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# From Within the Abyss: Drug Users in Areas of Rural Poverty

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FROM WITHIN THE ABYSS:  
DRUG USERS IN AREAS OF RURAL POVERTY

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Department of Sociology  
Western Kentucky University  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

By  
G. Eric Latham, Jr.

December 2013

FROM WITHIN THE ABYSS:  
DRUG USERS IN AREAS OF RURAL POVERTY

Date Recommended January 13, 2014

Douglas Clayton Smith  
Dr. Doug Smith (Committee Chair)

Stephen B. Groce  
Dr. Steve Groce

Kate King  
Dr. Kate King

Carl A. Fox 3-20-14  
Dean of the Graduate School Date

*I dedicate this text to the subjects who allowed themselves to be observed for this study. If not for their hospitality, cooperation, and trust, this study would not have been possible. I must state that it was a life-changing experience that would not have occurred if not for these individuals. I also appreciate these subjects allowing me to go on and prepare a thesis based on observation, trusting that I would not develop an oppressive modern scientific theory or a meaningless postmodern theory, but something new.*

*I would also like to dedicate this text to my thesis committee, who allowed me to complete this thesis in an unalienated fashion. If not for Dr. Smith, Dr. Groce, and Dr. King, I fear that the trump card of Authority (alienated power) would have been used to eliminate the threat that my theoretical thought may lead to certain camps of the field. Camps who may currently feel they have the upper hand in some silly holocaust of qualitative studies in American Sociology. Today, things are different. The very demographic categories (nice word for stereotypes) used to supposedly liberate minorities, are what allow a culture to see and define an individual based upon this classification. The old modern science dies today, along with the postmodern theory that refused the right to develop their own style of science. Still, a new science rises today as well, along with a new era beyond the nonsense of modernity/postmodernity coinciding as they have thus far.*

*Finally, I dedicate this work to my Fiancé, my Friends, and my Family. I appreciate all the help and support they have giving me. These three F's, despite moments of inability to follow or comprehend, stood by in support as I took a tough study with tough topics and developed tough theories brought on by the findings. I have given them scares with incessant insomnia and fasting while working to the point of having seizures, panic attacks, and nervous breakdowns at times. This is a last laugh on my part, because the IRB was originally concerned about by threats to my health and safety during data collection, not during subsequent analysis.*

*Some amount of dedication must also go out to Jacques Derrida, who became an important figure during the analysis. The subjects felt if I were going to do this, I needed to deal with such difficulty head on and see "what comes out of it." Derrida's work significantly changed the intensity of what this text can possibly mean for my field.*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It only makes sense to start with my thesis committee chair (and Department Head): Dr. Douglas Smith. If an uptight person had been in charge of the department, this important research would have never gotten a chance to begin. His guidance as a committee chair and department head has been a great benefit to me. As for Dr. Steve Groce, he was like an expensive defense attorney for me when dealing with the IRB. This may never have gotten approved if not for him. Furthermore, he has always encouraged my interest in social theory as well. It was Dr. Groce that introduced me to the book that began a new trajectory in my entire perspective: R.D. Laing's *The Politics of Experience*. I also cannot forget Dr. Kate King. While my topic is not her specialty, she was more than willing to take the last place on the committee when I asked. Her being a criminologist is a benefit, given that field's level of inclusion for Michel Foucault, who has heavily influenced my writing style and thought patterns. When I have had the luck to be in one of her courses, I often recall that she would be the only one engaging me in discussion on the boards, as the fellow students either found me pretentious or could not keep up. She has always been a kind soul.

Finally, my time at WKU has been one of intense learning. There is not a better Sociology department in the state of Kentucky. I only stop at the state level to be conservative in my praise of the department. I hope that in the future WKU has a PhD program for Sociology. I guarantee that the three professors on my committee could probably run the entire course themselves.

## PREFACE

This study was done in part to expand upon the quantitative DRUGNET study. DRUGNET was an internet-based research study conducted during a period in which it was likely that drug users in areas of rural poverty may have been under-represented. (It is likely they did not have access to internet in the late 1990s.) Furthermore, it was my intent to expand upon the study of "functional drug users" qualitatively. It was my goal to not do another internet survey from the safety of some office, while hiding behind a computer and praying to numbers. I wanted to reach something close to actual intersubjectivity with drug users in areas of rural poverty.

Initially, I was concerned with the issue of functional drug use within areas of rural poverty. The reflexive and grounded theory approach taken in this study led to something new, for lack of a new word, and findings range from the relationship between rural poverty and drug use to much more abstract theoretical concerns. That which began as a simple thesis ended as a truly life-changing experience. How this work is received by American sociology or by academia overall, in all honesty, no longer matters. This thesis represents a *rupture* in the discourse on the scientific and cultural conceptualization of drug addiction.

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FROM WITHIN THE ABYSS:  
DRUG USER IN AREAS OF RURAL POVERTY

G. Eric Latham, Jr.

January 13, 2014

221 Pages

Directed By: Dr. Douglas Smith, Dr. Steve Groce, Dr. Kate King

Department of Sociology

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This research was completed to deal with many unanswered questions regarding drug use, specifically drug use in areas of rural poverty. Look at any "Faces of Meth" billboard or listen to any corporate-news program and one might assume there is a drug epidemic in rural areas. Without research, this allows the viewer to assume that poverty is the fault of the drug user who happens to live in rural places. This study sought to take a qualitative and ethnographic methodology to "embed" the researcher in this setting to see for himself whether these views were valid or invalid.

The questions of functional drug use were at the forefront of the study, as was the possible relationship between drug use and rural poverty. This study transformed into a serious analysis of a network of drug users in the town of Mulch Valley. While standard sociological (and policy issues) concerns are dealt with, this thesis moves beyond such concerns. Theoretical concerns are brought into questions as new concepts, such as: *cultural narrative of addiction, master sociality, slave sociality, and Derridity.*

***"Crushing. Cheating. Changing. Am I deaf or dead? Is this constricting construction or just streets with rusty signs of something violent coming?"*** (Manson, 2012)

## Chapter I: Introduction

Whatever the poverty of our knowledge in this respect, it is certain that the question of the sign is itself more or less, or in any event something other, than a sign of the times. To dream of reducing it to a sign of the times is to dream of violence. (Derrida 1978:3)

As if this were not a trying and complicated text to produce from the very start, Derrida's (1978) *Writing and Difference* kept coming to mind during the data analysis/theory formation period. At first, an easy route in dealing with Derrida was sought. Reflexivity would not allow this, nor would the data. Thus, I finally decided that it was time for a social science to not just deal with Derrida as a theorist important to their topic of investigation but also to take the affirmative, more difficult route. This would mean applying Derrida to all of social science, as much of social science has not treated Derrida fairly. Those who have treated him the fairest have at best missed his point entirely and only offered the negative response. Many social scientists would like to look back at poststructuralism and especially deconstruction as a sign of the times in which it arose. This places it safely in the past, allowing social science to get back to its empiricism or its dumbed-down "Derrida." He warned them. Mainstream American social science has, if we are to be reflexively reflexive, dreamed the dream of violence. Now it must awake to what follows.

As for the topics I sought to deal with in a free-from Derrida manner initially, drug use and rural poverty are topics that have been heavily studied throughout the history of sociology. While there is an ample amount of sociological research on these topics separately, there is very little completed research on the topic of drug users in areas of rural poverty. Little is scientifically known about the relationship between rural poverty and drug use as a result. This thesis sought to help correct that deficiency.

I built rapport with a network of drug users in a poor, rural area for approximately one year. These previously established contacts within the rural drug subculture agreed to be subjects in overt ethnographic research. This overt ethnographic research took place for a year. During this second year of interaction with the subjects, I observed them and from time to time recorded field notes while keeping a reflexive journal. To put it simply, I observed the network in a way similar to that of a friend who does not partake in drug use. One subject had agreed to allow me to stay in their residence for periods of observation and interaction. The subjects were aware of my intent to observe as a researcher and were also aware that they could request I cease observation without consequence. The safety of both researcher and subject was of the utmost concern and precautions will be explained in the methodology chapter.

This ethnographic research was based in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967). It was not my intent to force data into an existing theoretical perspective by setting out to test a specific theory or hypothesis. Instead, the observations undertaken were focused on locating and recognizing emergent patterns of behavior out of which a data-bound theory could be formed.

While this research was focused on developing grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), noting the researcher's commitment to both poststructuralism (Dumont 2008) and reflexive sociology (Gouldner 1970) is also important. These commitments only reinforce the commitment to the grounded theory perspective. A focus on reflexivity is helpful in eliminating researcher bias on several fronts. Poststructuralism, in my interpretation, pushes one toward grounded theory as its conceptualization of power is fluid, which forces one outside preconceived binary structure/agent explanations.

Reflexive sociology, poststructuralism, and their relation to grounded theory in my framework will be fully explained in the theory chapter. This reflexive and poststructural approach to sociology does not constitute a specific theory or hypothesis to be tested but a reinforcement mechanism for grounded theory.

As stated the project used qualitative observation/ethnography as the specific methodology for developing a grounded theory. In short, this consisted of immersion, observation, expanded field notes, and for reflexivity purposes, the keeping of a personal journal. The subjects' identities were protected by using aliases for both individual subjects and locations. The methodology was not only chosen for purposes of naturalism but also for the protection of the subjects. While in-depth interviewing would require the keeping of audio data that could compromise the subjects' anonymity through voice recognition, qualitative, ethnographic observation records data in field notes. Field notes, obviously, do not have the same possibility of voice recognition. While protecting against voice recognition may seem like a far-fetched concern, these subjects are involved in illegal and highly stigmatized activity and all possible safeguards were taken to protect them.

This thesis provided important scientific insight into the sociology of drug users and drug use within areas of rural poverty. It provided knowledge on the relationship between rural poverty and drug use, which is currently lacking. This study provided valuable information and knowledge that can help guide policy in both areas, rural poverty and drug use. Ultimately, these subjects ended up not being a threat to other individuals in these areas and are functional; this could point to wasted government

finances on enforcement of drug laws. In areas of rural poverty, these funds may be needed more elsewhere.

In areas of rural poverty there is less anonymity; if drug users anywhere are experiencing stigmatization, one could reasonably expect it to show up here. This stigmatization (Goffman 1963) was found in watching the difference between social behavior within the group in private, or back stage (Goffman 1959) and their social behavior in public, or the front stage. The subjects often used a public transcript (Scott 1990) when personally interacting with individuals on the public stage. This stigmatization could contribute to migration away from areas of rural poverty. This specific network did not seem to seek migration, nor did they seem to care so much of public image in areas away from Mulch Valley. The stigmatized identity placed on them by “the other” was not a concern for them, but within Mulch Valley, it was more of a public transcript to hide drug use (and their hidden transcripts) from those outside the network. It was a survival technique of resistance in the face of the dominating and stigmatizing force of others. “The other’s” labels were never accepted by the individual subjects.

Considering their behavior outside Mulch Valley, stigma management does not seem to cover their response to the supposedly negative image. If other said individuals are functional and/or are talented in some way and said stigma is there and pushing them away from the area, then the stigma of drug use could be contributing to trapping the area in poverty. The pride found in their deviance and contempt for those who wish to stigmatize them suggests something other than management of it. The subjects suggested I reread Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) *Genealogy of Morals*. They pointed out that there

could be a type of *slave sociality* (type of sociality and style of interaction based on slave morality) opposing their *master sociality* (type of sociality and style of interaction based on master morality). (Considering the subjects' plentiful references to the slave morality of society-at-large, *Genealogy of Morals* is reviewed in the literature review.)

Furthermore, if it is the case that stigma of drug use is pushing away other functional and talented individuals (outside this study), then the moral capital seen in areas of rural poverty would not be something that was completely beneficial to the area.

Most studies of drug users come from their appearances in justice and rehabilitation systems; this slants our knowledge of drug users to assume that drug use necessarily leads to addiction and social dysfunction. (Duncan, White, and Nicholson 2003). This study provided a window into drug users who are not being rehabilitated or incarcerated. These drug users are functional. This study could provide valuable information in helping fight addiction as a disease. For example, drugs choices, strategies of use, etc. could be suggested that might avoid the development of addictions. This would be valuable information for drug education programs, as we would have strategies other than abstinence to help fight addiction and other potential aspects of abuse.

Finally, getting a chance to overtly, with full subject cooperation, study through qualitative observation individuals and/or social networks involved in an illegal activity such as drug use is rare. This study provides valuable insights on emergent patterns found in the observation data on this illegal activity. Furthermore, this study's use of grounded theory, reflexive sociology, and poststructuralism allowed for a final intellectual product focused on qualitatively understanding the drug user in areas of rural poverty. This is an extremely important area, as it is a break with the study of drug use as a social problem.

Studies that begin with the conceptualization of drug use as a social problem will undoubtedly interpret data so that shows it as a social problem. This study allows theory and conclusions to rise from the data, which is not something we usually see occurring often.

I must offer fair warning to the reader of this text, as the study led to some unexpected abstract theoretical conclusions. Many of these conclusions could be considered nihilistic, anti-humanistic, appalling, and/or just plain dark. This researcher does not find said conclusions to be so negative. If anything, it is my hope that this text will be a preface to a new era in American sociology, which has become bogged down with statistics and quantitative study. It is my hope that such grounded theoretical conclusions grant American sociology the innocence of becoming a new science rather than dying with the old one that it intends on impressing and with which it strives for an impossible gaining of full acceptance.

No matter how this thesis is received, it is done. It cannot be undone, even if it does cause what some people consider to still be the meaning of social science to come undone. (During the formation of grounded theory I have come undone repeatedly and of course reflexively.) One cannot conduct a project of grounded theory and have fear or allegiance in one's heart. It was my goal to be able to say, whatever the outcome, that I truly completed a thesis using reflexive sociology and grounded theory. I can say this today. I allowed the data to take me places I did not even know I wanted to go. If I had not, the reader would have seen nothing but Foucault references throughout.

## Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This study operated within a grounded theoretical (Glaser and Strauss 1967) framework. Specific hypotheses were not tested in this study. Instead, theory was formed based on the emergent patterns found within the data. This theory construction does not prohibit prior theoretical concepts. If any theoretical concept applies to the current data, then it will be used to describe the data. For example, if presentation of self (Goffman 1959) appeared to apply best to a specific act, then that theoretical concept will be applied in analysis. However, specific theoretical concepts did not guide the interpretation of data. There was no reason to limit the study along theoretical lines. To do so would have broken the author's commitment to reflexive sociology and poststructuralism. While this is to be a project in grounded theory, my commitment has a theoretical and philosophical basis.

Poststructuralism, as I interpret it, tends toward keeping ethnographic research grounded. This is because it does not focus on standard sociological forces, such as the state, the economy, etc, but on power itself. Every social interaction involves power. This power is destructuralized and fluid. Individuals can manifest power by defining the situation and the roles therein just as much or more as the media can through mass broadcasting. Power is used to describe is the interconnectedness of social facts, actors, and their interactions. If causality exists in the social arena, then it is this destructuralized and nonspecific form of power that resides in social interaction and negotiation. Without it, causality or influence could not exist.

Poststructuralism also avoids the philosophical debate involved in arguments regarding agency versus social structure (Giddens 1984). Instead, even agency is seen as



social. It too is both a form and product of the alienated power of authority, which is sadly often perpetrated by modern science itself (Foucault 1965; 1980). The very concept of a detached rational mind free of social influence only arises due to specific historical social forces and cultural modes of thought (Dumont 2008). By dealing with authority and its alienating gaze in this manner, one is forced to maintain a grounded theory approach driven by the data. This is in contrast to attempting to squeeze data into a pre-existing theoretical mold.

This is related to Nietzsche's influence on poststructuralist social theory as the theoretical perspective adopts the extreme social constructivism or "socio-ontology" (Aspers 2007) of said author. In adopting this "socio-ontology" one cannot avoid recognizing the role the researcher plays in constructing reality. This makes reflexivity a necessity. While the role of the researcher in constructing the social reality cannot be eliminated, grounded theory places said construction closer to the data and reflexivity helps in this process. Derrida (1978) mentions in passing a "reflexively reflexive" necessity not yet developed. It is this excessive level of reflexivity with which I ultimately ended up in line.

There is one final note on poststructuralism. As a theoretical framework, poststructuralism has been noted to be beneficial for marginalized peoples studied by American anthropology (Dumont 2008). Consequently, and in concurrence with Dumont, poststructuralism is seen as beneficial for sociological studies. This is especially true for the study of marginalized groups. While many would not like to define drug users as marginalized, that very fact speaks to the marginalization experienced by drug users. Those in rural areas and those suffering through poverty are also a highly marginalized

group of people. Incorporating poststructuralism can only help with the minimization of possible harm to subjects taking part in this study. It is exciting to see an attempt to have a poststructuralist sociology develop that can act as a liberating force, rather than seeking to sterilize and "stat" life into static.

My objection to the whole of English and French sociology still continues to be this, that it knows only the decadent form of society from experience, and with perfectly childlike innocence takes the instincts of decline as the norm, the standard, of sociological valuations. (Nietzsche [1889] 2007: 70)

Nietzsche's ([1889] 2007) concern with the sociology of the 19th century was simple; it failed to recognize that it also was a product of sociological forces. It assumed functionality. This assumption was blinding and in turn affected how the field went about research as well. This brings us to the adjective, reflexive. This refers to Gouldner's (1970) reflexive sociology. This is where the important second break from the position of observer comes from, which Bourdieu ([1977] 2002) calls for as part of reflexive sociology. Both of Bourdieu's reflexive breaks are involved in my methodology. Bourdieu is also correct in pointing out that objective and subjective forms of knowledge are both valid and limited. It is the ultimate goal of this project to produce a meaningful reflexive knowledge. This entails being conscious of the suppositions of my field, as well as my place within the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

Meaningful reflexive knowledge also entails being aware of the sociologist as a social role and actor. The goal is no longer the "methodological dualism" of non-reflexive sociology, which would imply that reflexive steps are taken to eliminate one's subjectivity. Instead, reflexivity refers to the removal of the assumption that sociologists can attain a god's eye-view, the self-awareness of the fact that both the subjects and

observer are affected by researcher, and the giving up on that goal of objectivity. In a reflexive sense, reflexivity tells us the closest we can come to the highest value of objective knowledge only really becomes possible when we let go of that highest value (Gouldner 1970).

Gouldner's (1970) approach to reflexive sociology not only provides a "sociology of sociology" but also provides a reflexive sociology of reflexive sociology. The goal of reflexivity is to recognize and report the limitations of science (and of one's own approach to science), rather than attempting, failing, and then ultimately claiming "objectivity." While "knowledge as information" is useful and helpful, it is not the only necessary type of knowledge. "Knowledge as awareness" is required as well, for sociological understanding. In a Derridian (Ritzer 2008) sense, reflexivity's goal is to keep the ever-changing social world, which includes sociologists, "in play." This is opposed to continuing to attempt to end the negotiation of the social world, including sociologists, by "deciding" the social world in binary. (The subject/object opposition that Gouldner's reflexive text deconstructs would fit into the categorization of binary opposition.)

It is the goal of this researcher/author to expand knowledge by way of research that recognizes the constantly changing social world and thus avoids blindly accepting informational knowledge as "knowledge as awareness." This reflexive theoretical disclosure is necessary, as it gives a perspective with which to interpret my sociological work and findings. It expands the reader's possible awareness of my text as sociological and currently in play, even as I type. While ultimately to decide that there is a true self-presence in text, which Derrida (1991) has stated does not exist in actuality (Ritzer 2008),

reflexivity does attempt to allow for the possibility of being able to understand the author's possible self-presence and the effects that presence could have upon the final work. It does not give up on the goal of achieving knowledge, nor does it find itself desperate enough to assume that it can escape self-influence on one's work through "objectivity." The "objective knowledge" of "hard"/natural sciences is no longer the goal. Instead, a reflexive knowledge which includes information about the very attempt at expressing a self-presence or self-will in text that the researcher necessarily commits as a part of the very process of knowledge production is necessary (Gouldner 1970).

In summary, this theoretical framework is poststructural, reflexive, and grounded by necessity. It seems that poststructuralism--or at the very least a Foucauldian poststructuralism concerned with power/knowledge (Foucault 1980)--works well with a reflexive sociology. Reflexivity attempts to separate knowledge from authoritative power (or at least recognize the influence of authoritative power), which in turn leads to a grounded approach to research. The goal is to expand data-driven understanding as much as possible.

### **Chapter III: Literature Review**

As the thesis took the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) approach to research, the review of literature was guided by the data as well. The very idea of a literature review section specified and set aside for the review of literature was a bit problematic. The spontaneous review of literature was guided by the emergent patterns found in the observed data. While erasing all prior knowledge gained from reading the existing literature was impossible, minimizing its influence on interpretation of data was nevertheless important. This was achieved by not conducting an extensive and official literature review before research in the field. Patterns were allowed to emerge from observation in an unrestricted fashion that kept grounded the actual review of literature-- which is reflexively kept--as it arose in the analysis chapter. However, considering the project included the study of illicit activities, some literature needed to be reviewed to show how this type of project was not out of the ordinary nor was it ethically irresponsible. The literature reviewed before investigation is covered here.

#### ***Prior Research on Illicit Activities and Ethical Concerns***

First, it must be stated that this study did not focus on members of a protected population. These are members of a "hidden population" as Duncan, White, and Nicholson (2003) of the DRUGNET study describe them. This DRUGNET study reached outside the two subgroups of illicit drug users from which we normally gather data: 1) those entering treatment programs and 2) those who are accessible due to arrest for drug offenses. This thesis reached outside those two subgroups as well. It specifically looked at illicit drug users in areas of rural poverty. Furthermore, it provided qualitative data whereas the DRUGNET study provided quantitative data. (While the DRUGNET study

determined the subjects found outside the two mentioned subgroups to be nonabusive or functional drug users, I did not assume functionality and protected my grounded theory approach to the study.)

The sociological study of drug use and drug users is not limited to the DRUGNET study, of course. Petrocelli, Oberweis and Petrocelli (2012) examined recreational steroid use. This study was done using semi-structured interviews of subjects found in gyms suspected of having access and through snowball sampling. Here the anonymity of the individual subjects was sacrificed only to the researchers; the confidentiality was not sacrificed. There was also a qualitative study completed on upper-class college students who were also drug dealers. This study involved years of ethnographic observation and interviews (Mohamed and Fritsvold 2012). Boeri, Sterk, and Elifson (2012) completed a study on baby boomer drug users who represent an aging drug using community. This study utilized ethnographic research as well as interviews. Also, there exists a study on club-drug use, which utilized ethnographic data on drug use committed by youth in New York City (Kelly 2012). Finally, there is Patricia Adler's (1993) ethnographic study on upper-level drug dealers.

These five studies are just a few examples of situations where anonymity of the subject was sacrificed only to the researchers, who maintained confidentiality. The researchers knew of the illegal activity of the subjects and knew their identities, yet confidentiality was kept. When the chance for such research arises, it has often been the case that the researcher is trusted with protecting the confidentiality of the subjects' true identities.

While my study does not deal with subjects that are members of a protected population, there have been studies that have dealt with drug use within protected populations. Patricia Adler and Peter Adler (2012) included their study on young children who smoke pot in their anthology of drug studies. While this study was completed originally in the 1970s, the study's very existence proves their conclusion that at the time pot use had become legitimized and destigmatized in our culture at the time as its use was becoming acceptable even when such use was amongst members of a sacred group within the culture: in this case, children. This conclusion was made, of course, before the Reagan administration and its anti-drug campaign. Thankfully, my proposed study does not deal with members of a protected population, which would, of course, bring up more ethical concerns. That being said, while the study on "Tinydopers" is an example of study that brings up serious ethical concerns, it is also an example of how such studies (those that bring up serious ethical concerns) are useful and important to the field of sociology.

There is one last study that I would like to mention in this section of the chapter. The study to which I refer is *Gang Leader For a Day (A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets)*. In this study, Venkatesh (2008), a graduate student, gained ethnographic access to a gang within an area. This study dealt with many illegal activities, including the trafficking of crack cocaine. I mention this study to show that it is not only established researchers that are trusted with protecting the confidentiality of subjects while knowing their true identities, but that graduate students have also been trusted with this task. It is of the utmost importance to protect the subjects' anonymity by maintaining confidentiality, which I will do no matter what circumstances develop. The very fact that these subjects are aware of my proposed research and have volunteered to take part in the

study shows their high level of trust in my role as possible researcher. This mere fact shows that they trust me to keep their identities confidential. The fact that I have been building rapport with this network for over a year and have kept their identities confidential shows that I am worthy of that trust.

Because of my commitment to the grounded theory perspectives, I have not gone too in depth with this literature review. As previously stated, this review's purpose is to simply show that such research has been completed before within a framework that properly respects ethical concerns. Furthermore, it has proven to be important research. This thesis does not have a full traditional literature review section. Just as the theory will remain grounded, so will the literature review, else the entire process could end up ungrounded (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Hence, when data suggested certain review, the literature was reviewed during analysis and the text produced included this. I would be a hypocrite if I were to say I was committed to grounded theory and then intentionally re-ordered the text to where the reader could not see where such theory began to form within the very text. I have done my very best to keep a high level of naturalism in the very writing of this work.

To conclude, considering that this is a hidden population made up of individual volunteers who are not members of a protected population, this study represented a great opportunity to ethically expand upon the scientific knowledge we have on drug use and drug users in areas of rural poverty. Sherman (2009) in her study of Golden Valley, found that drug users in areas of rural poverty were such a hidden population that she was unable to observe any. It was assumed that this was due to her conclusion that moral capital was of much more importance in rural areas. It could be felt as an act of further



stigmatization to *exclude the knowledge* (Foucault 1980) that the subjects offer by passing on this opportunity they have willfully granted me. This was their chance to be powerful and have a *role in creating the knowledge regarding their lives, actions, and "selves."* In sum, they could take their hidden transcripts and bring them into a public transcript (Scott 1990).

They were willing to allow me to know their identities for this thesis to be completed, as they know that I would not compromise their identities under *any* circumstances. To deny them the opportunity to be ethnographically researched could be interpreted as a further marginalization of this social minority. We did not wish to risk furthering the stigmatization and marginalization of these subjects. Since this type of research, situation, and relationship between researcher/subject (knowing the identity of subjects involved in illegal activities while protecting confidentiality) is common in the history of qualitative sociological work, taking this risk by passing on this opportunity was clearly unnecessary. I was willing to risk my entire future career as a sociologist on my ability to protect these subjects. (It would have been a sad day for the field of ethics to become a source of exclusion and alienation of certain undesirable groups, all while pretending it was for their protection.)

### ***Nietzsche: Forgotten Founding Father***

You had not yet sought yourselves; and you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore all faith amounts to so little. Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you. (Nietzsche [1889] 2007:220).

I must reflexively admit that I have been reading Nietzsche's work since the age of 12. I am now 31. It is quite possible that my "self" developed out of interaction with his texts. From the age of 12 through 24, I read or reread some of his work every day. Yet

I must also reflexively admit that until the analysis stage of this thesis, I had not intensively read Nietzsche for a few years. I remembered quotes and the pages they were on that I needed for school work and such. Nevertheless, it was a static understanding (and usually read for leisure). Before observation I expected that his "socio-ontology" (Aspers 2007) would be all one would see of Nietzsche in this work. Yet Nietzsche ([1887] 1989) was an important figure to the subjects and his concepts of *master morality* and *slave morality* would become the basis for a grounded theory explaining the strength of the subjects' resistance.

While Ritzer (2008) may state that Durkheim (1987) conducted a sociology of morality, it was not the first attempt at this, nor was it the boldest. It was the same "castrated society" that gave us the criminal that also gave us a non-reflexive sociology of France and England (Nietzsche [1889] 2007). Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) *On the Genealogy of Morals* was the first attempt at a sociology of morals. In it, Nietzsche refutes Spencer's idea of utility as the source of what we considered morally good, as it would require us to forget what we found useful in order to allow it to become a moral good. This is merely one example as the text refutes many explanations as to how morals developed.

What is important to this study is that Nietzsche ([1887] 1989) identifies two styles of moral systems: master morality and slave morality. Master morality is active and creative. One could compare it with Mead's (1934) concept of the "I." Having true power, it does not seek to defend itself as it does not recognize any threat in the natural world. Master morality often focuses on what it likes and labels it good. Slave morality, on the other hand, can only be reactive and is born out of resentment. It makes its suffering holy

and rejects natural life. It looks to the outside to point fingers. It sees something that it cannot enjoy and labels it evil. For Nietzsche, the natural social order was reversed to where slave morality became a dominating force within individuals (and thus also society) and master morality became something of a rarity.

It was because of this that Nietzsche ([1889] 2007) calls for a return to nature and refuses to attempt to improve mankind as this would be succumbing to slave morality and the desire to dominate humanity. To do so, he would have had to admit defeat to slave morality on an individual level. For a thinker such as Nietzsche, committing suicide would have been better. This would at least be noble.

Noting that Nietzsche ([1885] 1966; [1887] 1989; [1889] 2008; 1967) consistently refuses to separate actor from action is important. It is a confusion based entirely on the structure of language. He rejects both free will and determinism. Free will is a social construct developed to be able to place blame a.k.a. “hold responsible” when for him there is no responsibility. One is not in control of their action. Instead, an actor is the action. The responsible actor or self is an interpretation born out of the desire to place blame. Simultaneously no other worldly forces predetermine action.

This makes my development of an extreme Symbolic Interactionism based more upon the ideas of Nietzsche ([1889] 2007) than Mead (1934) rather interesting. As while there are some aspects of his thought that makes this seem like something a madman would attempt, some aspects fit perfectly. These latter aspects of his thought almost take S.I. taken to the extreme of a theoretical perfectionist. One of these aspects is perspectivism. Perspectivism is an extreme form of relativism. Each perspective has its own unique interpretation of a situation or event. One cannot objectively observe and/or

understand another perspective. For Nietzsche, the closest one can get to objective truth is to attempt to qualitatively see through each perspective. One will still only end up with an interpretation of said perspective's interpretation, but it will be closer to being the actual interpretation than if one were to attempt to view from some outside perspective.

## Chapter IV: Methodology

As stated, the chosen methodology for this project is ethnographic qualitative observation. This is not to be confused with participant observation, as I did not participate in consuming illegal intoxicants with group members. I was, however, a social participant in their network. I took the role of a friend who happens not to partake in illicit intoxication. It has already been noted that I had been building rapport with said network for approximately one year, before the year of observation. The subjects were at a point where my inclusion in their network was felt as a natural occurrence.

I began official immersion during the summer of 2012. I spent time with the network as any member would. Field notes were produced randomly and also for any events the network considered major (such as their annual celebration held to commemorate the release of Casey Anthony). This randomization of field note taking was done to increase naturalism and improve intersubjectivity. I stayed with the subjects often, as they had offered. There were times where it was just a weekend or even just an evening; other instances I stayed longer, allowing for continued immersion throughout the observation period. The randomization of field note production kept observation from limiting immersion. The subjects had the understanding that observation notes could have been produced any time that I was around, yet having official observation periods occurring at times unknown to them increased naturalism for the subjects. They agreed to this. They knew that they were being researched, but they did not know what time frames would be official observation periods that resulted in field notes. (They understood, however, that I was in constant observation.) This also increased naturalism on the researcher's part as well.

Because I spent extended amounts of time informally observing these subjects, I also produced a personal journal for reflexive (Gouldner 1970) purposes. All names and locations were changed in the personal journal to protect the subjects' identities. The subjects agreed to my keeping of a personal journal throughout the project. This personal journal also provided information on my own possible biases rather than attempting to ignore any possible bias. Coming from a reflexive perspective, this personal journal was just as important as the field notes. Furthermore, the personal journal was kept starting from the moment the project was proposed. It covered the entire process of this project: starting with writing the thesis proposal, to applying for IRB approval, through actual observation, and finally through the completion of the final draft. This provided reflexive information on my developing interpretation of the project and how it changed throughout the project, rather than assuming the researcher maintains the same viewpoint throughout the study.

Observation periods were often not planned. Due to this fact and my grounded approach to research, I did not set out a number of planned entries. Furthermore, there was an issue during the year of approved observation with availability. At one point, I even told my thesis chair that the subjects may, in fact, be too functional (due to their ability to remain busy with school, jobs, and other "functional" aspects of social life) for me to observe. Thus, I often observed the network whenever I had the chance (still producing the actual field notes randomly during an extended stay). Reflexive journal entries, which I saw as reflexive field notes to keep track of the researcher, were produced outside a schedule as well. This study resulted in thirty-one entries in my collection of data, which totaled one-hundred-fifty pages. While separating the reflexive

journal entries from the field note entries was impossible due to the blending of the two types of notes, I attempted this task. Nineteen of these entries were what I officially considered "field notes." There were twelve reflexive journal entries. I must state that these two types of notes often blend. Ergo, these numbers of entries are essentially meaningless. The fact that the collected data reflexively lead to the formation of grounded theory and reached a point of exhaustion (if "exhaustion" is ever possible) is much more important.

The expanded field notes and personal journal entries were the resulting data of this qualitative observation study. These allowed for the reflexive recognition of emergent patterns of behavior, upon which a grounded theory regarding the sociology of drug users in areas of rural poverty could be formed. The observation period continued until saturation was achieved with the emergent patterns. As expected due to the length of time spent building rapport, the study went extraordinarily smoothly. Trust had been maximized on both sides. They show a high level of trust in me due to their extraordinary level of hospitality and openness. On the flip side, I am confident that this study has produced valid findings, as naturalism was maximized both by subject and study design. There was a high level of understanding between subject and researcher. Every reasonable action was taken to continue their comfort with the project, as getting this level of possible accommodation with such a study on such a topic is rare.

This methodology of qualitative observation was chosen for a couple of reasons. First, this type of observation, which places me in the network, maximizes the naturalism of the gathered data without having to partake in illegal activity. Even the unstructured interview fails to maximize naturalism when compared with ethnographic qualitative

observation. The interview itself is an unnatural event, as it removes the subject from their natural setting. Qualitative observation will allow me to recognize emergent patterns as they naturally appear, whereas even the most unstructured interview still guides the data, even if only to a small degree. Furthermore, the data is observed second hand in interviews. Second, this type of observation is the safest for the subjects. With the field notes and my personal journal being the data, I can eliminate any information that might be used to identify the subjects. The subjects are most comfortable with this methodology. Third, I can collect the most data through observation. The proposed thesis is an exploratory study, especially considering the lack of existing literature on the subject. Ergo, it makes methodological sense to cast the net as wide as possible. Qualitative observation/ethnography is less filtered than other qualitative methods. Hence, it was the best methodology for this project.

There is also an ethical issue of protecting anonymity of the subjects. This is very important to me. In the safety precautions subsection of this chapter, I list steps taken to protect the anonymity. Beyond these, there is still the issue of myself knowing the subjects' identities. While the DRUGNET study used the internet quantitative surveys and could set it up to where the identities would not even be known to the researchers (Duncan et al. 2003), this is not possible with qualitative ethnographic research. This research is just as important, however. Furthermore, despite designing the DRUGNET study to keep the identities of the subjects from the researchers:

Numerous respondents followed up their survey responses by sending us both mail and E-mail that often included information of a sensitive nature despite the loss of anonymity this involved. We believe that this bodes well for future research efforts of this type. (Duncan et al. 2003:215).



The subjects of this thesis were willing to be researched and to allow me to know their identities. There was a connection between my proposed subjects and those respondents who volunteered follow up data that would allow the researchers to know the identities of the subjects committing illicit activities. While the DRUGNET study focuses on electronic approaches to gather data from hidden populations (Duncan et al. 2003), the subjects of this thesis have offered perhaps even a bigger opportunity: a chance to ethnographically and qualitatively view and analyze their behavior even if the researcher will clearly know their identities.

Furthermore, Duncan et al. (2003) cover prior attempts to study this hidden population. Lindesmith (1957) did research on individuals who use heroin, yet do not become addicted. Powell (1973) and Zinberg (1977) used advertisements to sample drug users, Zinberg and those working with him also used follow-up interviews to further gather data. Cohen (1989) used "snowball sampling" to study cocaine users. In each of these studies, the researcher was trusted with knowledge of the identities of the subjects.

While the DRUGNET study used an anonymizer service to protect confidentiality (Nicholson, White, and Duncan 1999), there is always the possibility with anything done over the internet of losing one's anonymity in some manner. The study also suggests that the general well-being of the DRUGNET subjects had no quantifiable observable difference to that of the general population (Reneau et al. 2000). This study provided important qualitative data on the daily lives of its voluntary subjects, who happen to be members of a specific social network within the hidden population of illicit drug users.

The individuals in the observed network had levels of education ranging from high school diploma to some college courses. There were a couple with bachelor degrees.

Their jobs ranged from fast food, going to college (living off loan money), working in factories, and also some street level drug dealing. Those involved with the trade of illicit substances were also unemployed at such times. Three out of four (from what I call the core group) had some level of college education. The rest of the subjects all had high school levels of education. All of the subjects were Caucasian. Most of the network members were male, as only a couple times were females included in observation. In such cases, they were romantically involved with a main member of the network.

### *Safety Precautions*

As a researcher/author of this subject, one must recognize the existence of safety concerns. First, one must avoid the victim role (Dunlap et al. 2001). This was done by absolutely not partaking in any ingestion of illicit substances. The subjects were also aware that I would not hold any illegal substances for them. Furthermore, the researcher avoided riding in the automobile of anyone who may have been intoxicated. This safety concern did not inhibit the research and gathering of data. It allowed me to take the role of designated driver when needed. This allowed the subjects to naturally consume whatever substance at whatever pace. It allowed me to avoid becoming a victim, or being seen as a possible victim, by anyone I was observing.

Second, the protector role (Dunlap et al. 2001) was utilized. The subject Freddy acted as an individual to introduce and explain my existence to the others when the network interacts with those outside the network. This subject played both the locator and protector roles. I had become a common social entity to Freddy, John, Josh and Mike. They played the protector role in many observations. This is to say that they took up the space surrounding me in any large setting.

Considering that these subjects may occasionally use pharmaceutical stimulants, I am aware of the possibility of paranoia (Dunlap et al. 2001). This is one reason I avoided covert field research. My purpose is out in the open. Furthermore, I maintained neutrality during observation. I avoided making judgmental statements some would call culture shock. Overall, it was my goal to avoid culture shock by maintaining a poststructural and reflexive approach to research.

The subjects understood that not only must I contribute to their safety by protecting their identities, but I must be concerned with my safety as well by not committing illegal acts, not partaking in intoxication, and not riding with anyone intoxicated. It was not only an issue of researcher safety, but it was also an issue of the validity of the resulting thesis. If I were to have done a full-blown participant observation and partake in drug use, not only would I be risking my safety, but this would probably cause the validity of the study to be questioned. It would have been a waste of a great opportunity to develop an understanding regarding a highly stigmatized illegal activity if my actions as researcher had brought the validity into question.

Finally, I conclude with a statement on the importance of protecting their anonymity. This, besides researcher safety, was the most important concern of this study. Just as I would not allow my safety to be compromised by taking risks such as riding with someone who is intoxicated or using an illegal substance, I did not and will never allow their privacy to be compromised. These ethical concerns have been and will continue to be the main concern for this researcher. As stated before, names and locations are changed. The names mentioned earlier are already aliases. I did not even keep a master list of aliases to real names.

There were no problems with law enforcement during the study. While I do not foresee future problems with law enforcement attempting to gather information from me, I am prepared to be imprisoned if necessary to protect the subjects' anonymity and privacy. It is the only ethical thing to do. Not only would breaching their privacy be a negative thing for them specifically, it would be a terrible thing for the field as a whole. Future studies of such activities might become much more difficult to set up. These possible subjects have been very hospitable and open. It only makes sense to reinforce that trust and return that hospitality offered to me. Furthermore, I was able to gain an NIH certificate of confidentiality. This certificate provides an extra layer of protection for the subjects.

## Chapter V: Analysis/Discussion

### *"No Sineater to slay us, us Children of Cain." (Manson 2012)*

Writing a text without producing power/knowledge (Foucault 1980) is difficult.. The subjects requested that this section should be written from the gut, so to speak. The subjects not only provided data for this project, but they also inspired me to do things differently. The following is a direct quotation from my personal reflexive journal:

I wish to represent the subjects fairly and properly in the thesis. The problem with this is the fact that once written, interpretation of the text is out of my hands. In many ways, I wish not to finish the thesis at all, due to this concern. I have come to connect with the subjects and their network. I wish I could be that free. I don't want to imprison them with my text.

Allowing a grounded theory to rise from the data is difficult. There were many moments in which a theory started to form but would dissolve and disappear almost as quickly. These words represent nothing more than a Polaroid of the formation of theory from within the abyss of data. This thesis is a snapshot taken at a time when the photographer finally stopped trying to get the perfect picture and pressed the button.

### *Functional Drug Use Found*

We were on our way to meet Mike, Josh, and Freddy at what everyone called, "The Deviants' Place." "The Deviants' Place," is a house rented by several late teens/early twenties guys. It is like a frat house without the school. There are virtually no "adults" there, so it is almost like it is some type of Neverland free of normative power. John informed me that I would probably be the oldest person that has ever stepped foot into "The Deviants'." Apparently, we were going to play some monopoly and Texas hold 'em poker. We pulled into the driveway, which was filled with cars. I recognized Freddy's and Mike's. Josh must have ridden with one of them. The other cars I did not recognize. I was curious about this, my first time at "The Deviants'." With a name like that, it couldn't be too bad. At any rate, we got out of the vehicle and John just opened the door and walked into what was supposed to be the kitchen. The kitchen, however, had all the living room furniture in it. I inquired about this and was informed that they wanted comfortable seating in the kitchen so they had just moved the couch and chair from the living room into the kitchen.

I thought to myself, “now this is my kinda place... sofas go in living rooms, what?! Who came up with that arbitrary bullshit? I want it in the kitchen.” The pure sanity of this form of madness appealed to me. I could see Derrida shifting furniture to areas in which they didn’t belong. Thank goodness there were no adults here to ruin it. I was hoping there would be other eccentricities to make me feel at home, both theoretically and literally. The late teens who lived here looked as if they would be considered what some might call “punk”, “emo,” and/or “goths.” Each individual had some variation. Deviant #1 (and I call them this in admiration) was pretty much straight punk and seemed to be the one who was somewhat responsible. He actually had a job. What was interesting was this room was filled with the punk/emo/goth/skateboard teens, Freddy who was somewhat of a gangster and a fan of rap style clothing, John who was just a good ole boy, Mike who was a standard comedian, and Josh who was a standard generic individual outside of his intoxicant use. Here they all were ready for a serious game of monopoly. The room was filled with smoke. It seemed everyone smoked here. Deviant #2 was a skater who was skateboarding around the kitchen. Deviant #3 and 4 were more like emo kids. There were other Deviants here but it was difficult to figure out who actually lived here, because just about everyone seemed to stay here for extended periods. This was my first time here and after introductions, “This is Eric... he's a sociologist. He's studying us,” John announced, I was immediately invited to make myself at home and stay here whenever necessary. Deviant #2 snorted what he said was a xanax and said that we should get started on monopoly. This was going to be a crowded game, though not all the Deviants were playing. Deviant #1 started to act a bit concerned with the whole “he's studying us” aspect of me being there. I informed him that all identities would be protected, and explained a little bit about participant observation and calmed him down. After that, there were questions about it, but more of being in awe of that being an occupation and being “way funner than his job.” This group of individuals play monopoly in a unique way. They form what they call “corporations” so that two can team up and build hotels on their properties even though as individual players they do not have all of the individual properties of that type. Combined, as a corporation, they did. I applauded the bending of the game rules.

The house was a bit of a mess, but considering that a group of late teens and people in their twenties often lived here, it was actually more kept up than I expected. It was something like Animal House, I suppose. Conversations varied in topic covering everything from recent sexual conquests, to recent fun drug times, to dealing with “stupid people” of the town, to music, and everyday life. Freddy won the game of monopoly of course, and was proud to brag and celebrate. He had earned it. As we prepared for Texas hold ’em, Freddy started talking about possibly changing his major in school because he could make more money in a

different field sooner. Once it was established that that indeed was what he willed most, John, Mike, and the others gave their full support. John said, "Don't be scared to do it, if it gets you closer to your goal." [These guys definitely break the stereotype of non-driven drug users. This also speaks to the social bonding despite a lack of normative group goals or regulations other than do what you want most. The end didn't matter to these individuals of this group. It was will that mattered. No end is ever rejected, unless the desire is clearly lacking.] This is not what they show on those anti-drug commercials. Individuals supporting each other's goals positively while playing monopoly and smoking pot. [Again, I am surprised that no one cares that I do not partake. Even these new introductions. Again this goes against the stereotype. Intoxicant use is as normal as kicking back and having a beer with this group. It is not something to be peer pressured.]...

Later that evening Deviant #2 opened the front door, and skated through the kitchen and living room on to the porch and was jumping off doing tricks. This was at 4 am. [They clearly are not concerned about the neighbor's opinions.] Yes, this was an aptly titled place and was quite refreshing. Free spirits existed here.

The preceding quote from my field notes covers a night of drug use that is the closest to something that may not have been considered functional, yet everyone was off work. Everyone had a great time. Everyone supported each other's goals, yet there were no normative demands from the group on what those goals should be. This suggests not only a functionality in these relaxing or partying drug users, but also the fact that they may be more functional than the rest of us. (This is my take on the subjects.) The neighbors may have seen them as nuisances, but nobody got hurt and everyone from different social groups came together to form a specific intersubjectivity. This anomie style intersubjectivity did not result in suicides or anything negative for the subjects, who remained functional. It also was a proud vision of resistance against the normative forces of the local community at large, though they perhaps merely annoyed their neighbors. This does seem to suggest a different style of sociality--perhaps, one grounded in Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) concepts of master and slave morality.

There was a tremendous void when it came to the existence of data that would support any scientific classification of these subjects as addicted. There is not one intoxicating substance that the subjects seemed to require to avoid any sort of detoxification side effects. It cannot be said that the subjects were suffering from addiction to any specific substance. In many ways, something resembling an unofficial rotation of substances was used. This was similar to how baseball teams do not start the same pitcher every game but instead use a rotation.

So far, this seemed like any old card game among friends. [I found this interesting. As the only difference between a card game being played by those intoxicated on drugs and those not or intoxicated on alcohol, seems to be the inclusion of illicit drugs. Other than that, the social setting appears to be much the same. Yet, then again and at the same time, the illicit drugs are a large difference, as no standard friendly card game (no money on the line) would result in fear when a door is opened, as had occurred earlier. It is almost as if the intersubjective divide is not the actual difference of intoxication, but rather the stigmatization of drug use. It is this possibly unreasonable stigmatization and reasonable fear of stigmatization that creates such a rigid social wall between drug user and non-user. It is almost as if the fear of the “unreason” side of the binary opposition reason/unreason on the part of the side of reason, drives the reasonable to being quite unreasonable themselves. In turn, it makes those partaking in the “unreason” of illicit intoxication seem to be much more reasonable than the so-called “reasonable.” The lines are blurred by drug users, not just for the drug user, but for the neutral observer and also, ultimately, the non-user. Since the official side of “Reason” tyrannically cannot deal with the erasing and blurring of arbitrary lines, it must ignore its own “unreason” (stigmatization of the drug user.) It is also almost as if Michel Foucault (1967) was correct about the use of drugs in the late sixties being a way for the rational to reclaim madness from the Reason/Unreason opposition used to filter every other opposition into “normal/pathological.” Or at least, one could say that Foucault's theory applies to this drug network, in an existential sense. In the same sense, they could be seen as reclaiming “deviance” in the normative/deviant opposition that seems to have been converted to “normal/pathological.” One could state this for all the former oppositions filtered down to normal/pathological, as their existence deconstructs all binary oppositions. Similarly, their “criminal” behavior seems to be quite non-criminal, while those who fight their criminal existence, seem to be quite criminal, when one looks at the war on drugs and all its atrocities.]



The substance most often present was marijuana. Marijuana use was a baseline event. It was used often by the subjects during observation. It was not used as much as the observer used tobacco, yet it was common. In most all observation of poly-substance use, marijuana was present. No negative effects were observed during times lacking marijuana use. Thus it must be assumed that not even an addiction to marijuana was present, despite the frequency of its use.

Freddy said, “No prob Bob. Pot is pot, despite differences in strength. It is always much appreciated.” [This is an interesting response to Tom's disclaimer. It is also in line with what I have observed from this group. While they have a very Nietzschean vision of individualism and respect for differences, there is almost something Marxist about how they share intoxicants. This suggests that the use and sharing of intoxicants (though they will also sell to each other or “throw in often”) is something that builds social cohesion. It is an important classification for them. It is one of the things that make them see themselves as a “group.” This and their Nietzschean philosophy seem to be two things that build social cohesion for them.] He then went to smelling the bag of marijuana that Mike had handed him.

Moments in which the subjects were completely non-intoxicated failed to show that the subjects' drug use reduced the quality of their non-intoxicated existence. The subjects never seemed to get intoxicated to escape the experience of life while non-intoxicated. Ergo, the conclusion on the question of addiction is as follows: within this group of subjects, no drug addiction is present, despite the frequent presence of drug intoxication. This brings the foundations of much of the rehabilitation industry into question, as this study provides strong evidence that substance use does not necessarily lead to substance addiction. If these subjects were going to become addicted “eventually” (as is often stated in face of conclusions such as this study makes), it is not due to any of the substance use observed during this research.

Further interesting findings of functional drug use show the group being open to new companions:

[Here again we see part of the socialization of this network. For whatever reason, the individual actor that is most distant member of the network attempts to gain acceptance and seems to be concerned about his contribution to the group. This is met with complete acceptance and an attempt to keep the distant member of the network from worrying. (This further makes me trust Freddy's and the main network's analysis of Mike's wife, as they've been more than welcoming to myself and her specifically to a distant member of the network.) This suggests a very loose intersubjective web specific to the network. This goes along with their general Nietzschean attitude and diversity of other interests beyond the Nietzschean philosophy, living in an area of rural poverty, and use of illicit intoxicants. Perhaps, this level of individualized acceptance helps create the strong social cohesion. Either way, it seems to be a very open network as far as acceptance of individual deviance is concerned. So far everyone observed from this network has been Caucasian, in their 20s, from an area of rural poverty, a user of drugs, and heterosexual. Yet, on several occasions I've heard them attack racism, homophobia, and other closed minded modes of thinking. The only judgment seems to be directed at their area. They feel that they must escape this rural area, as they feel it has no opportunity and often traps good people here. This also might have to do with their concern about their friend, Mike, being trapped here.]

This suggests that not only are these drug users quite functional and non-threatening, but also great champions of diversity. It seems as if there is no area of deviance that they will not accept into their social network. The main thing here is simple: "no pigs,"<sup>1</sup> as they would put it. I did not set out with a definition of functional drug use. I immersed myself in the network. Their behavior suggests a working definition of functional drug use. They avoided detection by social forces of Authority, avoided harm, and their drug use did not get in the way of their individual will-to-powers.

***Deconstructed Disease (Concept:)***

There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign, and which lives the

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<sup>1</sup> This terminology "pigs" refers classically to law enforcement agents. For the subjects, this label is expanded to mean any normative force of social control

necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology--in other words, throughout his entire history--has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of play. The second interpretation of interpretation, to which Nietzsche pointed the way, does not seek in ethnography, as Levi-Strauss does," the inspiration of a new humanism (again citing the *Introduction to the Work of Marcel Mauss*). (Derrida 1978:292)

There is something about finding functional drug use that is contradictory to the supposed system of addiction put forward in our culture's supposedly scientific vision of drug addiction. It is reported that at the center of drug addiction is drug use. Saying this seems almost obvious, yet here we have a study in which the observer witnessed drug use that has not led--and seems not to be leading to--drug addiction. Despite the possibility of this network of drug users being outliers, this remains problematic. Addiction studies do not seem to leave room for the existence of outliers. Psychology seems to have forgotten that its theories are not whole, and the psychology of addiction seems to have set up a situation in which continued drug use--if not drug use itself--is the origin of drug addiction. In this sense, the psychology of addiction sets up continued drug use as a signifier of a disease for which it uses the signifier addiction. The field treats its theories on addiction as a totality. Derrida (1978) has warned the realm of social science about such non-reflexive approaches to science, while also pointing out the non-affirming (toward interpretation and play) approach to data that keeps science attached to cultural/social concepts without being able to achieve the objectivity it desires to achieve. The psychology of addiction is no different from any other non-reflexive/non-affirming-of-interpretation social science that treats its theories like laws.

It is this center (drug use) of a totality (addiction) that limits play of the term addiction (within both our culture and the social sciences) while also creating the opportunity for play, as this study has shown that drug use has not resulted in addiction. Derrida (1978) dealt with the issue of a limit of totalization, which now confronts the psychology of addiction. There are two styles of response to such a limit. The first, he mentions, is the one that takes the easy path out. It simply writes it off totalization as an impossibility due to there being too much to say. (There is no doubt that the field of psychology has incorporated this response to limits on their conceptualization of addiction as a disease and will most likely continue using this response.) The second response is to determine nontotalization "no longer from the standpoint of a concept of finitude as relegation to the empirical, but from the standpoint of the concept of *play*" (Derrida 1978:289).

From this latter standpoint, one sees that language is the nature of science. It is this nature that excludes the possibility of totalization. It is not an inexhaustible field due to being too large, but because it lacks a center which to make play of substitutions finally end. Ergo, it is useless to be closed toward new findings or to suggest that the findings found here--in this text--are not permissible due to not fitting the definition of the system of the disease called addiction found within psychology (Derrida 1978). Unlike much of the work found within what might be called the psychology of addiction, this work was reflexively produced. The possible biases, even of the very field of sociology, were considered and removed before this study began. The same cannot be said for other fields' works on addiction.

Clearly, since something is missing from the psychology of addiction, or really I should say, "addictionology," to include all sciences. What is missing? Clearly, if drug use does not necessarily lead to drug addiction, then what is necessary and/or sufficient to cause addiction? Of course, I am keeping in mind that I am, albeit scientifically, only adding to the nontotalization of addiction. I am not seeking a center/origin, but accepting the noncenter, rather than mourn any perceived loss of center (Derrida 1978) in the next section.

***The Cultural Narrative of Addiction: Cory Montieth Didn't like the Drugs, but they liked him | Socially Constructed and Inconsistently Oppressive***

Norm life baby "we're white and oh so hetero and our sex is missionary."

Norm life baby "we're quitters and we're sober. Our confessions will be televised."

You and I are underdosed and we're ready to fall.

Raised to be stupid, Taught to be nothing at all.

I don't like the drugs but the drugs like me...

Norm Life Baby "our God is white and unforgiving we're piss tested, and we're praying."

Norm Life Baby "I'm just a sample of soul made to look just like a human being."

Norm Life Baby "We're rehabbed and we're ready for our 15 minutes of shame."...

You and I are underdosed and we're ready to fall.

Raised to be stupid, taught to be nothing at all.

I don't like the drugs, but the drugs like me....

There's a hole in our soul that we fill with dope. And we're feeling fine! (Manson 1998)

The lyrics from Marilyn Manson's 1999 hit, "I don't like the drugs (but the drugs like me)" are, in my interpretation, a critical, satirical attack on the concept of addiction as a psychological disease. This song (and music video) is perhaps one of the best examples of the *cultural narrative of addiction*, albeit a critical one.

The observed data of this qualitative study supports the concept of functional drug use. Given that the existence of functional drug users must now be considered scientific fact by all serious social scientists, it has become necessary to reflexively reconsider

theories on addiction that have been previously presented as fact within our own culture. This reconsideration can only be completed within a reflexive sociology, as the other fields, such as psychology, do not seem capable of reflexivity based on their own epistemological foundations and due to the influence said fields have had upon our culture. Currently, said fields of science are not able to effectively escape any possible cultural bias which is necessary to achieve reflexivity.

**The criminal type is the type of strong man amid unfavorable conditions, a strong man made sick. He lacks the wild and savage state, a form of nature and existence which is freer and more dangerous, in which everything that constitutes the shield and the sword in the instinct of the strong man takes a place by right. Society puts a ban upon his virtues... It is society our tame, mediocre, castrated society, in which an untutored son of nature who comes to us from his mountains or from his adventures at sea, must necessarily degenerate into a criminal. Or almost necessarily: for there are cases in which such a man shows himself to be stronger than society.** (Nietzsche [1889] 2008:77)

The theories found within the Psychology of Addiction, despite their level of validity, exist as a very present cultural narrative. This *cultural narrative of addiction* is a mythic fact (Maines, Bridger, and Ulmer 1996), as are all cultural narratives (Maines 1999). Nietzsche's ([1889] 2008) proto-labeling theory regarding criminality and Becker's ([1963] 1991) labeling theory best explain the process by which this narrative is formed. Once drug use (a virtue to the user) is banned and labeled a vice by “our tame, mediocre, castrated society” (Nietzsche [1889]: 2008:77), the process of labeling (specific to the drug addict) goes as follows: 1) A specific celebrity/figure of cultural importance died due to their drug use. 2) Suddenly, their entire history of previous drug use is known or made known. 3) This history of drug use becomes a tragic narrative of the figure's struggle to overcome addiction. 4) The Psychology of Addiction is structurally reinforced by the repetition of its dominant theories being beyond question. 5) Perhaps most

important, the theory of addiction as a disease and the theory of drug use necessarily leading to this disease are presented loudest. Finally, we get the formation of this *cultural narrative of addiction*, which quite simply states that addiction is a psychological disease brought on by drug use. One can imagine hearing "I don't like the drugs, but the drugs like me" at an NA style of meeting when someone is trying to explain their relapse. Thus, also part of the narrative is that the user does not control their use, as they do not like the drugs. The drugs find them, and this must mean it is a disease.

The data collected in this thesis suggested that the reverse is occurring. In sum, it is not a disease or psychological deviation that causes the deviant action. Becker's ([1963] 1991) sociological theory is much more applicable when reflexivity is sought by the researcher. In my research, it is clearly not a deviant pathology that causes the deviant action. Instead, it is the labeling of a deviant action as pathological that causes the pathology/motivation. This also suggests that Foucault's ([1967] 1999) vision that Western societies had been reducing all binary systems (by way of madness/reason binarism) into an over simplistic pathological/normal binary opposition was correct. In the same interview, Foucault states that drug use in Western societies was liberating the madness/reason opposition from the social function of scientifically filtering other oppositions into pathological/normal. The rise of the Psychology of Addiction and the declaration of the War on Drugs that would later follow were predictable.

What are the cultural and social effects of these specific tragic narratives of addiction? The celebrity is pitied. Suddenly, for example, Cory Montith<sup>2</sup> did not die due

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<sup>2</sup> Cory Montith, known for his leading role in the television series *Glee*, died in 2013 from an overdose shortly after completing a drug rehabilitation program; prior to his death, popular media had covered his addiction and recovery heavily.

to his *lack of experience* with drugs by having his tolerance drop during times of sobriety and during relapse going back to previous dosage levels. The fallen celebrity is absolved of all responsibility. Instead of being a pathetic figure that died due to an accidental overdose, the fallen becomes a victim of this disease that is to blame for their miscalculation in dosage. Whatever actual responsibility the individual had for their own death is either not spoken of or is transferred to the disease of addiction. In this sense, the cultural narrative of addiction socially functions to maintain the image of a popular figure that died due to something that might tarnish said image. No one says mean things at a funeral, after all.

The *cultural narrative of addiction* is not just useful to dead celebrities. It also benefits living celebrities. When celebrities tarnish their own image by some transgressive behavior brought on by an excess of excess, they have the opportunity to oddly take responsibility for their addiction by submitting to and becoming part of the cultural narrative of addiction. Their salvation is granted once they have entered tertiary deviance (Kitsuse 1980), and they take responsibility for their disease by blaming said disease for their actions and seeking treatment.

One figure that has resisted being forced to take on this narrative and maintaining his social status is Charlie Sheen. Sheen, in a sense, became a very Nietzschean figure. He gained a counterculture status by gaining respect of individuals living in modes of resistance. Sheen did this by making public the hidden transcript (Scott 1990) of subordinated drug users. He spoke truth in the face of the dominating force of authority. Specifically, the subjects of this study see Charlie Sheen as a Nietzschean hero, if not as an overhuman. They were not necessarily fans before his supposed meltdown. It was



because he promoted a lifestyle of master morality (which he called “winning”), resistance against social control, and transgressive individuality that these subjects view him as a heroic figure. This resistance to the cultural narrative by a celebrity, Mr. Sheen, makes sense based on the data, which would find Sheen was more within this network's intersubjectivity. The following quotations from my field notes illuminate issues of this:

John had just showed up to visit at Freddy's family's place. Freddy and I had been discussing seasonal depression, a common occurrence. Freddy had been experiencing some of it. He wondered what had happened to the person he was the previous summer, “It's like I forgot about winning. That's now gone completely.” [This network of friends had shown last summer an affinity for Charlie Sheen's winning, as well as Nietzsche's concept of *ubermensch*.] He stated that it was this way every winter, but that being in Mulch Valley made it much worse. He worries about his family. He sees how desperately hard they work and how little they get in return. “It's simple economics and this town lost the competition,” he said as he wondered why anyone would stay. Freddy clearly wishes his family could escape the poor rural area, but it has “trapped them” as he put it. [This is interesting as one of the problems that poor rural area's face is a sort of brain drain, caused by the massive exodus they often experience.]

Watching a drug documentary reminds me what is wrong with the study of drug use and addiction. It must be treated as a separate social setting of interaction. It is its own frame. Its own society so to speak. This is not just metaphor. It is perhaps indeed a completely different intersubjective frame. These documentaries and other approaches to addictionology are on par with early anthropological work into “primitive” societies, before the notion of going native as a tool was around. There is an intersubjective divide that is amplified by these attempts at understanding. The divide makes the individuals look as though they are dysfunctional, because they often times are dysfunctional in our intersubjective frame. Yet in their intersubjective social frame, they are often quite functional. Often times, they are functional in both. Those tend to not be focused on because the intersubjective frames are intersubjective with one another, or at least more so.

This shows that despite what the *cultural narrative of addiction* suggests, we cannot judge drug users to be functional or not. This is because the term functional is defined differently in multiple intersubjective frames. Furthermore, we see that this

intersubjective frame of drug use is not tied to class, location, or even time. In the intersubjectivity of this network of drug users in an area of rural poverty, we see Charlie Sheen and Friedrich Nietzsche, as well as the sociologist observing them all.

This *cultural narrative of addiction* allows individuals to 1) maintain their social status in the case of death caused by an overdose and 2) have an opportunity a chance for social redemption through treatment of a disease if they happen to get out of hand in their behavior and become offensive. These results of the narrative also cycle to help maintain cultural dominance of this narrative over other possible explanations or interpretations of drug use and/or addiction. When figures of cultural importance use the narrative, it reinforces its social authority. The upper class individual can afford the expensive rehabilitation that comes with the redemption the narrative offers. The common social figure views the news of celebrity A's death and history of drug use or celebrity B's confession of addiction and decision to seek help, and especially if not a drug user, is influenced to blindly accept the cultural narrative as scientific fact. Thus, their already normative behavior is reinforced through their acceptance of embarrassment (Goffman 1967) felt toward their discovered hidden transcripts (Scott 1990).

If the common viewer happens to be a user, they may be converted by this round of propagandized histrionics seen in the mass media. They may have even been a functional drug user. Now the converted deviant embodies the cultural narrative and can become both a victim of it and a foundation for its continued authority. The up-until-this-point functional drug user did not use drugs to escape their own self-loathing or hated existence. After submitting to the narrative's authority, they can only conclude that they must have hated life all along, as they are using drugs. They reinterpret their own

behavior in a way that explains their primary deviation. They are in a stage of what Lemert (1951) identified as secondary deviance and begin reactively defining themselves as addicts and defining their lives as something they wish to escape. The narrative gives them the map of treatment. If they happen to be wealthy enough, they can probably stop their drug use, which became an addiction at the very moment they accepted the cultural narrative of addiction. If not, they too may one day die of an overdose; yet when other common social figures happen to hear of their death in some local media (whether it be local newspaper or gossip), they will not be absolved and mourned as the celebrity figure. They will be seen as just a common addict who did not overcome their disease, unlike their wealthier counterparts who could successfully overcome their addiction. Of course, the second half of that last sentence will not suggest (to those learning of the common social figure's death and interpreting it in this manner) the obvious importance of ability to pay for treatment and/or rebranding.

It is then that the issue of social class appears. While clearly all figures affected by the *cultural narrative of addiction* are oppressively affected (even the celebrity who resists successfully during life is feeling the narrative's oppression by having to even answer to it in the first place, and ultimately, in the end, everyone dies and no one can control how one is defined after death), there are different intensities of oppression that might be present. These differences are based upon two areas of distinction: class (both economic and social) and drug user/non-drug user classification. Economic class is a factor due to the cost of rehabilitation. Social class is a factor because what could be considered helpful benefits of the *cultural narrative of addiction* are more easily found for the class of the culturally important/celebrities. Chambliss's (1973) finding that there

were different repercussions for deviant behavior along lines of social class supports this analysis.

The drug user/non-drug user classification is a factor as it may be the common drug user that ultimately buys into the theory who suffers from what many consider the most intense oppression. Obviously, if a cultural narrative acts as a social force to get rid of a singled out classification, as the *cultural narrative of addiction* seeks to eliminate drug use, then said classification group will feel what most scholars and individuals would usually call the most intense effects. I have intentionally left out another area for differences in intensity of oppression. This would be the rural/non-rural setting of the drug user or non-drug user. Considering that it has been suggested that class is often spatially displayed (Park, Burgess, and McKenzie 1925), this area of difference will be further explored in the following subsection, as it is directly tied to this study.

While all drug users are affected by this *cultural narrative of addiction*, it is this network of functional drug users who have proudly maintained and resisted acceptance. This may be due in part to their understanding of certain theorists and authors. The following excerpt from my notes highlights this:

“What are you saying?!” asked Freddy nearly screaming. “Do you even hear yourself?” he followed. Freddy was driving while talking on his cell phone. He was quite animated. “Why even listen to them? Why is it any of their business?” “Slave morality is getting ya, right there.” I was riding in the passenger seat. Apparently, John had been guilt-tripped by his parents into not signing over his children. He was thus still trapped by his child support payments. “He says he is just going to attempt it for a few months and if it doesn’t work out he will sign them over, but really he’s just making excuses for himself and will remain trapped here,” Freddy explained. [Perhaps, this network operates on its own master morality and acts as a source for a type of reverse social/moral capital. Many times it seems as if they are at constant war with the surrounding community, whether they be strangers, bosses, fellow workers, of family

members. It is as if they are at war with all of Mulch Valley, which they see as a prison that they are trying to escape.]

Freddy seemed genuinely concerned for his fellow member of this network of deviants. He said that he knew how badly John wanted to get out of Mulch Valley but was trapped by the financial barrier to escape. There were no good jobs here. Even Freddy's parents who had graduated college with useful degrees, were underscored in this micro-economy. I have often heard Freddy try to get them to move to another area, where they could maximize their financial gain. Instead they are struggling small business owners. Far from impoverished, Freddy often wonders out loud what the difference is between his apparently middle class family and the more impoverished background of some of his friends. Freddy's parents are trapped on a cycle of debt, trying to make it work in the wrong town. He has often said that they are playing the wrong game. Freddy is often concerned they will drop into poverty or lose their home. It is not so much of the loss of a safety net that bothers him, he is prepared for that. While he disagrees with his family's religious background, he still cares for them, as well as his friends. In sum, John would be trapped unless he could find a way to save some money to get out of this town. Freddy kind of views it as a graveyard. It's not that this area lacks intelligent and capable people, though he'll be the first to tell you that most are stupid followers, it's just that there is no outlet.

“John thinks that he can just motherfuckin' fuck around here and please his family and things will always stay the same. It won't be so bad, he'll always have people like me and Mike. What is he gonna do when he wakes up and we've made it out. Then he's gonna realize he shouldn't have fucked around with things, and he'll want to leave and be trapped. That's my worst fear, being trapped here,” Freddy said in a frustrated tone. “He's convinced he's doin' the right thing... they've convinced him. I mean who wants to give up their kids. One day he'll see, this easy way out sucks.” He continued. He finished, “I'm not getting trapped here in no jobs, no money, nothing to do central, bullshit town.”

This instance suggests that the issue of class, while important for ability to pay for treatment, is not that which helps the resisting functional drug user fight the *cultural narrative of addiction*, as even the drug user who gets help due to financial ability has done nothing more than turn himself into confinement and disciplinary power (Foucault 1977). In John's case, a moral capital issue (or as Freddy would argue, a slave morality) caused him to cease to be concerned with financial issues. Here it does seem that Freddy

is correct, and Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) conceptualization of slave morality was the acting force in John's decision. Finances then, and economic and social class, do not necessarily determine one's ability to fight the *cultural narrative of addiction*. It also suggests that Freddy's master morality drove him to escape Mulch Valley, despite his drug use, and perhaps even due to the alienation of being a drug user in a small town.

On the flip side, the following field notes suggest that there is an attitude of a lack of caring for the small community's social order, structure, intersubjectivity, and/or mode of sociality found in the network of drug users I observed. It furthermore suggests that the attitude of the deviant group is one of superiority to all that which is the same. This shows a general lack of concern with the *cultural narrative of addiction*.

There doesn't appear to be any concern with moral capital of the overall community in this group. In many occasions, I have heard them state they felt above the general population. At least this is true with Freddy, John, and Mike. The intersubjective nature of this network doesn't appear to be strict. Whatever one wants to do is supported by the others, so long as they are doing it because they want to do it. To have a repressed will is about all that is frowned upon in this group. Individuals in this network come from every economic class except upper class. They each have different levels of education as well. There is an intense amount of difference other than the focus on doing what one wants. As long as one is doing what they want, no judgment is passed by the rest of the group. Though if one is "acting under slave morality" judgment is passed and the others often have serious conversations about how to help the individual who is being repressed. This type of lack of social controls would suggest that there should not be any social bonds, as an anomie type situation. Yet, there appears to be a strong social bond in this network, perhaps stronger than in the overall community. This perhaps shows that anomie is not a descriptive term of a low measure of social bonds, but instead is a different type of sociality all together. Perhaps, a better one than our standard society which is so disciplinary that we often do not even recognize it as such.

This current subsection, however, has provided 1) the identification of the cultural narrative of addiction, despite scientific validity of the theories--now in serious question--

that are a part of it, 2) the exposure of the cyclic social construction of said narrative's cultural dominance, 3) the vision of the cultural narrative as an oppressive social force, and 4) the realization that the oppression of the cultural narrative is not equally distributed, though the possibility of active resistance exists. As stated, the next section zooms in on one of those particular areas of unequal access to oppression, but a following subsection will cover what it is that allows the functional drug user to fight normative forces, such as *the cultural narrative of addiction*.

### ***The Extra Layer of Oppression in the Setting of Rural Poverty***

The subjects' general desire to keep their drug use hidden from their individual families and community, to a degree, is interesting. It is something that wavers. In a very public location, they seem to go out of their way to blend in. This gives credit to Goffman's (1963) work on management of stigma. It is especially interesting when considered with their praise for Charlie Sheen and his ability to essentially rub his drug use in the face of the very social forces they have been forced to hide from. I was initially surprised by how cooperative they were with my observation of them. I am no longer surprised, because I offered them what they desired, in many ways. They could be viewed by a social figure outside their network without having to concern themselves with maintaining social camouflage for said outside social figure. The study of which they were apart was itself set up to avoid any bias judgment. I gave them a chance to be observed by science minus the prejudgment.

For the most part, Freddy is up for any challenge. He is a fan of confrontation. If he is challenged, he will step up or at least attempt to. John on the other hand is a fan of fun, and that's all good except when it causes conflict. He almost wishes for a somewhat lazy version of master morality. [Still though he doesn't buy into the moral capital of this community. He openly states it is nonsense. He especially enjoys quoting

the old Nietzsche line, "God is dead," to religious folk. When it comes to his family though, he just prefers peace to Freddy's war. Both Freddy and John see this as a weakness however. Freddy agrees though that if John wanted to stay here it wouldn't be an issue, but he knows that he wants out.]

Desires are an interesting thing in this group. Freddy seems completely focused on money. It seems he wants to get enough money to no longer have to worry about money. [This could be a side effect of being from the lower to middle class.] Apparently, his family started in poverty and worked their way out. As a result, he said that he saw his father and mother work their ass off and not get much in return for it. Freddy isn't even interested in owning a house. He says they did all this work so that they could make a better life for him and climb into the middle class and become home owners. The problem he said was that this house became another reason to overwork for lower pay than they could get in another area.

This excerpt from the notes suggests that this group of deviants happen to be functional drug users. Their public or front stage (Goffman 1959) seems to mainly be their families and other areas that may make them susceptible to labeling and sanction. Their back stage is their private times of hanging out with one another. Once off stage, they clearly enjoy bringing up deviance, other than their drug use, to breach and hassle the local audience. They often do this on the back stage as well. Finally, the fact that many are focused on getting out of Mulch Valley may represent a desire to escape Mulch Valley and thus gain a larger back stage and off stage area. Though this should not be assumed, as often they have no problem with getting "amped up"<sup>3</sup>, so to speak, and making their way to being front stage and/or audience:

I had just arrived in town and was pulling up to Freddy's place. I saw Freddy and Josh on the front porch. I popped out of the car, and there was overzealous greetings and catching up. [I have been hanging out with this crew off and on since the summer, which was full blown immersion... by now I'd say they probably do not even think twice about my project. I'm pretty sure I achieved full immersion sometime ago.] It was dead cold outside, as the sun was getting ready to set. Freddy and Josh were on pain

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<sup>3</sup> "Amped up" is used by the network as slang for getting intoxicated on amphetamines.



meds and speed. To be specific, they were on hydrocodone/apap and dextroamphetamine. Freddy had just rolled a blunt, and they were waiting on John to show up so they could all three smoke it. They informed me of all of this. I asked what else was planned. Freddy told me that there wasn't much that we could do because some Thanksgiving/Christmas parade was getting ready to happen. [I am from a rural town as well, originally, and I recall these holiday parades. I inform them of this to continue the conversation on it. I'd like to get their take.] This parade seemed like it was more of a hassle to them than anything else. Freddy told me almost everyone in the town shows up to this "small pathetic parade" and "pretend it is something great." I ask if they plan on going. Josh informs me that we must go because Freddy's girlfriend wants him to meet her there. Freddy then states that we don't have to go and argues with Josh a little about what he said.

It is at this point that John pulls up in his pickup truck. He pulls right into the muddy dead leafed up yard, window down with a cigarette barely hanging out of his mouth, his hat on crooked, and a half stupid look on his face. I immediately know that he has been smoking pot. [I have, overtime, developed the ability to tell when Freddy and John are high on marijuana. They behave in a certain manner, talk in a certain manner, and just have this high look on their face. It is most obvious with John.] John gets out of the truck, as soon as he steps on the ground I say, "You're high." He replied, "Yep." He then went into a spiel about the "damn parade" getting ready to shut down the entire town which is "just one main road." Freddy ran up to John and smacked him on the back several times rather hard and said, "Whadya say feller?" in an exaggerated accent. "You reckon we oughta head on down to tha big parade?" He continued. John stated that we "might as fuckin well," but he wanted to "blast off" first. [Blast off is the terminology this network uses for snorting aka insufflating dextroamphetamine. Interestingly enough, they won't touch methamphetamine.]<sup>4</sup>

We made our way into the house. Freddy's cat, whose name is 8-ball and has snow white fur, attempts to block our feet and escape into the residence. John pulls out 10 mg of dextroamphetamine and crushes it on the coffee table. He proceeds to snort it. Freddy and Josh proceed to brag about how they were on hydrocodone as well. It upsets John that he missed the hydrocodone. "Well fuck, sucks I missed that," he whines. Freddy exclaims that John should be more worried about the "8-ball of coke" he missed this past week. "Fuck you buddy," was John's response and he began to pretend to punch him in a playful manner.

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<sup>4</sup> During the beginning of the study it seemed as if the network of subjects bought into the social stigmatization of methamphetamine use, as they used plenty of pharmaceutical amphetamines. The network later began to also functionally use methamphetamine

Sherman's (2009) research on rural poverty was devoid of any observation of drug use. Her subjects suggested that such things were not an issue in the area. She concluded that this was an honest statement of desire, rather than an effort to maintain frame by way of a presentation of a generalized rural self (Goffman 1959). My research suggests that her conclusion may have been naive. Sherman is satisfied with her conclusion as she tried to fully gain access to her locations of study. She simply could not find the rural drug users to observe. I, on the other hand, could approach potential subjects as both an outside observer and as a transgressive figure of resistance in my own social realm. I may have not been a drug user in their network, but I was a graduate student of sociology that was willing to construct this study so that they were granted equality with the forces they felt were oppressive to them. I was a student in the very field that I was questioning and aggressively going after certain aspects: my approach to sociological research has always had Nietzsche as more-of-a founder than Durkheim. In this sense, I was a transgressive figure of rupture to them, much like Sheen, though exponentially less recognized! This study allowed them to become part of my revolution while being observed in non-biased fashion and still maintaining anonymity. Access to their very private network may have seemed simple to a researcher such as myself, but I highly doubt it would have been simple for other researchers.

Sherman's (2009) lack of observation of drug users in areas of rural poverty is theoretically important. Combined with my subjects' willingness to be observed by a very specific figure, it shows that this need to keep their drug use hidden from the general frame of the rural town of Mulch Valley is externally imposed. The dead end of Sherman's path to observe her areas in their entirety was the result of this secrecy by

actual drug users in rural areas combined with an intense desire of the non-drug users of rural areas to maintain a drug free status of their entire locality. This desire of the local normative forces (social groups entrenched in normative behavior and the status-quo) in rural areas to present a vision of rural areas as free and almost innocent of any charges of things such as drug use seems intense. To what extent are such groups of normativity are willing to go to maintain their own cultural narrative of rural life?

Given Sherman's conclusion of there being an intense social importance on moral capital in her studied community, Golden Valley, they would clearly be fine with hiding it from those who may cause too large a fuss. My position in this study gave me a unique perspective. I could see shifts between observing them in private and in very public settings. There is a fear of being discovered for rural drug users that just may not be present in drug users living in urban or suburban settings. While my subjects could resist it with what they termed a "master morality," (Nietzsche [1887] 1989) they may very well be outliers. This does not mean they should be thrown out of study. In fact, it makes them that much more important to study.

The blue-light brigade slowly lurks past and in front of us. Some pig/village idiot found it genius to play the theme from a popular brutal law enforcement show.<sup>5</sup> Immediately, John asked me, "Do you hear that? What do you think of that? That's so fuckin' stupid, right?" "I think so," I responded. [This is great. This is more evidence that I am in this networks specific mode of thought. I am as close to "gone native" as legally possible.] Freddy and Josh laughed. Freddy put his hand over his face and said, "It's so embarrassing to be from this town. I apologize for the idiots of our town, Eric." "Which is everybody almost!" Josh stated as an excited matter of fact. Laughter in agreement followed.

Not far behind the blue-lighted vehicles, two warmly dressed females carried the banner for the whole parade. Right behind that was an ocean of horses, mules, donkeys, and other animals being ridden. Then came a rather small marching band that was doing more dancing than

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<sup>5</sup> "COPS"

marching. Behind that was some local politician being carted around in a convertible by someone who looked old enough to be her father, perhaps it was. She had this looking down her nose at the crowd type of smile. Like she was ultra-important. While this group may have been making fun of the situation as well, she didn't look the type to be allowed to do that in my mind. I'm sure she was thinking something like: "Can't believe I have to show up here. I'm clearly the most important person here. This is beneath me. I'll just smile at all these idiots in the crowd..." She looked like one of those rich daddy's girls more than a serious politician. [Such is local, rural politics I suppose.] I was no idiot, nor were my subjects. Freddy pointed and said, "Look she thinks she's important..." and broke into laughter.

I looked at Freddy and said "This is the sixth Reich." I was intentionally referencing the circus casino scene in the film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. "This is what the whole hep world would be doing if the Nazi's won the war," I paraphrased Raoul Duke/Hunter Thompson. That scene is what this parade reminded me of. Following the self-important young "rambunctious" politician, there were more Christmas-esque lights on more floats. Some people looked straight forward. Freddy and I decided that there were two types of "looking forwards." One type was "I'm so cool being in this parade." The other type was "I can't wait to get this goddamned thing over with." Some individuals just blankly stared into the crowd, while yet others violently threw candy at us. John started racing little children out to the candy, but most of it just slid into the sewer vents. How fitting? !

Those blank faces staring into us as we stared back were perhaps the most unsettling. It was as if they were unwillingly put on display. Yet still, there was only contempt for the politician. The rest didn't know any better. [I assume this politician was one of those students in high school who thought they were smart simply because they could reference many stocks of knowledge, without realizing it was all pretend. Stocks that I found to be trivial and unimportant, because they were indeed nothing more than intersubjective and pretend, in an ethnomethodological sense, though I didn't yet know those were the terms to describe what I knew. This contempt, may indeed be due to my own bias: All knowledge is normative power, except for the knowledge that knowledge is normative power, which is subversive. I like to travel in the upper levels of pretentious meta, in order to justify participating in the lowest levels of filth. Yes, Georges Bataille perhaps had the best interpretation of Nietzsche. The masters are both noble and the filthy. Forget the middle ground. Synthesize the extremes!... The contempt could also be due to my own bias against politicians, being a former scholar of political science. Nevertheless, I asked the other members later what they thought of the politician, and it was pretty close to my position. They, being members of this community, are more likely to form an accurate picture of this

politician than I am. This is also a good review for my immersion. I am thinking like my subjects.] By the time the parade ended, we were all ready to get the fuck out of there. Most of it was the cold, but a lot of it was the loathing.

There is some information, from the preceding quotation from the study. The subjects were more concerned with my vision of Mulch Valley rather than my study of them. This is the result of good methodology, but it also suggests that they do not identify with the community in any positive manner. In many ways, my subjects were outlaw scholars much like myself. Their ability to discuss social theory and such further shows their functionality. It also deconstructs the theories expressed by the *cultural narrative of addiction*. Their strong rejection of their local culture also shows that there is an extra level of oppression for users within areas of rural poverty. The drug user, functional, educated (even if self-educated), is forced to go along with a very conservative community (despite their many breaches) and be suppressed by this society. Just as Nietzsche's ([1889] 2007) strong human of nature can be stronger than society, these subjects were stronger than society despite the extra layer of oppression, as they are anything but drug addicts. This shows that suppression and oppression can be resisted, no matter how strong the mass media and pop-psychology's Authority is to spread the lie that I label, *cultural narrative of addiction*.

***Freddy's Friends Finish off the Cultural Narrative of Addiction (WINNING):  
Master Sociality***

We must deal with this issue of how we see this network of drug users fight off the cultural narrative of addiction. We must also ask ourselves a serious question: Is their functional drug use maintained by their refusal to accept a *cultural narrative of addiction*, which first demands the prospective cult-initiate admit that they are diseased and have a

problem? Those who admit they have a problem often go on to have serious issues with relapse and eventual overdoses. Just look as our nation mourns the meaningless death of yet another one of its conformist celebrities with dark secret lives of social deviance they keep quiet. I can almost hear Freddy saying, “Fuck that faker! Idiot did not know how to deal with relapse. He probably thought he had the same tolerance levels. That's what happens when you listen to their bull shit!”

Freddy had been going on about a former member of the network. In all honesty, it seems as if this former member was always a bit on the edge of the network (honestly, even when I started building rapport with this group, it seemed I had more social status within the network), but apparently, he was supposed to bring Freddy and John some marijuana and then tried to lie and get out of bringing them the pot. Mike also mentioned the fact that he was now dating Freddy's ex-girlfriend. Freddy quickly pointed out he wasn't even concerned about that. Freddy was fine with all that “until he decided to become a complete BITCH!!! Turning around and lying and saying he couldn't bring us that pot!” (I honestly believe Freddy being more concerned with that as he seems to always pick up a date somewhere or another.) Apparently, then the offending party had been a “bitch” to Freddy on a social network/media outlet and gone so far as to block him. John interrupted and stated that if either he and/or Freddy ran into the offending party that said party would be slapped “like the bitch he is.” Freddy then concluded that he would “not even say anything to him” and that he'd just “walk straight up to him and slap him in the face.” .... Mike appeared to be worried about his status within the network, “I'm still on your guys team, right? Even though I been busy?” John and Freddy both stated he was, with Freddy adding, “so long as you don't pull a bitch move like that.” Mike said, “Oh yeah, no fuck that, I wouldn't do that.” [This is interesting, because there does seem to be a social order, and while there seems to be high levels of social integration amongst this network, once one moves to the exterior, one is more expendable. If they choose to anger the core group and/or avoid them, the core group looks at it as that individual's decision to “not be on teams.” It shows that drug users in areas of rural poverty aren't necessarily all part of the same network, nor do they necessarily stick together quantitatively, despite the marginalization. Yet, at the same time, they do seem to have a high level of social integration and cohesion, qualitatively speaking. i.e., at least in this specific network, numbers are not as much a concern as is loyalty to the “team.” Then again, it is quite a diverse network, in terms of social class, status, and power within the overall status in the small community. There is also a range on belief systems as well. The philosophy seems to

be “do and believe your own thing” just always be allied with the “team.” They're a type of “group of individuals,” so to speak. Breaking one's word to another member seems to be a big offense. Also, falling to “slave morality” (they refer to Nietzsche here) and not following one's own creative will in terms of individual style and/or attempting to push a “correct style” on everyone else is a major offense.]

The next round began after everyone calculated the value of the cards they were left with. This is, of course, something I didn't learn to calculate until I got caught holding cards during the first round. Thus, despite progressing to the step, I was rather far behind in terms of points. Had I known what the values were, I would've gotten rid of a few more heavily valued cards (as one wants to accumulate the least points, and quantitatively speaking I was “ahead” in points, having accumulated the most, so far.)

This concept of “being on teams” against the world that is Mulch Valley goes back to the struggle against the extra layer of oppression rural drug users feel. Being outnumbered, Freddy and his friends do not resent their lack of authority in the town, as they are all very well read on Nietzsche. They despise everything about rural life except the beauty of nature. They hate the gossip. They hate the churches. They hate the normal people who are sheep going to slaughter in their eyes. (The term noble contempt seems more applicable here to this researcher.) In sum, they despise all agents of social control. It is understandable that they often express this contempt at Mulch Valley, because social control and moral capital (Sherman 2009) are stronger in rural areas. Nietzsche's Overhuman (and Freddy often wore a t-shirt that said *Übermensch* across the front and loved that hardly anyone got it outside his group) did not seek blind sheep to follow him. Only companions on an equal level were desired (Nietzsche [1885] 1966). Instead of desiring more people to join their network, they desired a decrease in interaction with those outside the network. As already shown, they wanted to leave the area. This does not mean that these subjects' deviance is explained by Merton's (1938) graph of deviant

typology (Ritzer 2008). They did not seek to retreat. They sought to epically adventure elsewhere. They were disgusted by their surroundings, not so much afraid.

Either way, it seems to be a very open network as far as acceptance of individual deviance is concerned. So far everyone observed from this network has been Caucasian, in their 20s, from an area of rural poverty, a user of drugs, and heterosexual. Yet, on several occasions I've heard them attack racism, homophobia, and other closed minded modes of thinking. The only judgment seems to be directed at their area.

This makes plenty of sense, although when angered they may use terms such as "bitch."<sup>6</sup> Fans of diversity: they were believers in great individual liberty and freedom. They were targets of a totalitarian war on drugs, and yes, I am ready to compare the War on Drugs to the Holocaust. Again, Nietzsche's ([1889] 2007) proto-labeling theory and Becker's ([1963] 1991) labeling theory will help explain my position.

The Nazis incarcerated and killed Jews because they were labeled as a racial threat in Nazi culture. Law enforcement incarcerates drug users because they have been labeled as a violent threat due to being labeled an addict possibly capable of violence to serve an addiction. (The very addiction our humanistic psychology gave them according to this research.) The DEA exists to enforce drug laws. Himmler's S.S. existed to carry out final solutions. These organizations and their functions are common knowledge. The similarity is that in both Nazi and American cultures you had an innocent group of people being labeled as threat. Yet you do not dare even see my own field's demographic-leaning thinkers attempt to make drug users a demographic classification. I am disgusted

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<sup>6</sup> It is only due to mechanisms of social control that such terms should be automatically linked to misogyny or anything else negative. When I am angered I will use similar words that may offend some based on **their interpretation of such words**. Their interpretation of my use of such words is meaningless to me, as are the words I use as pure obscenities. The subjects interpret their use of such words in the same manner. They have no problem threatening to "bitch-slap" someone during a moment of anger, and then later discussing how much they cannot stand domestic abuse. The person using the term has the interpretation that matters; the interpretation of the term that society wishes to make dominant says nothing about the person using the obscenity.



by modern sociology for that. Such a demographic classification may be the first classification that would be fair. Race/ethnicity fail to end hate crimes. Sure we have legislation, which in turn divides the races and creates hate, as you cannot commit a hate crime against a white person. This in turn creates a new source for racial tension. Let us not classify people based ascribed statuses that are meaningless. No one chooses race. It is an oppressive identity placed on them by skin tone and reinforced by demographics. (Though in all honesty, some theoretical side-effects of finding this *cultural narrative of addiction*--which has the potential to be terribly oppressive on some individuals; my subjects reject the narrative, and oddly despite a consistent use of drugs never develop addiction--will take care of demographics or at least embarrass it.)

I must reflexively state that my subjects may have rubbed off on me. Their desire to fight all systems of oppression has brought back a fighting spirit within me. They are targets of psychology, which both Foucault (1965) and R.D. Laing (1967) have shown to be one of the trickiest cultural control mechanisms. Things became more interesting when I would get to meet Hunter and Rose, who had resisted joining the study Freddy had told them about. They too were heavily involved in this fight against not just the *cultural narrative of addiction*, but were involved in many political battles.

Of all the subjects, Hunter and Rose were the most concerned with an actual battle with drug laws. They were even cautious of the concept of "functional" drug use. They feared it could be used to limit leisurely non-functional drug use, which would become a new figure of fear for society. My first meeting with them I will include almost in entirety right here. I find this is important, as the network was happy to help take part in a study that could break the *cultural narrative of addiction* which they had fought and

never accepted and thus been able to enjoy drug use. Yet, these two subjects were mentioned to me once by Freddy. He stated if I wanted to see some "full blown wild drug use" that still remained functional or non-addicted that I should visit these subjects.

[The drive out to the country was quite cold in my borrowed convertible. It was appalling, the amount of litter on the side of the road this overcast and chilly evening. Hunter had contacted me to meet his girlfriend/fiancé. He had also told me that it would be a great occasion for me to observe some "functional drug use... or drug use nonetheless." I pulled into the driveway, finally, walked up to the porch. I heard some loud music and some decent karaoke going on indoors. It sounded like "How Great Thou Art" (the live Elvis version circa last few concerts.)

I recall being told that Hunter and Rose were in the throes of a "binder," as he put it. I cautiously but firmly knocked on the door. Hunter interrupted his performance to yell, "Open!" I opened the door thinking to myself, "Well this is it. There is no turning back now. You may be here a while." I stepped in and the scene I saw was magnificent (and there really is no other word for it.) Rose, his girlfriend, was lying on the couch naked halfway masturbating, and Hunter was down on one knee with what looked like a carpal tunneled claw in the air as if he was singing to it. I looked at the television; they had their computer hooked up to it watching what looked like Elvis's final performances on YouTube. (Hunter was nearly hitting the same type of vocal mastery that even "fat druggie Elvis," as he called him, could hit.)

As soon as the song was over Hunter offered me a line of cocaine. I declined by once again telling him that I was not "going native." He scoffed at me, as he dumped out a pile of cocaine in between Rose's breasts. "How are you ever going to really learn about drug use, functional or otherwise, without partaking?" he asked. I told him that I agreed with his qualitative methods and morals but not all my professors (and certainly not IRB) would fully understand. He laughed, "Those bastards... what kind of grad school are they running over there out west?"

...I informed him that at least from what I observed from the outside thus far that he seemed quite functional. He replied, "Yeah, thank the gods you are using fake names. I would hate to lose my street cred. We drug users in Mulch Valley are a very exclusive social group you know. I cannot be fucking with my status. You should know that as a sociologist. Right? That's a rhetorical question."

[I find it rather interesting that he was truly so concerned about his standing within the very open-minded, almost anomic network of drug

users within areas of rural poverty that I had grown used to. He was not concerned about anyone else really finding out. Yet, he was worried I'd tell the specific Mulch Valley drug user network that he was functional or as he put it, "a big softie."]

...Hunter put in a movie at this point and told me he was going to go check on his girlfriend. "Damn all this blow and speed... I'm gonna need some Viagra." It was at this point I set back and watched *Permanent Midnight* in which Ben Stiller plays the role of a drug abusing author. Hunter stated that Freddy and John would be over here in a couple hours and to just entertain myself. He was going to attempt to get an erection and "Go fuck Rose."

The mere fact that these subjects could wittingly conceive of how assimilation can be used as a weapon of social control while looking like an expansion of diversity absolutely blew my mind. I was surprised by the level of complex thought involved in seeing my terminology of functional drug use as a possible back stab threat, perhaps with good intent, that will be used by power/knowledge to further attack those who do not use drugs in what society considers a functional manner:

He continued the young conversation by telling me that he was not even sure he wanted to be called, "functional." It sounded too much like "gay marriage assimilation as liberation" rather than winning "the real fight... We're here. We're fucked up beyond all repairs. Get used to it." This type of fight does not seem to exist any longer among many minority groups.

Yes, I am now willing to label *drug users* as a minority group. They are in the minority. They are beaten down by society and thrown in prison for being what they are: *drug users*. If anything, I would state this suggests a type of incarceration based on drug use status. This seems like the beginning of a *holocaust*. What is the difference? I have found nothing evil about these subjects. They are no threat to you or me. Any threats they represent are nothing more than threats caused by the War on Drugs, and the excessive drug legislation in this country. They are a threat to social control, clearly. I have seen a

perfectly functioning social network made entirely of drug users without social norms have high social integration. This seems like a utopian style of sociality to me.

Consequently I will go ahead and bring Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) influence and his concept of master morality straight into the findings. This specific network of drug users in an area of rural poverty seem to operate under a different style of sociality: master sociality. This concerns a style of living that attempts to stand their own ground and use creative will-to-power to skirt any social authority, which is nothing other than the alienation of individual power--or as Marx would call it, labor.

This text is more than a direct threat to the dominating view of drug users within our culture. It is worse than that. These subjects represent *more* than resistance, especially from a perspective similar to Nietzsche's ([1901] 1967). These subjects represent real power that has no need to dominate and control the behavior of others. These subjects sociality can be called nothing but *master sociality*. It is the politician, the policeman, the priest, the psychiatrist, etc. that represent the resentful *slave sociality*. They are a resistance to the everyday lives and self-interested actions (Scott 1985) of the truly powerful drug users. These subjects were more than functional. They were powerful, as they overcame the resistance represented by the false consciousness of the *cultural narrative of addiction*.

The term power had been usurped and redefined to mean control over others. It is not so in Nietzsche's ([1901] 1967) work. These subjects have their own interpretations of drug use. "In fact, interpretation is itself a means of becoming master of something" (Nietzsche [1901] 1967:342). Therefore, I go a step further than Scott (1985), who deserves great credit for redefining resistance so boldly. Everyday actions of self-interest

when completed by peasants were seen as resistance to dominance. I simply take it a step further and define them as true acts of will-to-power. The subjects do not interpret themselves as submitting to dominance, even when using strategies such as hidden transcripts (Scott 1990). They express a frustration toward something other than an oppressive force. They express a frustration toward a social resistance to their behavior--a resistance that they overcome every day of their lives.

This may upset modern sociologists a bit, but I am not concerned about such things. Mead's (1934) work is brought into question. Durkheim's (1897) work is brought into question. The whole idea of an "I" that is creative being able to give up enough to a "me" that is essentially a society's punishment of creativity in favor of a mask. The "me" is not functional at all. Even if it could allow for enough conformity to be useful, this "I" would ban it for the terribly alienated world we live into today, dominated, no doubt by the "me." This idea that there is a balance of "I" and "me" as well as a balance in the amount of norms that make for the best societies, keeping people from offing themselves and what not are lines of thought that are completely outdated. This very social network seems anomic and yet has great social cohesion. They often take a philosophy of what Mead would see as the "I" being placed first and the "me" being avoided at all costs (Ritzer 2008). They do utilize public transcripts (Scott 1990) in town as a survival mechanism. The show of conformity is based on their interpretation of the conformist. There is nothing sincere, real, or tragic about it. Georges Bataille ([1954] 1998:73) once wrote, "Nothing is tragic for the animal, which doesn't fall into the *trap of the self*." These subjects have escaped this trap and overcome the self to continue to creatively become whatever they envision.

As they are a network of individual creative forces, many of America's mainstream sociological theorists are brought into question. No worries, however, that is not all for which I will be exiled. I state that the while the *cultural narrative of addiction* is an oppressive social control mechanism and clearly no psychological law, it has an existence as a mythic fact that seeks to use authority (here, scientific) to discriminate against, segregate (Foucault 1965), forcibly medicate, and ultimately eliminate drug users as a social group. These subjects prove their theories wrong, even if psychology has gotten away with adding denial of disease as a sign of the disease. However, all effects upon that little field we call psychology are covered as a theoretical side-effect of the findings in the next section.

***Theoretical Side-Effects: The Monstrosity of a New Social Science and the Current Status of the Psychology (and Social Science Overall) Left in its Wake***

I employ these words... with a glance toward those who, in a society from which I do not exclude myself, turn their eyes away when faced by the as yet unnamed which is proclaiming itself and which can do so, as is necessary whenever a birth is in the offing, only under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity. (Derrida 1978:293)

Before the production of this text, even within the early stages of production of this text, I have always used Derridian concepts as a sort of tool. One can see this in the theoretical framework, where, out of fear for my own field, Derrida (1978) is utilized as an ideal tool for pushing reflexivity in my desire to develop a grounded theory. This is entirely based on the negative interpretation of interpretation. It is a nonaffirmative use of Derrida, before quickly locking him back in the toolbox before any possible damage is caused to my own project. Once the decision to affirmatively deal with Derrida was made, other than a ridiculous amount of very careful reading of a theorist who I preferred

to read their interviews, the ultimate result was of passing the critical moment. Initially, I had sought to somehow, almost mystically, move beyond text and language. Then when other theories started forming from the data, I sought to go back to ignoring the ever present threat. Ultimately, my commitment to reflexive sociology and grounded theory lead me to include the very threat from which I sought to protect them. This was very trying, as I was already feeling rushed. Derrida is not the easiest to carefully and sincerely read, especially when you have much catching up to do, as I both have done and continue to do.

Considering that one is investigating drug use, one may want to view side-effects as something pertinent. The first theoretical side-effect is a new science--in that it is a new vision of science itself, rather than a new field. Derrida (1978) hints at this new science or new writing throughout his work, and yet includes himself among those who wish to turn away from it. As Ritzer (2008) suggests, it is both a liberated and liberating science; it is also a liberated and liberating society. It is a combination of dancing and writing, which Nietzsche ([1889] 2007) first suggested and Derrida points this out. It is a playful science rather than a science of play, as it is not based on ending--that which it realizes it cannot end--play. Rather than seeing the center as lost, it accepts the noncenter. With play--instead of the center/origin/truth--being the presupposition of science, a rupture in scientific discourse occurs. An old science has been overthrown by a new science. This new science does not attempt, as all revolutions have, to hold on to “the general structure in which each agency is linked to all the others by representation, in which the irrepresentability of the living present is dissimulated or dissolved, suppressed or deported within the infinite chain of representation” (Derrida 1978:235).

This new science remains in play, much like this study does. In many ways, I would state that this study unwittingly was a study--perhaps initially, perhaps not--to utilize this new science--more specifically this new social science. This is the new sociology within the new social science. Ultimately, it was the result of transgressing my own limits of reflexivity. It was the data and commitment to grounded and reflexive sociological theory involved here. Unlike Dumont (2008), I am not starting by praising the possibilities of a poststructuralist sociology. Poststructuralism was initially used as a type of steroid that enhances one's theoretical reflexivity. It was a poststructuralism that was heavily focused on Foucault.

The new sociology is not poststructuralist. It is beyond poststructuralism, due to its reflexivity and grounded theory. (This is not to associate it with postmodernism either.) This new science (as well as the new fields that will replace the old ones) is nameless other than the term new being placed in front of it. I will leave it that way. I am merely the doctor delivering the newborn, and do not name names. I will only state that this new scientific theory is not to be misconstrued with postmodern scientific theory, post-postmodernism scientific theory, and/or modern scientific theory. These were nothing more than competing paradigms. Nor should it be construed with poststructural scientific theory, which was a rupture in scientific thought that disrupted continual paradigm shifts and progression.

It is a trajectory, even if a delayed one, that is an alternate to the postmodern trajectory that activated after the poststructuralist rupture occurred in scientific thought. Interestingly enough, it was the activation of this postmodern trajectory that inspired the self-termination of the modern trajectory. It was the very attempts made by those seeking



to protect modern scientific theory and modern science, as well, which set the modern trajectory regarding scientific thought on its downward spiral path. In many ways, it was almost something of a suicide attack on postmodernism and postmodernity. One can see that the modern scientific theories and their criticisms of postmodern theory betrayed their own strict standards of modern science (Ritzer 2008).

Now that this is clearly a new sociological work that both helped form and is a result of the new science (hence the admittance to a lack of center), I will move on to what this means for the other social science mentioned heavily in this text: psychology, or to be specific, the psychology of addiction. The modern psychology of addiction is dead, even if it returns as a zombie. This much is clear, yet declaring the modern psychology of addiction dead as part of what is truly the death of the old science, which is here, modern scientific theory would be overly simplistic.

The *cultural narrative of addiction* is identified here as not entirely suppressing nor is it presented as entirely liberating. It is clear, however, that this cultural narrative of addiction--seen in both pop-psychology and in modern psychology--is hardly scientific, even by the standards of modern science. It appears more as an attempt at confinement and at power/knowledge (Foucault 1965; 1977; 1980). Furthermore, the resistance of those members of the network observed in this study suggests that it is not even an entirely successful social construction (Derrida 1978), when it comes to limiting, confining, defining, and/or even defining socially a stigmatized identity (Goffman 1963).

Thus, the modern psychology of addiction cannot survive this reflexive sociology of psychology and its grounded--in the finding and inclusion of functional drug users--sociological theory of the cultural narrative of addiction. This also happens to be that

which sets psychology, including the psychology of addiction, at a bit of a disadvantage at being able to move beyond its modern and/or postmodern limits, which cease to be chains despite reaction. Considering the importance of the reflexive reflexivity in this study, it would appear that modern psychology, especially the psychology of addiction will be at a disadvantage at transition to any new science.

Psychology as a field was granted a great chance at preparing for this affirmation of difference, play, and of the outlier with the rupture it experienced with R.D. Laing's (1967) work dealing with inter-experience and the impossibility of this inter-experience being something created by the very field seeking to gain it (psychology/psychiatry). Much like other fields of modern social science, such warnings were ignored due to feelings of scientific-superior-authority it assumed was based in nature rather than language, despite the assumed authority being nothing more than an alienation of their own labor and individual power.

It is this authoritative approach--and fear of that which ruptures--so common in the more culturally--both in the general culture and in the culture of modern science--accepted modern social sciences (example: psychology) that leads to them being rocked and taken by a surprise head shot. Thus, of course, it ultimately leads to their cries of cheap shot, which are the actual cheap shots. For example, the idea that postmodern science, which I admit is a failed trajectory to replace the modern science that went down with it, must somehow live up to the standards of modern science (Ritzer 2008) is a bit of like stating the living at a funeral must behave as that which is in the casket, or at least wear similar make-up. Perhaps better, it is more like applying the rules and standards of professional soccer to golf, hockey, or another sport.

## Chapter VI: Conclusion

The reimagining of society, and thereby of sociology, in terms of socialities of intra-,inter-, and extra-personal, self-relations breaks down the dualisms of private and public sociologies in favor of recognizing their twin-born and inseparable centrality to the sociological inquiry. As much as self-relations are reconceived as social relationships within and across persons, or in terms of relationships to the natural or build environments, social relations in turn are reconceived as relationalities of self-hoods. Efforts in understanding society thereby inherently become efforts in self-knowledge at expanding intra/interpersonal, group, and broader social landscapes. (Tamdigidi 2005/2006:193-4).

### *Master Sociality versus the Cultural Narrative on Addiction*

It is by this point clear that there is some reason that certain people do not always follow the expected manner of behavior. Ethnomethodologists do this with their breaching methodology (Ritzer 2008). The subjects I studied had no problem breaking all kinds of community social norms. It was not limited to drug use, functional or otherwise. This was despite frame, setting, audience, and just about any other setting of which you could think. The group had an intense focus on celebrating individualism. They had very little normativity/regulation/common morality as a social network, and yet simultaneously, they had an extreme amount of social cohesion.

This upsets the theory that a lack of a common morality disrupts social cohesion. The vision that modern sociological theorists like Mead (1934) and Merton (1938) put forward seemed to require a certain amount of normative structure, to remain efficient as a social group. While Durkheim (1893) did not define anomie as a lack of moral restraint that supposedly leads to a loss of social cohesion anomie seems to remain the antichrist of American sociology, especially given Merton's expansion of the term, "anomie" (Puffer 2009). As in situations like anomie, individuals may not buy into the "put on" of things such as the psychological theories spoon-fed to our culture as the *cultural*

*narrative on addiction.* Then individuals would not know to avoid drug use. This would most certainly lead to the pathology of addiction in individuals. Finally, we would have a very pathological and ineffective society. One could say that Mead (given his idea that society operated effectively due to the social process of interaction between “I” and “me”) is the microlevel version of Durkheim (1897). (Personally, I have always seen a little too much functionalism in traditional symbolic interactionist theory.)

If sociology were a society, then Nietzsche ([1889] 2007) was the criminal whose reflexivity regarding sociological concerns was banned. An unapologetic sociology would not be seen until *this day!* By unapologetic I mean a sociology that treats morality and behavioral standards as products of the social process without an assumption of these being effective and functional. Reflexivity, as important as it was to his theory, was lost to Mead (1937). Durkheim (1897) never had a chance. This thesis reflexively removed such presuppositions, collected data, and then produced grounded literature review and theory. In the specific case of drug use I have found that morality/moral capital, behavioral social standards, and regulation to be *negative, dysfunctional, and ineffective* products of the social process. Mead simply trusted most of the people too much.

What then is the difference between a social actor that is easily controlled by forces of social control and those social actors who even take an aggressive response to such forces? It is simple, yet you will not find it in many sociological theory books. The answer comes from Nietzsche's ([1887] 1989) term master morality. Also, I allowed the subjects to speak for themselves here. (Considering their terminology for what made them different, it was the only option to do this. Their constant reference to master and slave morality inspired this new sociological terminology.) In sum, a person Nietzsche

labeled as a master moralist, would socially behave in a master moral way of using one's creative will-to-power to create, and to pass excess happiness on to others (Bataille [1945] 2004). The slave moralist is only concerned with resentment and the tearing down of those who are great. It is the slave moralist, who uses terms such as "narcissist" as an attack, despite secretly being on themselves. In many ways, we could see these two strategies, as ones that Derrida (1978) deals with when describing how we respond to the play of language. The slave moralist would attempt to continue to ignore the fact that reaching truth is impossible, as the social world is not static. Language is the nature of social science, and language is filled with play. The master moralist understands this and dances while writing. Creative is expansive. Ergo, the *master sociality* is a mode of social interaction in which the actant expands social interpretations and such upon itself, while the *slave sociality* is a mode in which the actant attempt to maintain a limited or excessively precise social interpretation of itself.

The *slave sociality* intends on gaining control through structural means of manipulating the social process, while *master sociality* has no need to attempt to control, as it is busy creatively willing. Master sociality is often more deviant, as it is a lot easier to follow norms as one with slave sociality. This makes sense as functional drug users have no problem ignoring the *cultural narrative of addiction*. It is this very narrative that creates an addict, and it even states this in their slogans and narratives: you, the addict, must admit to yourself have a problem before you can get clean. Yet, as this study suggests, it is only until one tells themselves that they are addicted, in an act of *slave sociality*, do they trick themselves on accepting that social label and physical disease.

Either way, the psychology of addiction can no longer be considered anything other than power/knowledge (Foucault 1980).

While a person with *master sociality* can use as many drugs as they please and remain functional due to their suspicion of the modern sciences of social control (psychology and whatnot), those with *slave sociality* are the target of the *cultural narrative of addiction*. These subjects took the *master sociality* approach and demanded that they define themselves, rather than letting any science or court judge them. Whether one becomes an addict or not, seems to mainly to depend on how much they believe in the addiction narrative spewed at them (Nietzsche [1887] 2007). While my subjects rejected this narrative and maintained functional drug use, they are not generalizable to all drug users living in areas of rural poverty. Drug users living in areas of rural poverty may in fact be more affected (in negative fashion) by this *cultural narrative of addiction*. Policy must be looked at to alter this tragedy of classism and discrimination against rural users.

***Policy: Drug Use as a Human Right / Power: Drug Use already a Human Right***

Drug use must be viewed as a human right. Can we trust any authority to do this? I honestly doubt it. Perhaps Weber's ([1921] 1968) charismatic hero can save the day. The problem with this is that charismatic leaders often either end up being mass murderers or producing changes that we would never have believed in, considering campaign promises. The main problem here is that legitimated domination is nothing more than alienated power. Every one of Weber's types of authority is not natural. Weber himself hoped for the individual to rise against rationalization and authority (Ritzer 2008).

Therefore we must allow the social process of social decay that Nietzsche ([1885] 1966; [1887] 1989; [1889] 2007) identified to naturally finish. Authority, the alienation of an individual's power, will end with it. Sociology took a weakened and decaying social reality and assumed it to be a universal improvement over nature. The social Darwinism of early sociologists was all wrong. Nietzsche saw that even the idea that human beings were somehow the top species as laughable. The very morals that Durkheim ([1897] 1951) found so important in maintaining what he assumed was a functional society had promoted a less varied species over time. Thus humanity is at the most risk for extinction given some event that will again put us back in the hands of natural selection.

While I am tempted to suggest the abolishment of the State, this would not solve the problems of our downfall. Authority must be abolished and individual power taken back. We must see the *master sociality* take its natural place: above the *slave sociality*. This is up to each individual. No movement, no political party, no style of government, etc. can do this for us, lest we alienate our own power. Therefore, I can only say what I intend to do and think needs to happen. In sum, I will behave in the form of *master sociality* and ignore authority. Thus, I can express my creative individual power. The State may have to be eliminated. Psychology may very well need to be eliminated as a science altogether. It is nothing more than a field that attempts in the hardest ways, norm enforcement. Primarily, there should be no such thing as drug policy.

Derrida's (1978) work has been seen as something that brings up heterogeneities that our social control methods have tried to cover up. Derrida is someone who has always attempted to liberate through deconstruction and envisioned a society in which limits were transgressed. (Newman 2001). Derrida envisioned a world, a science, and a

society in which we were not nearly as oppressed as we are currently. At the very least, we must legalize every intoxicant possible, and allow for a true free market to handle the drug trade, which would put the black market out of business. (Ritzer 2008). It seems that Derrida would have no problem accepting anarchy in our policy. This would be splendid for this Derridian, as well, I will say it once, "Look at Portugal." Legalization and/or deregulation of drugs are the best strategies for handling drug use. This possibility, however, remains only possible if *master sociality* and the loose interaction within it create a new social process. This is one not based on balance. It is based on transgression. Perhaps, it is this new unapologetic, reflexive, and grounded sociology will set in motion the beginning of this transgressive social realm.

#### ***A New Science and New Sociology: Beyond Modernity/Postmodernity***

The new science I speak of is one in which reflexivity is strictly enforced. Grounded theory is the only method for developing theory. It is one that also accepts play. It is a decentering science so to speak. It is not a science trapped by modernity's conceptualization of empiricism. It is not a science trapped by what is essentially postmodern theory's mind-blow. It is one that avoids the production of power/knowledge (Foucault 1980) by never seeking to find the center truth of any presence. It does not seek out a correct theory or true interpretation. Instead, it seeks out difference. It continually seeks out difference. It is in no way opposed to the retesting part of the scientific method. It is a social science that recognizes it cannot ever be complete, for it is the subject: the social universe that is constantly expanding. The play of language is its nature, which it cannot go against simply by dreaming up a universal truth/origin/reality. It is a liberating science, as it incorporates many of what Dumont (2008) covers in his suggestion for a



poststructuralist sociology. Yet, I care not to give it a name, other than state that it never had to live up to postmodernity or modernity's standards.

This new science is also driven by a new pragmatism. Previously, I was fond of saying that there is nothing more non-pragmatic than pragmatism. After all, how can one solve problems without knowing truth? The new science accepts an infinity of perspectives of truth. An extreme form of Symbolic Interactionism, with Nietzsche's ([1901] 1967) perspectivism at the base rather than Mead's (1934) faith in humanity, will achieve the ability to see through the perspective of each individual in a social process. In doing so, the social scientist can develop an accurate definition of the situation. The more one understands the problem, it becomes easier to develop helpful solutions. In sum, it is a reflexive S.I. that rejects the assumption that the researcher can imagine what it must be like to be the other. Thus, one must go as native as possible with each individual regarding a situation. Reflexivity and grounded theory are key here. One cannot assume what going native means. Each case must be treated differently (Ritzer 2008).

The new sociology on the other hand will be a sociology set free from Newtonian elements (Tamdgidi 2005) and the fascist demand for empiricism. Considering the ever expanding sociological universe, so to speak, it is time to move beyond the standard modern sociological approach, even if we do not head down a postmodern path. In the end, it is the affirmation of the infinite play of that which is social, that Derrida (1978) challenges us to pull off.

It is funny because Derrida (1978) gives social sciences this answer to his puzzle, which many sociologists such as Agger (1991) demanded a tie to empiricism and attempted to incorporate certain aspects of what he labeled as poststructuralism and

postmodern. Regardless, Agger failed to even attempt to re-imagine sociology in face of the rupture of poststructuralism. The details are not as of yet clear to me, of this new sociology. Yet, I am tempted to go with a reflexive, grounded, quantum, and playful sociology that does not seek to find THE one answer (clearly modern sociology must have hated itself, hoping to run down its utility) but instead searches out the outliers.

### ***Our New Era***

Considering that modernity and postmodernity were eras of our existence of which our interpretations on were based in several things. The most important were the standards by which we thought to discover truth. We now seek to find truths. This is not postmodern, as postmodernism believed in no scientific approach. Either way, we are no longer in the modern era, nor are we in the postmodern era. We are in a new era. What shall we call it? There is no question what we must call this new era in history. We must label it after the one we as a society of frightened intellectuals finally fully understood. *It will be well known that the 21st century will most definitely be **Derridian***, but what of the new era? This new era born out of crisis will henceforth be known as: ***Derridity***.

### ***Final Considerations for Psychology of Addiction***

It is in the aftermath of this crisis that is this very reflexive sociology of the psychology of addiction that I have presented here, where we will one day find that psychology waking and attempting to make tyrannical reason of the intellectual wastes--of that which was once modernity and postmodernity--where it now finds itself. It will remain at a loss, spinning in circles, and damned to a life within its own rotting corpse. Unless, of course, it can free itself from that which it must discover it needs liberation. If

this is even to become possible, then: *it is now the psychology of addiction that must admit--to itself--that it has a problem!*

If we could dispense with wars, so much the better. I can imagine more profitable uses for the twelve billion now paid annually for the armed peace we have in Europe; there are other means of winning respect for physiology than field hospitals.--Good; very good even: since the old God is abolished, I am prepared to rule the world-- (Nietzsche [1887] 1989:344).

## Appendix: Field Notes and Reflexive Journal Notes

### Entry #1

Due to a reflexive approach to this possible thesis work, it is important to be as honest as possible in this personal journal to be kept along with field notes. Currently, I am not even sure that my thesis proposal will be approved. It reflexively makes sense to keep a personal journal throughout the whole process. This will put a human face on the one who is often faceless within scientific research: the researcher. We must remember as scientists of any sort, natural or social, that we are not faceless gods and that the space remains empty. We cannot fill it. Maybe we will one day observe subjects who might be able to. Here is the real goal of "science."

I am excited about the possibility of being able to study these subjects, and I have been since the idea came to me last summer. I have been building rapport with these subjects since then. They seem to show a knack for living in the present while still being focused and hopeful about the future. They are generally fun to be around. They laugh a lot. This is in contrast to myself. I do laugh, but my laughter seems emptier and desperate.

One could write it off as their naivety, but this personal journal is about me, the observer. I honestly miss naivety. I hate realism and what it does to my mood. I miss mystification and enchantment. I am only approaching thirty years of age, yet I feel as if I have never been more ready for the possible finality of death. I am generally tired. I remember being seven and being absolutely amazed by the fact that I could see. It seemed miraculous to me. Now it just seems like another fact. Weber's old "iron cage" gets worse as we age.

This is of course all very pretentious, but I am a pretentious man of thought. I really hope that I can get this thesis proposal approved. These subjects may not only offer knowledge into issues such as rural poverty, brain drain, deviance, and moral capital to sociology, but they may also offer some kind of personal hope to me. If it is not approved, I am not sure what I will do. I am sure it will be highly theoretical, but I really need a break from theoretical thought. It is no longer just the ultra-focus of this intellectual-to-be, but it has become a downer on the mood.

I want more than this.

### Entry #2

I've always approached reflexivity in sociology as something directed at the field itself, rather than at my "self." You know, applying the sociological gaze at sociology itself. Perhaps, due to some leftover belief in "objectivity." I have tried to ensure that I had no "self" to completely ruin my work. But it does make sense to reflexively consider the "self-as-sociologist." How I hate that word, "self." Yet, whatever we wish to call it, we must consider the sociological gaze reflexively, and that includes my "self." I am that sociological gaze. Therefore, "I" must be examined reflexively.

We are currently approaching a time when the holy ones, great deciders of which knowledge to allow, that is to say the IRB, will decide if my project is worthy and "ethical" or if they'll *exclude the possible knowledge* that will come from the study. (First lesson about my "self", I am a Foucauldian and a Nietzschean.) If we are being reflexive, we all know it is political... the whole game of power/knowledge. IRB reminds me more of Nazis throwing books into bonfires than protectors of subjects. That's just my

interpretation though. In all honesty, I couldn't care less about their concerns. I am only concerned with my work and , and since in our wonderfully *bureaucratic* state of academia they are necessary; I will set my thesis work up according to their rules. It goes without saying that considering my work is my main concern, that I also am concerned about my subjects. I think we all too often view them as simple data. It is my goal for my actual study to have no direct effect upon their lives. Now, me being there as an observer, that effect cannot be helped if we're being honestly reflexive. We can however avoid a negative effect. If that is the true main concern of this IRB then we will get along just fine. Perhaps, I should be more open minded about the process. I will try.

But I wish to make this clear, it is only out of allegiance to my proposed thesis... which will be completed with or without WKU's stamp upon it. It may just have to wait. I may have to propose a thesis that provides a Foucauldian socio-historical analysis of the IRB itself instead. Perhaps something that analyzes from a Foucauldian perspective which projects they approve and which they deny. At least currently that is plan B. Of course, I'm sure someone has already thought of it.

### Entry # 3

I have chosen to not date my journal entries. I will simply state that this one is occurring before the beginning of field research, as I am currently waiting on NIH approval for a "certificate of confidentiality." I will give a general time frame for purposes of reflexivity, yet for purposes of protecting anonymity I am also taking extreme precaution with such a step, even though said step is was not necessary for IRB approval. (Any specific dating may possibly be used to make connections within my research and the

subjects daily lives if they were to get arrested and said research data was requested. Basically, it is my goal to completely lead to the elimination of any risk associated with the subjects' agreement to take part in this study. While they risk incarceration by violating certain laws, they would have such a risk without taking part in this study. Thus, I must consider their possible arrest, and even the possible subpoena of my data when calculating any possible risk this study may add to their initial risk. Thus, not only pseudonyms are used, but also no master list is used, and any written field notes, when necessary to take, will be coded and easily disposed of, if necessary. Said written notes will be destroyed immediately upon their use in producing expanded field notes for each formal observation session. Furthermore, such actions as not dating the data while still presenting it in chronological order will cover both the need to reduce additional risk and to cover the purposes of methodological validity. This way if I must make turn on my cell phone to make an emergency call during observation, my device's location, even if tracked will not be tied to any specific date revealed in my data.)

This journal entry will be about my own background regarding topics related to the topics in this study. I grew up in an area of rural poverty and have seen many friends and/or family members have problems with drug addiction and/or alcoholism. I have seen people within an area of rural poverty develop extreme problems with drug addiction, regardless of economic class, race, age, gender, and many other standard demographics. Thus, I developed the idea to further research the one common variable involved, which was simply living in an area of rural poverty. There may be a link there, but I must not presume one. This will be something I deliberately provide extra protection against, as I recognize and admit this is an area of possible bias. (Technically, the only true common

variable was living in my hometown, which happened to be an area of rural poverty. It may be specific to my hometown and not rural poverty in general. Thus, it is important to protect against such a possible mishap of interpretation and source of bias, as I am researching another area of rural poverty. Eventually, I hope to expand this research into other areas to minimize the risk of missing the actual link between drug use and either a more specific or more general variable. I will make no claims to generalization in this thesis. This is a very specific study.) If I were to not take such precaution, I may too easily declare an observed link. If I were to not use this reflexive journal as a guard against such "more easily made" declarations, I may not even be aware of such bias in my conclusions.

I must also that such issues have directly affected me in some manner or another. I graduated high school in a senior class of 30 to 40 students or so. One death by accidental overdose by a former schoolmate exists that I know of. I also know that at least half of said class, has had involvement with drug use at some point in time, and at least half of those have developed serious addictions at some point in time. These are experiences of friends', schoolmates', and former schoolmates' issues with drug use. I must also protect against such a possible source of an emotional bias against drug users. It must not be allowed to become an intellectual bias. It must also not be allowed to develop into or justify a cultural bias against the sub-culture which I will be observing. This is not only bad for validity of conclusions, but also could cause problems in terms of ability to continue researching subjects. Thus, culture shock must be avoided at all costs, no matter how understandable culture shock may be for me. The subjects may see it as passing



judgment on them personally and take offense. Thus, it is also important to protect against this emotional bias for reasons of safety as well.

This possible source of emotional bias may even develop into less visible results within my conclusions and/or observation. Having seen many negative results from drug addiction, I would like my research to be a source of helpful information against addiction if possible. Thus, I may be apt to more easily interpret information in a fashion that may lead to conclusions that may be helpful in reducing addiction rates. Thus, I must accept the possibility that I am helpless against things such as addiction and that my research may not uncover anything helpful. That is the purpose of research: uncovering things. If we already knew what was helpful to such an issue, then we would not need to complete research on it. Thus, here is another reason for my grounded theory approach: I accept that the fact that I'd like my research to be helpful to people does not mean anything in regards to it actually producing something helpful. If I allowed such a bias in, I would only be providing power/knowledge designed to alter others' behavior so that I could feel better "because I helped." It would not actually be helpful. Whether this research produces helpful results or not is up to the data, I can only do the footwork and reflexively guard against my own possible sources of bias. Basically, I can only make sure I don't mess the data up. Hence, I include this reflexive journal. Not only does it allow me to protect against my own possible sources of bias, but just in case, it records them so that others can check my own attempts at reflexivity. (One must even approach reflexivity in a reflexive manner.) At the very least, it keeps the project from developing power/knowledge. Even if I do not catch the bias myself, others will, and thus it will not be allowed to pose as "helpful" information, if it is not actually helpful.

While the last paragraph approaches possible results of allowing such a source of possible bias to become an actual bias in how I interpret data, there is also the possibility that if such an emotional bias were to influence me during the study that it may destroy any other possible valid information beyond the goal of helping reduce addiction rates. I say this because it may lead me to attempt to actually alter the subjects' behavior directly. While this is also a safety concern, as take such a thing personally, it is most importantly an ecological concern. I would not be observing their natural behavior, if I for instance, told them I was worried they were doing too many drugs, and they may need to stop. This may provide a concern that alters their behavior, which let's not forget I am observing. Such altering of behavior due to my presence is always something that will happen in some fashion, but it must be minimized/not allowed to completely corrupt the data. My presence must only alter their behavior as it would if I were there as one of them. That is to say as a full participant non-observer, which I cannot actually do in this case due to safety concerns for myself, and also because I must observe in order to complete research. Thus, my methodological goals specific to the methodology of ethnographic observation are 1) to be seen/treated as "native" (despite my not using of illicit drugs), 2) treat the subjects as if I were "native," 3) avoid "going native" or accepting a "native perspective" prior to my analysis of data, and 4) avoid dismissing any valid result of analysis simply because it may be in line with the "native perspective." Basically, during observation I would like to be as "native" as possible in my interaction with the subjects. Then during analysis avoid allowing the "native perspective" to influence my analysis regardless of how it influences it, whether through "going" or "dismissing" native. If I fail at these goals, it is my reflexive goal that my reflexive journal will catch the failure.

I am also currently a 30 year old graduate student working on their master's thesis. This is my position in the field. Ultimately, in the bigger scheme of things, I am a complete nobody in my field. I am completing this thesis in order to move on to get my PhD in the field. In many ways, one could state that I'm not even "in the field" yet but am applying for entry, so to speak. I want to be accepted into the field. Thus, if I am serious about reflexivity, I must be aware that I may be inclined to alter my interpretation of data to avoid rocking the boat, to use a metaphor. I cannot allow myself to do that, even if not doing so would cost me acceptance into the field. Ultimately, I have to be fine with the fact that being committed to reflexive sociology may cost me acceptance into the field. Thus, I must remember, that acceptance into the field does not matter if I'm not committed to the field. I do not seek to become a source of power/knowledge or to allow any currently hegemonic ideas or theories in the field or in the general culture in which the field exists to dominate my analysis. I cannot sacrifice commitment to validity in order to gain acceptance into the field.

On the other hand, my ultimate goal is not just acceptance into the field. I would ultimately like my work to remain valid and important well after I'm dead and gone. In all honesty, I'd like my name right up there with the likes of my heroes, one day. Thus, I must be aware that I may try to be "cutting-edge" in my analysis. Thus, if I'm serious about reflexivity, I must not only avoid "falling in line" in order to gain acceptance into the field, but I must also avoid the extreme opposite of "making a lot of noise" for the sake of just making noise. Here again, it is my goal to produce grounded theory. I must also avoid the middle point of this imagined line with "falling in line" and "making noise" on the extreme ends. I cannot intentionally ignore analysis of data that happens to "fall in

line" or "make noise" simply because it does so. The goal is that any "falling in line" or "making noise" is due to the data and not my own intellectual biases of where I'd like to be in the field.

Entry #4 (Field Notes):

We had arrived at our destination at some time approaching dusk. The road taken had been one of incessant curves and open spaces. It was all pretty much narrow country road and farm land. This narrow and wildly swinging road would meet its end in water, shortly after the steep, downhill, and slow motion roller coaster ride. We, however, would not meet our ends at the road's end. The black hatchback that I was driving was informed to stop up the hill a bit. It was Freddy who had told me to stop, and I, who told the car. I felt inclined to listen to Freddy, who was in the passenger seat. The floorboard of the passenger side was filled with long empty fast food paper bags. I could see how such a floorboard could become annoying. Also Freddy, John, and Randall had been insufflating amphetamine salts, mostly dextroamphetamine, in a portable manner they were quick to show off. This method of crushing and insufflating Adderall pills was quite innovative, especially for car travel on winding roads. They would roll up a bill of currency just like any other approach to insufflation. They would then insert a pill or half a pill close the ends of the bill with their fingers. They would then crush the pill in the bill with their teeth. Then one end of the bill was held. The other end would be inserted in a nostril. Finally, they would snort and release the other end of the bill at the same time. [I imagine it is similar to the process regarding the foot pedals when shifting gears with a clutch, as I was doing often during this drive... let out on the clutch as the car takes in gas.]

At this point in time, I have only been on this project for a couple weeks at most. These past two weeks could be seen as an immersion phase or, perhaps, a pre-project phase at least. [Though my continued lack of comfort around them when they were using stimulants could show that I am still in the immersion phase.] Two weeks ago I had just arrived back from Las Vegas. I had been in contact with Freddy since I completed a project on functional drug use during last semester. He had been an interviewee, with a different protected name, of course. We had been discussing the possibility of my undertaking a participant observation study on his network's summer time drug use. He and his network were apparently plotting a wild summer that would go beyond functional use. At any rate, it was arranged for me to spend much of the summer at Freddy's place and to be an observer of their planned chicanery.

I was still not yet accustomed to their use of stimulants in my car. Those are schedule two. I was not concerned about any dangers to myself. Rather, I was concerned with the possible legal issues were I to get pulled over. [Perhaps this is not due to a failure of immersion, but rather part of the deal of being a user of intoxicants, semi-legal or otherwise.] The point is that I was happy to stop the car and get out as quickly as possible.

We had arrived to what I thought was our location: a flat spot in between two steep downhill slopes. My iPod, which was connected to my radio through an iTrip or some "iX" formula, was telling us that "Ziggy played guitar" as I pulled to a stop then applied the parking break. Freddy informed me as I shut off the car that we would be listening to rap on the way back. [I like plenty of rap but am a larger fan of Bowie and rock. For this project to work correctly, I will need to go native as far as possible. This must include not

dominating music selection. Though I have noticed in my immersion and previous unofficial observations that they themselves often argue over what music to play.]

We opened the doors on the car and stepped onto the pavement of a little flat parking spot on the side of this road. I remember thinking to myself, "What are we doing here? Where are we going to sit? Out here in the open?" I noticed Randall was heading toward the edge of the forest on the other side of a small guard rail. The others started following and small talking. In addition to insufflation of pharmaceuticals on the drive down, John had rolled two blunts. These are cigars that contain marijuana. I followed them into a small barely visible forest path. Randall led the way, dressed in holy blue jeans and some light blue polo that was darker than the jeans, which were even lighter. His shoes were what looked like work boots. Freddy was wearing a t-shirt with the sleeves cut off, basketball shorts, and basketball shoes. John was wearing a marijuana-leafed t-shirt with sleeves, even holier blue jeans, and cowboy boots. He also had an American flag around his neck like how a boxer may have a towel. Freddy and John were talking about how much Mulch Valley "sucked" and how they could not wait to leave it.

Randall seemed to be a bit in his own world as he led the way. It was like once we crossed the line into the woods the road disappeared, and we were in a completely different realm. Beams of sunlight breached the canopy here and there. These beams would occasionally blind the eye enough to miss sighting a spider web that one would then plow into. Other than that aspect, it was quite a beautiful scene. I was a bit concerned about stumbling around in the woods near a lake when cliffs were possibly around here. I was surprised that a path existed here. It seemed so secret. After a short walk through this potential maze we came to an opening in the canopy. There was a spot

here with the remnants of a fire long extinguished surrounded by long flat pieces of wood that could be used as a sitting place. "So this is it?" I asked. Randall replied, "Maybe later tonight we will move here, we're going a little further now." As I thought to myself that who would really know what a "little further" actually meant, we had reached our destination. We had crossed back into a tree line on the other side of the opening. It only took a few yards and the dirt had turned to shale like rock and other rocks with weeds growing through them. We had reached the edge of a cliff that according to Freddy would normally be right over the water, but due to the water being down was over a flat area formerly covered by water. We were probably horizontally 200 yards away from the water and only about 30 feet up from the ground below. From this outlook one could see many tents and cars out where they were not meant to be but were able to be due to the water levels and all. There were people down there.

We each took a seat at the edge of this cliff of sorts. Freddy was telling me how this town traps people. John and Randall were agreeing. [Perhaps they wished to be like those cars, tents, and people out where there was once at least 30 feet of water judging by the high water line where vegetation starts growing. It did seem as if it was important to take any chance to get out, as you may not get another. Their tone seemed urgent.] They each complained about the number of churches. I recall Freddy saying, "There is a damn church every seven feet." "Slave morality," added John. I remembered that Freddy had mentioned Nietzsche to me before. I was a big fan of Nietzsche as well. [Perhaps, this whole project became available due to common interest in Nietzschean theory that I had with an interviewee.] I was unaware that John was a reader of Nietzsche as well. [Of course, it is possible that he isn't but had picked up lingo from this network. Perhaps, it

was his inclusion in this network as an actant that led to him picking up Nietzsche. Perhaps, it was the reading of Nietzsche that helped form the group. True Nietzscheans are hard to find. Is a common interest in texts and drugs enough for social cohesion? Either way, I'll need to find out. It would be useful to understand this network's philosophical standings and how they develop.]

Randall chimed in with a statement that religion was obsolete and how we should follow science. He also mentioned Richard Dawkins. [Here I wanted to get more involved in the discussion, yet felt I may disrupt the naturalism of this discussion.] Freddy stated that we should not be following anything other than our own wills. John offered his agreement with that statement. [Now that the position was out, I felt it okay to involve myself in the discussion. This will indeed be an interesting project. Following around individuals partying and talking about Nietzsche.] I stated that I felt Dawkins' position required more faith than say agnosticism. John added, "Yeah. Atheism can be a slave morality too." The discussion went on for a few moments. Randall did not assimilate, he maintained that we had to have something to guide us and that nothing as a concept was not good enough. The irony of this was brought up by both John and Freddy.

This topic ended with John saying, "Time to take off," as he lit the first of two blunts. They would each take two hits then pass it to the next in line. By "hit" I mean multiple inhalations to one exhale. No one seemed to be concerned about the possibility of being seen or smelled by one of the people below. As they smoked the conversation went from profound to silly. This was enjoyable however. We had been here approximately 40 minutes. The sun was beginning to set, and everyone was enjoying the sunset and its reflection glistening on the water. At one point Freddy stood up and raised two middle



fingers in the air at the edge of the cliff. John just about died laughing, as Freddy tried to hold the serious pose but finally broke into laughter. About that time Josh came stumbling through the tree line.

"There you guys are? Shit, you started without me?!" Josh asked in exclamatory fashion. Randall said something about him warning him to hurry by text. Josh was quite thin and wearing a long sleeve grey shirt, black jeans, and a backwards fitted red baseball cap. He began to complain about the situation. Freddy, who is heavily into weightlifting and much larger and fitter than the others, then threatened to pick him up and throw him over the cliff if he failed to "shut the fuck up!" Freddy was acting serious but looked as if he was holding back a laugh again. Josh took him seriously at first. Freddy tried to keep the seriousness of the argument going, before finally breaking into laughter again. It was then known that he was indeed kidding. Though John and Randall were laughing the entire time. John said, "God Josh, its only pot. Look what you could've caused." Randall said, "Yeah. Then you wouldn't be goin to that church all the time." Freddy stated acting seriously angry again, "Nah, cause he'd be in the hospital or dead!" Then he fell back into hysterical laughter. I was laughing as well. Even Josh was laughing. [This was something Freddy seemed to like to do. I had noticed before that at times he would act really serious and angry at something small as a form of joking. He would push it to the point where it was uncomfortable and then just a bit over. Then when you convinced yourself he was dead serious, he'd burst out laughing. I will want to look at this groups approach to such situations, as it is essentially a breach of normative intersubjective standards of interaction.]

Josh stated that he only went to church for girls. This was responded with the other three stating that that was even worse, in various ways. He also informed us that one such girl would be meeting us here later and that we should hold off on the church stuff. [This could be an attempt to assimilate the front stage, or it could be completely true. Either way, this front stage, at the very least, has an opposition to organized churches, if not religion.] It was at this point that John said, "Well good. You can fucking wait here until we get back." It was explained that Randall needed a ride back to his car, John needed to get more supplies, Freddy was going to come with us, and that I was indeed the designated driver and couldn't be left. This sounded like a reasonable course of action, so Josh would stay behind to "hold the fort down" as Freddy put it. Josh was whiney at first about it, but later agreed as he was waiting for a girl he was attempting to date.

The walk back through the forest was bothersome as now it was rather dark and the path less visible. We made it back to the car and I said, "We really need to get a flashlight before we come back." They agreed. We were in a bit of a hurry because we wanted to get back to see the fireworks that people set off from boats and the shore at the lake.

Entry #5 (Field Notes):

I was standing on the front porch at Freddy's place smoking a Parliament cigarette. I had dropped John and Randall off at their vehicles, which were in the front yard of Freddy's place. It was now getting close to 11:00 pm. Freddy stepped out onto the porch. I asked if we were still going to make it back down to the lake. Freddy informed me that they did not really start the fireworks until much later anyway. He was glad that he did not have to go to work the next day and was planning on getting the most out of this night. He then

received a text and said that we should probably head on back, and that he would be driving. [I had not noticed anyone worry about driving while under the influence of anything other than alcohol, other than to mention the designated driver as an excuse for me to not have to wait at the lake. So I went on, this was naturalism. Plus, it would allow me to drink, as I expected there to be alcohol at the get together.] We got in his car. The car was black and sporty. He was quite proud of the car, despite it causing him to have to work more. He stated the he was lucky and found a job in the closest town that was larger than Mulch Valley. It was one that was based off a standard pay rate of \$9.00/hr and commission for sales at a call center. [Freddy seems like the type to take whatever they are doing very seriously. Seems very driven. I wonder if this has any effects on this network.]

We were going to meet the others down there. The car was pretty fast, and Freddy drove it pretty fast. He blasted rap music the entire drive. He would occasionally point out some lyrics to me, and how Nietzsche and rap music go together pretty good. He also tied it to Charlie Sheen's "WINNING." I tried to engage in conversation but the music was a bit loud, so it was just a lot of loud yelling over the music. [But I can certainly see his point.] His driving was actually very controlled and skillful for someone I had watched smoke two blunts and insufflate approximately 40mg of Adderall earlier. Other than his increased state of appearing happy and excited talking, one almost would not have been able to tell if he was on anything. He did speed a bit driving back to the lake, but I had witnessed him speeding while completely sober as well.

...

It was around 11:30 pm when we arrived at the lake. We approached the same guard rail and path that was behind it. There were blasts of fireworks in the background and occasionally flashes of lights from said fireworks. "Shit! We didn't bring a flashlight did we?" I asked. Freddy informed me that we had not and laughed. He said that it was okay because it was not that far.

Freddy led the way using my iPhone as a flashlight. He asked me how good the phone was and talked about how he wanted to get a smart phone, but really didn't need one. I remember telling him something like they tend to create a need that doesn't exist, such as having portable internet service on the phone. Then you get used to it and absolutely require it. "That's good business even though it's kinda bull shit," he said. He also informed me that it didn't make a very good flashlight. He was correct, terrible flashlight. We were moving extraordinarily slow through the forest, because the path wasn't clear and Freddy did not want to get wildly lost as we really couldn't see anything except for the ground directly at Freddy's feet. We could hear the rest of the group ahead though, so we began to move faster. At one point the light went off from being idle and there was total darkness. Freddy actually gasped. "There's probably a sasquatch out here or something," he jokingly yet seriously stated. Apparently, he can scare himself into a frenzy if he were to sit and think about it. This is what he explained about how jokes can go wrong when high. We finally made it to the opening. The rest of the group was still on the cliff. We made our way towards them.

As we stepped through the tree line onto the cliff, I realized that there were more people here than I expected. Josh and his date were there. Randall had picked up his girlfriend. John had brought his nephew who was about 10. Mike, who is John's brother and is not

fat at all, was there with his girlfriend as well. John, Freddy, and Randall are all in their early 20s. Mike is almost 20 and Josh was 18. Mike had on a hilarious brown t-shirt in which there was a calculator that spelled "boobies" but in upside down numbers. John noticed us and grabbed a beer out of a cooler and brought it to me.

The group was talking about various things. Fireworks, Casey Anthony, Drugs, seemed to be the main topics. Thankfully someone had brought some lanterns. You could almost tell the seriousness of the relationship between those there with dates and their dates. Randall seemed stuck at his girlfriends side looking like he wanted to be able to fully behave like the rest. [Implied long term relationship.] Josh seemed stuck to his date only attempting to enter group conversation to try and impress. [Implied no relationship or early. This seemed to be apparent to the others as each attempt to impress was intentionally breached by the others.] Mike seemed free from any anchors as he would get up and walk around and leave his date [Implied either a really close relationship or one at its pinnacle.] [This implies that the girlfriends were not entirely part of the network. They seemed to be outsiders. Perhaps, even larger outsiders than myself. George Costanza's "worlds collide" theory comes to mind with the Randall situation and perhaps the Josh situation as well.]

There were houseboats and speedboats sitting still on the water firing off fireworks that blasted the night's sky with sound and vision, in what would otherwise be an ordinarily deaf and blind evening. The group was on the edge of the cliff 30 feet above it all, but we might as well have been on another planet. No one seemed to be concerned with these other people, despite the fact that there was the smell of pot, we could easily be seen up there, and Freddy was using that method of portable insufflation of pills that he calls,

"blasting off." Who knows how many victimless felonies and misdemeanors were going on up there, but I was proud to be a part of it. Who I found out was John's cousin, who was probably about 10, was even there. I was a bit concerned about John's cousin being there, as he had a box of firecrackers and was throwing them off the cliff. He seemed to know what he was doing though. Mike's girlfriend was keeping an eye on him anyhow. [It would have been unethical for me to do anything beyond mention it to John. I had been invited to partake in privileged information. It would be unethical for a social scientist to use that information in any way to cause problems, legal or otherwise, for the subjects. It would also break the naturalistic approach of my methodology.]

I had a few beers, Budweiser's in 12 oz cans to be a type of exact. [It definitely seems to break the intersubjective barrier between partier and non-partier, even though I wasn't using any illicit drugs. It helps to have a little substance sometimes.] It was quite an atmosphere looking back on it this morning. There was a small glow from the small lanterns. It was just enough so we weren't in complete darkness and could see each other. Due to this level of lighting, no effect was taken from the bright explosions tearing through the dark fabric in the sky.

The scene I recall as sort of a memory version of a Polaroid: I was standing back from the group a little talking with John and having a beer. The glow from the lanterns on the ground combined with the flashes in the sky and the fires on the ground below the cliff set by some of those firing fireworks from the shore, to reveal the amount of smoke that was in our area at the moment. Much of it was the result of cigarettes, but much of the result smelled of pot. John is in the forefront of the photo on the right side talking to me about what I do as a sociologist and how that's cool. Freddy is just a little further back on

the left facing the camera holding a rolled up bill in his nostril and "blasting off." Right beside Freddy is Mike facing the camera hitting a blunt acting like he is masturbating, sort of like playing "air guitar." Mike's girlfriend, whose name is something I can only barely remember [though I will have to make up names anyway], but is something like Susan, is sitting on the ground further back in the middle of the picture watching John's 10 year old cousin throwing firecrackers off the cliff. Josh/his date and Randall/his girlfriend are off to the side in the couple zone. [It does appear to be true that Susan is more involved in the group, as she was the only date whose name was told to me in some manner. I wonder if this has to do with use of substances. I will have to pay attention to that.] The scene is etched in brain (haven't had that much fun since undergrad.) It was like some type of small town Dionysian festival, in the Nietzschean sense of Dionysus. It was all taking part, quite fittingly actually, up in altitude in comparison to those on down on the formerly underwater ground (again lake was low.) They had escaped limits removed by drought horizontally. We had escaped the limits vertically. In my mind's ear, the plastic soul of mid-70's David Bowie is playing. There was no music playing, however, in actuality.

It was no surprise to see Josh and Randall leave first, as they did not seem to be able to fully enjoy themselves. Randall offered to give John's cousin a ride back to where he went. John's cousin left with them. The rest of us went into the opening in the canopy of the forest area, that was just on the other side of some trees and bushes from where we were. It was up off the cliff, as we had been as close to the edge where it just goes straight down as possible. We climbed up a bit and made our way to the long extinguished fire setting. The structure was already there, so John said he was going to

start a fire. The lights of multiple cell phones sprayed the ground with small sections of light in order to find firewood.

Eventually, enough firewood was gathered up. John started to attempt the starting of a fire. It seemed as if every time he about got it to go, he would mess with it a bit more and ruin it. This was humorous to all of us. When he finally got it started, he took a bow.

Freddy jokingly said, "Well it's about fuckin' time! Don't be patting yourself on the back. I'm glad we're not cavemen trying to discover fire." He went on to explain that if it was up to John to discover fire, it would have set the whole course of developing knowledges off by thousands of years and we'd currently just be making it to the dark ages. This was all done in a jokingly and brotherly fashion. Even John's "shut the fuck up!"s were done in this manner.

At this point, Mike looking deviously acted as if was checking to the right and then to the left before he pulled out a secret bag of pot that he had been holding onto for when less people were around to share with. He then laughed maniacally, "They shouldn't have left!" John and Freddy both said that the situation was "kick ass." [It may be interesting to look at strategies of maximizing free drug intake, if any exist. I must keep this in mind. It does appear to be somewhat of a communal type atmosphere with the drug intake. Yet, there are times like this, which suggest some type of value exchange.]

Everyone sat around the fire passing around the final blunt of the evening. The log I was sitting upon was perhaps the least comfortable. I was not excluded, despite not partaking. I just would pass it along, while sitting there drinking beer. The final event of the night occurred when Mike and John pulled two half burnt sword size pieces of wood out of the



fire. Holding the completely untouched by fire ends, they had a sword battle until John's fire-wooden sword was broken in half and thankfully flew away from the audience. No one was upset or concerned, we just all kind of laughed. From there after a long trip out of the woods in the dark, we separated up and took off. Entry #6 (Field Notes):

Today is going to be the big day. John has gotten tired of Nancy Grace's "slave morality," as he calls it. [I agree with his analysis of Nancy Grace.] John and Freddy have come up with idea to throw a Casey Anthony release party. We all had developed a common understanding of the situation. Freddy, John, Mike, Josh, Randall and I have all agreed to have a Casey Anthony release party. Freddy's family was out of town this week. He has already turned it into "party central." There is nothing much to be concerned about.

Though John has been inviting many people when he finds out they disagree with him. He told me the other night that he accused a person of slave morality and explained it to them. Then they told him that no one ever said that, and it wasn't real. We had a good laugh.

[I am curious about how other groups of deviants in this area are aligned philosophically. John and Freddy tell me that no one here in Mulch Valley understands or has even read Nietzsche. I'm not particularly surprised. It is just that this Nietzschean approach to everyday ethics and behavior seems to work well with this network of drug users, which is to say it works well with this group of deviants. Yes, deviance is not yet a completely negative word, despite movements of assimilation trying to make it as such. I wonder if any of the rest of the deviants in this small highly religious town (at least in the front stage) have developed a Nietzschean perspective maybe without knowledge of his work.

Perhaps, this group's cohesion is based off this similar theoretical perspective of everyday behavior, ethics, and morals. This will be a continued area of focus.]

Entry #7 (Field Notes):

Freddy had just woken up. He walked, yawning, into the living room area where I had been sleeping on the couch. He asked how long I had been awake. I told him sense around 8am, though I had napped some after that. Freddy then apologized for not being awake earlier. [He seemed to think it was impolite of a host.] I informed him all was good and not to worry. He then checked a text message on his phone and informed me that John was on his way over to pre-game the party a bit. Freddy then pulled out a prescription bottle from his pocket and removed a couple orange colored round tablets. These were 20mg of amphetamine salts. He had recently gotten his dosage increased, as before he had blue football shaped 10mg amphetamine salts. Freddy informed me that these didn't taste as much like candy as the blue ones but still had a sweet taste "in the nose," as he put it. He crushed up the pills and divided the powder into four lines on the coffee table, which didn't seem to match the room. It was bright red. The carpet was an off brown and the couch and reclining chair were an off white. Freddy was sitting in the reclining chair preparing to insufflate his lines. He did one line in each nostril and then let out a "woooo" to challenge all "woooo"'s. Eyes watering and trembling just a bit, he raised his hands in the air and exclaimed, "Now that is a way to start the morning." He then informed me that if I ever wanted to partake in any of the substances just to let him know. Freddy stated that he didn't want me to be left out. He had made this a point many times. [It always seems to be more of a type of respect and politeness than a type of peer pressure. After a "no thanks" it didn't ever expand into pressuring. Even if I were to

accept on methodological terms, it would not be something I would feel comfortable reporting anyway. Thus, it would've been pointless. It does say something about the level of stigma involved with recreational use. Even those who study it from a naturalistic methodology such as a "gone native" approach feel pressure to not partake or at the very least, not report it. It seems a bit extreme how science has become more and more discipline and less and less value-free, in certain aspects that we don't normally think of as "values." Due to this, my interpretation and experience of this network will not be a full blown "gone native" accurate description of the group and their experience. R.D. Laing was right.]

Freddy then did the other two lines and almost immediately hopped out of the reclining chair and walked towards the kitchen. The chair was still rocking back and forth from his sudden movement when he disappeared into the kitchen. He shortly returned with a protein shake. A clearly woken up Freddy then explained to me that he was concerned when he got prescribed to these meds. He was worried that they would mess up his weight lifting, which was currently focused on weight gain. This did not end up being a problem because he never really exceeded his total dose for a day on average.

Apparently, he had gotten so used to eating when he didn't want to, due to his program, that the loss of appetite associated with ADHD medications did not affect him. Freddy also informed me that it helped much with his weight lifting sessions. [Here we see a more functional abuse of pharmaceuticals. It is only abuse because of the insufflation. Yet, this cannot really be a scientific definition of abuse. The total dose is taken, just by a different route. It must be that this case, insufflation, remains a stigmatized method of

consumption. Though in this network and its front stages, it does not appear to be stigmatized.]

We continued to talk about his work, weightlifting, Nietzsche, Mulch Valley, drugs, and sports for a total of about an hour. Freddy noted that his work was the ultimate of drug places. He said that call centers always seem to be that way. Everyone that he had worked in, the majority of the people were on something. Just about anything could be found. Freddy seemed to love his work, and I would have too if I was making the commissions he was making. He told me that his job was proof Nietzsche's concept of the will to power. The decision was made to succeed, and he was able to pull it off. He stated that others there did not have his level of sales, basically because they started out with a pessimistic attitude about the job. Freddy also tied this to his weightlifting. He also said that he tended to seek out sports teams or athletes to root for that had this similar perspective. For example, in NASCAR he is a fan of Kevin Harvick. In the NBA, he is fan of Kobe Bryant. [In fact, as we were discussing sports he really didn't list any teams as his favorites, rather it was individual athletes. The teams he followed were only followed due to the individual player, he confirmed. This is also interesting because so far it seems he approaches the network that I am studying as a sort of team. Perhaps, it is simply a team of the individuals he values most.]

Then began a rather excited, though lucid, rant about Mulch Valley. People in this town were "too much like slaves" for him. He stated that it would be fine, but they try to drag other people into slave morality. For him, and I agreed, this was the key ingredient that determined whether or not a morality was slave or master. It was the attempted expansion and assimilation of others into said morality due to a fear of difference. This was one of

the reasons Freddy was anxious to get out of Mulch Valley, because of the "slave morality," as he put it. He felt that if he stayed it would eventually trap him here just like everyone else. Freddy even noted that sometimes he does not enjoy marijuana use because it "likes to sneak that slave morality in when you're high" by creating doubts. The pharmaceutical speed on the other hand was "automatic winning," according to him. I recall hearing similar statements from John. [This is interesting because it suggests that different substances can have different effects upon one's sense of self. It also suggests that these differences may be socially learned as it is from two individuals in the same micro network that I have heard this from. I will have to pay attention to this in future observation.]

I took the chance to ask him, "Why smoke pot, then if it promotes doubt and slave morality?" He answered that sometimes there is nothing else to do, but mostly it is to help bring on sleep. Freddy informed me that he has always had sleeping problems even before his ADHD diagnosis and medication. He felt it couldn't be the meds because most times he takes his dose when he wakes up and avoids taking it at night except on days when he doesn't have to work the next day. [Again, this shows a functional type of use.] Freddy would eventually state that John often has "smoke." They both usually end up smoking it, even though they know what it does to them. [This suggests that functionality is not linked to our concepts of hard and soft drugs. Here two individuals are continuing to smoke marijuana despite stating that it has negative effects. Is this addiction or is it something like a combination of availability and nothing else to do in a small town?] Freddy also stated that pot sometimes was just the happy side of it. He mentioned Mike, who he said never experiences slave morality with it. [This still may suggest a social

learning of the effects of drugs as two members of this network may smoke together more often.]

Entry #8 (Field Notes):

Freddy, Josh, Randall, and I were sitting on the Front Porch of Freddy's house. Freddy's parents were out of town for the week. This was now the location of the great Casey Anthony release party. Freddy, Josh, and Randall had been smoking blunts and snorting speed in the living room. Usually, they had to hide it, but Freddy's parents were out of town so it turned into party central.

As stated we were sitting on the porch, Freddy and Randall were aggravating Josh [If anyone has seen the television show "The League." Josh was the Andre of this group. The one they all pick on] by stating that he really didn't know about master and slave morality. We were all drinking Budweiser, yet Josh was not given one, because Freddy said he couldn't handle himself. Everyone was having a good time, even Josh, in an annoyed sort of way.

John finally pulled up in his beat up old truck with Mike. John was wearing a Hunter S. Thompson style hat, and had an American Flag around the back of his neck so that it came down over him, somewhat like a scarf or a towel that a boxer would wear in the locker room. This crew really liked to put on a show.

Much of my summer has been like following around a group that intentionally breaches social norms everywhere at all times. I recall the trip to an amusement park, that will

remain un-named here. They were all on marijuana, dextroamphetamine, hydrocodone, oxycodone, alcohol, and diazepam. Freddy was wearing a shirt that had  $5 + 5 = 10$ , but with Valium's with corresponding milligrams colored underneath. Yellow + Yellow = Blue. I thought it was humorous. The trip to the amusement park had been great. Freddy, John, Josh, Mike, and I were all crammed into a car for well over 4 hours as there was a tremendous traffic jam, during which they blasted the song "electric avenue" and openly passed a blunt around the car. There was no fear here.

Hence, here we are at a Casey Anthony release day celebration. The party pretty much turns into a standard house party. Plenty of marijuana was smoked by them, plenty of alcohol was consumed by all, and a few did plenty of dextroamphetamine. When I awoke the next morning, the living room smelt of cigarette smoke, which was odd considering that Freddy never smoked in here when his parents were in town. Pizza boxes were strewn across the floor. There were little piles of cigar tobacco lying about where blunts had been rolled. It was almost as if the room had a grey tint to it. Beer cans were everywhere. "Someone's gonna have to clean this up," I said out loud.

Entry #9 (Field Notes):

[I am fully confident in my complete immersion. I have completely broken with the role of objective scientist, I have taken the role of one of my subjects, upon analysis I will have to break with the second role in the sense of Bourdieu... not going back to objective scientist but a role all together different... a reflexive role. In a sense, I am breaking with my role as subject within these parenthesis. I wonder if the great One, Michel Foucault, kept field notes of long forgotten texts in his ethnographies of the present otherwise known as genealogies or archaeologies.]

I have been on many runs with John before. John has become a small-level marijuana dealer. He's sort of like a cross between pizza-delivery guy and mobile drive-thru. Every time I take part in his little adventures, I get paranoid as all get out. Each time a car goes by I fear my whole future career is fleeting. I prepare to immediately erase all audio documentation used for the help of field note expansion. It would be deleted anyway, yet still one must not be caught with it in the short time it exists.

[In line with Bourdieu, I must note my place in my field of knowledge... I am a nothing attempting to be something outside of the norm... something different... something slightly mad, but not mad enough that my findings cannot be communicated. I am a mere grad student attempting to be a figure like Nietzsche or Thompson... on the edge of everything, sanity and the field of knowledge I am taking part in. Attempting to be an artist in a world of scientists, is a good description. The elite stuffiness of the academic setting is beyond me... in my field... I belong in the field. This is true whether or not I'm buried in text or following around a group of drug abusers in the country. It is for this reason I find numbers so problematic; it is hard to become a number. For one, who wants to be a number. These people, my subjects-become-friends, are certainly not numbers. It is just so off. It is easy to decide what to do with people's lives when they are just numbers. As numbers their stories aren't told or known, and their complexity hidden. Solutions are easy that way. There is no solution for these brave warriors of the abyss that is human experience. One is not necessary. The only solution that is necessary is a solution for those who find one necessary: Direct your gaze the other way. Perhaps I will remain nothing in the bigger field of knowledge. But in this field, the field, I exist.]



I identify with John's beat up old truck. I've seen my battles and survived... although some would question whether it was worth it to keep on keeping on. Bright red is just like a "fuck you" to those who would question my existence or sanity or methods. John says that we're going to swing by "crazy Sherri's" place. I inquire, "Who is 'crazy Sherri?'" He informs me that she is just some middle aged woman who is also a middle school teacher. [This is very interesting indeed. A middle school teacher as a customer of this low level pot dealer in a town where everyone knows your name.]

John is in pizza delivery mode. His other mode, that of mobile drive thru, occurs most often with parking lots and late teens to early twenties individuals. This was a house call and the doctor was on his way. Her neighborhood was rather nice. It was sort of a nice neighborhood in a sea of impoverished dwellings. These were like the suburbia of small towns. Poor neighborhoods everywhere with a nice one occasionally rising up amongst them. In a sense, it reminds me of my time studying anthropology in Brazil, during which I stayed with upper class families though their neighborhoods were often right within sight of shanty-towns. The middle to upper class houses there, however, had gates with shards of sharp broken glass glued at the top as almost a cheap type of razor wire. I'm sure it was ground-breaking technology there. Here, in Mulch Valley, there are no great visible walls with glass. Instead, the walls are social. The only commonality is that the middle to upper classes occasionally let in one of the lower classed individuals, in order to purchase intoxicants. The impoverished bring the vices for the rich to enjoy to excess. [It almost reminds me of Bataille's twist on Nietzsche which includes the noble and the filthy as heterogeneous master moralists. In this sense, it is almost beautiful. Never mind my Marxist leanings, this is what brings people together, rich and poor, drugs. These

edge-workers, as some call them, do not seem as alienated as the people they sometimes help bring vice too.]

We pull into the drive way of a middle class house. Crazy Sherri is waiting on us. She approaches my window. She wants a joint to chill out this evening. I immediately go into "watch out" mode, looking back at the street as the transaction takes place over my lap. I am not only concerned for myself. I am also concerned for my subjects. [This group has become a close group of friends to me. To think I only gained access to this network through an in-depth interview project last semester on drug use. Lucky for me they allowed me to do this participant observation. I would lie in court for these people. Not that I take oaths to anything other than my vision of what is right seriously. This is my form of Nietzschean ethics. My subjects well-being comes first. Their story deserves to be told as well.]

The interaction lasts a few minutes longer than I would have liked it too. Small talk and all that never really seemed necessary to me. Yet, here was John and Crazy Sherri small talking it away, never mind that John had a truck full of pot and paraphernalia for both use and trafficking. He seemed completely sure of himself, however.

We finally drove off. He told me that he was unconcerned because cops don't usually search that neighborhood for drug deals. Most of all, he told me, that cops here were only concerned with busting meth labs for the most part. Only the DEA agents were something to worry about. Apparently, there are a few of them around here.

As we drove off, he brought up his dilemma. He was in financial trouble, thus he had started slinging pot on the side of his day job in order to cover bills. The majority of his

financial woes were associated with his child support payments. John had been in the Army. During his time there, his wife cheated on him and they ended up getting divorced. Their children were given to her. He set up this deal directly with her attempting to avoid the courts as much as possible. He was to pay 500\$ each month for his two children. I suggested he speak to an attorney. This child support woes was something he had been dealing with for a while.

Freddy, Mike, and others have had conversations with him about this before. They were always supportive, at least in my presence. The dilemma was that his ex-wife had offered him a deal where he signs them over completely to her and he would no longer have to pay the child support. He initially told her he would accept, all he had to do was sign the papers. Then his family busted in with "slave morality" as the others called it, and told him that he would be wrong to do such a thing. Apparently, they through a big fit and put a lot of guilt on him.

I told him that I agreed with Mike and Freddy. He needed to sign them away. He stated that he knew this was the correct thing to do, his family already looked down upon him for using pot and drinking. His friends had his back. Freddy had told him that if he ever wanted to get out of this town, he would have to do this, in one conversation I recall. I could tell that John knew this was the correct course of action, but I did not expect him to do it. I could tell he was being pulled by the Christian morals of his family, despite his atheism.

I felt rather bad for him. He desperately wanted out of this town and out of his situation. He was a creative and innovative mind trapped in a place where creativity was not

allowed and innovation was frowned upon. He knew the route out, yet the very morals he wished to escape out from under were the ones that were pulling him back. Freddy, of those out of the group, seems to be the most driven to escape this town. Mike seems to desire it as well, yet it was Freddy who wanted out most. Of all the conversations over the past summer in which "getting out" was the topic, Freddy was the driving, creative and innovative force. He was always developing plans for businesses and what not. He also seemed to have the strongest work ethic. The drugs he did use were used in a functional sense to make his work more efficient. Pot was just to be able to sleep, considering the fact that he was snorting uppers all day long. He excelled at his job, which was at a call center, and was looking forward to school starting. Freddy was one that would make it out, I felt. John just might not. John seems like he might be trapped in a world he wishes to escape. The problem would be worse if the rest were able to escape. I asked John where we were headed... and he replied, "Nowhere in particular." This was the only delivery he had to make. So we headed back to Freddy's this evening. I wondered if "nowhere" would end up being his answer to the great life question, "where are we going?" Hopefully not, I genuinely feel this network of individuals is creative enough to make it somewhere. I just worry about all the traps set for them.

Entry #10 (Field Notes):

We had been riding around in Freddy's car, John and I. John was in the passenger seat, as he had "called it, officially." I was in the cramped back seat. They had been consuming marijuana in their favorite device, the blunt. We had been driving around for a couple of hours. [This is also something to do in this small town.]

Freddy was very proud of his audio system and loved to blast his music to the extreme. He also happened to be a rather large fan of rap, as I've noted before. It was approximately 2:30 AM and we were stopped at a light on the main drag through town. We were behind a large truck with huge wheels... like monster truck wheels almost, though not really that large, but large enough that they remind one of that. They probably could have ran over the car we were in with minimal damage. The passenger looked out the window and seemed to be screaming. We couldn't hear him on account of the blasting loud gangster rap that was being played. We understood the sign language however, which Freddy and John reflexively responded with similar sign language. The angry passenger made a motion like Freddy's music was noise and covered his ears.

They turned off into a parking lot after the light changed. We drove forward. Freddy turned the music down to curse them. "What fucking assholes? Sorry it's not the standard pop country bull shit. Not even the good country that these idiots listen to." John stated that they were just standard stupid normal people. Freddy worked himself into an anger and less than a mile down the road he did a 180 in the vehicle and headed back to the parking lot. I was not sure what was going to happen. Freddy was quite angry, but John was laughing heavily.

This is what is interesting about a dextroamphetamine/marijuana mix. I'm certain it was the influence of the stimulant that sent Freddy into a rage. On the drive to the parking lot in which our foes were held up, the marijuana must've kicked in for him to come up with what happened next. There was one small group of cars that included the truck in an area of the parking lot. Freddy drove in the direction and cranked the music. He was playing Pastor Troy's "Yeah!!!" Once we got to the group of cars, he rolled down the windows

and reduced speed to the rate of snail movement. The opponents looked angrily towards the car, thru their arms up in the air as if they couldn't believe what was happening, then shook their heads. We turned around and drove slowly back by. Before burning out, John yelled out something out the window and Freddy acted as if he was trying to hear what the opponents were saying, putting his hand to his ear.

Freddy stated that's how you have to deal with people who try to impose and oppress you, go back and shove what they didn't like in their face. John just seemed to think it was hilarious, but Freddy seemed quite serious. I have seen him intentionally stare people down when most people look away at accidental eye contact with strangers. On one of the trips to the amusement park, as soon as we entered he held his arms in the air and proclaimed, "I am the best!" rather proudly. I must say that earned my respect... taking pride in one's self to the point of being unashamed to announce how great one feels they are. That is something else, and it's not really negative.

It is not as if this group of individuals just hated everything everyone else in the town liked. We often talked about hunting. Freddy was perhaps most into hunting. He stated that it is often all that gets him through the rough seasons of fall and winter. Fishing was also a favorite time of this group. They also just happened to hate church and adore the likes of Nietzsche and Thompson. They don't just play by different rules; they play a completely different game.

The wind felt good, as the windows were still down. I felt somehow accomplished as if I had been able to tell off every person I had ever wanted to. This had been a good time. This is a good project. It was a surreal moment. There were plenty of those with this

group. I felt young again, despite the fact these individuals were close to my age but still a bit younger. We discussed what to do next. John was down for a trip to Freddy's place to raid the fridge as he was experiencing some serious munchies. Freddy concurred but stated we must be quiet.

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Upon entering the house we, in hushed fashion, laughed about the previous incident. "You're crazy," John said. "So are you, what's that matter?" Freddy responded. The two then headed straight for the kitchen and returned with Ice Cream, Peanut Butter, and Doritos... an interesting combination. They turned on *Sportscenter* and kept the volume low and proceeded to eat plenty of food.

Entry #11 (Field Notes):

I'm currently at my apartment far away from Mulch Valley. I am staring at what was once a blank Word document with that damn flashing cursor. Now words are appearing as I think them. I have just gotten back, it is rather late at night. It is probably now considered early morning. Yep, 3 AM.

Leaving the field of study is difficult. Hopefully, I find a reason this semester to use this side-project. I will continue back into the field on weekends. These subjects have become friends. They expect me to return. It was so much easier with the online gaming study, with the randomization aspect of those I battled against.

Four hours ago, I was standing with Freddy, John, and Mike. My departure from the group was very much their disbandment as well. Freddy was off to an apartment in

Tennessee, he too had to head back to school. Freddy, John, Mike, and I have become somewhat of the "core" of this network. The "inner circle of the hellfire club" if you will. [My immersion went well. At first they were still cautious when using intoxicants around me. They even snuck into bathrooms at times. Now I am one of them.] They are open with me and I with them. I discuss my project with them. I joke that maybe one day I'll turn it into a book. It started as exploratory, but now I definitely want to do something with it. They think that would be a great thing to do. "Not many people want to know about people who use drugs but still operate in society. Especially, if they are on another level. Intelligence wise. People want it to be easy. Drugs equals dumb and bad," Freddy noted. [I should have produced more field notes, if I wanted a book. Though I feared hefty field noting would mess up my balance with immersion and analysis.]

This night feels somewhat heavy. Especially in comparison to the many other times spent with this crew. I recall Freddy slowly packing his car, with a look of doom on his face. This had been a fun summer indeed. Even if nothing comes out of this, text wise, it was an experience. Experience is better than knowledge anyway. Mike said, "This sucks, lets smoke a blunt in the backyard before we separate." Freddy was initially concerned as we were standing in the front yard of his house and his parents were home, but asleep. "Fuck it," he said, "Why climb into a vehicle when we can sneak into the woods and smoke?" John stated with a background of melancholy, "The last blunt of the summer." [At this point, I actually wish I could join in. While no moral is stopping me, I wish to show that even a completely clean individual can break the intersubjective divide and grasp an accurate understanding of the drug network. If I partook, it could always be written off as 'well he's a druggy too.' While intoxication might not be "all social" as previous



sociologists have suggested. At least, enough of it is social that if one allows their self to be socialized into the group they can take part. The rest of the group never cared that I didn't partake, except I did partake with alcohol. Though they stated that if I wanted to I was always welcome. They were a very welcoming group of individuals. It is not all or nothing. It is not clean or addict. It is not inside or outside. I wish above all things to show that with this project, because this is what the project has shown me. It has backed up everything I've been told by Nietzsche, Foucault, and Derrida with, what I consider, the hard data of experience.]

We scamper off to the woods behind the house. They smoke a blunt and recall the summer. This had been an especially good summer they felt. Each of their summers have been good. Freddy says that he dreads fall as he always gets depressed in fall and winter. So he loves summer in general. In a sense, it is a break for him despite the fact that he worked full time. Normally, he works full time and is in school. While this group always enjoys summer, they feel this one was a step above. [Perhaps part of this was due to the fact that they knew I was observing. They are all big fans of Hunter S. Thompson and perhaps felt self-pressure to take it to another level this summer. This does not undue or negate the results of my future analysis. This is simply something to take into consideration as a possibility.] They continue to talk about past summers while passing a blunt around. They even go back to when they were children. One story was told by Freddy and Mike. It was regarding the first time they discovered drugs. Mike had broken his arms and had a large prescription to pain pills. They abused them of course. They laughed at the stories as if they were old men looking back on their lives and talking to

grandchildren. It was that normal to them. In all honesty, it is that normal to me now.

[This means my immersion worked.]

This looking back to the past is not something I've often seen in this group. They are usually focused on the present or the future. Times they have focused on the past were to joyfully tell stories of their battles, hard times, victories, or enjoyable times. This time seemed similar to that on the surface. There was a sadness underneath it all though. There was a growing dread of the immediate future of what they call "disbanding." [This suggests a high amount of social bonding, despite the lack of normative regulations by other members for members. Social integration out of what some might call Anomie.]

Mike, the clown of the group, randomly twists John's nipples. "Ouch you fucker! Get outta here with that!" John screamed. Freddy immediately falls into laughter while trying to tell John to "sshh." Mike reminds the group that there are always weekends. From what I've seen they tend to treat each other's places of living as places they can stay. During the summer it wasn't party at one area then head back home. Often Freddy would just stay a week at John's, or vice versa. [I wonder if that will continue on weekends, or if this means they become more individualized and less integrated during the other seasons.]

Freddy tries to approach the upcoming shift in scenery as a challenge to overcome.

"Bring it on, I can take it. I hate this town anyway," he said out loud. "Fuck this town," John said. "The only thing good about it is we're here," Mike added. "I don't want to go back, but I feel like that's not slave morality though," Freddy contemplated. "Nah it is not slave morality. There is room for comradery and companions. Sometimes it is back to the

mountains and solitude," I answered. While I am new to this group, they've lived their entire lives together. I feel the comradery of the group. This is actually sad for me too. They've actually treated me as if I had spent my life around them. Very open minded people are these functional drug users. [I imagine they have to be open minded.]

"He's not even high," Freddy laughed, "and he's over here talking about going into mountains and solitude." The group laughed. Mike said, "Some people don't need to do nothing to be high." John added, "He does think like us." The four of us walked back to the front yard and stood on the porch. "Last round of cigarettes?" John asked. We all complied. Even though we each plan to get together next weekend, it feels as if this is a major shift. Any excuse to avoid disbanding will do. After the smokes are done, John and Mike say their "see ya later's" and drive off in their respective vehicles. Freddy and I head to our vehicles. "Back to school for us," he said. "Goddamn what a bummer," I replied quoting a line from *Fear and Loathing*. Freddy laughed, "Yep. That's what it is. Well come by this weekend for observations or just hanging out or whatever. Time for me to get where I'm going. Stay proud." This was followed by a fist bump and a reminder that he wants to read any text that comes out of this little project. He took one last look around the neighborhood and climbed in his vehicle, started it, and drove off. I climbed into my vehicle, started it, and drove off.

The drive back was slow. As I drove through town, I understood the subjects' desires to escape it. There was something distant about this place, despite everyone knowing each other's name. It was almost the opposite of the group I had just spent most of my summer with. There was intense informal social regulation, but almost no real social bonds or integration. No one cared about each other; they just cared about what everyone else was

doing and who they could tell. [Granted, I've probably adopted that point of view from my subjects. It may not be objective truth, but I can see that point of view for sure.]

Whereas the group of "morally degenerate" "druggies" that I studied didn't give a damn what you did as long as it was what you wanted to do, and there seems to be intense social bonding and caring.

This town was too small for them. They had big thoughts and big ideas. There is a church almost every seven feet here, and these guys go around talking about Nietzsche. They didn't want the American dream of getting by, of simply making a living. They wanted more. They want enough to no longer worry about getting by. They wanted this so that they could fully live, so they could fully experience life. There was no hope for unalienated labor for them. For them, the way to deal with alienated labor was to take it to the extreme and find the real meaning in life in more creative efforts that aren't often counted as "labor." I hope they each make it out, and I hope they remain in contact as a close network. It was refreshing to study this group. It was a rare occurrence. To find such a rare group made up of rare individuals in this setting was not all that surprising. I come from a similar setting, and there were plenty of skilled and creative individuals there as well. These guys remind me of myself. Humans desperately trying to overcome that which is human. [I doubt that it has to do with small towns producing these searchers, dreamers, will-ers, etc. I'm sure any environment can produce it. Most people would not expect to find them here. It doesn't really surprise me though.]

"One of God's own prototypes... too weird to live, too rare to die,"<sup>7</sup> Hunter S. Thompson's words echoed in my mind. These subjects were God's prototypes. (The quote also applies to the overall field experience as well.) I was off to be just another freak in the freak kingdom of graduate school. Where we all partake in intense debate, analysis, and other forms of seriousness about life outside the ivory tower. It must be similar in insane asylums. Theorizing about the world "out there." Some of us are lucky enough to be in a field, Sociology, that we are able to go out into said world and experience it, in order to understand it. I will always prefer that methodology. We think we can solve the world's problems, often without actually understanding them on this level. What type of madmen are we?

Part of me wants to follow in line with my subjects, now friends, and just break out of it all. Yet, there I was driving back to it. I should be grateful, as it allows for a profession which uses experiencing life as a methodological tool. I am grateful. Still though, there is nothing like being in the field. Out there I am real, despite the fact that I am intentionally putting myself through socializations and taking roles in order to create a different self that understands the subjects so said self can report back. Inside that cold tower, I am often just an abstraction. I'm just this dissolved self there waiting for another project to take on an identity. Of course, I wouldn't have it any other way. Foucault once said, "Do not ask me who I am, and do not ask me to remain the same."

The drive back was way too slow. The climb up the stairs to my apartment was way too long. My computer screen was way too blank. Sleep could still wait for the expansion of field notes and listening to audio data before deleting it for safety of my subjects.

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<sup>7</sup> *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*

The scenes from this last summer will remain vivid. I do not believe I've ever had that much fun conducting research, and I once did a participant observation of Call of Duty Hardcore Team Deathmatch. I will continue with informal and formal sessions of observation on weekends, but the main portion of my field experience has ended. It is time to start taking the reflexive break, and it is time to stop typing this is all getting too sentimental. Nah, actually, that's just slave morality as one of the group would say. But this section of the story has ended, as does this particular field note text.

It's been too weird to live and too rare to die, to paraphrase a hero of mine once again.<sup>8</sup> It can't continue continuously, but it isn't anywhere close to being forgotten.

Entry #12:

I just spoke with Freddy over the phone to see if he was going to be in Mulch Valley this upcoming weekend. I was plotting on heading there instead of going to the parent's house this weekend to visit. Either way, it seems like visiting family. Just different family/different town though it is pretty much the same style of rural town.

The group has this notion of "disbandment." This is interesting. They are highly individualized in their life styles and goals and purposes, yet they enjoy being in this group. They almost prefer it. It is almost like reinforcements. Allies in a war against all that is stable and standard. They aren't a group that often shares the more sappy of the

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<sup>8</sup> *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* Hunter S. Thompson

emotions they feel, yet the notion of "disbandment" is one that they openly express. This group of Nietzscheans and functional drug users do not enjoy times of "disbanding." This is true even during times in which the disbanding is more temporary, as in until the next day. This is not to say they are needy individuals. There is plenty of room made for individual life. Each has their own individual life "out there," but the time the group is together is the time to forget the problems of that life or get moral support in overcoming said problems.

The scene a month ago at the end of summer break, showed the seriousness of the disbandment concept. This was a large disbandment. Everyone seemed a bit down, and kept looking for excuses to continue in the company of the group. [Again this points to the intense amount of social bonding and integration despite a normative rule standard. This is very interesting. It is almost as if actual individuals in this disciplinary age of false individuality absolutely must stick together.]

I am actually finding it difficult to resocialize into the grad school setting. It is like a reverse culture shock. The reverse culture shock has always been more intense for me than the initial culture shock. I recall little culture shock upon visiting Brazil, yet experiencing a debilitating amount of culture shock upon my return. Perhaps, this is why I enjoy this type of research, using the self as tool of understanding. It also points to the success of my immersion. This past summer was more than a research project. It was an adventure. The subjects became friends, and were more than subjects to begin with, they were champions of individuality and examples of Nietzsche's overman. If normative forces can't be defeated, it is at least enjoyable to be a thorn in their side. We were warriors at that. Comedic prankish Warriors.

Entry #13 (Field Notes):

Riding around with John, on his "deliveries" and runs have become something like something I no longer want to do. Of course, it all has to do with legal concerns. Being with him when he gets caught dealing pot, so openly, is something that might cause me some problems. I am no fan of problems. Who drives around in a bright red fuck you style beat up pickup truck, with no insurance or tags, selling a controlled substance... even if it is just pot. I express this to John as he pulls into a parking lot filled with late teens looking to bend some rules. John just laughs. I ask him if my reaction to this situation is normal amongst the rest of the group. "Freddy absolutely hates it," he replied. "Worse than you do. You both worry way too much. I've told ya before, the cops here only care about meth. Most of the cops smoke," he continued.

Granted I am not passing judgment on the action, nor do any of John's friends. I recall several conversations in which I heard Freddy and Mike applaud John's decision to get into a little side money. "Make ya some money," Freddy would say. Riding with John, who is constantly on call now, has become a situation which can turn into one becoming a captive audience in an activity that is arbitrarily and quite stupidly labeled a crime.

John parks and almost haphazardly pulls out his scales. "A couple people gonna meet me here," he said. "Shit do you know how much they want," I asked. "Nope," was his response. I proceed to tell him that I figured he would have figured that out first so that he could prepare it before they got here, to make the transaction as quickly as possible. His response was, "You always tell me that, and I always forget. It would be more efficient time-wise."



Eventually, one car pulls up and then another. He chats up his customers and handles business. Meanwhile, he is multi-tasking by responding to texts on his phone. (John is one who will even drive down the road texting.) "More people," he said. Eventually, we are sitting in our own section of the parking lot surrounded by at least 7 vehicles. Now it looks as we're just another group of late teens out here chatting it up. (Their not being much to do in this small town, young people often meet and hang out in parking lots. I am familiar with this activity, as my hometown features a similar activity. Though in my town it also includes an older crowd that never left high school in their hearts.)

"You've opened a goddamned drug drive-thru here John!" I excitedly stated in an annoyed fashion. He just laughs, "You and Freddy always freak out." The crowd depletes all that he has except for his personal use stash. "That was a good lil money making episode," he stated brashly. I sarcastically asked, "What does everyone know you sling this?" He told me that in fact, just about everybody did. It hasn't caused him any problems. The local police do not care, and the few DEA agents in the area are focused on methamphetamine. His family has given him a harsh time or two about it, but that was mainly for using. [John is not at all concerned with moral capital here. His lack of it almost seems to not affect him. He seems to have a different type of capital amongst his group and those who smoke, which as previous episodes have shown include middle school teachers. Perhaps, on the issue of marijuana, the issue of moral capital is only a front stage deal here.] Though John informs me that some people outside the group dislike him, but they already dislike him for being a user of the substance. "So fuck em," he said.

John crushes up a hydrocodone pill and snorts it while sitting in the parking lot. He doesn't sell those, in that area he is just a purchaser. He says that if he were to deal those it would almost turn into another real job, and he didn't need another one of those. After a few parting words with his customers, we pull out of the area and I am immediately relieved. "I don't see how you handle the stress," I said. "What stress?" he asked. It was if it was second nature to him. He stated that the only reason everybody didn't do it was because of some form of slave morality or other nonsense.

With that we were finally on our way to our destination, John has somewhat become known for never being anywhere on time. His new side-occupation might have something to do with that. I recall Freddy giving him hell about it all the time, but in joking fashion.

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Entry #14 (Field Notes):

We on our way to meet Mike, Josh, and Freddy at what everyone called, "The Deviants' Place." "The Deviants' Place," is a house rented by several late teens/early twenties guys. It is like a frat house without the school. There are virtually no "adults" there, so it is almost like it is some type of Neverland free of normative power. John informed me that I would probably be the oldest person that has ever stepped foot into "The Deviants'." Apparently, we were going to play some monopoly and Texas hold 'em poker.

We pulled into the driveway, which was filled with cars. I recognized Freddy's and Mike's. Josh must have ridden with one of them. The other cars I did not recognize. I was curious about this, my first time at "The Deviants'." With a name like that, it couldn't be

too bad. At any rate, we got out of the vehicle and John just opened the door and walked into what was supposed to be the kitchen. The kitchen, however, had all the living room furniture in it. I inquired about this and was informed that they wanted comfortable seating in the kitchen so they had just moved the couch and chair from the living room into the kitchen. I thought to myself, "now this is my kinda place... sofas go in living rooms, what?! Who came up with that arbitrary bull shit? I want it in the kitchen." The pure sanity of this form of madness appealed to me. I could see Derrida shifting furniture to areas in which they didn't belong. Thank goodness there were no adults here to ruin it. I was hoping there would be other eccentricities to make me feel at home, both theoretically and literally.

The late teens who lived here looked as if they would be considered what some might call "punk", "emo," and/or "goths." Each individual had some variation. Deviant #1 (and I call them this in admiration) was pretty much straight punk and seemed to be the one who was somewhat responsible. He actually had a job. What was interesting was this room was filled with the punk/emo/goth/skateboard teens, Freddy who was somewhat of a gangster and a fan of rap style clothing, John who was just a good ole boy, Mike who was a standard comedian, and Josh who was a standard generic individual outside of his intoxicant use. Here they all were ready for a serious game of monopoly.

The room was filled with smoke. It seemed everyone smoked here. Deviant #2 was a skater who was skateboarding around the kitchen. Deviant #3 and 4 were more like emo kids. There were other Deviants here but it was difficult to figure out who actually lived here, because just about everyone seemed to stay here for extended periods. This was my first time here and after introductions, "This is Eric... he's a sociologist. He's studying us,"

John announced, I was immediately invited to make myself at home and stay here whenever necessary.

Deviant #2 snorted what he said was a xanax and said that we should get started on monopoly. This was going to be a crowded game, though not all the Deviants were playing. Deviant #1 started to act a bit concerned with the whole "he's studying us" aspect of me being there. I informed him that all identities would be protected, and explained a little bit about participant observation and calmed him down. After that, there were questions about it, but more of being in awe of that being an occupation and being "way funner than his job."

This group of individuals play monopoly in a unique way. They form what they call "corporations" so that two can team up and build hotels on their properties even though as individual players they do not have all of the individual properties of that type. Combined, as a corporation, they did. I applauded the bending of the game rules.

The house was a bit of a mess, but considering that a group of late teens and people in their twenties often lived here, it was actually more kept up than I expected. It was something like Animal House, I suppose. Conversations varied in topic covering everything from recent sexual conquests, to recent fun drug times, to dealing with "stupid people" of the town, to music, and everyday life. Freddy won the game of monopoly of course, and was proud to brag and celebrate. He had earned it.

As we prepared for Texas hold 'em, Freddy started talking about possibly changing his major in school because he could make more money in a different field sooner. Once it was established that that indeed was what he willed most, John, Mike, and the others

gave their full support. John said, "Don't be scared to do it, if it gets you closer to your goal." [These guys definitely break the stereotype of non-driven drug users. This also speaks to the social bonding despite a lack of normative group goals or regulations other than do what you want most. The end didn't matter to these individuals of this group. It was will that mattered. No end is ever rejected, unless the desire is clearly lacking.] This is not what they show on those anti-drug commercials. Individuals supporting each other's goals positively while playing monopoly and smoking pot. [Again, I am surprised that no one cares that I do not partake. Even these new introductions. Again this goes against the stereotype. Intoxicant use is as normal as kicking back and having a beer with this group. It is not something to be peer pressured.]

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Later that evening Deviant #2 opened the front door, and skated through the kitchen and living room on to the porch and was jumping off doing tricks. This was at 4 am. [They clearly are not concerned about the neighbor's opinions.] Yes, this was an aptly titled place and was quite refreshing. Free spirits existed here.

Entry #15:

Watching a drug documentary reminds me what is wrong with the study of drug use and addiction. It must be treated as a separate social setting of interaction. It is its own frame. Its own society so to speak. This is not just metaphor. It is perhaps indeed a completely different intersubjective frame. These documentaries and other approaches to addictionology are on par with early anthropological work into "primitive" societies, before the notion of going native as a tool was around. There is an intersubjective divide

that is amplified by these attempts at understanding. The divide makes the individuals look as though they are dysfunctional, because they often times are dysfunctional in our intersubjective frame. Yet in their intersubjective social frame, they are often quite functional. Often times, they are functional in both. Those tend to not be focused on because the intersubjective frames are intersubjective with one another, or at least more so. The only good thing about the "documentary" *Methadonia* is that it provides the metaphor of it being a social setting that is somewhat foreign to us. It, of course, misses the point that it is not a metaphor and also takes the wrong methodological approach, maintaining the intersubjective divide by not taking Bourdieu's (1977) second break, from the perspective of "objectivity," which is often highly limited and culturally tinted.

[There is somewhat of an intersubjective divide on my part as I am not consuming the substances. Yet, I feel as if it is less of an intersubjective divide as I'm allowing myself to be socialized into this particular network.]

There doesn't appear to be any concern with moral capital of the overall community in this group. In many occasions, I have heard them state they felt above the general population. At least this is true with Freddy, John, and Mike. The intersubjective nature of this network doesn't appear to be strict. Whatever one wants to do is supported by the others, so long as they are doing it because they want to do it. To have a repressed will is about all that is frowned upon in this group. Individuals in this network come from every economic class except upper class. They each have different levels of education as well. There is an intense amount of difference other than the focus on doing what one wants. As long as one is doing what they want, no judgment is passed by the rest of the group. Though if one is "acting under slave morality" judgment is passed and the others often

have serious conversations about how to help the individual who is being repressed. This type of lack of social controls would suggest that there should not be any social bonds, as an anomie type situation. Yet, there appears to be a strong social bond in this network, perhaps stronger than in the overall community. This perhaps shows that anomie is not a descriptive term of a low measure of social bonds, but instead is a different type of sociality all together. Perhaps, a better one than our standard society which is so disciplinary that we often do not even recognize it as such.

Entry #16 (Field Notes):

"What are you saying?!" asked Freddy nearly screaming. "Do you even hear yourself?" he followed. Freddy was driving while talking on his cell phone. He was quite animated. "Why even listen to them? Why is it any of their business?" "Slave morality is getting ya, right there." I was riding in the passenger seat. Apparently, John had been guilt-tripped by his parents into not signing over his children. He was thus still trapped by his child support payments. "He says he is just going to attempt it for a few months and if it doesn't work out he will sign them over, but really he's just making excuses for himself and will remain trapped here," Freddy explained. [Perhaps, this network operates on its own master morality and acts as a source for a type of reverse social/moral capital. Many times it seems as if they are at constant war with the surrounding community, whether they be strangers, bosses, fellow workers, or family members. It is as if they are at war with all of Mulch Valley, which they see as a prison that they are trying to escape.]

Freddy seemed genuinely concerned for his fellow member of this network of deviants. He said that he knew how badly John wanted to get out of Mulch Valley but was trapped by the financial barrier to escape. There were no good jobs here. Even Freddy's parents who had graduated college with useful degrees, were underscored in this micro-economy. I have often heard Freddy try to get them to move to another area, where they could maximize their financial gain. Instead they are struggling small business owners. Far from impoverished, Freddy often wonders out loud what the difference is between his apparently middle class family and the more impoverished background of some of his friends. Freddy's parents are trapped on a cycle of debt, trying to make it work in the wrong town. He has often said that they are playing the wrong game. Freddy is often concerned they will drop into poverty or lose their home. It is not so much of the loss of a safety net that bothers him, he is prepared for that. While he disagrees with his family's religious background, he still cares for them, as well as his friends. In sum, John would be trapped unless he could find a way to save some money to get out of this town. Freddy kind of views it as a graveyard. It's not that this area lacks intelligent and capable people, though he'll be the first to tell you that most are stupid followers, it's just that there is no outlet.

"John thinks that he can just motherfuckin' fuck around here and please his family and things will always stay the same. It won't be so bad, he'll always have people like me and Mike. What is he gonna do when he wakes up and we've made it out. Then he's gonna realize he shouldn't have fucked around with things, and he'll want to leave and be trapped. That's my worst fear, being trapped here," Freddy said in a frustrated tone. "He's convinced he's doin' the right thing... they've convinced him. I mean who wants to give



up their kids. One day he'll see, this easy way out sucks." He continued. He finished, "I'm not getting trapped here in no jobs, no money, nothing to do central, bull shit town."

We drove on for a bit and there was silence filled with background gangster rap music. Freddy then stated that he felt like John knew about master and slave morality, unlike others of this area (apparently one person even told Freddy that "no one ever said that, that's not real") but that often John would still fall down the path of slave morality. [I have taken to discussing my findings with the group, including taking full part in their discussions of Nietzsche. They know these terms well and understand what they mean and even further attempt to be ubermensch. Freddy and John were especially excited when they found out I had been reading Nietzsche since the age of twelve. This also gave me opportunities to tell them about Foucault and Bataille, but this is all beside the point.] He asked my opinion, "Maybe he is doing what he wants most of the time. It seems he backs down rather easily from when the pressure of slave morality when applied directly to him though. He knows what he is doing is backwards, but does it anyway," was my response. Freddy stated that that was a terrible thing to imagine, to not blindly follow, but follow knowing better. It showed a complete lack of strength in will to power.

For the most part, Freddy is up for any challenge. He is a fan of confrontation. If he is challenged, he will step up or at least attempt to. John on the other hand is a fan of fun, and that's all good except when it causes conflict. He almost wishes for a somewhat lazy version of master morality. [Still though he doesn't buy into the moral capital of this community. He openly states it is nonsense. He especially enjoys quoting the old Nietzsche line, "God is dead," to religious folk. When it comes to his family though, he just prefers peace to Freddy's war. Both Freddy and John see this as a weakness however.

Freddy agrees though that if John wanted to stay here it wouldn't be an issue, but he knows that he wants out.]

Desire's are an interesting thing in this group. Freddy seems completely focused on money. It seems he wants to get enough money to no longer have to worry about money. [This could be a side effect of being from the lower to middle class. ] Apparently, his family started in poverty and worked their way out. As a result, he said that he saw his father and mother work their ass off and not get much in return for it. Freddy isn't even interested in owning a house. He says they did all this work so that they could make a better life for him and climb into the middle class and become home owners. The problem he said was that this house became another reason to overwork for lower pay than they could get in another area.

Freddy is almost obsessed with finding a way out... in many ways he is working just as hard to envision and find a way out to another area, much like his parents sought to climb into another economic class. "I don't know why people feel they have to stay here. They need to get out when they get a chance," he stated. "Then they don't take the chance, and are pissy about it later in life when they realize the chance they fuckin' blew. Hold the steering wheel," he said to me. I grabbed the steering wheel. He started to prepare the portable dose of dextroamphetamine powder to be insufflated. [I've come to care about this group of individuals beyond subjects... they are indeed friends. Occasionally, I get worried at some of the drug use, though I do realize a lot of that is power/knowledge. This was one of those cases, where normally it just seems like something normal that occurs in this group and one is used to it. Here I realized, wait a minute I'm riding in a car down the road steering the car while the driver snorts speed and he's already aggravated.

In all honesty though, at least it is stimulant driving, not downer driving. I've seen them get "out of control" intentionally before, and I've seen their common use, which is much controlled and functional. I remember that I am not here to misplace judgments. I'm here to communicate their story as a network of friends that operate outside the standards of the moral/social capital of this small rural community. They had been kind enough to invite me into their world. I should be kind enough not to pass judgment. Even if it is disguised as concern.]

*Entry #17 (Field Notes):* I had just arrived in town and was pulling up to Freddy's place. I saw Freddy and Josh on the front porch. I popped out of the car, and there was overzealous greetings and catching up. [I have been hanging out with this crew off and on since the summer, which was full blown immersion... by now I'd say they probably do not even think twice about my project. I'm pretty sure I achieved full immersion sometime ago.] It was dead cold outside, as the sun was getting ready to set. Freddy and Josh were on pain meds and speed. To be specific, they were on hydrocodone/apap and dextroamphetamine. Freddy had just rolled a blunt, and they were waiting on John to show up so they could all three smoke it. They informed me of all of this. I asked what else was planned. Freddy told me that there wasn't much that we could do because some Thanksgiving/Christmas parade was getting ready to happen. [I am from a rural town as well, originally, and I recall these holiday parades. I inform them of this to continue the conversation on it. I'd like to get their take.] This parade seemed like it was more of a hassle to them than anything else. Freddy told me almost everyone in the town shows up to this "small pathetic parade" and "pretend it is something great." I ask if they plan on

going. Josh informs me that we must go because Freddy's girlfriend wants him to meet her there. Freddy then states that we don't have to go and argues with Josh a little about what he said.

It is at this point that John pulls up in his red pickup truck. He pulls right into the muddy dead leafed up yard, window down with a cigarette barely hanging out of his mouth, his hat on crooked, and a half stupid look on his face. I immediately know that he has been smoking pot. [I have, overtime, developed the ability to tell when Freddy and John are high on marijuana. They behave in a certain manner, talk in a certain manner, and just have this high look on their face. It is most obvious with John.] John gets out of the truck, as soon as he steps on the ground I say, "You're high." He replied, "Yep." He then went into a spiel about the "damn parade" getting ready to shut down the entire town which is "just one main road." Freddy ran up to John and smacked him on the back several times rather hard and said, "Whadya say feller?" in an exaggerated accent. "You reckon we oughta head on down to tha big parade?" He continued. John stated that we "might as fuckin well," but he wanted to "blast off" first. [Blast off is the terminology this network uses for snorting aka insufflating dextroamphetamine. Interestingly enough, they won't touch methamphetamine.]

We made our way into the house. Freddy's cat, whose name is 8-ball and has snow white fur, attempts to block our feet and escape into the residence. John pulls out 10 mg of dextroamphetamine and crushes it on the coffee table. He proceeds to snort it. Freddy and Josh proceed to brag about how they were on hydrocodone as well. It upsets John that he missed the hydrocodone. "Well fuck, sucks I missed that," he whines. Freddy exclaims that John should be more worried about the "8-ball of coke" he missed this past week.

"Fuck you buddy," was John's response and he began to pretend to punch him in a playful manner. [I take this moment to attempt to relate by informing them that during undergrad I was the "Fat White Duke," but my David Bowie/Cocaine reference and self-depreciating humor are not picked up initially.]

The other three then begin to have a discussion about Ancient Aliens. I attempt to explain the discontinuous nature of history and how anything can make sense when simply applied to historical facts in a grand narrative type nature. This leads to a semi-heated argument amongst the four of us. At this point, John and Freddy climb into the red pickup truck, as John needs cigarettes and the discussion needs cooling down. As John drives out of the yard, he finally gets my reference and screams, "I get it!" and sing/yells, "it's not the side effects of the cocaine..." [I feel especially important as I have brought them to some great music... yes, musical taste-expander is not supposed to be the role of participant observer, but I figured one should go native to the point where they are a part of the story, in Gonzo fashion. I've already started discussing my theories and observations with them. (How could I avoid it? They often have referenced Nietzsche. Being a fellow Nietzschean already, I might as well.) The fact that I've introduced new music to them is beyond the point.] I spent most of the time they were getting cigarettes in my car writing short notes, while Josh played with 8-ball the cat on the porch.

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Finally, Josh and I can hear John's truck, which means it is probably within a mile maybe more. It is rather loud, due to the lack of the muffler. Josh and I joke about how far away we can hear that John is on his way. No sooner than after we joked, we saw that bright

red beat up old pickup truck that looked as if it had survived several run-ins with smaller vehicles, crossing the bridge into our field of vision. "We overestimated our ears Josh," I said. He said, "Yep." The lipstick red uninsured war veteran of a pickup truck veered off the pavement into the dead green grass, which was underneath the plethora of suffocated leaf-corpses that had fallen out of their trees. Once green they were now rotten brown and yellow. John and Freddy had returned to the yard.

Once they got out of the truck, there were apologies over the heatedness of the debate over, of all things, Ancient Aliens. The worst thing you can label another in this group is a follower of "slave morality," and both sides had committed this. [I recall several debates within this group, whether we were on the righteous master morality path or the slave morality path. This group truly treats Nietzsche's concepts as moral code, which is great. It is perhaps this Nietzschean style of ethics that keeps them from being concerned with moral and social capital in this close-knit community. This group is an even closer-knit community, itself. Unless something on the outside is some type of legal threat, they are typically ignored. Physical threats are typically threatened and frightened off, as Freddy is an amateur bodybuilder and most everyone carries some type of gun.] The three of them proceed to smoke a blunt filled with marijuana in the back yard, then it is off to the parade.

Josh and John take the truck and I ride with Freddy. We are indeed on our way to this parade. Having grown up in several similar rural areas, from Louisiana swamps to rural Texas to rural Kentucky on the very edge of Appalachia, I recalled the parades from my youth. [Well I guess they weren't so similar, just the Kentucky and Texas ones.] I wasn't particularly looking forward to this, especially given the temperature. It was frighteningly

cold and I had only a long sleeve shirt and jeans on. As we pull up to the road which contains the communal charade, I see how many people are on the edge of the street. [This must be something really big to this community, at least in appearances. This is in stark contrast to the network of subjects I am studying.] It is now dark, but I can make out the individual figures under the street lights. It's a whole horde of people. "That's a lot of people," I tell Freddy as we look for a parking spot in the small building's parking lot next to the main road. "Why are we doing this?" He responded. "This is stupid, let's just leave Josh 'n Johnny boy here," he suggested. I inform him that he is to meet his girlfriend here, and he settles on parking the car and starting an adventure amongst "all them." [He doesn't seem scared, only cautious of legal issues and annoyed with having to deal with being amongst everyone.] We exit the car as John's truck pulls up beside us. Then John and Josh exit the truck, and we all slowly make our way to the front line.

The *"set is amazing, it even smells like a street."*<sup>9</sup> [Too much Goffman/Derrida synthesis... reality is presented (thus edited) text. The only chains we have to lose are the ones we place on our "selves." But what drives us to edit our "selves?" Do we all? Yes, but some more than others. The self is the edit. Dissolve the self. Tear it to infinite shreds until it becomes nothing. Or at least be sincere and speak in the third person. Yes, if there is a "true self," it is that decentered center of nothingness from which we scream out in order to refer to ourselves in the third person and thus, as a presented other. Let us not call that "true self," rather it should be called "sincere self."] We locate Freddy's girlfriend and her children. She doesn't use any intoxicants, but she knows that Freddy does and doesn't mind. [It is cool how some people can be cool like that.] The four of us

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<sup>9</sup> Lyrics from David Bowie's "Candidate" from *Diamond Dogs*

form a small cluster of a group, as if we are attempting to cover each other's backs. We were amongst "them," as John puts it. "Who knows which one of these assholes would call the police on us?" He asked. Freddy told him that it wouldn't matter because down the street there was a large amount of blue lights. It was, as if, every police officer this rural community had to offer was leading the damn parade. John then jokingly commented that "now would be the time to rob a bank or something." The four of us laugh. [It is as if we are in our own area, despite being amongst the crowd. Occasionally, Freddy and his girlfriend speak, but most of the time, we are in our own conversation.]

The blue-light brigade slowly lurks past and in front of us. Some pig/village idiot found it genius to play the theme from a popular brutal law enforcement show. Immediately, John asked me, "Do you hear that? What do you think of that? That's so fuckin' stupid, right?" "I think so," I responded. [This is great. This is more evidence that I am in this networks specific mode of thought. I am as close to "gone native" as legally possible.] Freddy and Josh laughed. Freddy put his hand over his face and said, "It's so embarrassing to be from this town. I apologize for the idiots of our town, Eric." "Which is everybody almost!" Josh stated as an excited matter of fact. Laughter in agreement followed.

Not far behind the blue-lighted vehicles, two warmly dressed females carried the banner for the whole parade. Right behind that was an ocean of horses, mules, donkeys, and other animals being ridden. Then came a rather small marching band that was doing more dancing than marching. Behind that was some local politician being carted around in a convertible by someone who looked old enough to be her father, perhaps it was. She had this looking down her nose at the crowd type of smile. Like she was ultra-important. While this group may have been making fun of the situation as well, she didn't look the



type to be allowed to do that in my mind. I'm sure she was thinking something like:

"Can't believe I have to show up here. I'm clearly the most important person here. This is beneath me. I'll just smile at all these idiots in the crowd..." She looked like one of those rich daddy's girls more than a serious politician. [Such is local, rural politics I suppose.] I was no idiot, nor were my subjects. Freddy pointed and said, "Look she thinks she's important..." and broke into laughter.

I looked at Freddy and said "This is the sixth Reich." I was intentionally referencing the circus casino scene in the film *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. "This is what the whole hep world would be doing if the Nazi's won the war," I paraphrased Raoul Duke/Hunter Thompson. That scene is what this parade reminded me of. Following the self-important young "rambunctious" politician, there were more Christmas-esque lights on more floats. Some people looked straight forward. Freddy and I decided that there were two types of "looking forwards." One type was "I'm so cool being in this parade." The other type was "I can't wait to get this goddamned thing over with." Some individuals just blankly stared into the crowd, while yet others violently threw candy at the us. John started racing little children out to the candy, but most of it just slid into the sewer vents. How fitting? !

Those blank faces staring into us as we stared back were perhaps the most unsettling. It was as if they were unwillingly put on display. Yet still, there was only contempt for the politician. The rest didn't know any better. [I assume this politician was one of those students in high school who thought they were smart simply because they could reference many stocks of knowledge, without realizing it was all pretend. Stocks that I found to be trivial and unimportant, because they were indeed nothing more than intersubjective and pretend, in an ethnomethodological sense, though I didn't yet know those were the terms

to describe what I knew. This contempt, may indeed be due to my own bias: All knowledge is normative power, except for the knowledge that knowledge is normative power, which is subversive. I like to travel in the upper levels of pretentious meta, in order to justify participating in the lowest levels of filth. Yes, Georges Bataille perhaps had the best interpretation of Nietzsche. The masters are both noble and the filthy. Forget the middle ground. Synthesize the extremes!... The contempt could also be due to my own bias against politicians, being a former scholar of political science. Nevertheless, I asked the other members later what they thought of the politician, and it was pretty close to my position. They, being members of this community, are more likely to form an accurate picture of this politician than I am. This is also a good review for my immersion. I am thinking like my subjects.] By the time the parade ended, we were all ready to get the fuck out of there. Most of it was the cold, but a lot of it was the loathing.

Entry #18 (Field Notes):

It was a rare winter weekend in Mulch Valley. I call it rare because Freddy was in town visiting his family. Winter had been taking its toll, both for me and apparently my subjects. Freddy finds winter to be a terrible season of self-doubt, depression, and general psychological pain. He informed me that he would be in his hometown this weekend, if I wanted to continue observation of the group in Mulch Valley. He has been staying, more often, at his college apartment out of town during the weekend with two roommates, both of which were also from Mulch Valley. They were not members of this particular network. Freddy has referred to them as his group of "college friends." This weekend he was spending his time in Mulch Valley, however. [I will attempt to gain access to this

second network. It would be interesting to see how this second network operates, as they are from Mulch Valley, a poor rural area and attempting to get out of it.]

John had just showed up to visit at Freddy's family's place. Freddy and I had been discussing seasonal depression, a common occurrence. Freddy had been experiencing some of it. He wondered what had happened to the person he was the previous summer, "It's like I forgot about winning. That's now gone completely." [This network of friends had shown last summer an affinity for Charlie Sheen's "winning," as well as Nietzsche's concept of *ubermensch*.] He stated that it was this way every winter, but that being in Mulch Valley made it much worse. He worries about his family. He sees how desperately hard they work and how little they get in return. "It's simple economics and this town lost the competition," he said as he wondered why anyone would stay. Freddy clearly wishes his family could escape the poor rural area, but it has "trapped them" as he put it. [This is interesting as one of the problems that poor rural area's face is a sort of brain drain, caused by the massive exodus they often experience.]

It was at this point that John came in the front door in Kramer fashion (no knock just an opening of the front door.) [I must say that everyone in this town that I've interacted with, seem to be laid back and very accommodating.] We had been sitting in the living room, which has a line of vision on the front door and was lit only with fading evening sunlight through the windows. As soon as John stepped in and finished the obligatory "what's up," Freddy invited him into the conversation about seasonal depression. John implied that this is a common occurrence for him as well. He even implied that "not even Adderall" could create its usual "feeling of winning" during the fall and winter months. Freddy agreed with an exclamatory, "I know!" [While it is possible for one to assume that this

decreased mood is probably related more to the general use of drugs than seasons, at least in these individual's cases considering their drug use, this would be a non-reflexive thought process. Instead, I intend to take the subjects at their word that it occurs every winter, rather than buy into the stereotype, even if it is functionally legitimated, for the most, by science. I question the value of the "objectivity assumption" being assumed to be an educated and proper assumption. I am much more concerned with not creating a new source of disciplinary power/knowledge.]

We made our way on to the front porch and from there to Freddy's vehicle. It was a sunny evening, yet there was still that dead look to our surroundings that is natural to winter. John called, "Shotgun!" This is the way of determining seating of course. John would now ride in the front passenger seat, which is the most comfortable in Freddy's car. I would be riding passenger side back seat, which is the most confined not counting the driver side back seat. The driver side back seat was filled with the stuff Freddy felt he needed to travel back to Mulch Valley for this weekend.

I climb into my seat and immediately ask John to shift the front seat forward a bit. There were empty 20 ounce bottles surrounding my ankles. "This is a sign of one who spends a lot of time in their car," I thought to myself. Freddy is often driving back and forth, though he has stated that he intends to cut down on that this winter. His car is usually kept very clean, though there are times where plastic bottles have built up before.

John shifts the front seat forward a little, and this provides much claustrophobic relief. Freddy starts the car and begins messing with the cd player. John begins to prepare a blunt and says, "This'll do the trick!" This was a very excited tone, especially for a time

when the general mood of the car was rather somber. Freddy responded with an excited, "Shit yeah!" He clapped his hands together as he said it. I stated that at least the sun was out. They agreed, and we began discussing winter depression. Freddy felt that Mulch Valley made it much worse. John implied that it was more due to the people. The two friends discussed this further. They came to the conclusion that it was the hypocrisy of the town's people. Freddy said that they were the type of people who would gossip about drugs while preparing "up a line of some meth."

Methamphetamine seems to be a drug they completely avoid, yet they happily use dextroamphetamine and amphetamine salts. [It is almost as if meth is too stereotypically tied to the local area.] This group wishes to disassociate with this area, so it makes sense that they would avoid meth given the poor rural stereotype involving methamphetamine. They have also offered a financial reasoning for this avoidance, stating that people pay cocaine prices or more for "bottle dope." In their eyes, why not just buy the cocaine. [Interestingly enough, there still seems to be a stereotype linking cocaine use with financial success... cocaine is almost like a status symbol to at least this network, while methamphetamine is a negative status symbol. This could also be a functional decision given the different half life of the two stimulants. John has stated that "coke doesn't make people crazy, meth does."]

Freddy starts up the car and we go for a drive out of Mulch Valley and away from population. Freddy and John discuss how beautiful the country is the further one gets from Mulch Valley. The conversation is interrupted when John spotted a group of wild turkeys, nearly thirty of them, off in a distant field. He excitedly pointed at the wild birds. Freddy says referring to the wilderness and wildlife, "See this is what's great about here.

I'd be fine living here if it weren't for the people." John stated that he would prefer it, but that the people are just too much. John desperately wishes to escape Mulch Valley but is not as close to leaving as Freddy. Freddy tells him to go back to college and "never look back." "If only everyone in Mulch Valley was like Jesco White," John thought out loud. The two then began discussing *The Wild and Wonderful Whites of West Virginia*. "See those are good country people. Put that in your notes," Freddy directed at me. "The people back there," he said pointing behind the car with his thumb in the general direction of Mulch Valley, "most of them ain't good country people." It was interesting conversation, especially considering the rap music blasting from Freddy's speakers. [They seem to have pride in being "country," but they also aren't limited by it when it comes to their taste for music or anything else for that matter.]

[I've noted before that this group has its own unique form of moral capital. I would call it "master moral capital," in the Nietzschean sense. This is not just because I consider my approach to social theory to be very Nietzschean, but this group clearly considers themselves Nietzschean. They know of Nietzsche and discuss the "slave morality" of this town's people. Now because this is an area of common ground between researcher and researched, they may have talked more about Nietzschean thought in my presence. This could be especially true in the early days of observation. It is reasonable to find it natural to focus on areas of commonality amongst newly acquainted people. Either way, I would classify their attitude and actions as Nietzschean. ]

[The reason I bring up the issue of moral capital here is simple: to make a suggestion.

***Perhaps, moral capital in poor rural areas does not act as a preventive deterrent to "dangerous" deviant behavior. Perhaps, it is the case that moral capital not only puts***

*excessive social pressure on deviant behavior such as drug use and involvement, but drives it, literally and eventually, out, rather than preventing it from occurring.* This could be a dysfunction rather than a function of moral capital, or should I say "slave moral capital" aimed at eliminating deviance. I say this because these individuals are clearly sophisticated, regardless of what people think of their accents. They're intelligent regardless of what people think of their drug use. Furthermore, they do not hate rural areas. They clearly fully enjoy rural areas. Also they are not self-hating rural people. It seems to me that it would benefit Mulch Valley to keep these types of individuals. Mulch Valley would be better for it. They have innovative minds. One must be innovative to a certain degree to go against sociological pressures. Perhaps, this form of deviance ought to be given a pass. After all, innovation is a form of deviance as Merton has shown. Innovative minds are necessary to help with the issue of rural poverty. To me, "moral capital" seems to be a bigger scheme than the monetary policy of "quantitative easing" aka inflation. One that does more harm than good.]

As the drive continues, so does the conversation. Freddy and John tend to treat me as a necessary reference when they are reach a brick wall in interpreting Nietzschean concepts now. [The common Nietzschean ground is perhaps what helped me most in getting socially established in this network, despite not participating in actual use of drugs. Over time, I have established social status with this network now and without needing to partake in illicit substances.] Freddy had been linking "slave morality" with his winter depression. He stated that it was very much "like slave morality" considering its self-doubt and self-hate. He asked if that seemed correct. In my interpretation, at least

metaphorically, one could see how winter depression, or any depression for that matter, was the resentment of slave morality being turned inward on itself.

[This is interesting, as Freddy seems to have the highest social status within the network. This definitely implies that my goal of "going native" socially has been achieved. They must have over time come to see me as part of the network. Or at least some type of valid outside reference on a topic that is somewhat important to them. I can no longer really guess the actual importance of the topic, as it is probably clear that I might be having a sociological effect. Then again, what is "actual?" What I saw, heard, and felt are as just much "actual" as what would've occurred had I not conducted research. Reflexively, I must admit that I cannot, nor can anyone else, achieve such a detached level in the field that they have no social effect and aren't affected socially. Perhaps, then, one can also not ever fully achieve the "gone native" perspective, either. The goal is to "go native" while maintaining the self-as-sociologist. The observation isn't forced to be natural. It becomes natural by being treated as such. This sounds like an "unnatural" statement. Yet, if the network comes to see something as socially natural, such as the presence of an observer, then it has followed the way everything else is made to be natural; that is to say it was made natural socially. The term "natural" is a symbol; the meaning of which is in constant negotiation/power struggle just like any other symbol.]

John interrupted, "You know I told this girl that I was fuckin', 'bout slave morality and master morality, and do you know what she fuckin' said?" Freddy laughed, "Wait till ya hear this!" John continued, "She said 'that's not real', 'no one ever said that,' and that I 'made it all up!'" John said this with a very serious look on his face. Freddy was now laughing uncontrollably. John seemed astounded. To comfort him somewhat I brought up



that Bertrand Russell's argument against Nietzsche was just as ignorant. "But who cares about Bertrand Russell? He died of a motherfucking cold. Not AIDS, like Foucault or going mad, like Nietzsche. No. He died of a cold. It only took a cold to kill him... or the flu whatever." I firmly stated.

This was met with laughter and John saying, "I don't know who Bertram Russell is, but he sounds like he sucks." Freddy laughed further and informed him of his mistake in name. John then implied that he stylistically did this on purpose. Freddy started to accuse him of just pretending that he made this mistake on purpose. John denied. Freddy called, "Bull shit! I'm not even that familiar with Bertrand Russell," but that even he knew his "name wasn't Bertram." John then admitted that it was not intentional but that in claiming it was, he was "only being polite." Apparently, he didn't want me to "feel out of place."

[While one could view this as a problem of achieving naturalism, I view it as quite the opposite. This is perhaps how any newly accepted member of the group would naturally be treated. One could go further and say that this is the way everyday social interaction is anyway. We treat each individual in a certain manner, perhaps, naturally. It may be possible that we have a presented self for each individual we socially interact with. If this is the case, this situation could represent a clashing of presented Johns. One presented to Freddy, and the other presented to me. Or perhaps it was an attempt to gain social status by appealing to both Freddy and I. Then, yet again, it could just be further excuse on John's part. The point is: the sociologist self is natural itself. It is just what it often does to be natural is often not natural. How could it hope to achieve naturalism by attempting to do the most unnatural thing possible, attempt to have no effect? The goal is to be able to have some effect, as that is natural. I didn't set out to intentionally manipulate anyone

socially, but instead, to actually become, as a sociologist-self, a truly natural occurrence in this social network. In order to achieve intersubjectivity, one must be open to it actually occurring. Rather than somehow just viewing intersubjectivity somehow objectively, which is now somehow also naturalistic. In order to put one's self up against the same social forces as others, one must be open to becoming a social force as well. Anything else would truly be a "simulation."]

The back and forth between Freddy and John went on for a bit. After about a 30 minute drive, we arrived back at the driveway at Freddy's. It continued in the driveway with the three of us still in the car. "Not just you, but everyone... everyone does what you just did every day," Freddy said to John. He continued and implied that all anyone is, including us, is a show. John implied that this meant nothing was real. "No it means that everything is real," I stated, and Freddy agreed. It was at this point that I started to think about the general things mentioned in the last paragraph. I felt that my sociologist-self was indeed a real (and natural) occurrence. In fact, it was all that I was. [I have always felt as if I was always conducting field research, now that I think about it further and look back. Before this had a negative connotation and was associated with Nothingness. It was only a presented "simulation" that this was a positive thing: this constantly conducting research. At this point, however, it actually became positive. We're all always conducting research. Some of us just wish to make a career out of it.]

I realized that this conversation with two people, who were slowly but progressively becoming intoxicated on marijuana, turned out to be quite existential and expanded my thought despite my soberness. We sat in the driveway and remained in the car until they

had finished smoking their blunt, which they lit rather late in the drive. No one was home at Freddy's place. Everyone in his family always seems to be quite busy.

After Freddy and John finished the blunt, we spent another 10 minutes in the car, in the driveway. The two of them seemed to be in deep thought, so I figured I'd join them and try to get lost in my thought. This was easier than I expected. [Perhaps, we are all always lost in it.] At this point, I realized that I had come to admire these subjects. They thought about things others didn't or even refused to do so. They stood their ground. It was as if they were trapped between two different worlds, but they continued to fight on both fronts: some type of zombie between life and death. I remember thinking that I could identify with that. [This is perhaps where the dissolved "core self" is most beneficial: I haven't really been culture shocked in any of my qualitative studies. (I mean "dissolved," when I type "dissolved." The sociologist-self is a surface expression or presentation. It being "surface" is what makes it real, as the core always remains the abyss.)]

At once, I thought of Derrida, binary oppositions, and the pharmakon. We were viral and undecided, somewhere within both inside/outside and also in neither at the same time. Society must decide us! (Sarcasm.) [The big sociological importance of Jacques Derrida is not that we're unconstrained because the social is still text, which deconstructs itself. It's his recognition of "binary oppositions" as a common mode of thought in society. This gets at the root of it all: power. We decide the situation through binaristic oppositions, and if it can't be decided, it must be made to fit in one side of the dialectic. This is a social/cultural mode of thought. It remains the hegemonic academic mode of thought through Michel Foucault's "power/knowledge", as academia has turned on more "poststructural thought." It needed to be decided after all. Poststructuralism was decided

to be postmodern, which was decided to be a passing fad and mistake. The big joke is that nothing is ever fully decided. But back to my point: we can actually attempt to understand or measure in an informative fashion these binary constructs and their social development.]

As I was thinking on Derrida's concepts, John interrupted the silence. "Hey, " he said, "it's not normal for people to sit in their car, in the driveway, this long." Freddy was upset by this statement as he had "forgotten" about other people, such as neighbors. We got out of the car and made our way to the front porch. We remained there while John and I smoked a cigarette. Then it was time for disbanding.

*Entry #19 (Field Notes):*

I woke up in Mulch Valley, on the couch at Freddy's around 9am. Freddy was blasting some rap music. I yawned and stretched and saw Freddy sitting in the reclining chair beside the couch. I'm pretty comfortable here as Freddy's family now knows me well as a friend from college. Still it is always a bit of a shock to wake up and see anyone awake sitting or standing near you.

I asked, "What song is that?" "That's Lil' Keke, 'I'm a G,'" Freddy responded. I listened to the song for a few moments and sat up. "Good song... I like it," I stated. We then had a discussion about rap music and Nietzschean themes. We both agreed that rap had passed rock as the most Nietzschean music genre, at least in the present. [I find that hanging out with this particular network in Mulch Valley has changed my music tastes quite a bit. This says quite a bit about the social integration and also my socialization into the group.]

Freddy was preparing his morning dose of dextroamphetamine/amphetamine salts. For the most part, during times of school, he only consumes something that would resemble a prescribed daily amount. This amount, however, is almost always insufflated. [This may only affect bioavailability and the amount of time it takes to have an effect. The fact that this individual is able to "over-use" at times when he has a "surplus" from not consuming his full daily dose or during times he is not in school and is also able to limit it to his daily dose, suggests that this is a type of functional use, rather than abuse or addiction. At least this is the case in my eyes. Of course, I do not approach the topic of addiction in a binaristic "abstinence or addiction" manner.]

As he was preparing his morning dose, he started talking to me about the girl from the night before. He laughingly says, "That bitch is fuckin' married." He continued to tell me about how she is "really crazy." As he said those words, "really crazy," he motioned to mimic shooting up, implying that this female injected drugs. [This is something this group of friends avoids. It goes along with the Derridian idea that injection is the most stigmatized route of use, which the great one, Jacques Derrida, expressed in the interview "The Rhetoric of Drugs." Even amongst these drug users the method of injection is seen as "really crazy."]

He continued to tell me of his exploits. Apparently when he knew this girl five years ago she wasn't "crazy" at all. This night had been the first time he had seen her in person in a few years. "She caught up with me on Twitter," he explained. He continued excitedly, "And BAM! The very first night I see her, man... She's completely wasted and ends up fuckin' me." He then went in depth about her shooting up in his car, asking to sleep at his place, how he simply "asked her to fuck," how she agreed and then how he even knew

she was married. "Nice...sounds like a nice girl... a keeper around," I responded. We both laughed. He went on to jokingly tell me that "there's a person for you to study." [Freddy didn't seem to be concerned about her being married, so being that I approach this study as a dissolved self, I did not act like anything out of the ordinary happened. It is not my place to make moral judgments, and if I'm truly being reflexive, as a good Nietzschean, I consider myself beyond morality. All that I can justify is an individualized moral system that I cannot project onto others. Ethnographic research suits me because of this. Even the Adlers' had problems with moral judgments during their study on the upper-level drug industry, which they expressed in their book, *Wheeling and Dealing*. So considering how great the Adlers are and the fact that they even had problems with moral judgments, the fact that I was able to avoid moral judgment is impressive and is a positive thing, methodologically.]

Freddy was still concerned about moral capital, as he explained his position on monogamy. He mentioned that most "idiots in this town" would attack his actions. He saw them as "basically slaves." In his eyes, he had actually done a favor to the couple, whose marriage he was threatening. The female obviously wasn't satisfied at home, so he satisfied that need. Also, if the husband found out, it would be doing him a favor too. Clearly, in his eyes, she was going to cheat on him anyway. To Freddy this means the marriage wasn't a good one anyway. By breaking it up, he would have been doing both of them a favor. I concurred with his very Nietzschean line of thought. [The fact that he has defined his destructive action as good means that he was recognizing that "evil" can be "good." He wasn't just reversing them. He was deconstructing the value of a monogamous marriage at all costs, and re-evaluating the value of breaking up a

relationship that already needed it. This was an affirmation of life, even that which may be considered "bad." This was a very Nietzschean action and suggests transvaluation. Transvaluation further suggests that this individual, and perhaps this network, is operating with its own "master moral capital."]

I discussed the aspects of Nietzschean thought that came to my mind. Freddy agreed that it was a different type of moral system. "We have our own moral system, and moral capital, or whatever," he stated. He continued stating that "most people just follow what they're told" and his mode of morality was "more thought out." Basically, he stated that his own morality followed his "will," but it was backed up with much thought and contemplation about how "one should follow their will." He also felt that anyone who didn't follow this moral mode was "nothin' but weak slaves." He felt that these "weak slaves" often "gang up and try to bully" people like him, but that it was "just fine." He could handle it. [He seems to view the overall community's system of moral capital to be oppressive but also something that can be defeated. The common enemy does seem to increase social cohesion with this network. It is far from anomie.]

We continued talking and headed to the kitchen. He was looking for something to eat. He told me that the lack of appetite gained from using the "lower types" of amphetamines was very helpful when trying to lose body fat and during workouts. He still made sure he ate though. [This suggests further functional use. The entire conversation also suggests that functional use is still deviant behavior, as it creates negative moral capital in the overall community.]

"There's never nothin' to eat in this goddamn house," Freddy complained. He felt that this was an effect of "no one ever bein' here." "Fuck this!" he yelled. Freddy then suggested we go visit John. We left the house and got in the car and drove over to John's. Freddy started up his car, cranked the volume up on some rap, sent a text to John and the short drive began.

[Freddy had only consumed ten milligrams of dextroamphetamine/amphetamine salts. This is his standard morning dose. Riding in his car, in no way threatened my safety. This corrects attention deficit disorder, which if anything would increase his driving ability. One thing I will never do is take a ride in a car after alcohol has been consumed. I have never noticed any of the substances used by these users have an effect on driving ability. A prescription level dose of amphetamine salts is far from the level that it would probably take before it would have a negative effect on driving ability. I've followed them before, in my car, early in my immersion, and never saw any weaving or decreased driving skills from their doses, which ranged from a prescribed amount to considerably more. This would be anywhere from 10 milligrams to 50 milligrams at once on average. Furthermore, everyone in this network tends to still manage to get sleep. Of course, had Freddy not gotten any sleep or seemed like he didn't get any sleep, I would have insisted on driving. This was not the case.]

Freddy and I were headed to John's step-grandparents' place. He was currently staying in their basement. This was a quick drive, but it we had to drive out of the city limits of this town. You could just start to see the beautiful open fields and forested mountains, right before we had to make a right turn into one of the last sections of housing.



The houses in this neighborhood were all exactly rectangular in shape. They were also one story. They may have had basements just as John's place did, but there was no way of me checking this out. The houses were about as wide as a double-trailer but didn't have near as much length. Several of the houses looked deserted, as there were no decorations and the yard and house appeared as if there had been little to no human altering. They were all made of either bricks, mostly dark red colored. These small houses were surrounded by equally small yards. Halfway through this dead-end road, we parked at our destination.

We noticed that John was waiting on us. He was outside smoking a cigarette. He was wearing white and light blue basketball shorts, a black hoodie, and a backwards baseball cap. It was rather chilly outside, and Freddy brought up this fact. "Look at this idiot," he said jokingly, "fuckin' wearing shorts in this."

The house had a wooden carport in which no car could fit. It was a storage center for items that had almost completely lost their use. It reminded me of the living room in my apartment, which looks disorderly. (It is basically both my office and my living room. There are all kinds of disorganized papers and other items.) There were all kinds of different items: tools, toys, an old couch, a car engine, and many more.

We parked on the side of the street in front of the house. John was standing by his vehicle, which was in the driveway but not under the carport. He was smoking a cigarette. Freddy and I got out of the car and walked over to John. Greetings were exchanged. John told us that Mike was there but was asleep.

The three of us entered the house and opened the door to John's room where Mike and his girlfriend were in the early stages of being woke up, by us. Freddy began aggravating them about them being asleep in John's bed and not wanting to see us. "It's been so long!" Freddy proclaimed. Mike's girlfriend remained hidden under blankets, and the three of us, Freddy, John, and myself exited the house for cigarettes. As we were heading out, Mike yelled that he would hang out with us later in the day.

We stood underneath the carport smoking cigarettes. Freddy was busy texting the previous night's conquest. He informed Johnny and I that she would be swinging by to pick up her keys that she left at Freddy's the night before. A friend was going to drive her over.

We stood around for a few more moments and eventually a car pulled up and she walked up to us. A friendly but guarded conversation ensued. John seemed to be guarded with this unfamiliar person. Freddy seemed to be guarded about how we judged this new exploit. Apparently another friend of his said he would not have had sexual relations with the young married lady. As soon as she left, he informed of us of this. He thought his friend was basing it off morals and couldn't possibly be basing it off physical attractiveness. John gave his thumbs up as did I. "I knew he was hiding his true reasoning, " he concluded. There were no morally enraged totalitarian monks here.

[There seems to be a code in this network of unyielding moral support for each individual in all of their endeavors. It is indeed their own currency of moral capital. They don't appeal to any moral teachings, other than perhaps Nietzsche's extra-moral thoughts on master and slave morality. Even so, if one is getting to be religious even, the goal is to

support the individual, so long as they continue to morally support the others. It requires a type of morality that is entirely personal and is not projected out onto others. All that is projected is this expectation of not projecting out ones more traditional morals on the rest of the individuals within the group. Here again, this seems awfully close to something like a "master morality" that states whatever one thinks is good, one should go for, but it shouldn't affect one's level of moral support for others.]

It was at this point that John and Freddy decided that it was too early to get into anything. John offered Freddy some prescription pain pills, but Freddy declined. [The turning down of drugs actually seems to occur often in this network. It seems to be an issue of one not wanting the specific feeling the specific substance brings or an issue of functionality. For example, if there is work to be done, I have seen marijuana turned down by individuals in this network. If it is too late in the evening, I've seen stimulants turned down. These appear to be very functional drug users, though I would argue they are still deviant. Any drug use, I would suggest is deviant. This is not a judgmental attitude. Instead, it is simply the recognition that deviant behavior is not negative behavior. Too often these are linked. There is currently not enough research to suggest that functional drug use is the norm for drug users or is deviant itself. I am simply thinking that drug use, in general, in our society is deviant.]

We would reconvene later.

Entry #20 (Field Notes):

We had gathered at Mike's. We being: Freddy, John, Mike, and myself. We were sitting in Mike's car in the driveway. Freddy, John, and Mike were smoking marijuana. I was smoking a cigarette. I had driven over, in order to act as a possible designated driver, if they required it. We had then reconvened in Mike's car.

Freddy, John, and Mike were having a fun time discussing old times. There were many great and hilarious stories of delinquent youth. Stories such as the first time smoking cigarettes at age 14 echoed in my mind. These were good people. They've gotten a bad rap in mainstream academic thought. They weren't that different than anyone of us. Why are they forced to hide in their cars and reminisce with their substance of choice, while others can go out openly to a bar, get wasted, and then dangerously drive home?

Mike seemed to be feeling the somber type of nostalgia. "I never get to get out with you all anymore," he told John and Freddy. (John had been talking to Freddy and I on the drive over about this particular issue. He seemed to place the blame at a "stingy girlfriend" that didn't want Mike to have any other friends.) No one really wanted to bring that up to Mike, though. [It could be seen as an overstepping of one's obligation to provide moral support.]

Mike's cell phone rang. He said, "Uh oh," and answered it. It was his girlfriend on speaker phone. She was wondering how long he was going to be out, even though he was only just in his driveway. He told her that he was spending the day with his friends. It was now around 2pm. She mumbled something that can only be described as sounding "bitchy," as John would later remark. Mike apologized but stuck by his initial statement.

She angrily responded, "Well I'm out of fucking cigarettes. Fuckin' get me some." Then she hung up and there was a moment of absolute silence.

It was as if rabid totalitarian monks spotted and charged us. Here we were staring into the abyss out here in the middle of nowhere, while the enemy advanced. Would their gaze catch glimpse of this magnificent abyss?

Perhaps... perhaps not. Either way they had seen us... that much is for sure. After all, we were there... guilty as charged. Shit, what would we do? What could we do? They were advancing at an alarming rate. Granted our sight couldn't confirm this as we were trapped in a staring context, but we knew nevertheless.

I sat there smoking my cigarette as the others baked in their intoxication. My sober mind was cringing at the possible thoughts of my subjects. Mike's girlfriend had just castrated him over the phone, and on speaker phone at that. All he had wanted to do was be able to spend time with his "home team buds," as they like to put it. The tone in his let down voice was disturbing. I felt bad for him, we all did I believe. [Safety precautions have kept me from methodological purity, but at this point I nearly offered myself and possibly my chance at a future career up. Granted it would have been in the name of methodological purity, full participation. But I thought better of it and decided to keep with the safety precautions. It was bad enough worrying about the stigma attached to studying heavily stigmatized topics. I am for expansion of understanding into such topics. Methodological purity was not worth the possible cost of ending chances at expansion of understanding. Baby steps, as they say. One can't just pick up and throw baby American Sociology into the abyss.]

What would they do when they got to us? Would they ever... get to us? It now seemed as though they were not in such a hurry. Perhaps, they saw each of our individual fates and were terrified to share in it. Or better yet, they saw these fates and then realized their own. Perhaps, we were not to be messed with. Either way, the bluff had worked. We were spared a minor annoyance, which is the best someone can hope for these days.

Mike put down his cell and said, "Goddamn it." John asked, "bitchy, isn't she?" [Once he expressed frustration the obvious door was finally opened.] "Man that's bull shit!" Freddy proclaimed. I even added that it was a bit rude.

An intervention, of sorts, was now on. Being the sober mind in the car, my small comment was added as evidence that it was out of line by the rest of the car. Here we were sitting in Mike's car in his driveway, for his intervention. Freddy and John continued, but Mike went along with their concerns. He stated that she could wait on "fuckin' cigarettes" and implied that he wasn't going to get them. Mike had finally seen what John and Freddy had been trying to tell him.

Mike cranked up some rap music on his stereo and asked if Freddy and John wanted to "roll another blunt." This wasn't "mids" as Freddy and John call them. This was "high-grade chronic" as they put it. They rolled another blunt and began smoking it. The three of them continued to discuss what had just occurred. It seemed as if it might be a breaking point for Mike, and his good friends were there to talk him through it. This wasn't the stereotypical silly pot conversation that mainstream society has come to expect of marijuana intoxication. [I even feel disgusted with myself for using a more "official" terminology. It could contribute to the intersubjective barrier, or rather I should say, inter-

experience barrier (to bring in Laing) that already exists between illicit intoxicant user and non-illicit intoxicant user or non-user in general.] No, this was a deep meaningful conversation about one young adult's life as a "floor mat" as Freddy put it.

Mike went on to tell us that she tells him he must "grow up and get a job," when it was she, herself, who cost him his last job. This fact upset him. He pointed at the rooster in his yard and said, "I wish I was that rooster. Fuck this shit." This startled me. I somewhat identified with that sentiment. Every single one of us have to deal with those forces of "growing up," only to find out it was a lie told to control us. We did not grow up... we were tricked into growing up.

"Fuck this shit," was the sentiment of each of us. We decided to head over to Freddy's place. They often hang out there as Freddy's family is rarely home, due to excessive work in order to not drop out of the bottom of the middle class. For them, rural poverty, was an ever looming threat, which they sought to avoid. At least this is how Freddy always presented it. I would follow them over in my car to watch for any signs of over-intoxication such as weaving. [We do not really have accurate information on how marijuana affects driving, or anything other than alcohol, really. They were smoking a bit much of "high-grade," so I decided to follow.] They would remain in Mike's car, continuing to smoke.

I didn't notice any negative driving side-effects while following them on the drive over. [I've never really noticed any negative driving effects when following them in the past either.]

Entry #21 (Field Notes):

We opened the door and made our ways into the outside building/shed. As I walked through the door, the strong smell of gasoline hit me almost instantaneously. Freddy, Sheila, John, and I then began to gather around the card table while searching for chairs. John said something about not needing to have gasoline in "here with us" and began to move the red containers of gallons of gasoline outside the building. (I thought to myself, "good call.") The three of them had been talking up a card game that I had never heard of and had talked me into taking part in a match. This is their usual "cards" hangout, and they have been playing cards quite often lately. They have informed me of this information.

Even after John had removed the gallons of gasoline, the smell of gasoline lingered. This building clearly doubled as a place to store outdoor equipment such as weed eaters, lawnmowers, chainsaws etc. It was also somewhat of a general storage area for season specific items when out of season, such as late summer type lake items like water skis. It was a bit of a chilly night and the building had little in the way of insulation, but there was some insufflation taking place. In what seemed like no time after we all took our seats, Freddy had crushed up a line of "dexy" (dextroamphetamine), made up of an approximate 10 milligram dose. He began snorting the line as John was attempting to explain the rules of this unfamiliar card game to me.

I was having trouble following the rules of this totally unfamiliar card game as John explained them. Ultimately, I decided it would be trial by fire. I would just simply learn as I went along and just start with the self-acceptance of my limited knowledge. Let the



cards fall where they may, as it were. Clearly, John had come to this conclusion as well, as he seemed to have given up on the explaining and was currently focused on preparing a "blunt" (cigar filled with marijuana.) He had been in the midst of a smoking fest when the other three of us arrived to meet him at his grandfather's place. [This shows that, perhaps, intersubjectivity is clearly possible between the intoxicated and not-intoxicated. This is due to the fact that it seemed as if we had both subconsciously concluded that I would have to learn the card game as I went along. Of course, reflexively speaking, I may be leaping to this conclusion, because, ultimately, my entire project is based on that possibility of actual intersubjectivity between intoxicated and not-intoxicated.]

The table was square, an off red color, and just large enough for four people to sit around and have enough room to play cards. My chair was quite a bit lower than the other three individuals', so I felt a bit like a child at the grown-ups table. I mentioned this observation, and they laughed. John stated, "Yeah that's right!" He continued to chuckle, and then the door suddenly opened. Suddenly everyone became very serious and rigid. The three of them had the look of a "deer in headlights," each staring directly at the door, which was behind me. This was despite the fact that it was a late hour, already in the early AM, and in all likelihood it was someone within their drug using network who they had mentioned the game of cards to and forgotten. There was quite a bit of tension, if just for half of a second. Once everyone realized it was Mike, you could literally see the relief on their faces. John laughed and mentioned that he should've realized it was Mike for the reasons I mentioned previously. [This shows a heightened sense of the social division between user and non user, who may possibly disapprove of their use (and we, non users,

are all possibly disapproving.) This also shows that I have been able to overcome that intersubjective barrier, as they are not on alert in that manner when I am around. This is good for phenomenological reasons regarding a naturalistic qualitative methodology. It is as if I am one of them without taking part in their drug activities.]

The shock had been replaced with relief, which was now replaced with looks of joy. Freddy and John have lamented about the small amount of time they've gotten to see Mike since "his relationship went all serious and went and got married." "Mike," Freddy exclaimed, "haven't seen ya in a long time, feller!" Mike responded, "I know. I know." This catching up went on for a bit, and then Mike pulled out a bag of marijuana and John asked if he wanted "to match" (to literally match someone's drug input in some manner, whether through amount, same type of drug, or different type of drug.) John was referring to the "blunt" he was preparing in his hands at the time of the abrupt door opening.

Mike agreed to "match" John with more marijuana, which would allow him to gain access to John's. (Now had Mike showed up empty handed, I doubt he would have been left out, based on what I previously know about this network's behavior. However, Mike showed that he was able to "match" by pulling out his bag of marijuana. It would've been considered rude to disclose what drugs one had on their person without "matching" and still assuming one could take part in the use of the other's intoxicant. This is also based off previous knowledge of this network.)

Sheila asked Mike if he wanted to join in the card game. Mike declined and stated that he would just watch the game and "focus on the pot." John then lit the blunt and Sheila began shuffling and dealing the cards. Freddy and Mike continued to talk about how little

they see of each other compared to earlier times. "Remember those memories? Sometimes I wonder if those memories will continue to be made," Freddy spoke in a manner that seemed both dead sadly serious and also as if he was holding back laughter, knowing that he was giving Mike a hard time. Mike exclaimed, "Oh, I know! I've just been in busy times." "He's a married boy now," John interrupted in a joking fashion and then fake attempted to slap Mike in the stomach.

I looked at my hand and tried to remember what I was supposed to do this round. Thankfully, they had two cards which had the list of what each player must do to move on to the next more difficult check on the checklist. I thought to myself, "Hmm... this might not be that difficult." The others were passing around the "blunt" and were either watching or playing the card game. Everyone seemed to be involved in unorganized discussion.

Freddy had been going on about a former member of the network. In all honesty, it seems as if this former member was always a bit on the edge of the network (honestly, even when I started building rapport with this group, it seemed I had more social status within the network), but apparently, he was supposed to bring Freddy and John some marijuana and then tried to lie and get out of bringing them the pot. Mike also mentioned the fact that he was now dating Freddy's ex-girlfriend. Freddy quickly pointed out he wasn't even concerned about that. Freddy was fine with all that "until he decided to become a complete BITCH!!! Turning around and lying and saying he couldn't bring us that pot!" (I honestly believe Freddy being more concerned with that as he seems to always pick up a date somewhere or another.) Apparently, then the offending party had been a "bitch" to Freddy on a social network/media outlet and gone so far as to block him. John interrupted

and stated that if either he and/or Freddy ran into the offending party that said party would be slapped "like the bitch he is." Freddy then concluded that he would "not even say anything to him" and that he'd just "walk straight up to him and slap him in the face."

It was my turn to draw a card, and I pulled a three card. I was happy with this, because it meant that I had the cards I needed to move to the next step. (Still I would eventually get caught holding cards as another player went out.) Mike said, "Man he's an idiot," in reference to the former member of the network. Mike appeared to be worried about his status within the network, "I'm still on your guys team, right? Even though I been busy?" John and Freddy both stated he was, with Freddy adding, "so long as you don't pull a bitch move like that." Mike said, "Oh yeah, no fuck that, I wouldn't do that." [This is interesting, because there does seem to be a social order, and while there seems to be high levels of social integration amongst this network, once one moves to the exterior, one is more expendable. If they choose to anger the core group and/or avoid them, the core group looks it as that individual's decision to "not be on teams." It shows that drug users in areas of rural poverty aren't necessarily all part of the same network, nor do they necessarily stick together quantitatively, despite the marginalization. Yet, at the same time, they do seem to have a high level of social integration and cohesion, qualitatively speaking. I.E., at least in this specific network, numbers are not as much a concern as is loyalty to the "team." Then again, it is quite a diverse network, in terms of social class, status, and power within the overall status in the small community. There is also a range on belief systems as well. The philosophy seems to be "do and believe your own thing" just always be allied with the "team." They're a type of "group of individuals," so to speak. Breaking one's word to another member seems to be a big offense. Also, falling to

"slave morality" (they refer to Nietzsche here) and not following one's own creative will in terms of individual style and/or attempting to push a "correct style" on everyone else is a major offense.]

The next round began after everyone calculated the value of the cards they were left with. This is, of course, something I didn't learn to calculate until I got caught holding cards during the first round. Thus, despite progressing to the step, I was rather far behind in terms of points. Had I known what the values were, I would've gotten rid of a few more heavily valued cards (as one wants to accumulate the least points, and quantitatively speaking I was "ahead" in points, having accumulated the most, so far.)

John began to shuffle and deal the next round. I felt as if I had learned from my mistakes, as I checked the card listing what I had to accomplish hand wise this round. As everyone picked up their cards, there was the type of trash talking one would expect to see at any card game. So far, this seemed like any old card game among friends. [I found this interesting. As the only difference between a card game being played by those intoxicated on drugs and those not or intoxicated on alcohol, seems to be the inclusion of illicit drugs. Other than that, the social setting appears to be much the same. Yet, then again and at the same time, the illicit drugs are a large difference, as no standard friendly card game (no money on the line) would result in fear when a door is opened, as had occurred earlier. It is almost as if the intersubjective divide is not the actual difference of intoxication, but rather the stigmatization of drug use. It is this possibly unreasonable stigmatization and reasonable fear of stigmatization that creates such a rigid social wall between drug user and non-user. It is almost as if the fear of the "unreason" side of the binary opposition reason/unreason on the part of the side of reason, drives the reasonable to being quite

unreasonable themselves. In turn, it makes those partaking in the "unreason" of illicit intoxication seem to be much more reasonable than the so-called "reasonable." The lines are blurred by drug users, not just for the drug user, but for the neutral observer and also, ultimately, the non user. Since the official side of "Reason" tyrannically cannot deal with the erasing and blurring of arbitrary lines, it must ignore its own "unreason" (stigmatization of the drug user.) It is also almost as if Michel Foucault<sup>10</sup> was correct about the use of drugs in the late sixties being a way for the rational to reclaim madness from the Reason/Unreason opposition used to filter every other opposition into "normal/pathological." Or at least, one could say that Foucault's theory applies to this drug network, in an existential sense. In the same sense, they could be seen as reclaiming "deviance" in the normative/deviant opposition that seems to have been converted to "normal/pathological." One could state this for all the former oppositions filtered down to normal/pathological, as their existence deconstructs all binary oppositions. Similarly, their "criminal" behavior seems to be quite non-criminal, while those who fight their criminal existence, seem to be quite criminal, when one looks at the war on drugs and all its atrocities.]

Freddy began making grandiose hand gestures and statements about his hand. He looked up in the air at his left hand, which was held up above his head palm up, and began humming majestic and triumphant music. John claimed to have a terrible hand, which Mike (who was free to roam and look at everyone cards) laughingly yelled, "He's a liar! Watch him, he always says he has a bad hand when it's a good one. Plus, I've seen his

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<sup>10</sup> Foucault, M. ([1967] 1999). Who are you, Professor Foucault? In M. Foucault, and J. Carrette (Ed.), *Religion and Culture*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press

cards!" Sheila reminded Mike that he shouldn't be taking sides and "cheating." Freddy yelled, "Do what you fucking want!"

Entry #22 (Field Notes):

I was standing at Freddy's place waiting on Mike to show up. It was getting late. I was not sure of the actual time, considering that I keep my phone off during times in which I am involved in observation. Either way, it was dark outside. I was curious as to what Mike's "big surprise" was that he had mentioned to Freddy who was still inside. I was just about finished with my second cigarette and thinking about going back inside when Mike finally drove up. I opened the door and let Freddy know that Mike had arrived. Mike yelled from his car, "Hey won't you guys follow me."

Freddy stepped outside and I informed him that Mike wished us to follow him. Freddy asked if I'd drive, so I decided to go ahead and drive. We backed out of the driveway and followed Mike. He drove up a large hill then took a right. In no time we were at a house with no lights on. The house looked small from the outside/front yard perspective. Freddy and I got out of my car. Freddy commented that the drive didn't take long. Mike and Tom got out of Mike's car. "This is my house!" Mike proclaimed. (He and his wife had just rented a house, and he was excited to show it off to the rest of the group.)

We followed him and Tom in as they packed a few small things. Once inside the house was quite large. There was quite a bit of space. The first room we walked into was like a foyer. It had a big stone platform for which one could put some type of heating device that burns either wood chips or corn. The next room, which was separated from this one by a large walkthrough doorway, was the kitchen. To the left was a hallway that led to three bedrooms. Walking forward through an even larger walkthrough walkway, we

entered the living room. Mike had a love seat and one of those chairs that sat right on the ground but rocked due to the curved shape.

Mike lifted up the television that was sitting on the floor and Tom scooted a cooler underneath it to put it at eye level. Mike then went about hooking up his PS3. As he was hooking up the PS3, he said, "Freddy I hope you're ready to celebrate, we just gotta wait on John to show up for the real celebration." Tom handed Freddy a joint to hit.

Tom, Mike, and Freddy passed the joint around while Mike went over the details of his new house. Apparently, it was only going to be 650\$ a month for rent. This was going to be split two ways. (I was surprised at this number. I wondered if perhaps, having always rented apartments, if I should have not rented a house sooner.) Freddy expressed surprise at the price as well. Mike then gave us the official tour. The master bedroom was quite large, and it had a little vanity mirror and desk right in front of the bathroom. Freddy saw this and said, "Hey even a little coke snorting desk!" Everyone laughed. Mike had not brought in any furniture other than what I've already mentioned. He stated that he had been busy cleaning all day. He said that the place had been a mess. He finished the tour with the garage, and we walked back into the living room to sit down. I took a seat on the floor.

I recalled a conversation that I was a part of some time back. This had been a conversation with Freddy, Mike, John, and Nicole. We had been playing cards. Mike had become a rarity since getting married. Freddy and John had worried about him "falling to slave morality" in Freddy's words. Freddy had been concerned that he had gotten married and was plotting on getting stuck in owing a ton of money by buying a house. In the



conversation that I recalled, Mike was talking about how he was plotting on buying a house. Freddy and John did their best to persuade him to not bother with this, as it would become too much of a financial burden. Freddy stated that he would be stuck for a long time paying off a home loan and if he wanted to remain free to move elsewhere or whatnot he would be stuck. "If you're in a job you hate, guess what... can't quit," I recall Freddy saying. It had seemed by the end of the conversation that Mike had been convinced not to buy. Yet he seemed determined to at least rent a house.

Mike must have recalled the same conversation, as he made it a point to bring up that the guy attempted several times to try and sell the house to them. Instead of buying it, Mike had "stood his ground" and committed only to a one year lease. I recall Freddy being supportive, though later that evening he would tell me that he worried it was "downhill from here" for Mike. Freddy told me much of the background story after we left later: Mike and Freddy had been good friends since middle school. They had caused all kinds of fun trouble together. The core of the group, Mike, Freddy, and John had been friends since middle school. [Though they have built up a strong respect for each other's individuality, they had also built up a strong social cohesion. I would suggest that perhaps this social cohesion is built on respect for each other's individuality and the differences that it brings.]

Drugs have been a part of the lives of these three individuals for over a decade. They had been close for longer than that. The respect for each other's differences is something I've noticed for quite some time now. It was one of the first things I observed really. While Mike's marriage had concerned the other two, Freddy and John both have shown tremendous respect for Mike's individual difference. Yet, they had also both noticed that

Mike could be losing his respect for individual difference as well as his "will to power" and "master morality." [Here the Nietzschean terminology was used by Freddy and has been used by John as well. This, as well as the many philosophical conversations I've had with them, suggests a strong Nietzschean perspective within the core of this network of drug users within an area of rural poverty. This Nietzschean mode of thought may be quite important and must be considered when I analyze the data. This is something that the data has shown me. Thus, it will also call for some literature review as well. In developing theory out of the data, it would be anything but grounded to not include a theorist mentioned in their own words quite often.]

In this conversation with Freddy, after we had returned from Mike's new house, it was made clear that Freddy and John (as Freddy spoke about John's concerns as well) were not in general against the concept of marriage. Nor did they feel threatened by Mike's wife. Freddy did state, however, that they were worried that Mike's wife had some terrible qualities: 1) she was quite controlling and attempted to alter Mike's opinions quite often. 2) After seeing the network's support for Mike's individualized goals and dreams, she had worked to isolate Mike from the group. (They had invited her to basically join the network multiple times when Mike first started dating her. She hung out a few times, but often caused arguments by taking a "slave morality" approach to difference.) [Again, the term "slave morality" was the term Freddy had used. Also I have observed that even prior to his marriage, his future wife, was never around when I observed, and when Mike had to leave it was always due to her requiring him to go.] 3) She was "incredibly stupid." (Again, this is Freddy's terminology. Yet, he provided examples such as her defiantly arguing that "Africa was not a continent, but instead it was a country." Freddy

couldn't help but laugh while stating this.) 4) She was extraordinarily "insecure," which Freddy felt explained her "slave morality." 5) She was addicted to opiates, which Freddy felt was a possible danger to his long-time friend. (He had focused so much on avoiding "true addiction," as he put it. While he did not worry that Mike would become an addict, as Mike seemed to have scaled back his drug use to just marijuana, he worried that while she was a "functional addict" at this point, once she had isolated his friend that she would simply use him as a "workhorse" and not pull her own weight.) [This was interesting as it shows that this particular drug user feels that they have avoided developing any addiction while being able to recreationally partake in multiple intoxicants. In all honesty, everything that I have observed so far, suggests that Freddy, John, Nicole, and Mike are all functional users.]

[While it is possible that I could expand my research to include this entity, it is clear that she is not a member of this social network. First, I've not even met her (though I can verify that they've invited her to hang out before, as I've heard them tell Mike to bring her along several times.) Second, I can tell by the way the network speaks about her that she is not a member of the network. (I mean Mike did invite them to Mike and his wife's house, but only prior to them being moved in. Freddy would even later state that he'd be surprised if he was ever invited there again.) Thus, even if she was a distant member, to include her in my study could be detrimental to my subjects, as they appear to believe that there is some type of conflict between her and the network. In their eyes, she started this conflict. Thus, I am not going to attempt expansion by including her, unless of course she were to suddenly start showing up in this network's activities. Even then I would discuss it with the core of the network. As she may not be someone they want knowing

about my research project. If there is conflict, she might find a way to use it against them. Thus, while I do not see this becoming a dilemma, as she is not attempting to be a part of this network, it is an ethical decision made to protect my subjects. This is the case even if they are exaggerating about her "bad" qualities. Unless they want her invited to take part, I will not do so. It is not something that I will bring up, unless it becomes necessary. Thus, the only mention of her in these notes will be as "Mike's wife," and it will be limited to the network's social construction of her.]

Freddy was merely concerned that this woman would ruin his good friend's life. Yet he also stated, "Now if Mike was really happy with all this, I would not be concerned. It wouldn't matter. It would be his own individual life, but he says things that say he is not happy. It is like he is doing what he has been told he is supposed to do." [In Mike's presence, Freddy (or John for that matter) had not spoken ill of Mike's wife. I don't interpret this as due to "keeping the peace," but rather, as their own terminology suggests, this was due to their commitment to respecting difference. They just genuinely hated to see someone "fall to slave morality," especially one of their own. They also missed their friend, who I have seen less and less of during observations. (Freddy informed me that they saw him perhaps maybe once or twice a month these days.)]

I sat there on the floor thinking about the prior card playing conversation that Mike, Freddy, John, and Nicole had. After Mike had left that card game, Freddy and John had expressed their concerns to me, just as Freddy would again later this evening. (Similar concerns were expressed then. Furthermore, such concerns have been expressed during times of intoxication and sobriety.) I sat there analyzing all this and nearly forgot I was observing. On the love seat/small two-seat couch, Tom and Mike were sitting. Freddy

had the ground level chair, and I was sitting to his left where I could see each person, not so much the television. They had finished the joint, and Mike had pulled out what he called "WMD." WMD was a glass marijuana pipe. "Now let's smoke some of my shit!" Mike exclaimed. He then handed the bag to Freddy and asked him to smell it. Tom began to mention that he had no idea how good his was and that this would probably be better. It was just "some shit" that he had picked up "in a hurry." [This was an interesting disclaimer. First, it was offered after his joint had been smoked. Second, I am not used to hearing disclaimers used so blatantly in this network. Granted, this was the first time I have officially observed Tom. I have met him before, and he has agreed to being observed; but even so, I have not seen him that often while even while informally observing this network. Yet, I would consider him a distant part of the network, as John speaks of him often. It may even be the case that we may be seeing a break in the network in which Mike decides to completely break from the main network and take some of the distant members with him. Not enough data exists for me to predict this.]

Freddy said, "No prob Bob. Pot is pot, despite differences in strength. It is always much appreciated." [This is an interesting response to Tom's disclaimer. It is also in line with what I have observed from this group. While they have a very Nietzschean vision of individualism and respect for differences, there is almost something Marxist about how they share intoxicants. This suggests that the use and sharing of intoxicants (though they will also sell to each other or "throw in often") is something that builds social cohesion. It is an important classification for them. It is one of the things that make them see themselves as a "group." This and their Nietzschean philosophy seem to be two things

that build social cohesion for them.] He then went to smelling the bag of marijuana that Mike had handed him.

"Ah that does smell good," Freddy stated, "Let's smoke this shit!" Freddy handed the bag back to Mike and Mike began loading up WMD. WMD was a very large glass pipe, by the way. He packed it up and took a hit. He then handed it to Freddy. "Here, I made sure to leave ya some of the fresh green to light up," Mike said. Freddy took a hit that seemed to take forever, and this was followed by an exhale of smoke that also seemed to take forever. "Oh yeah, that's pretty good shit," he stated. He then handed it to Tom. Tom took a hit and stated that it was indeed better than his pot. He then offered another disclaimer, "I didn't really know about mine. I got it from a new source." Freddy responded, "Eh, wait for the effects to kick in, you can't always tell by the taste and smell. It doesn't seem like it was a big difference though."

[Here again we see part of the socialization of this network. For whatever reason, the individual actor that is most distant member of the network attempts to gain acceptance and seems to be concerned about his contribution to the group. This is met with complete acceptance and an attempt to keep the distant member of the network from worrying. (This further makes me trust Freddy's and the main network's analysis of Mike's wife, as they've been more than welcoming to myself and here specifically to a distant member of the network.) This suggests a very loose intersubjective web specific to the network. This goes along with their general Nietzschean attitude and diversity of other interests beyond the Nietzschean philosophy, living in an area of rural poverty, and use of illicit intoxicants. Perhaps, this level of individualized acceptance helps create the strong social cohesion. Either way, it seems to be a very open network as far as acceptance of

individual deviance is concerned. So far everyone observed from this network has been Caucasian, in their 20s, from an area of rural poverty, a user of drugs, and heterosexual. Yet, on several occasions I've heard them attack racism, homophobia, and other closed minded modes of thinking. The only judgment seems to be directed at their area. They feel that they must escape this rural area, as they feel it has no opportunity and often traps good people here. This also might have to do with their concern about their friend, Mike, being trapped here.]

Mike asked at this point, "Man isn't this great? I mean the house!" "Well yeah," Freddy said. I added, "Hell my last small ass apartment was 595\$ a month. This is a good deal." Mike again referenced the fact that he did not buy the place, "Yeah that bastard wanted to sell it to me for 90 thousand. I said nope, but it was hard. But if after a year I want to buy it, the guy told me that he'd take what I paid in rent off the total price." Freddy and Tom agreed that there was indeed no reason "to get locked up right away", especially with "that offer." [This is interesting as well. Especially, considering what I already knew about Freddy's concern for what was going on with Mike.]

Entry #23 (Field Notes):The drive out to the country was quite cold in my borrowed convertible. It was appalling, the amount of litter on the side of the road this overcast and chilly evening. Hunter had contacted me to meet his girlfriend/fiancé. He had also told me that it would be a great occasion for me to observe some "functional drug use... or drug use nonetheless." I pulled into the driveway, finally, walked up to the porch. I heard some loud music and some decent karaoke going on indoors. It sounded like "How Great Thou Art" (the live Elvis version circa last few concerts.)

I recall being told that Hunter and Rose were in the throes of a "binder," as he put it. I cautiously but firmly knocked on the door. Hunter interrupted his performance to yell, "Open!" I opened the door thinking to myself, "Well this is it. There is no turning back now. You may be here a while." I stepped in and the scene I saw was magnificent (and there really is no other word for it.) Rose, his girlfriend, was lying on the couch naked halfway masturbating, and Hunter was down on one knee with what looked like a carpal tunneled claw in the air as if he was singing to it. I looked at the television; they had their computer hooked up to it watching what looked like Elvis's final performances on YouTube. (Hunter was nearly hitting the same type of vocal mastery that even "fat druggie Elvis," as he called him, could hit.)

*Hunter looked something like this without the cool outfit:* **Error! Reference source not found.**

*(I would show you what Rose looked like but that could be construed as pornographic.)*

As soon as the song was over Hunter offered me a line of cocaine. I declined by once again telling him that I was not "going native." He scoffed at me, as he dumped out a pile of cocaine in between Rose's breasts. "How are you ever going to really learn about drug use, functional or otherwise, without partaking?" he asked. I told him that I agreed with his qualitative methods and morals but not all my professors (and certainly not IRB) would fully understand. He laughed, "Those bastards... what kind of grad school are they running over there out west?" He then proceeded to insufflate a large line of cocaine off the table he had made his girlfriend into.



I asked, as he fought off a sneeze, "So you're a fan of late Elvis as well?" He responded, "Nothing better than some 'bout to die fat druggie Elvis! You know this motherfucker met with Nixon higher than ape shit and was given a DEA badge after he snuck a gun into the office?" I informed him that I had heard of this glorious moment in American political history, "My BA was in Poly Sci, you know!"

I continued, "By the way, nice performance, but what's up with some boring gospel cover?" Hunter informed me it was a "secret vice-slash-guilty pleasure" and that I should feel privileged to know about it. He also demanded to know that I was using pseudonyms. After a short discussion that involved him demanding to be named after his hero, Hunter S. Thompson, I informed him that he should watch some real "fat druggie Elvis," and play his live version of Frank Sinatra's, "My Way." He immediately knew the YouTube video. He asked, "Last concert... correct?"

"Are you gonna show me how to sing also?" Hunter asked. "Sure, why not!" I stated rather simply. I did my best without any alcohol to sing along with "My Way" performed by Elvis during his last concert. Hunter and Rose both acted somewhat impressed. Immediately following my sudden little performance, I said, "Even got the mannerisms down better than you buddy." "I didn't know you could sing! I mean that was Elvis and no matter what they say, even during his last concert he could properly sing," Hunter stated. I agreed. We had just watched one of the final songs Elvis performed, and he was not the decrepit monster that we have heard all the old wives tales about. This was, in sneaky fashion, turned into an opportunity to have a discussion about the possibility of functional drug use and if so, how to define it. [While I prefer to keep things in play, when it comes to signs and such, the subjects must not become victims of

power/knowledge (at least on my watch.) Hence, their perspective is as important as the ethnographic data they ooze. Considering my lack of "going native," conversation appears to be my best option.] Quoting the rather proud Sinatra lyrics proudly performed by Elvis that I sang along with:

*"For what is a man, what has he got? If not himself, then he has naught. To say the words he truly feels and not the words of one who kneels. The record shows I took the blows and did it my way! The record shows I took the blows and... did... it... my..... Way!"<sup>11</sup>*

Rose stated she was off to the bedroom, considering that we were distracting her just as the conversation began. Hunter told me not to worry about her as, "she had plenty o' toys in there." He continued the young conversation by telling me that he was not even sure he wanted to be called, "functional." It sounded too much like "gay marriage assimilation as liberation" rather than winning "the real fight... We're here. We're fucked up beyond all repairs. Get used to it." He stated if it were not for the inflated prices on drugs due to our drug laws then he'd "probably just rather keep it on the down low."

I informed him that at least from what I observed from the outside thus far that he seemed quite functional. He replied, "Yeah, thank the gods you are using fake names. I would hate to lose my street cred. We drug users in Mulch Valley are a very exclusive social group you know. I cannot be fucking with my status. You should know that as a sociologist. Right? That's a rhetorical question."

*[I find it rather interesting that he was truly so concerned about his standing within the very open-minded, almost "anomic" network of drug users within areas of rural poverty that I had grown used to. He was not concerned about anyone else really finding out. Yet,*

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<sup>11</sup> "My Way" © CHRYSALIS MUSIC GROUP, Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc.

*he was worried I'd tell the specific Mulch Valley drug user network that he was functional or as he put it, "a big softie."]*

He continued to inform me that now as 32 year old he had been doing the "harder" (those quotations were added by his fingers in the air) drugs for 18 years. To be fair he also told me that was doing "hard drugs very softly." Apparently, at age 14 he had stumbled into the parents' medicine cabinet. He grabbed what he could then researched the drugs on both "slow ass dial up net" and the PDR one of his friends at school had stolen from a "medical family member or something." He ended up mixing some amphetamines and opiates. This was his first experience with drugs. He saved his second experience for that night when he needed the sleeping pills to pass out.

We continued to watch live performances by long dead rock stars, with the exception of Marilyn Manson's tours from the late 90s. "Manson is a proper drug user, which is why he isn't dead like the others we have watched," Hunter broadly stated during a live performance of "I don't like the Drugs (but the Drugs like Me)." He would continue to suggest that Elvis and Michael Jackson were trying to be "functional" drug user by attempting to use drugs to help them function better as they got older and what not. He also stated that in many ways the dead rock stars are "Jesus figures in our retarded American bible story known as the war on drugs." He continued, "Manson, on the other hand is like the rock star version of that dude on your shirt... winning." He continued to tell me that those who knew that drugs were for fun not functioning in the "boring ass dim world" would always out last those who use them for functional societal behavior. He concluded, "The really good stuff... coke, pills, or heroin, you cannot use small

amounts of everyday for whatever good reason. You build up a tolerance. Clearly, you are not ready to drop out, so you will just respond with more and more until you're dead."

I wanted to be clear, so I gave him my interpretation of his interpretation of functional drug use. I explained to him that it seemed as if he was saying one could only maintain what he called "functional drug use" by keeping drug use and/or abuse in the non-functional (socially/economically speaking.) [*Here we may have an issue of keeping leisure unalienated.*] He agreed and stated that while one may lose some jobs and/or friends when they treat drugs in this manner that one went in with the mindset that drugs make them non-functional, at least it isn't the loss of life. He then informed me that he had been able to get Bachelors of Science, though he hasn't done anything with it. The point he seemed to want to make was that one should compartmentalize drug and non-drug use versions of their selves.

Hunter put in a movie at this point and told me he was going to go check on his girlfriend. "Damn all this blow and speed... I'm gonna need some Viagra." It was at this point I set back and watched *Permanent Midnight* in which Ben Stiller plays the role of a drug abusing author. Hunter stated that Freddy and John would be over here in a couple hours and to just entertain myself. He was going to attempt to get an erection and "go fuck Rose."

Entry #24:

It was approximately 4 AM, and I was standing on the balcony that overlooked the apartment parking lot below. From the balcony, and at this awkward time, I saw someone sitting on the ground in front of their apartment door. Formerly, I wouldn't have thought anything about it. Where I've been in the "field" as they say, I want to know the story. I'm

not going to bother this solemn person quietly sitting on the ground, nor do I wish to bother all the neighbors by yelling down to bother said person. Already I started to imagine what said person's story might be. Due to the topic of my study, I immediately thought perhaps they were using stimulants of some sort. (It is always due to my subject's odd hours, which is helped by their utilization of stimulant pharmaceuticals that my sleeping hours get all messed up. It would be a boring study if I observed them sleeping.) I wondered if perhaps they were in some sort of amphetamine induced super-focus "trance," as my subjects' have described what can happen at times with over focus and stimulants. On a side note, I wonder how it is possible for me to conduct such a study and find out I am in some ways, way less functional than my subjects. I mean none during this previous session, smoked. Most of them don't smoke tobacco, in general. While they transgress reality, consciousness, and who knows what else, they actually manage to either never stop smoking or to quit smoking as a healthy choice. Then there I was alone on the balcony with just my cigarette and the imaginary story of what turned out to be an imaginary person. They weren't a person at all. It was mere decoration. Did somebody slip me something? (I ask this jokingly and knowing that they hadn't.) At least when it comes to lung cancer and reducing the risk of it, my drug using subjects are certainly more functional than me. I wonder if the question of a drug user's "functionality" is a fair question at all now. First, it presupposes that drug use is inherently and essentially non-functional or "dysfunctional." So it is already a biased research question. Are any of my research questions actually non-bias? In asking if a link exists between living in an area of rural poverty and drug use, am I not assuming things about both rural poverty and drug use? I suppose this is the purpose of this reflexive journal: to expose my own

presuppositions and let the reader actively make their own interpretation of whatever it is that my work ends up meaning.

Second, I have given up on the idea of "objectivity" some time ago. Many of the presuppositions that my questions openly and reflexively admit to have been based on the findings of fields in which said idea of "objectivity" is still tightly proclaimed and no need for reflexivity is even mentioned. How can I take myself seriously? How can I fairly portray the experience of my subjects? Is it even possible to truly develop grounded theory? I have done my best in forgetting everything I know about the subject and keeping an open mind about my subjects and the data they produce. Yet, I still find these overlooked presuppositions? I suppose all I can say is that I've done my best. I'm glad I've uncovered these biases. This will improve the accuracy of the rest of the study.

I set out to study a deviant group, both in terms of social existence and sociological classification. I wanted to present the picture of them that was true to their social existence. In order to do that, I had to forget about the sociological classification side of it... at least through the data collection process. I must forget words such as rural, deviant, drug user, functionality, etc. This is because I do not want to present a picture guided by anything but the actors and the data itself. I am convinced that all words have presuppositions made up of other words. Thus, all words are biased. One of my subjects mentioned the Pineal Eye to me in conversation, and I immediately brought up Bataille. I think perhaps, it is this Pineal Eye that I was to observe these subjects with. I know that I will never be able to explain it exactly as I saw it or even as how they saw it from such a perspective. This is because explanations require words, and despite my qualitative biases, sometimes it is necessary to not only move beyond numbers, but also beyond

words, in order to escape the very possibility of biases in one's work. In sum, I will attempt to observe them outside of language from now on, while also keeping the record of words that tells what went on at the very surface. I will probably continually attempt to explain it as I saw it from this perspective beyond words. I will catch myself and laugh, but I will still do my best to explain it how I saw it. Whatever the reader does with that is ultimately the reader's responsibility. Reflexively speaking, this study, as difficult as it has been to get set up, approved, and to schedule observations, was the best study I could have done at this moment in my "intellectual self-hood." I've had many of my most memorable conversations with these individuals: whether we were discussing philosophy, social theory, or politics. Every discussion that one has influences them in some way, if we're honest. Thus, I can be more than certain that some of my favorite conversations have definitely influenced me and how I see the world. One last "thus": It is clear that my interaction with the subjects during the course of building rapport and observation has influenced me and how I see the world, including how I see them.

Now hear the "objectivist" scream that I've somehow "gone native" and because I can now identify with and see myself in these former "strangers" that all my work is invalid. You hear the Objectivist's screams, because I no longer can. Reflexively speaking, I have not "gone native" simply because I do not see my subjects as lab rats to observe. If one considers that "going native," then in my vision of sociology, "going native" should be the goal. The fact is that these subjects are more than a source of ethnographic data. To ignore that fact in my methodology would be to essentially use science as a tyrannical perspective or as the "Holy Science!" I am sorry but not even science itself is exempt from the scientific process, which demands retesting.

Furthermore, by viewing the subjects in this way I gain access to another perspective: a perspective that is both not the final one and also not the previous one either. It is both and neither. I can reflexively recall my former perspective, and I can say nothing of my future perspective. I can assume that my current perspective is brewing up something new, but the next one may have nothing to do with this one or everything to do with it. This is not something I can predict. I do not know how I will interpret things tomorrow. For the purposes of my study, however, the fact that this experience has opened up a new perspective and that I can reflexively recall the previous one works out perfectly. Not only have I allowed the "data" (aka subjects) to guide my development of theory and finding of answers to a few general "areas of interest" let us call them, instead of "research questions," but I have allowed the data to guide my interpretation of said "data" by socially interacting with the data as the actual individuals that they are and being open to that.

I will point out one very important lesson that has come strictly from the data, or rather the difficulty of scheduling observation times due to their work schedules, which have indeed been busy. My assumption that such scheduling would be easy implied, at the very least, that I assumed the subjects had a "different definition" of "functional," if they were "functional" in any sense at all. It did not take me long to realize that I was completely wrong. They seem to be quite functional, perhaps even more functional than I am, and I'm the sober person here. To be honest, when I think of what I would normally think of drug users in any area before this study, I would imagine them as easy to recognize and see them as those who clearly use drugs. Yet, in all honesty, if I did not truly get know them during the time of building rapport and my immersion, I wouldn't be



able to tell that they used any illicit drugs based on their behavior. Say I saw them as the strangers that they once were; I wouldn't have been able to tell that they used or were using certain drugs at the time. Now that I know these people well enough to be granted this opportunity by them, I can see that, at first, I allowed power/knowledge to influence me. All I knew is that they were drug users, so I assumed and expected certain things. Yet, other than observing them using drugs, if they kept that hidden from me I would probably not know that they even used drugs.

[This suggests something theoretically. What it represents, I am not yet sure. It could be used as an example of Goffman's front stage and back stage concepts. Then, again, having watched them interact with non-drug users, it does not seem like they are hiding from anything. No one asks, because these subjects tend not to fit the stereotype of how we think drug users behave in public. Now if they are not intentionally trying to hide this aspect of their lives, this would imply that everything we think we know about the use of intoxicants may indeed not be correct. Even if they are intentionally hiding this aspect of their lives, this is the case as well. Nevertheless, I am happy that in some ways one could say that I have been allowed "back stage." It is because of this that I can remember the "front stage" versions of these subjects, whether intentionally performed or not, and I can conclude that the only thing I can really say is different between "front" and "back" stages, is that back stage I know about their drug use. They are functional enough to keep this hidden from whoever it needs to be hidden from. This also suggests that it is quite possible that all the stats about drug use may indeed not be accurate. There may be more people than we expect who not only use drugs, but because they use drugs "functionally" as the DRUGNET study suggested was possible, it may indeed be difficult for us to

collect such data. Finally, though, it is also possible that due to the fact that they live in an area of rural poverty that they are able to keep such a secret so well. Being originally from an area of rural poverty myself, I know that in such areas, a focus on privacy can become important for any social deviant, as at the very least there is an interpretation of the people of such areas, which is actually often an interpretation by the people of such areas about themselves, is the enjoyment of gossip and often the existence of heavy socially conservative view points. Perhaps, if they were from an urban area, they would be less skilled at keeping such knowledge from the everyday person they interact with. I cannot be sure.]

*Entry #25 (Field Notes): "I slowly lose myself in unintelligible and bottomless space. I reach the depths of worlds. I am devoured by death. I am devoured by fever. I am absorbed in somber space. I am annihilated in joy before death." - Georges Bataille [1970: 237]*

Freddy suddenly burst through the front door. It seemed as if they had some important information for Mike, Hunter, and John. I had been sitting there discussing everything from social theory to music to sports. *[This implies a lack of will to self-label to a degree. Their network seems to be highly diverse with the only thing in common being the use of drugs, and well the location of rural poverty. This also implies a different sociality than the standard sociality of normative society, which I would like to borrow from Nietzsche and call Slave Sociality.]*

It had been a standard day at the house. I was busy singing the Elvis song, "Hurt." I was trying to hit it perfectly. Mike was complaining about his "Mexican whore of a wife." John was looking at internet porn on a laptop. We'd all take breaks for conversation of course. Hunter was the only one acting a bit off. I was slightly concerned about him, as

he had seemed depressed lately. John informed me that he was simply "shootin up some meth" in the bathroom. There was an awkward moment. John wasn't sure if I was comfortable with what society considers being an extreme level of drug abuse. He mumbled, until I expressed excitement at the chance to observe. "Tell that motherfucker he don't gotta hide just for me, I am just a non-bias observer bro," I told John to relay to Hunter.

I could tell that Freddy seemed both excited and antsy. He was clearly waiting for a turn to speak, but finally could not make it. "Sorry I gotta tell yall about this DMT shit. It takes you to another dimension. You read about the "third eye" right Eric?" He asked. "Well I have read Bataille's writings on the Pineal Eye, yes," I told him. Freddy looked like he could do a back flip. He then began to talk about the 5th dimension. He described the 3rd dimension much like I, an anti-sociologist, so to speak, would describe society itself: constructed bull shit. "But this Pineal Gland releases DMT and you think it is just a trip, but it is what the real is, for real," he stated excitedly. *[Little did I know that this small event would change my research focus so heavily, as at first I was like "oh god what is this crap." By the end of the time frame for data collection I was mainly focused on this Pineal Gland theory and how it interacts with social theory. In all honesty, I could already see that rural poverty seems to have an effect on a desire to escape boredom or rough living and this leads often to a possible use of drugs. Yet, this network's use of drugs seemed to be irrelevant to rural poverty, especially toward the end of the year of observation. It became almost spiritual... and looking through my notes... this was the day it seemed to really begin.]*

Surprisingly, no one acted as if Freddy had finally lost it. Mike completely forgot about his "whore-stupid-cunt-slut-Mexican-wife" who had recently gone to have a tattoo of the name of another man removed. (This tattoo was visible in their wedding photos. The problem ended up being that she fucked the tattoo artist who removed the name of the guy she fucked before the wedding.) Freddy went on to talk about being able to use this "third eye" to control this "constructed reality" as he put it. He then went on to state that he had to do more studying on it. I offered him Georges Bataille's "Inner Experience." He and I had been kind of talking about Bataille and the third eye for a bit. Apparently it all the sudden hit him and he had to announce it.

Freddy sat down on the floor directly after I handed him the book. He began maniacally reading. John snuck over and tried to read over his shoulder. Mike asked me, "Hey dude, you wanna go kick out my soon to be bitch ass ex-wife's family who just moved into our home, and made it smell all Mexican." *[Mike is by no means a bigot. I mean he was married to a Latina chick. He happily moved in her family. Then found out she didn't need to be married and instead should have become a prostitute instead. It is like Mike said, "At least make some money. Don't give it for free."]*

I looked at Freddy reading Bataille, John back seat reading, and Mike sitting there feeling like a cuckold. "You know what Mike, I don't care if this is questionable ethically. Based on my methods, it is perfectly fine methodologically speaking. Ethics are just social constructs anyway you know," I responded. Mike and I then headed out to his car. As we stepped off the trailer porch, we heard a rushing Hunter exiting as well. "Damn veins... worst ever! I missed some third eye shit and nearly missed kicking out that cunt's family from your house Mike. I can't wait to throw out the handicapped one that is always trying

to get pity points," he said at a slightly faster than normal tempo. Freddy (with book in hand) and John soon followed. John proclaimed, "Let's take care of this shit buddy!"

I rode with Freddy, as he had a two seat vehicle and had some questions for me about Georges Bataille. "Hey check that glove box. Make sure that 45 is in there, loaded, safety off and ready to go just in case... you never know," he stated. "Safety first, you locked and loaded," I responded. The car barely had two seats to be honest. The floor on the passenger side was stacked with notebooks, books, and also some random trash. It was a nice vehicle though. I began to compliment him on it when he asked me about Bataille. I explained to him that Bataille was, at least in my interpretation, the first theorist to properly "get" Nietzsche. "Even Max Weber was a bit off," I told him. I went on to tell him that we probably would have never had Foucault or Derrida if not for Bataille. I also named some more of his books of the top of my head. "Have you never noticed this talking about the fifth dimensional stuff I been talking about for a while now? I mean the Pineal Eye, that is right in your face," Freddy stated. "Honestly, I haven't done much research on any of that or even on DMT." Freddy then handed me the very book I let him look at moments before: "Inner Experience," by George Bataille. He asked me to turn to some page or another and to read. He would then make his points and ask if I saw how Bataille was saying this. I kind of got it, so I went along with it at the moment though I was filled with doubt. *[This was most likely due to my unrecognized biases at the time based at the heart of science.]*

We arrived at what was left of Mike's and his soon to be ex-wife's house. I walked into the front door and notice how it had not been kept. When they first moved in, it was always the cleanest house I observed. This old heavy set Hispanic woman asked me "who

the fuck I was." I responded, "Who are you? Better yet, who do you think you are to even ask me who I am?" Mike covered for me, "He is with Immigration services. Don't worry he's just observing." Freddy seemed like he was fighting off laughter. It became easier when the elderly lady began speaking in Spanish and walked off. John whispered, "Laughing my ass off, immigration." At this point Freddy, Hunter, Mike, and John grabbed the attention of the several in-laws in the living area. Freddy yelled, "Your daughter's a slut. Their marriage is over. Please gather your things and move out." (The place was rented so it was not like a complicated deal or anything.)

I walked back to the bedroom with Mike and saw his ex having sexual intercourse with some random person with a smaller than average penis size. Mike grabbed his shotgun and made them both leave immediately. The rest of the group quickly consoled him. I made sure, feeling as though I had become an honorary member of the group, to tell him that the man in bed with his wife couldn't have had more than 4 inches length and "had a pencil dick to beat all." John pulled out a blunt and a bag of marijuana. Once all the former in-laws had been properly moved out, John, Hunter, Freddy, and Mike began to smoke.

I sat on the floor. I had pulled out another Bataille text, "On Nietzsche." One blunt turned into two. Then two turned into three. Hunter went off to the kitchen to look for some aluminum foil in order to smoke some "bottle dope" as he put it. Let us just say that the Pineal Gland talk really started up big time then. I am not sure if I somehow got a contact high, but I felt that rush of energy go up my spine and reach the very top of my head and slowly move toward the center. This happened when Freddy was talking about all that he had learned. At the same time I was reading the appendix to the book, while listening to

Freddy. When it hit, it hit too. It wasn't a quick chill or anything. I yelled, "Ah, he is talking about this." Freddy replied, "I knew it, let me see that. I tell ya. Nietzsche, Foucault, Bataille, hell even Jesus knew about this and were talking about it." At this moment, I could see what Freddy would later tell me were thermals. The feeling in the center of my head, which pulsed through my spine, grew more and more powerful. I became almost manic in mood. The air was wavy. Patterns on the floor were moving. The intensity of the energy, which is not a good word, maybe we will say emotion or passion. At any rate, the intensity increased the more I read. I saw the words but I no longer heard them in my head. I had killed thought. This was direct communication from a deeper level, or at least that is what Freddy told me about that later. I tried to think and I could only hear gibberish. I became focused on the image of Nietzsche's collapse in Turin. It wasn't really a hallucination. It was more of a mental visual as my eyes blacked out and took a break. I heard lyrics from Peter Gabriel's "Family Snapshot" : "I've been waiting for this. I've been waiting for this. All you people in TV land, I will wake up your empty shells. Peak time viewing blown in a flash as I burn into your memory cells." (Again, no hallucination, as Hunter was playing it on the computer.) At any rate, at "Cause I'm alive!" I broke or something. The feeling was soon gone, but not before uncontrollable tears rolled down my face. There was no sadness. It was just intense generic emotion for lack of a better word. Once it broke, I was gone. Everything was normal again. Freddy would then ask me about it and inform me that I nearly made it to the fifth dimension, but some fear kept me in this dimension. What threw me off was I was certain that this only lasted a few seconds, based off the song. Yet, only Freddy and Mike were still there, and it was evening. I had been in Turin for hours watching my intellectual hero finally

collapse into madness as Peter Gabriel sang about killing some political figure. Freddy warned me to not just look at the surface to find out what I needed to find out in "my journey." I asked if I had been drugged. Yet, I had consumed no drink or food at all that day.

Freddy, Mike, and I left once I regained my ability balance myself and walk. Freddy was excited because this meant one did not need an intoxicant to "trip 5D" as he just saw me do it with no substance to help. I had a lot to think about. I am still thinking about it. The next reflexive journal will deal with this. For now, even though I've had a day to rest, I need another, ergo; I am going to deal with this later.

*[I would later find out there was no music being played. This confused and worried me. In all honesty, this being grounded theory, I found no reason to assume medical or psychological. I suspect a type of intense sociological reaction occurred, regardless of whether or not one believes in DMT/Pineal Gland induced trips to a fifth dimension. This network, which by this time I had become a close part of is full of intense and strong social cohesion despite the very loose intersubjectivity. Their micro-network suggests that Durkheim was wrong on Anomie, or at least imposed an presupposed interpretation. In this network, the lack of norms increases the social integration on some level that we sociologists may never fully understand or grasp. It seems to go against reason. This is experience, however. Does that not trump the cold iron fist of Reason?]*

Entry # 26:

I am still unsure of what to think about this experience. I refuse to automatically assume some form of pathological force. Foucault [1954] [1967] and Laing (1967) taught me



better than that. Also, once again, it would violate my grounded theory approach to sociology. I must also be careful to not blindly accept the perspective of my subjects. I will also not rule it out. The whole experience of being elsewhere in both sound and vision but not in space was problematic enough, but I seemed to have been outside of time as well. I do not wish to over focus on this at this moment. I will continue my observation, but I will no longer let my bias from science make me scoff at these mystical experiences of drug users. I had one without taking anything. This is such an interesting group. They are truly discontinuous. At the beginning of this study, they seemed to be about standing their own ground and making it out of Mulch Valley, or at least letting everybody know they do what they want and would bow to any norm. Now they seem like some type of rural shaman working hard to take spiritual journeys. The original question of Functional or not is no longer interesting or important. They have been all kinds of different types of functional. They avoid arrest. They achieve happiness even in an area of rural poverty and also unfortunately closed mindedness. At one point they were so busy with regular jobs, I thought they may be too functional to ever observe. Now they seem to be functional in a spiritual sense. Who am I to judge their ends? Functionality only applies to means. If they get them where they want to go, I consider them functional drug users.

Entry #27 (Field Notes):

I recall when I first started building rapport with the charismatic, almost shamanistic, core of this network of drug users living in Mulch Valley. They were listening to a lot of MGMT. Specifically, they'd listen to the song "Kids" on repeat while smoking blunts... aka marijuana cigars I suppose. I no longer know how academic jargon would label this

preferred form of marijuana consumption. *[I take this as a sign that I am making sure the textual data is not some weapon of power/knowledge, but rather, is being translated from their highly discontinuous and chaotic intersubjectivity into our cold and stern wall of an intersubjective realm in a manner that is true to them. I only wish to present to the reader a picture of what their mind's see. I do not wish to impose meaning here or there. This is of course why I have serious discussions about my data collection methods and field note translations with the subjects themselves. I offer the field of sociology, though somewhat as perhaps the first "anti-sociologist" of the field, a text-as-visual or text-as-seen outside of the tyrannical hold of the socially constructed preference for text-as-meaningful-symbol to communicate, aka text-as-authority. My data is a sincere attempt to present the painting of the subjects' perspectives, which they have been kind enough to invite me to see. In this sense, I am much more in line with R.D. Laing than Foucault, Derrida, Bataille, Marx, or even Nietzsche.]*

In many ways, I am already gone. I have become one of them even without partaking of the substances. *[This suggests that their different style of "sociality," if one can call it that is not solely due to their drug use. This qualitative finding backs up the DRUGNET quantitative data that suggests drug users can be "functional." Though as Freddy puts it, "Drugs are like a cheat code to get passed all the society's bull shit. They break down the need to fear what other people think of you. They essentially end the fear of the stranger... as well as the fear of any judgment... when used as a supplement to life rather than an escape."]* If I have learned anything from these subjects, it is quite simple. It is only misuse of drugs that leads to their definition of "non-functional." Freddy explained in conversation after conversation that one is "functional" so long as they are happy by

their own standards and free of the low intensity emotions that sit and eat at you until you are... well, Nietzsche's "Last Man."

The last I spoke to Freddy, we spoke for 12 hours straight about all of this. "Society is slave morality," he stated. "It must fall," he concluded. I agreed that all these so-called human "victories over nature" (language, social contracts, government, law, medicine, psychiatry, knowledge in general) were nothing more than Job deciding that suffering is what was "winning" (as Freddy put it.) I referenced Nietzsche's concept of slave morality, being the morality developed by the weaker figure creating a fake system in which their loss was actually a win. Freddy even called me on this, stating that it was winning to them, but also that he saw the point as, "everyone who has that slave morality are the insecure control freaks worried about their 3 inch fully erect penis and wanting to bring everyone else's Proud down... that's what was important about what Nietzsche said. He was the first to get it. This society horse shit is for those who would die in a world of true freedom."

I responded, "And even Nietzsche in the end realized that there was no system to place master or slave morality as a preferable cultural mode of moralism, as he became both Crucified and Dionysus." Freddy concurred telling me that Nietzsche was the first to see the fifth dimensional reality that "existed outside of all of society's crap." "He hugged that horse, collapsed, wrote his final letters trying to express that which could not be expressed in words, because he had been outside of words... out of this fake 3D world," he continued. I added, "Outside of text even?" Freddy stated (without ever having had a course in social theory), "That is all that exists here in this fake ass third dimension." We

then continued on talking on the subjects until we finally reached the conclusion of "fuck it, do what you please. Fear nothing.. not even fear."

This is a recent conversation with Freddy, which is somewhat a stark change from the Freddy observed at the beginning of the study, who was very much into the pleasures of third dimensional reality. Now he shoots DMT, eats ounces of shrooms, smokes blunts like cigarettes, and experiments with lsd and Special K, as well as extremely transgressive doses of amphetamines. He has found that "amphetamine psychosis" is merely another chance to get a glimpse of fifth dimensional reality. As he stated in rather stoned fashion, he had been "already dead" using drugs the wrong way (either to supplement daily life or escape its fears) rather than taking them for fun, for experience, "for rebirth," and to "truly learn."

*[He had a point: amphetamines, for example, are a social control mechanism when used to help you learn the lies of power/knowledge. (Just like alcohol is a self-hate trigger when used to forget. "Who needs to forget? I don't remember who I was yesterday, I am everyone at anytime," he stated. "The Discontinuous Self," I replied. "See dude, you get this shit," he confirmed.) Yet, when amphetamines are used to "take your brain to another level of thought where words almost don't make sense" then according to Freddy, they are a form of resistance, or rather a "force of chaos, rather than order." Even alcohol can be used to loosen social standards (though Freddy no longer consumes alcohol, as he finds it benign at best and often "low-frequency" friendly.)]*

Taking all this into consideration, I am no longer concerned with what any academic's definition of "functionality" whether they are cool or lame, genius or average, top dude or

new hire, and I even do not care if they are hot teacher or something you might see in granny porn. *[Thus, I refuse to make a conclusion on their so-called "objective" level of "functionality."]* I only report back to you the subject's current non-definition of "functionality," subject to discontinuous change, of course. I suppose Johnny expressed it most clearly, "Am I doing whatever I want to do? Then I am functional. Yeah sure I can have to do stupid shit like my job, but it allows me to buy the amount of smoke I want to have. I am not functional because I have this job that somehow benefits some bitch named society. I am functional because I live. I enjoy. My existence benefits myself and my crew. Who the fuck else matters? Let them do their own thing. I don't try and tell them to do my kind of functionality. Don't force your shit on me. They cannot even fully see with their two eyes. I got a third." *[Here Johnny is referring to the "Third" or "Pineal" Eye. This makes Georges Bataille, a true sociologist if there ever was one (just never got the credit he deserved because other than theory he wrote pornographic texts... still without him we would not have had Walter Benjamin's unpublished manuscripts) a very important figure in the building of the grounded theory that I am after.]*

Freddy added that the people who assume they are functional individuals contributing to society are "like the Jews who helped the Nazi's organize the lines to the gas showers." *[He has a valid theoretical point, regardless of the aesthetics of the empty signs used in his presentation. In a sense, Freddy is the guy on the talk show that breaks the fourth wall with this comment.]* He continued and expressed no desire to change these "insecure control freaks who believe the dictionary is a book of laws... when it is just scribbles defined by other scribbles." "Have you read Derrida?" I asked. "I know of Derrida. Just not enough to carry on one of those conversation deals," he responded as he fired up a

blunt. *[Derrida seems to be important as well, at least to me. Yes, I know this seems as if I am naturally trained to go with those I know best, and am failing at grounded theory. The problem with that criticism is that it is a copout intellectually. I did not treat the subjects as morons who were somehow "less" than me. I had many conversations on theory with them. The theories of poststructuralism came about from the subjects, either directly as with Nietzsche and Bataille or indirectly as with Derrida. Furthermore, the fact I could have these conversations with them, 90% of which they initiated. I was just excited to get to talk theory while observing, to be honest.]*

As Freddy and John passed a blunt back and forth, I wished for the 70s [and a time when science was qualitative enough (and thus real enough) that I could partake.] *[This is a major flaw in my study. IRB would never approve an R.D. Laing (1967) type of adventure of taking every possible step to place myself in their perspective. Well here are my feelings on that... and I am just being real here. Fuck IRB. It has no place in Sociology. IRB handles ethics. Ethics are socially constructed. IRB being involved in Sociological work is like the owner of a huge corporation donating unlimited money to a Presidential candidate to buy herself a puppet. How can Sociology accurately describe our subject matter, when our subject matter limits our research and analysis with so-called "ethics?" If you ask me the genealogy of ethics has to do with a trajectory in which the sheep of society saw the field of Sociology as a possible threat of exposure. That's why those nerdy guys wearing the lab coats looking into microscopes or masturbating to numbers like to treat the field as a pseudo-science. It is not one about social control. Of all the sciences, it is the purest. Sociology is somehow unscientific, yet they accept Dr. Drew's babble and the entire field of Psychology (designed to increase normative behavior by "curing"*

*deviant behavior.) I am sorry but I have no respect for science these days, as it is all socially constructed and posing as a new Ape God handing down commandments. It has become scientism. Yes, good old Science, it is the mythology of a comatose modernity left on life-support because folks like Habermas can't pull the damn plug. It is up to Sociology to take a stand, and to take a seat in the throne. Comte may have been mentally handicapped in my eyes, but he was right about Sociology being the science above all sciences. Now I know you may accuse me of breaking my commitment to grounded theory by not considering the theories of these mythologies and fads as serious possible sources of certainty. I committed to do a Grounded Sociological Theory work. Sure, if something makes sense from another field I will consider it, but everything I have observed has led me to see psychology as something that is completely incompatible with true grounded theory. R.D. Laing covered this already folks. Psychology is an outdated pop fad on the front stage and a tool of oppression back stage. It is Gestapo for the mind and experience. Similarly, I will not be considering any nonsensical racial theories or any of lil' Dick Dawkins' pathetic attempts at a "sociobiology." What I am doing is the only real science: Grounded Sociological Theory, whether my contemporaries will have the will to stop fearing the older "sciences" and their so-called "authority" and accept their own superiority or not, doesn't actually concern me. I do not even care if I am granted the MA. Valid research is done for no other reason than, as some of my subjects put it, "to get to the real."]*

This gets me back to the memories of listening to the song "Kids" by MGMT on repeat back in the early days of research. I recall an almost bittersweet existence. The music expressed a type of "we're living the life we want to live, because life is meaningless

anyway, so fuck it. Let's go fishing. Let's have fun." [*Child-Camel-Lion-Child* was indeed Nietzsche's (1966) proclaimed transformations that we all must go through to some degree. At the beginning of this study, I saw them struggle between all four at once. Most of them in their early 20s or late teens, rejecting what society wanted them to carry as a camel, rebelling/destroying social standards as lions, but still desperately trying to achieve the child status, but not able to let go of all the lies the world had placed in their programmed hard drives known as brains. Now I listen to the song, "Kids" by MGMT and smile. They have made it in my opinion. I may not have partaken in the most fun of the fun moments (those which existed outside the intersubjective spider web of slave society) but I was like an embedded journalist. I took the same journey.]

The bird of paradise has strummed his guitar. I hear the call to "come home." I still have work to do. I must finish this work. It was Freddy and John who helped me realize that. Only then will I be able to breathe the fresh air of freedom and be able to make a decision about my own wandering path through the forest filled with shit-throwing apes armed with calculators, shoving sticks of measurement where they don't naturally belong, demanding some mysterious thing called "The Truth" (even though it is not in my rectal cavity), and insulting my vision (suggesting I need glasses or a new brain.) Yes, that is what I think of academia. Only the field of sociology is cool enough to be ready to allow in and even celebrate an "anti-sociologist" of sorts.

If Nietzsche's overhuman would fit anywhere in academia, {non-gendered pronoun} would feel most at home and most welcome in sociology. Sociology, despite the desperate beginnings under Durkheim, is by far the most intellectually and most theoretically advanced science. We are among no one... on a completely different level.



The rest of academia is "East Side." Sociology is "West Side." To keep with the metaphor, I plan on being the field's Tupac. That is just how we are going to do that.

At this point, I show my scribbled notes for the last paragraph or to Freddy. "Hell yeah," was his response. "Fuck all that power/knowledge... write this your way feller," John stated in support. "They'll either love me or hate me or not get me at all but pretend to out of fear of seeming out done for some odd reason, even though without much of them, mainly cool professors and some authors, my perspective would not be here." We continued and I paraphrase the shout outs and mad props: Really it is due to the super cool professors. My thesis committee: Doug Smith, Steve Groce, and Kate King have been open minded enough to let this shit happen. Now some of the numbers geeks might not like the complex use of language while in full recognition of cyclic deconstruction within the text. You know they gotta have their burgers super plain, no cheese even, before they'll buy it. (The cheese will upset their stomachs, and when their allergies make them sneeze and they're pocket protector goes flying they may accidentally mess their pants. This must not be confused with an ejaculatory messing of pants. No, this is excrement.) But who cares... quantitative is a good side arm for a sociologist, but there is no such thing as quantitative sociological theory... there are just demographics and statistics with computers to do the actual work of analysis aka "theory forming."

John laughed heavily. Freddy nearly choked on the hit he took from the blunt, "God I hate self-important, look at me. I am a real scientist, because I am interested in stuff that most of the time don't matter. Like somehow numbers aren't just words themselves that are meaningless," "and forgettable," John added at the end there. We all laughed. A rant about pretentious number worshipers ends up with a song about words being

unnecessary. "Thank you, Depeche Mode. I hope that at the very least when your work here is done that, we can all "enjoy the silence" of the ruins of an academia that collapsed due to your work," John giggled as he tried to coldly state. "West Side till we Die!" Freddy suddenly screamed. "Fuck Durkheim. Fuck Spencer. Fuck Merton. Fuck quantitative sociology and fuck functionalist theory as a methodology, as a field, and as a motherfucking crew. If you wanna be down with the numbers and tyrannical logic, then fuck you too. We gonna kill all you motherfuckers," I parody rapped Tupac Shakur in response to Freddy. It got quite the laugh.

We were kids again. Finally, we were truly free but without having to rely on provider modules and their so-called "authority." Giving life doesn't grant "authority," though it is a creative act of will to power in my opinion. The idea of *razing* (intentional aesthetic use of incorrect word) children makes me vomit on the other hand. *[In many ways "razing" is the proper word. To raise a child, they destroy it. Wipe its hard drive clean, just in case those silly biologists are correct. Then socialization, de-humanification, de-individualism, and pre-nazification take place. Hitler was the biggest of all slave moralists: Insecure and terrified of a lack of order. (Maybe he worried that without rules he'd enjoy watersports rather than secretly feel shame.)]*

We discussed our liberation. Freddy even applauded mine despite my lack of intoxication. John told me about a time when his youngest child was pretending to be driving a race car, but he was using an empty box. "I was on that MDMA at the time, and it was a big birthday party. We were upstairs avoiding the adults, because we called them 'the norms.' They were like robots designed to kill fun and make life unbearable. Anyhow I watched my son having the time of his life, full blown imagination. I don't care to admit

it. I cried, but not out of 'oh no he's retarded or something is wrong.' Not at all. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the creative power of imagination. Intense tingling of the spine began, like right before a roller coaster ride. No fear though. Just intense joy and a desire to protect this young child. I could feel my Pineal gland reactivating, the intensity of that moment overcame the fluoride water calcification. I told him to 'never listen to those liars in the other room... they might act like they care... but they don't. They're just jealous of your power to take that object and make it a race car and go on an epic adventure. Promise me, son, never listen to any adult after what I just said. Cause it'll be no more race cars... just work and money and you might as well kill yourself like that.'"

*[This was a moving story that John told us all. He knew it was important as he made sure to repeat it to me once I stopped crying from the overwhelming beauty of a father telling his child... do not honor only due to age or other nonsense. Honor your own creative will to power. It takes what those men who are worried about being masculine would call "a real man" to be able to do what John did. Children aren't mirrors. The quote may not be the original one. This was what was repeated to me once we arrived at our destination. Theoretically, this implies that we are not naturally social creatures. John's son did not give a flying fuck (pardon my language) about what anyone thought. He had snuck off to solitude to immerse himself in imagination and make his day a work of art. Perhaps only children remain non-alienated. I can only hope that his father's advice stuck with him, and he ignores every invisible and non-existent social contract or rule or role or what have you. I hope he is the next spider from mars.]*

*[Back on topic, more so anyhow, it seems as if the MDMA whether pure or cut with methamphetamine, heroin, or cocaine allowed John to disassociate from the ridiculous*

*front stage father role that exists in areas of rural poverty. He transgressed intersubjectivity and had a moment of certainty or a real moment, or a moment of trillness (whatever you wish to call it) between father and son. It wasn't just "don't act like that," "don't say that in public," "don't cry, what are you a girl," "be nice to the neighbors" (even though they spread rumors behind our backs), or "get a job." ]*

Freddy asked, "Man, I wonder if that will stick with him. That'd be great. You are a good father no matter what anyone says." I of course went into an excessive analysis of Nietzsche's texts and how this fit within the current situation. Thankfully, my subjects were already well versed and read when it comes to Nietzsche.

Entry #28:

Derrida is his own pharmakon. Nothing exists outside the text/signs/words. Thus signs signify signs. The word "nothing" is a sign as well. So while Derrida sees all the signs as everything, best we can do is keep them in play. Derrida's own text also suggests something quite simple: there are no words no sign for what is outside of text. We cannot even create a word for it else we pull it into this context. Perhaps the closest word we have is experience... which the only reason that word is there is to try and drag what there are no words for into this context. One can walk the other way completely... the result cannot be explained it lies outside of thought/faith/truth/fact/reason/constructed/context/words. All I can say is that RD Laing's *The Politics of Experience* and Nietzsche's writings AFTER his collapse are important for reasons i know I will try to explain because it is fun and I want to. I do not give a flying fuck about the result it has upon the reader or even the author; in this case a person such as "I" and/or "me" Mead is important which surprises the hell out of me. But I

always had the right words or tried my best to represent. So much I thought words were truth. Also this has come to me as a result of a grounded approach to theory and reflexive approach to research, but words do not prove anything. You get what I truly feel/mean/not really a good word for it... or you don't. All is well either way no matter how what may be the work that kills an intellectual career before it is born, is received. I no longer am trying to prove to myself that we or really I can escape control or that we are over controlled... I fear no result. I have no doubt. I do not want to even control those who wish to control by opening their eyes. I am no hero or villain or savior. One cannot be controlled if one simply fears no result and doubts no experience by asking questions and giving answers that are signs that signify nothing but other signs. This will be fun, if not final.

Entry #29:

Sacrifices are made in research. Freddy, John, Mike, Hunter, and the rest of the crew began talking about mystical experiences and the 5th dimension, some time ago. While some would say these guys went from functional to non-functional, I would say the reverse. I couldn't comprehend anything they said, but they eventually led me outside of the text. Outside of all this fake socially constructed reality? Yes, well beyond it, and I didn't even have to consume intoxicants. This was bigger than social deconstruction. (By the way, I may have a bias in that I find anything socially constructed to be inferior and worthless and just disgusting.) This was dissolution, as you can see in the field notes of my 5D experience.

My brain is stuck between two levels now. Freddy told me that my brain is in mushroom mode and will be from here on out as far as he knows. This is different from being stuck

in a trip. It is just the thought process. Freddy said it happens to anyone who experiences 5D. All these important symbols and their interactions that we are so proud of, remain exposed to the point of nearly unlearning language eventually. My thoughts seem to have an altered structure. I just tried to discuss this with my girlfriend. Even though she felt she couldn't communicate with me, she let me know plenty. She knew what I was talking about but only in words, which meant she understood nothing at all. Nietzsche stated that thoughts were merely shallower representations of our deepest emotions and drives. I sensed her deep insecurity and fear of a lack of order that occurs with the dissolution of logic and language. She's much like that prick Richard Dawkins. She has no faith, not even in the deepest levels of herself. She has no problem proclaiming the God of religion as myth, but she is pathetically desperate for Science to be the replacement. God can die but not Truth.

This is problematic because I love her. She may do what she wants, but the joy of realizing this is all horse shit is so overwhelming and real. It is intense. I often have a rush of emotion, for lack of a better word, and I can feel a ton of activity in what feels like the middle of my brain, where the Pineal Gland would be. I sobbed the other day when I realized what my own brother had gone through as a teen. He went swimming at the lake with his good friend. His friend drowned. I felt bad for him at the time. I know now my mother held the information that he tried to save his best friend. He did everything he could but he couldn't save him. This was over a decade ago. I learned recently that people who showed up still can't get my brother's image and sound of his emotional breakdown driven by the guilt of having "not been good enough to save him." He blamed himself. When I got the full story, though I wasn't there I could hear my

younger brother... both his external cries and internal self-torture. The room I was in started to go black, and while I was not in full blown 5D mode, I didn't just feel his pain. It was like I was him, for real. I experienced as well, until I snapped out of the trance. In that moment, I knew what he went through, not in words... not in text... not even in what we call emotions. This was in experience... not sympathy or even empathy. I relived it. This may seem painful, but I wish I could've shared his pain at the time the event actually occurred.

I lost myself during sex with my girlfriend. I didn't begin or end, nor did she. We were one. Not in any metaphorical sense, not medical either. Our "presence" we will say, became one. Because it is one already, it never really became... it really was more like a sudden realization. She experienced that too... I believe only in words, and not outside of text. She says she wants to figure this out, but her text lies. Her inner emotion/passion shows through its lack of intensity that she believes in the lies of the tyrant Reason and the lie, yes lie, of observation leading to truth. I am glad that data observation is over now. But I plan on continuing down this "Western Shamanistic" path, and living life in 3d how I please while trying to make my way back to beyond the text in 5d. While this has been the greatest relationship of my life, I know it will end due to my approach to social theory and science. She has told me this outside of text. She can't realize it because she is stuck in 3d mentality, of using something as useless as language or worse, mathematics to accurately communicate. It is her fear of recognizing the death of her socially constructed "self." One realizes that the dictionary is perhaps the funniest concept ever: we look up definitions to an otherwise empty symbol only to find it is defined by other empty symbols. Intersubjectivity is pretending at best. Well, sorry

ethnomethodologists... I intend on being a bit more grown up. Pretend and letting pass is not enough. I have a hunch that the decentered center of language causes the deconstruction cycle, but there is a larger focal point of dissolution... a black hole in language so to speak. It is only a matter of time until we are free of these small prisons for forced meaning that we call words.

I will either be seen as a nut, as my future ex-girlfriend sees me, or I will be forgotten as will all of this as I am proven right and my work brings about the end of text. I am not sure if the weak 3d brain will last long enough to finish any sort of acceptable work. I am sure that the 5d brain won't give a damn. As Charlie Sheen said, "Winning." Though, I can't go back anyhow. I tried to tonight. She just looked at me like I was a scary individual in an asylum. Only my subjects get me currently. Perhaps this is my last work, and it will be time for me to join these Shaman's of the Western World and abandon this third dimension now that my third eye is open.

Much of this thesis will be not just about what I learned about the subjects and the relationship between drugs and living in areas of rural poverty, but will be about what I learned from the subjects. If sheep can't keep up, I suppose I can't stop them from slaughtering themselves. I feel like I'm trying to keep her from drowning, while knowing it is pointless. I wish she could just open her mind a little bit more.

Oh well, back to work. This piece of work is what I want to finish. It is already been an experience that is not even positive or negative or even both or neither, but rather it has been all of that and much more. Language is too limited explain.



Ergo, I wash my hands of the possibility that a reader may not be able to create their own interpretation. The blame lies with your (the 3d world) simplistic language. We are indeed the weakest of the species, and the stupidest too for we think we are at the top. It is time for human beings to perhaps go extinct.

As Phil Collins once sang, "I don't care no more!"

Entry #30:

It has become obvious that the very first quote from Georges Bataille that I used to begin the process of thesis proposal is once again important. I had no intent of this. I intended on giving up much of the poststructuralist leaning. This thesis was supposed to produce knowledge, but instead, with many thanks to the subjects, has produced what is beyond (con)text and "knowledge."

The difficult thing will be holding on to complete the thesis when words truly don't suffice (not even here.) I have been beyond knowledge and context. This became possible through a process of non-knowledge that was unlearned to me by my subjects. I had to experience their experience for myself. This was not through illicit substance abuse, but rather, it was through an understanding beyond text of something close to a process involving the re-activating the pineal gland.

As a result of completing this thesis: Derrida will have been out-Derrida-ed. Nietzsche proven useless except for his post-collapse writings. Mead made important enough to have a role, which was a surprise to me. Bataille will be granted a last laugh. R.D. Laing

is all that can hold anything that looks like a proper thesis together now. Finally, once complete, "I" will have left the text.

Entry #31:

This is my final transgression and/or transmission. This study has taken quite a bit out of me. In the beginning, my main concern was to complete an exploratory study on drug use and rural poverty. I have changed just as much as the subjects. Functionality was a question to begin with. That question, now, after all that I have experienced, reminds me of Burger King asking if I'd like salt or ketchup with that.

[Functionality is a code. The same cultural and political forces which oppress drug users, whether rural or urban, are the same forces that define what experience counts as "functional." Only an individual drug user can determine whether or not they are "functional." This Dr. Drew (the moron who thought Suboxone therapy for opiate dependency was only supposed to last three days... no wonder so many of his celebrities have gone on to OD and die... malpractice) fad of celebrity rehab has perhaps altered the cultural role of drug user from one of a warning against excess to a story of redemption and a loving society waiting to welcome home the prodigal son/daughter or what have you. Either way, these cultural roles do not represent the reality of the experience of many drug users who resist taking said parts in this "feel good movie" called American "Democratic" Society. I have spent the better part of two years interacting with a network of rural drug users, whether building rapport prior to approval of study or doing actual observation. They are no threat. They are not unintelligent. They are kind and welcoming to those who will accept them for who they are. They are functional by my standard. I have enjoyed their company more than most clean and sober people's company.]

I did not study any urban users. This was strictly rural drug users. While urban drug users have had to deal with a stigma for quite some time, with the rise of methamphetamine a terrible stigma has developed for rural drug users. I experienced this stigma when trying to get the project approved. This specific network may indeed be an outlier, but even when they consumed methamphetamine they were anything but dangerous to anyone who treated them like a human being.

I wanted to figure out if living in an area of rural poverty contributed to drug use. In all honesty, I do not feel I saw enough of this in the data to conclude that. It did seem that a lack of other forms of entertainment in rural areas may contribute to the decision to use. [It is also quite possible that my specific network of subjects did not use due to boredom or poverty or due to living in a rural area. This is an important point that huge macro level quantitative studies forget often. Statistics do not provide any Truth. They provide percentages and such. Still there is no reason to assume that all drug users in an area of rural poverty (or in an amusement park for that matter) use drugs for the same reason.]

I spoke with my main contact the other day to wrap up data collection. I asked about the reasoning behind drug use. For Freddy, it is the reasoning that determines what type of user one becomes. It was clear that this network did not use to "retreat" or "escape" from society, my apologies to that pretentious looking goofball Merton. It was a creative force ultimately, and somewhat spiritual. They were innovating standard life in an area of rural poverty, perhaps. While during the beginning of the study, it seemed more like the drugs were used for fun. By the end of the study, it was about a conquering of fears. It was indeed about transgression. It wasn't as petty as social transgression. This was dimensional and artistic. It was a transgression of space and time itself. In all honesty, I

ended up learning more from the subjects about living a good life despite struggle than the field of Sociology learned from them about "themselves." This is due to the fact that these individuals are discontinuous. They have no "selves." They push for the now, avoid investment, and always remember that "no investment is too large to drop if it becomes a prison" (as Freddy says.)

Now as to what the field of Sociology can learn if it opens its eyes a bit (perhaps even its third eye), there are some very revolutionary ideas that this network gives birth too, just as a network. We may have to cast aside our supposed founder's "great" work dealing with Anomie. This network interacts in such a chaotic manner. There is no norm. They will grant you access so long as you are not trying to force your behavior on them. I was treated as a lifetime friend almost, even though I was there to simply observe them and not take drugs. Even drug use is not a norm. [They are perhaps the most open-minded people that I have met in any rural area. I do not mean to be stereotypical, but most southern people living in a rural area are not going to publically argue against people that are being homophobic or bigoted in some other fashion. This network stood out from the rest of Mulch Valley. I saw so many signs and bumper stickers condemning homosexuals. I even saw a church with a marquee board that could have just as easily said, "My Savior is bigger than yours." I have no problem with rural culture. I love fishing, hunting, and Hank Jr. I do have a problem with rural political culture. Interestingly enough, these "scourges" actively supported gay marriage. They didn't even have that Paula Deen under the radar screen style of racism that we often see in, especially, southern rural areas.]

I link this level of acceptance of diversity to a couple of things possibly. First, the unapologetic and open drug user is perhaps one of the most disrespected individuals in American culture at large. More importantly I find that this level of acceptance of diversity is linked to their desire for anomie. They reject norms. At the same time, if one of them are threatened by someone trying to enforce a norm or just be a jerk, I promise you that you will see the biggest level of social integration and cohesion you have ever seen. Does this mean that anomie isn't always something that decreases social integration? Don't worry yet Durkheim; you may have just misinterpreted the meaning of committing suicide. This network would not keep one of theirs from committing suicide if said person wanted to go ahead and die. This is not done out of some indifference born out of a lack of norms. It is done out of a love stronger than any normative person could ever understand. They do not fear death or life. An individual's death is theirs to control just as much as one's life is. Sure mourning would occur, but at the end of the day there is the mentality that they took control and died when they wanted to... "Cheers to them."

This suggests even further developments for sociological theory. It is quite possible that there is not just one mode of sociality. My experience during this study highly suggests this to me. This goes beyond normative/deviant, normal/pathological, binary/non-binary.

While sociality is sociality, there does appear to be at least two modes of sociality.

Because those who seem to operate in one particular mode also seem to display traits of a particular mode of morality, I would like to call these *Master Sociality* and *Slave Sociality*. While the subjects, particularly Freddy, have suggested that really even these two things have the same ultimate end (master sociality as slave sociality will destroy itself), the difference is one of intent and style. This is very much exactly out of

Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Morals" just replace the word moral with social. The Slave Sociality is one in which the individual actant has a main driving force of extreme insecurity and fear (or weakness.) It is this extreme fear of something (death, chaos, failure, etc) that causes this mode of sociality to be aggressive. Due to the excessive inner fear a desire for calm, strict, and boring order develops. In the worst cases you see a type of social interaction where the one in slave sociality mode may even violently attempt to control the other actant.

Up until this moment sociology has assumed that this is the only mode of sociality. It is the mode of sociality that Durkheim gave us: slave sociality. Think about functionalism as a theory. It desperately paints the picture of society as something in perfect order. Well now there is another mode of sociality. It is not just seen in theory by counting Nietzsche as a founding father of the field. Instead, it is seen right here my study. I have seen master sociality in existence. The subjects agree they don't interact the way "most jerks do."

I understand there will be serious resistance to this conceptualization. The problem for the old guard of American Sociology is that master sociality is observable. Master sociality/Slave sociality though it pays respect to Nietzsche in its name, it is 100% a grounded theory brought to us by a Reflexive Sociology not afraid of reading complex poststructuralist authors.

The time has come for American Sociology to accept that Nietzsche has eclipsed Durkheim in innovative theory, intellectual influence, and (yeah this is going to be the toughest to accept for some) importance to the field. Durkheim was obsolete in his heyday, no one knew it though. This was due to Nietzsche being far ahead of his time.

His focus on and perspective on the importance of symbolic language not only acts as a precursor for SI, but also as a precursor for the undoing of SI by more poststructural or ethnomethodological approaches to symbolic interaction. Durkheim was alive then, but he was stuck on this grand idea of an orderly and functionalist society. (Slave Sociality has the control intent during interaction.) Nietzsche was focused on the real chaos of social interaction and such. (Master Sociality has the creative intent during interaction.)

The importance of this discovery is that it does away with the idea that in order to have social interaction we must form what we now know are mechanisms of just one mode of sociality, slave sociality (laws, guilt, shame, stigma, limitations, etc.) We can now envision a preferable social world that could be based on master sociality. It would be a social world that is driven by a creative force rather than by excessive fears.

In this specific study, I witnessed the master sociality interaction mode within the network of drug users. This does not mean that any group of people necessarily always uses one mode of sociality or another. Instead, it means that any micro level actant may operate in a slave sociality mode or a master sociality mode. It may also use both modes depending on the situation and/or time, among other variables. In many ways, one could validly point out that slave sociality is merely the alienated form of master sociality. This must be considered.

As far as reading material for analyzing all this data further is concerned, Simmel and Nietzsche come to mind, but R.D. Laing seems to be the big fish here, as the data deals a lot with experience and how society judges or attempts to use slave sociality to control what experience is valid. I am going to remember to not get too focused on the grounded

theory formation of the theories of master and slave sociality. It is also my intent to tell the subjects' stories.



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