment as involving an “open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for” (p. 15). She clarifies by explaining in the following:

When I care, I really hear, see, or feel what the other tries to convey. The engrossment or attention may last only a few moments and it may or may not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and essential in any caring encounter (p. 16).

Explaining further, Nodding adds that when the efforts of caring are received, then the caring relationship between carer and cared-for is completed.

Noddings (1992) also describes motivational displacement, a process that takes place when we put our personal projects aside and become engrossed with the project of the one we are caring for. Nodding argues that there is “the sense that our motive energy is flowing toward others and their projects” (p. 16). She points out that neither engrossment nor motivational displacement inform us of what to do; rather, “they merely characterize our consciousness when we care…[w]e are seized by the needs of another” (p. 16).

Applying this concept of caring to school situations, Noddings (2003) states that happy classrooms provide a “negotiated balance between expressed and inferred needs” (p. 242). She suggests that when teachers demonstrate care, students are willing to do things for them. She adds that “caring involves responding to the expressed needs of the cared for” (p. 262). On a similar note, Bruner (1996) suggests that the school is an ideal place to learn how to treat others, and that this learning experience can extend to how a society could better function. Weissbourd (1996) supports this type of thinking by stressing the importance of teachers to recognize those times when there is a need for intervention and support, and to remember that every child or individual has vulnerabilities. Additionally, hooks (1994) emphasizes that teaching “in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (p. 13).
I see the value of caring from a very broad perspective, one that includes Doll’s (1993) “four R’s of Richness, Recursion, Relations, and Rigor” (p. 176). Dolls discusses these from a standpoint of curriculum that I appreciate, but I visualize them in relation to painting a new portrait of adolescence/juvenile delinquency that has the potential to allow depicting the portrait with an open-mind rather than as “predefined” (p. 176). Drawing on Doll’s descriptions of the four R’s and applying them to a new portrait, I visualize “richness” as one of the potentials to add many new layers of meaning to curricula that are filled with generosity, understanding, and encouragement. Likewise, I see “recursion” as a potential to continuously have hope and find success in curricula—these have the recurring potential to happen again and again, and they suggest an open frame for positive reflection. I view “relations” as a rich connection with others that encourages pleasant interactions and assists in negotiations that promote dignity and respect for each individual. Finally, I see “rigor” as being imperative to this new portrait in terms of vigor and vitality—working hard to encourage the growth and strength that accompanies an outlook of abundance, one that “look[s] for different alternatives, relations, connections” (p. 182).

I also see a strong element of caring and responsibility in Egea-Kuehne’s (2001) explanation of Derrida’s concept of deconstruction. I find the concern for “affirmation of otherness and alterity, and human rights and democracy as related to the other” (p. 204) relevant to my driving need to examine the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency and question what makes it possible. Egea-Kuehne clarifies how deconstruction can play an important part in painting a new portrait that, in my view, is both desirable and needed. Egea-Kuehne writes:

[Deconstruction] pointed to the role language plays in gaining access to human rights and freedom, and the responsibility facing education in re-evaluating, re-considering, and re-interpreting its position along the continuum of double duty described by Derrida. Considering the aporetic nature of education and its issues of rights and language,
overlooked in all proposed models of education and curriculum, is not the necessary step to recognize with Derrida that our true dilemma is not a choice? Rather, not only should we refuse to settle for easy consensus, simplify, neutralize, or translate, but should we not also accept and assume the responsibility to ‘think, speak, and act’ within aporetic situations, under the double contradictory imperatives of a continuum of ‘double duty’? (p. 204)

Along similar lines, I believe that I have a responsibility to speak out and act based on my understanding of the narrative of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, Michael’s poetic story, and my own autoethnographic story.

Placing new sketches on a fresh canvas includes brushstrokes that depict an attitude of caring and that set the tone for new and different portraits, ones that are full of hope and unique possibilities. With caring comes the many characteristics that a culture of abundance promotes: a culture of abundance has an air of surplus and plenty that suggests there is enough of everything for everyone, including positive individual attention, time, concern, assistance, graciousness, benevolence, tolerance, understanding, and encouragement.

These new sketches representative of a culture of abundance display bright colors with varying hues that highlight altruism, amiability, and ampleness. The texture suggests unending acceptance, geniality, happiness, and exuberance. The portrait provides space for and the needs and wants of every individual to be considered, regardless of the situation. Shading and shadowing blend with the other features of the portrait and illustrate that race, gender, class, and culture can have pleasant connotations that promote dignity and respect for each person. An aura of open-mindedness and freedom of thought pervades the portrait, with no exceptions for anyone or anything.

My ultimate desire is this new portrait, this re-written narrative that is deeply steeped in a culture of abundance, will be unanimously accepted throughout our society and will habitually be passed on from one generation to another. The portrait would become a tradition that is
automatically institutionalized—a socially available stock of knowledge that is recognized and known by all. It would be studied, talked about, written about, and embellished to the point that the idea of scarcity would have to be researched because it has become extinct.

- Attitude of caring
- attention to individuals
- relational
- move away from self

- Engrossment, receptivity
- culture of abundance

**Exhibit XV**

Thinking back to my last few years at Scenic High, I remember that additional changes continued to take place. A decision was once again made to close the female unit that had been located in Area III for a number of years. It had a fully functioning school, dining hall, and gym in addition to the dorms and administrative building. At its peak, in terms of numbers, the unit housed about one-hundred-seventy-five females, a similar number to that of students at JRDC when it was in full operation. So once more female students were considered insignificant, not a threat to society, and ultimately everything that had been successfully organized and put in place for the female students for several years was totally dismantled. Female students were either sent to their personal homes or to one of the group homes. Teachers were reorganized and staff members were placed in different areas of the campus. Several of the female students were upset because they were scheduled to take the next GED test, but they were whisked away to a group home in north Louisiana two days before the test date. Although I tried to get things worked out for them so that they could return for the test or to take it at their new location, my efforts were in vain. There was a total lack of cooperation or caring on the part of everyone involved. Another political decision disrupted many peoples’ lives. It was sad as well as frustrating, but
the decision makers were totally unconcerned, just as they had been in all of their previous, disturbing proclamations.

As time went on the atmosphere and emotions of the staff and students eventually returned to normal. Little upheavals were always occurring about something, but that was routine. Wardens changed a couple of more times and a few people retired—nothing exciting or disturbing. Then, as if out of nowhere, talk about closing Jetson Correctional Center for Youth began circulating. None of us working there actually took the rumor seriously at first because we had over six hundred male students. We felt this was just talk, that closing the center was totally impossible, that we had nothing to worry about.

Our naïve outlook was so incorrect. Talk continued and escalated. Negative thinking about Jetson had spread and had been accepted by many as the truth. This was a political issue: a new governor had been elected and he made many new appointees who wanted to make a change. Legislative members became involved, and the ultimate outcome was that Jetson would not be completely closed, but the number of students would be greatly reduced. With such a drastic reduction in the number of students, the large number of teachers and staff members was no longer justifiable. Many students were sent home or to group homes throughout the state. Others were sent to the institution in Monroe. And some remained at Jetson.

For those staff members who were civil service employees, a policy was in place as to how a reduction in staff should be handled. None of them would automatically lose their jobs. There was an established process that would be applied to each staff member who was affected. Those of us who were teachers, teacher-aides, tutors, and principals, however, were treated differently. An old established plan of using the East Baton Rouge Parish School System’s
reduction in force policy was ignored, and a few staff members at headquarters decided how everything was going to be handled.

There were at least forty-five of us in all and each one of us had to re-apply and be interviewed if he or she wanted to be considered for one of the ten teaching positions or the one teacher-aide position. It had been decided that there would be no guidance counselor, librarian, or principal in this new program, despite the fact that we were supposed to be included because we had all started as teachers. The whole situation was a political hoax that the decision makers had conjured up so the people who determined who would be re-hired could pick exactly who they wanted. This was evident in who these people re-hired: each individual had some type of political connection to those making the decisions.

The many of us who were not selected were told to leave campus immediately. We were all waiting in the school library, and they called us to the hallway one by one to inform us of their decision about us. They did not want any of us to have the opportunity to talk to one another or to have contact with anyone else on campus—particularly the students. I somehow missed those directions. As soon as I heard the word displacement I quickly walked out of the building and went back to my office. I later found out that some of the displaced teachers were not even permitted to go back to their classrooms to pick up their personal items. I really wasn’t surprised or upset at that precise moment because I had made a list of who I thought would be re-hired. I was totally correct. Stamping out any thoughts or emotions about what had just happened, I cleared my computer of everything that was personal and started throwing away everything that I thought would not be needed. This was not a simple job since I was going through about thirty-three years’ worth of accumulated items. I left on time that day. It was March 14th, 2009. Leaving on time was rare because I normally stayed late to work on different
things. The security guard on duty at the front gate had not heard the news and was quite surprised when I signed out at four o’clock that afternoon.

I didn’t go to work the rest of that week. The realization of what had happened finally hit me. Although I was not overwhelmingly emotional, there were isolated moments when I felt sorry for myself and cried. Dealing with the reality of the situation was quite an adjustment. It was not how I had planned to end my career as a guidance counselor at Scenic High. Although I was old enough and had enough years of experience to retire, I had no immediate plans to do so. However, being the practical person I am, that is what I did: I visited the teacher retirement office and filled out the paperwork to make my official retirement effective on April 2, 2009.

I think what ultimately bothered me the most about those final days at Jetson was that those of us who were terminated were treated like we had done something wrong or could not be trusted. The behavior towards us was cold, indifferent, almost hostile: it had a dehumanizing effect that was difficult to tolerate. Even though we were still considered employees for the rest of March, we were banned from the campus. I had to call and get special permission to go back to my office to finish packing the things I wanted to take home. It was a dreadful, mortifying feeling, one that I will never forget and one that I hope I never feel again.

Although that culminating experience was hurtful and humiliating, the one thing that could not be taken from me or destroyed was my memory of the many different students with whom I had worked and had enjoyed getting to know over the years. That is one of the most valuable things I continue to have. I can still think back and remember moments of pride, appreciation, and satisfaction: those are the portraits I treasure and hopefully will never forget. My experiences while working with the students many disparagingly called “juvenile delinquents” changed my outlook on so many things in life and continue to do so today.
Disbandment of female section
reduction of Jetson—students sent elsewhere
displacement of teachers and staff
banned from campus

Hurtful, humiliating ending
valuable memories—portraits in my mind
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Questions for First Interview

1. Tell me about your childhood. What was it like?

2. What were the values and beliefs emphasized in your home and family as you were growing up?

3. What were your personal values and beliefs as a teenager?

4. What influenced you to go to college?

5. Do you feel that your values and beliefs have changed in any way?

6. What kind of plans do you have for your future?

7. Of all the things you have talked about in this interview, what do you think is the most important?

8. Looking back over your past, what is your worst memory and what is your fondest memory?
Interview Questions for Second Interview

1. What has been going on since we last talked?
2. Is there anything new or changed in your life?
3. How is everything going with your parents and the rest of your family?
4. Do you have any new or different plans for the future?
5. What is your biggest fear in life?
6. What is your biggest hope in life?
Interview Questions for Third Interview

Rather than ask you questions, why don’t you tell me about the trip you took to find out information about various boxing gyms and the experiences you had along the way.
Interview Questions for Fourth Interview

1. How do you feel about your experience as a college student now that you have graduated?

2. What are your hopes and dreams at this point of your life?

3. What type of lifestyle do you see yourself living in the future?

4. Where do you hope to be doing ten years from now?

5. When you are 70 years old, what do you want to be able to say about your life?

6. Do you have any other thoughts you would like to share with me?
APPENDIX B: IRB FORM
Consent Form for a Non-Clinical Study

1. Study Title: Portraits of Adolescence/Juvenile Delinquency: Something Written, Something Said, Something Constructed, Something Read

2. Performance Site: Louisiana State University Campus

3. Investigator: Marianne Fry
   (225) 931-6616, mfrv3@lsu.edu

4. Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to conduct a qualitative study that examines dominant narratives of adolescence/juvenile delinquency, questions what makes the discourse possible, and considers the possibility of rethinking and rewriting a new narrative.

5. Subject Inclusion: One participant who is between the ages of 21 and 28 who does not report psychological or neurological conditions.

6. Study Procedure: The study will incorporate the research method of narrative inquiry with the research design including at least 3 interviews with one participant. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

7. Benefits: The study may yield interesting and valuable information that could be beneficial in promoting understanding and social awareness.

8. Risks: Study risks are minimal. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets and only the investigator will have access.

9. Right to Refuse: The participant may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time.

10. Privacy: Results of the study may be published, but no names or identifying information will be included in the publication.

11. Signature:

The study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about participants' rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Matthews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692, irb@lsu.edu, www.lsu.edu/irb. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator's obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________
VITA

Marianne Fry received her Bachelor of Science in Education degree in 1962 from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. In 1966, she received her Master of Arts degree from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. In May 2012, she will receive the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in curriculum and instruction from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

From 1962 to 1965, Marianne was employed by Columbus City schools as first a fifth grade teacher who taught all subjects and then later as a high school librarian in Columbus, Ohio. From 1966 to 1970, she worked as Assistant to the Dean of Women in the Dean of Women’s office at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. From 1970 to 1975, she worked as a high school guidance counselor at St. Joseph’s Academy in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. From 1975 to 2009, she worked as a high school guidance counselor for the Department of Corrections at both the headquarters office and Jetson Center for Youth in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She has taught a required introductory class for elementary education majors from 2009 until the present at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Marianne has presented several academic papers at peer reviewed conferences, both nationally and internationally, during the time she has been enrolled in the doctoral program at Louisiana State University. The conferences she attended include: Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice (JCT); American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies Conference (AAACS); Louisiana State University’s Curriculum Camp; Complexity, Chinese Culture, and Curriculum Studies Conference in Shanghai, China; International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (IAACS) in Cape Town, South Africa; American Educational Research Association (AERA); Curriculum and Pedagogy
Conference; Southeast Philosophy of Education Society Conference; East China Normal University (ECNU) Teaching Reform Conference. Shanghai, China; the Mid-South Sociological Association; and Women’s and Gender Studies Graduate Student Conference.