

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME  
LANGUAGE COMPONENTS OF ADOLESCENTS  
IN A BOYS' TRAINING SCHOOL AND  
IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
Barbara Jean Brenneis  
1962



## ABSTRACT

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOME LANGUAGE COMPONENTS OF ADOLESCENTS IN A BOYS' TRAINING SCHOOL AND IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL

by Barbara Jean Brenneis

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a difference exists between certain language performances of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.

The aspects of language studied and compared were total verbal output, type-token ratio, and number of mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words utilized in relating a story about each of two Thematic Apperception Test pictures shown to each subject.

The subjects were one-hundred adolescent boys institutionalized in a state training school and one-hundred boys enrolled in a public high school. There were four age groups, fourteen through seventeen, with twenty-five subjects in each age group. Non-delinquent subjects were matched in age with the delinquent participants.

Ten Thematic Apperception Test pictures were selected from the thirty comprising the complete test. These were randomly paired to make five sets. Each set was shown five times in every age group.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a difference in the language performances compared. The non-delinquent subjects used significantly more total words and significantly more two and three syllable words in telling their stories than did the delinquent subjects. Non-significant differences were found for type-token ratio and number of monosyllabic words utilized.

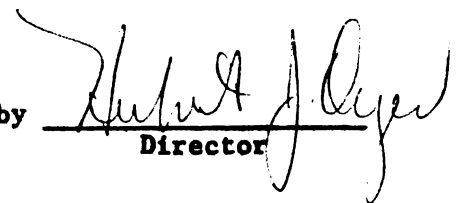
Conclusions of this study state that it is possible to measure

Barbara Jean Brenneis

language differences effectively by the techniques employed and that there is a difference in language performance of the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects seen in the study. This difference is in favor of the non-delinquent.

Poor family relationships, low socio-economic status, and lack of interest in scholastic activities are suggested as plausible reasons for the existence of such differences.

Approved by

  
Director

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AND IN A PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL**

**By**

**Barbara Jean Brenneis**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**College of Communication Arts, Department of Speech**

**1962**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iii
LIST OF FIGURES . . . . .	iv
Chapter	
I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
Introduction . . . . .	1
Statement of Problem and Purpose of Study . . . . .	1
Hypotheses . . . . .	2
Importance of Study . . . . .	3
Definition of Terms . . . . .	4
Organization of the Thesis . . . . .	6
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE . . . . .	8
Introduction . . . . .	8
Etiology . . . . .	8
School Performance . . . . .	10
Personality . . . . .	12
The Importance of Language . . . . .	12
III. SUBJECTS, EQUIPMENT, AND PROCEDURE . . . . .	14
Subjects . . . . .	14
Equipment . . . . .	14
Procedure . . . . .	15
IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION . . . . .	17
Methodology . . . . .	17
Questions . . . . .	18
Results . . . . .	18
Discussion . . . . .	21
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH . . . . .	26
Summary . . . . .	26
Conclusions . . . . .	26
Implications for Future Research . . . . .	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	29
APPENDICES . . . . .	31

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	A Test of $t$ for Significance of Difference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups Relative to Total Verbal Output . . . . .	19
2.	A Test of $t$ for Significance of Difference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups Relative to TTR . . . . .	19
3.	A Test of $t$ for Significance of Difference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups Relative to Monosyllabic Utterances . . . . .	20
4.	A Test of $t$ for Significance of Difference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups Relative to Dissyllabic Utterances . . . . .	20
5.	A Test of $t$ for Significance of Difference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Groups Relative to Trisyllabic Utterances . . . . .	20

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Mean Percentage of Monosyllabic Words Comprising Total Verbal Output of Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Subjects . . . . .	23
2.	Mean Percentage of Dissyllabic Words Comprising Total Verbal Output of Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Subjects . . . . .	24
3.	Mean Percentage of Trisyllabic Words Comprising Total Verbal Output of Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Subjects . . . . .	24



## CHAPTER I

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

Language is an important facet of human behavior which is basically related to personal and social problems<sup>1</sup> as well as to environment, early parent-child relationships<sup>2</sup> and basic endowment. F. H. Sanford has stated:

Thus speech is behavior. It serves as a direct tool of adjustment and, more importantly, it is behavior entering indirectly into more overt and more obvious adaptive actions to complicate and delay, but always, in the long run, to facilitate adjustment.<sup>3</sup>

Language pervades all areas of daily living. It keeps the individual in constant contact with his environment and provides the most effective means of intra- and interpersonal communication.<sup>4</sup>

#### Statement of Problem and Purpose of Study

Language is an integral part of the person and his background.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wendell Johnson, People In Quandries (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), p. 499.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Henry Mussen and John Janeway Conger, Child Development and Personality (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 179.

<sup>3</sup>F. H. Sanford, "Speech and Personality," Psychological Bulletin, 39 (December 1942), pp. 145-146.

<sup>4</sup>Jane Beasley, Slow To Talk (New York: Bureau of Publications Teacher's College, Columbia University, 1956), p. 52.

<sup>5</sup>Lee Edward Travis (ed.), Handbook of Speech Pathology (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957), p. 268.

The male juvenile delinquent has been likened to and differentiated from other non-delinquent male adolescents of similar age, background, intelligence, etc.,<sup>1</sup> yet language behavior per se has not been investigated. The Gluecks have related many cases of juvenile delinquency to disruptions of home life before the child reached ten years of age.<sup>2</sup> The close relationship between speech and language development and home environment during the early years when language is being learned and integrated into the total personality would suggest the importance of investigating this area of personality development. The purpose of this study is to attempt to determine whether delinquent and non-delinquent subjects used in this project differ in various aspects of language behavior, namely total verbal output, type-token ratio, and number of one, two, and three syllable words used. It is hoped that answers to the following questions can in part be obtained: (1) Is there a significant difference in the total verbal output of each group? (2) Is there a significant difference between type-token ratios of each group? (3) Is there a significant difference in the number of mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words used by the two groups?

### Hypotheses

To answer the above questions, the following null hypotheses have been proposed:

1. There is no significant difference between mean scores obtained by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups for

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<sup>1</sup>Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency (New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950).

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. Hendrickson with Fred J. Cook, Youth In Danger (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1956), p. 274.

total verbal output.

2. There is no significant difference between mean scores obtained by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups for the type-token ratio measure.
3. There is no significant difference between mean scores obtained by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups for total monosyllabic words used.
4. There is no significant difference between mean scores obtained by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups for total dissyllabic words used.
5. There is no significant difference between mean scores obtained by the delinquent and non-delinquent groups for total trisyllabic words used.

#### Importance of Study

For many years, investigators have been accumulating information which would aid them in determining in what ways the male juvenile delinquent differs from or is similar to the non-delinquent male in hopes of increasing knowledge about its cause and perhaps using the obtained information in prevention and control. The Glueck study indicates that some of the causative factors in delinquency are also factors closely related to the development of speech and language. The delinquent socio-cultural environment is described by them in the following manner:

The delinquents as a group are distinguishable from the non-delinquents: . . . in having been reared to a far greater extent than the control group in homes of little understanding, affection, stability, or moral fibre by parents usually unfit to be effective guides and protectors or, according to psycho-analytic theory, desirable sources for emulation and the construction of a consistent, well-balanced, and socially normal

superego during the early stages of character development.<sup>1</sup>

The delinquent boys were treated with far more indifference and even hostility by their parents than the non-delinquents in this same study.<sup>2</sup> Thus the general antisocial atmosphere of the home environment would increase the possibility of the existence of language differences in the delinquent adolescent.

There is evidence that the sociopath scores lower on verbal than performance tests on intelligence tests and has a tendency to give more concrete than abstract responses on intelligence tests.<sup>3</sup> This seems to be the extent of our knowledge about language performance of the delinquent.

Since the language studies done under the direction of Wendell Johnson at the University of Iowa in 1944 using the quantitative analysis of language,<sup>4</sup> there has been relatively little additional research using this promising method of investigation. It is hoped that some insight into the language behavior of delinquent and non-delinquent adolescents might be gained by the statistical treatment of the various aspects under consideration in this study.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the terms used are defined in the following manner:

Language.--This is the ability to use and meaningfully combine

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<sup>1</sup>Glueck, op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>4</sup>Psychological Monographs, 56, No. 2 (1944).

abstract symbols (words) in intra- and/or interpersonal communication.

Juvenile Delinquent.--The following definition was taken from  
Public and Local Acts--Michigan, 1953:

Section 2. A boy between the ages of 12 and 17 is eligible for admission to said boy's vocational school, upon commitment by the juvenile division of the probate court to the state department of social welfare, who:

(1) Repeatedly associates with immoral persons, or is leading an immoral life, or is repeatedly found on premises occupied or used for illegal purposes; or

(2) Wilfully and repeatedly absents himself from school while being required by law to attend, or repeatedly violates rules and regulations thereof; or

(3) Has deserted his home without sufficient cause or is repeatedly disobedient to the reasonable and lawful commands of his parents, guardian or other custodian; or

(4) Has habitually violated municipal ordinances, statutes of the United States defining petty offenses or, statutes of the state defining misdemeanors cognizable by justices of the peace or who has violated any other penal statutes of the state or the United States; or

(5) Habitually idles away his time.<sup>1</sup>

The same document states that:

The Michigan social welfare commission may, on the basis of said findings (physical examination of MD, mental examination of psychiatrist and clinical psychologist) exclude from admission any boy who, because of mental or physical defect, would be unable to profit from training, or at the option of the judge who committed the boy and if the nature of the defect would not endanger other boys in said school order the boy admitted and care for him at the expense of the county of commitment.<sup>2</sup>

Non-Delinquent.--This term may be defined here as adolescent males attending a public high school.

Thematic Apperception Test.--This is a projective type personality

<sup>1</sup>Michigan, Legislature, Public and Local Acts 1953, No. 122, pp. 121-122.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

test. It was used in this study as a means of eliciting spontaneous speech from the subjects. The test consists of thirty abstract pictures. Subjects were asked to tell a story about each of two pictures shown to them.

Total Verbal Output.--This is the total number of words spoken by each subject in telling a story about two TAT pictures. (See Appendix C for sample stories told by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.)

Type-Token Ratio.--This is an indication of flexibility or variability of vocabulary. It is the ratio of different words (types) to total words (tokens) in a given language sample.<sup>1</sup> The language sample in this study being the subject's story about each TAT picture shown to him.

Mono-, Di-, and Trisyllabic.--Every one, two, and three syllable word used by each individual in the above mentioned spontaneous speech sample was tabulated, then treated statistically.

### Organization of the Thesis

Chapter I has contained the statement of the problem which led to this study. It has included an introduction to the topic and an outline of the purpose of the study. It has put forth the hypotheses to be considered, discussed the importance of the study, and defined the terms which will be used throughout the study.

Chapter II will contain a review of the literature available on this topic.

Chapter III will consist of a discussion of the subjects, equipment, and method utilized in collecting and analyzing the data.

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 500.

Chapter IV will consist of a discussion of the results of the study.

Chapter V will contain a summary and the conclusions of the study, as well as implications for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Since 1948, the number of juvenile delinquents in the United States has been steadily rising. Between 1948 and 1955, the rate of increase of juvenile delinquency has exceeded by more than four times the rate of juvenile (7-17 years) population increase. Consequently, it is estimated that within the next few years nearly one million delinquents may be seen in our nation's juvenile courtrooms.<sup>1</sup>

In hopes of developing more effective crime prevention programs and improving therapeutic techniques, much of present day research has focused on cause. There is a certain amount of conflict here, however the discussion below includes those "causes" which are generally given credit for being determining elements of juvenile delinquency.

An extensive and thorough study carried out over a period of ten years by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck<sup>2</sup> has contributed much to the understanding of cause. From this study have also emerged a number of characteristics which seem to distinguish the delinquent from the non-delinquent.

#### Etiology

Adolescence is generally known as a period when the male is unsure

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<sup>1</sup>William C. Kvaraceus, Juvenile Delinquency (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1958), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Glueck, op. cit.



of his masculinity and where he occupies a marginal societal position. Peer approval is particularly important to the adolescent. Lack of parental understanding and inability of the adolescent to form attachments to and identify with the parent may force him to prove his abilities through joining the neighborhood delinquent gang and participating in its activities.<sup>1</sup>

Conflicting standards of young and old contribute to the lack of understanding between parent and child, especially if the parent is foreign born. Again the adolescent is forced to seek the companionship and approval of his delinquent peers.<sup>2</sup>

Disciplinary measures employed by parents of delinquents are often unsuitable and ineffective. Frequently these parents were found to hold indifferent and rejecting attitudes toward their children. Discipline tended to be lax, erratic, or over strict.<sup>3</sup> Some parents were too anxious about their own problems to concern themselves with the welfare of their children, thus alienating and estranging the children and leaving them no choice but to identify with persons outside the family.<sup>4</sup>

Family life of the delinquent is lacking the cohesiveness which love, interest, attachments etc. provide and which is necessary for healthy development of self and social attitudes in the adolescent. Apparently the relationship between child and parent is more significant than a broken home.

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<sup>1</sup>Joseph S. Roucek (ed.), Juvenile Delinquency (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1958), Preface.

<sup>2</sup>Kvaraceus, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Roucek, op. cit., p. 128.

In further support of the poor standards set for the delinquents by their families, research by the Gluecks disclosed that 70 per cent of 1,000 delinquents were reared in families where parents or siblings had criminal records. They also found that 52.1 per cent of non-delinquents, and 17.1 per cent of the delinquents regarded their fathers as acceptable for emulation. In about 95 per cent of the cases, mothers and fathers of delinquents were using inadequate methods of discipline.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, the family situation of the juvenile delinquent leaves much to be desired. Many researchers are attaching more importance to this poor family relationship than to the usually accompanying low economic status.

It has long been accepted that delinquency thrives in densely populated poverty stricken urban areas. However poverty alone does not seem to account for delinquency. Burt states that closely related to delinquency and poverty is the strength of desire for the financially unattainable.<sup>2</sup>

The school also serves as a source of frustration to the juvenile delinquent. His resentment toward authority, lack of academic achievement and his feeling of not belonging to the classroom group are factors contributing to his persistent truancy.<sup>3</sup>

#### School Performance

The Gluecks found in their carefully matched delinquent and non-delinquent groups that school achievement of the delinquents was far

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

below the school achievement records of the non-delinquent, even when irregularity of school attendance was considered.<sup>1</sup> Their achievement test scores often indicated that they could have accomplished more than they did, indicating again maladaptation to the school situation.<sup>2</sup> "While the delinquent becomes a headache for the school, it should be remembered that the school is an even greater headache and heartache to him."<sup>3</sup>

Research regarding the intelligence of the juvenile delinquent is contradictory. Cooper reports that there seems to be a slightly higher incidence of mental deficiency in the delinquent group,<sup>4</sup> however the Gluecks conclude that there appears to be no direct relationship between intelligence and crime.<sup>5</sup> Elliott also implies that mental abilities of juvenile delinquents vary as they do in the general population.<sup>6</sup>

As stated in Chapter I, the delinquent scores higher on performance (concrete) than he does on verbal (abstract) tasks on intelligence tests. Social class values may be partially responsible for this difference. Upper and middle classes prize and reward verbal achievements, whereas this ability in the lower classes is not considered

<sup>1</sup>Glueck, op. cit., p. 140.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>3</sup>Kvaraceus, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>Clara Chassell Cooper, A Comparative Study of Delinquents And Non-Delinquents (Portsmouth, Ohio: The Psychological Service Center Press, 1960), p. 197.

<sup>5</sup>Roucek, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>6</sup>Mabel A. Elliott, Crime in Modern Society (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 328.

to be of interest or importance. The male is also more likely to be rewarded for motor accomplishments than for verbal achievements.<sup>1</sup>

The consensus seems to be that shortcomings in the home and school are more significant factors in maladjustment than the individual's mental status.

### Personality

Contributions in this area have, in the main, been made by the Glueck study. Conclusions were based on responses to Rorschach and psychiatric interviews. They found:

The delinquents as a group are distinguishable from the non-delinquents: (1) physically, in being essentially mesomorphic in constitution (solid, closely knit, muscular); (2) temperamentally, in being restlessly energetic, impulsive, extroverted, aggressive, destructive (often sadistic)-traits which may be related more or less to the erratic growth pattern and its physiologic correlates or consequences; (3) in attitude, by being hostile, defiant, resentful, suspicious, stubborn, socially assertive, adventurous, unconventional, non-submissive to authority; (4) psychologically, in tending to direct and concrete, rather than symbolic intellectual expression, and in being less methodical in their approach to problems; . . .<sup>2</sup>

In summary, the delinquent, in many cases, is contending with a family which is unequipped or unwilling to help by giving him the love and understanding he needs; a school system which does not recognize or cannot deal effectively with his problems--academic or social; and a community which is only interested in his punishment. At the present time, an eclectic approach to causation would seem to be necessary.

### The Importance of Language

Language and personal adjustment have been linked by many. It is

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<sup>1</sup>Mussen and Conger, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>2</sup>Glueck, op. cit., pp. 281-282.

seen as a part of all mental processes and adaptations. When a person speaks, he reveals himself as well as his level of contact with the world. As the Gluecks have stated, "There is no more promising inquiry into the dynamics of juvenile delinquency than determination of the comparative personality character structures of delinquents and non-delinquents."<sup>1</sup>

In reviewing the literature, the writer found that nearly every aspect of the delinquent's make-up has been investigated, with the exception of language. The close ties between language development, the child-parent relationship and home and school environments would suggest the fruitfulness of investigating this dimension of personality development.

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<sup>1</sup>Glueck, op. cit., p. 16.

## CHAPTER III

### SUBJECTS, EQUIPMENT, AND PROCEDURE

#### Subjects

The subjects were one-hundred juvenile delinquents from the state Boys' Training School in Lansing, Michigan and one-hundred boys from a public high school in Holt, Michigan, making a total sample of two-hundred. The boys at each school were divided into four age groups from fourteen through seventeen, with twenty-five subjects in each of these age groups.

Boys from the two schools were matched with respect to age alone, since intelligence test scores were available for those at the training school only. In nearly all cases, birth dates were within a few days of one another. In no instance did the difference exceed six months. Slightly more than one-fourth (twenty-eight) of the Boys' Training School sample was negroid. There were no negroes available in the non-delinquent group.

From school enrollment cards, it was ascertained that parents of the non-delinquent boys were most often employed by local factories--blue collar workers.

#### Equipment

The Thematic Apperception Test, developed by H. A. Murray and his staff at Harvard Psychological Clinic, was employed in order to elicit spontaneous speech in the form of a story from each subject.

With the aid of a clinical psychologist at the Boys' Training School, ten pictures were chosen from the thirty making up the complete test. These final ten pictures were then randomly paired. Each of the five sets or pairs of pictures was shown five times in the four age groups of both samples. This procedure was designed to avoid comparison of pictures and stories within the groups. As an example, set number one was shown to five of the twenty-five fourteen year old subjects at the Boys' Training School and to the five fourteen year olds with whom they were matched at Holt High School. A description of the pictures employed appears in Appendix A.

A Wollensak tape recorder was used to record the subject's responses to the two TAT pictures and a stop watch used to time each story.

The data were gathered in an unused schoolroom at the Boys' Training School and in a health room vacated for this purpose at Holt High School.

#### Procedure

Rapport establishment was begun with each subject by briefly explaining what he was to do for the examiner--"I want you to use your imagination and make up a story about two pictures." He was assured that the examiner was not a psychologist, psychiatrist, or in any way connected with the school. Each boy was asked his name and age, then engaged in a short conversation on any topic which seemed to be of interest to him. These topics ranged from school, family, or hobby interests to, as in many cases at the Boys' Training School, reason for incarceration, future plans, etc.

When it was felt that the boy was sufficiently at ease with the

examiner, he was given directions in more detail. (See Appendix B.) The tape recorder was placed on a chair beside the examiner, outside the view of the subject. A microphone was placed on the table between the subject and examiner, hence it was necessary to explain that the stories were being recorded.

The subject was allowed three minutes to look at the picture and compose his thoughts or ask questions. He then had three minutes to present his story. Time limits were not mentioned to the subject. Stories were cut off when the story had been completed, the subject indicated he could think of no more, or the three minutes had elapsed.

Interruptions by the examiner were kept to a minimum, however encouragement was offered when deemed necessary. It was felt that this encouragement had negligible effects on the amount of verbalization of any given subject.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The spontaneous speech of one-hundred delinquent and one-hundred non-delinquent boys has been analyzed in order to ascertain whether a difference exists between the two groups in total verbal output, type-token ratio, and number of mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words used. In Chapter II, it was pointed out that many factors believed to be related to juvenile delinquency are also closely related to speech and language development. The paucity of information in this particular area led to this research project.

#### Methodology

The data were tabulated using the following procedural criteria. In all computations, the two stories told by each subject were considered as one. That is, total verbal output included words used in both stories, as did the syllabification count and type-token ratio (TTR). Hyphenated words and contractions were counted as two words and dates (1984) as three. For TTR, use of present, past, or future tense of the same word was considered as three different words. The authority referred to for syllabification was Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.<sup>1</sup> Vocalized pauses, er and uh, were not tallied. Unintelligible or doubtful words or phrases were omitted from the data.

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<sup>1</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1956).

The statistical analysis used was the t test for unpaired variates. The following formula was utilized to obtain the t scores:<sup>1</sup>

$$t = \frac{M_1 - M_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x_1^2 + \sum x_2^2}{N_1 + N_2 - 2}} \sqrt{\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2}}}$$

### Questions

Questions proposed at the outset of the study were as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference between total verbal output of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects?
2. Is there a significant difference between type-token ratios of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects?
3. Is there a significant difference between total number of mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words utilized by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects?

### Results

Table 1 presents means, t score and level of confidence for a comparison of total verbal output of the delinquent and non-delinquent groups. The difference is significant at the .05 level of confidence. The size of the means indicate that significantly more words were spoken by the non-delinquent subjects.

Table 2 shows means, t score and level of confidence for a comparison of type-token ratios of the two groups. The difference is non-significant at the .05 level of confidence. The means indicate

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<sup>1</sup>Charles D. Hodgman (ed.), C.R.C. Standard Mathematical Tables (10th ed.; Cleveland: Chemical Rubber Publishing Co., 1956), p. 239.

that the delinquent subjects used more different words than did the non-delinquent subjects.

TABLE 1

A TEST OF  $t$  FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT GROUPS  
RELATIVE TO TOTAL VERBAL OUTPUT

Subjects	Mean	$t$ score	Level of Confidence
Delinquent	188.32	2.08	Sig. at .05
Non-Delinquent	237.48		

TABLE 2

A TEST OF  $t$  FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT GROUPS  
RELATIVE TO TTR

Subjects	Mean	$t$ score	Level of Confidence
Delinquent	52.52	-1.93	Non-Sig. at .05
Non-Delinquent	49.60		

Table 3 shows means,  $t$  score, and level of confidence for a comparison of monosyllabic words used by each group. As the table reveals, the difference is non-significant at the .05 level of confidence. This is interesting in view of the fact that the non-delinquent group used significantly more words than did the delinquent group.

Table 4 presents means,  $t$  score and level of confidence for total number of two syllable words used by the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects. The difference between the two groups is significant at the .05 level of confidence. The size of the means indicates that more two syllable words were used by the non-delinquents.

TABLE 3

A TEST OF  $t$  FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT GROUPS  
RELATIVE TO MONOSYLLABIC UTTERANCES

Subjects	Mean	$t$ score	Level of Confidence
Delinquent	153.46	1.68	Non-Sig. at .05
Non-Delinquent	189.21		

TABLE 4

A TEST OF  $t$  FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT GROUPS  
RELATIVE TO DISSYLLABIC UTTERANCES

Subjects	Mean	$t$ score	Level of Confidence
Delinquent	29.10	2.22	Sig. at .05
Non-Delinquent	37.71		

Table 5 presents means,  $t$  score and level of confidence for trisyllabic words used by the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects. As the table shows, the difference is significant at the .01 level of confidence. The means indicate that the non-delinquent subjects used significantly more three syllable words than did the delinquent subjects.

TABLE 5

A TEST OF  $t$  FOR SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
DELINQUENT AND NON-DELINQUENT GROUPS  
RELATIVE TO TRISYLLABIC UTTERANCES

Subjects	Mean	$t$ score	Level of Confidence
Delinquent	4.49	3.75	Sig. at .01
Non-Delinquent	8.22		

### Discussion

Results indicate that stories told by the non-delinquents were significantly longer than those told by the delinquent subjects. The null hypothesis number one stating that there is no significant difference between the two groups in total verbal output can then be rejected as being significant at the five per cent level of confidence.

Statistical treatment of TTR's showed that vocabulary flexibility of the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects did not differ significantly at the five per cent level of confidence. Therefore it is not possible to reject the second null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between TTR's of the two groups. These results must be considered in light of the fact that there is a tendency for TTR to vary inversely with the size of the language sample.<sup>1</sup>

Uncontrolled variables must also be considered in evaluating the above findings. The subjects were matched in age only. Chotlos found that there was a positive correlation between written TTR's, IQ, and CA, however the correlation was not large enough to account for all factors determining TTR.<sup>2</sup> To be considered also are variables which are more difficult to control, such as motivation, interest, attitude, and emotional state. The extent to which these variables affected verbal output is not known. An informal observation made as the data were being collected may give additional insight into this matter. Non-delinquent subjects seemed, in general, to be more anxious to do

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<sup>1</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 501.

<sup>2</sup>John W. Chotlos, "IV. A Statistical and Comparative Analysis of Individual Written Language Samples," Psychological Monographs, 56 (1944), pp. 92-94.

well and please the examiner than did the delinquent subjects, although the delinquents were very cooperative. The Gluecks have noted that the delinquent is less afraid of failure or defeat than the non-delinquent. He is also less concerned with complying with conventional expectations and more ambivilant or less submissive to authority than the non-delinquent.<sup>1</sup>

The difference between monosyllabic words utilized by the delinquent and non-delinquent subjects is non-significant at the five per cent level of confidence. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference in mean number of monosyllabic words used by the two groups is therefore not rejected. This is of particular interest when it is recalled that the non-delinquent subjects used significantly more total words than did the delinquents. Figure 1 shows that of the total verbal output for the delinquent subjects, the mean per cent of monosyllabic words employed by them was 81.51, while 79.81 per cent of the total output was monosyllabic for the non-delinquent subjects.

The difference between the two groups for utterance of dissyllables was found to be significant at the five per cent level of confidence. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the two groups in mean number of two syllable words utilized is therefore rejected at the five per cent level of confidence. Figure 2 shows that the mean per cent of dissyllabic words making up total verbal output for the non-delinquent group was 15.81 and 15.47 for the delinquent subjects.

The trisyllabic difference was found to be significant at the one per cent level of confidence. The null hypothesis stating that there is

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<sup>1</sup>Glueck, op. cit., p. 275.

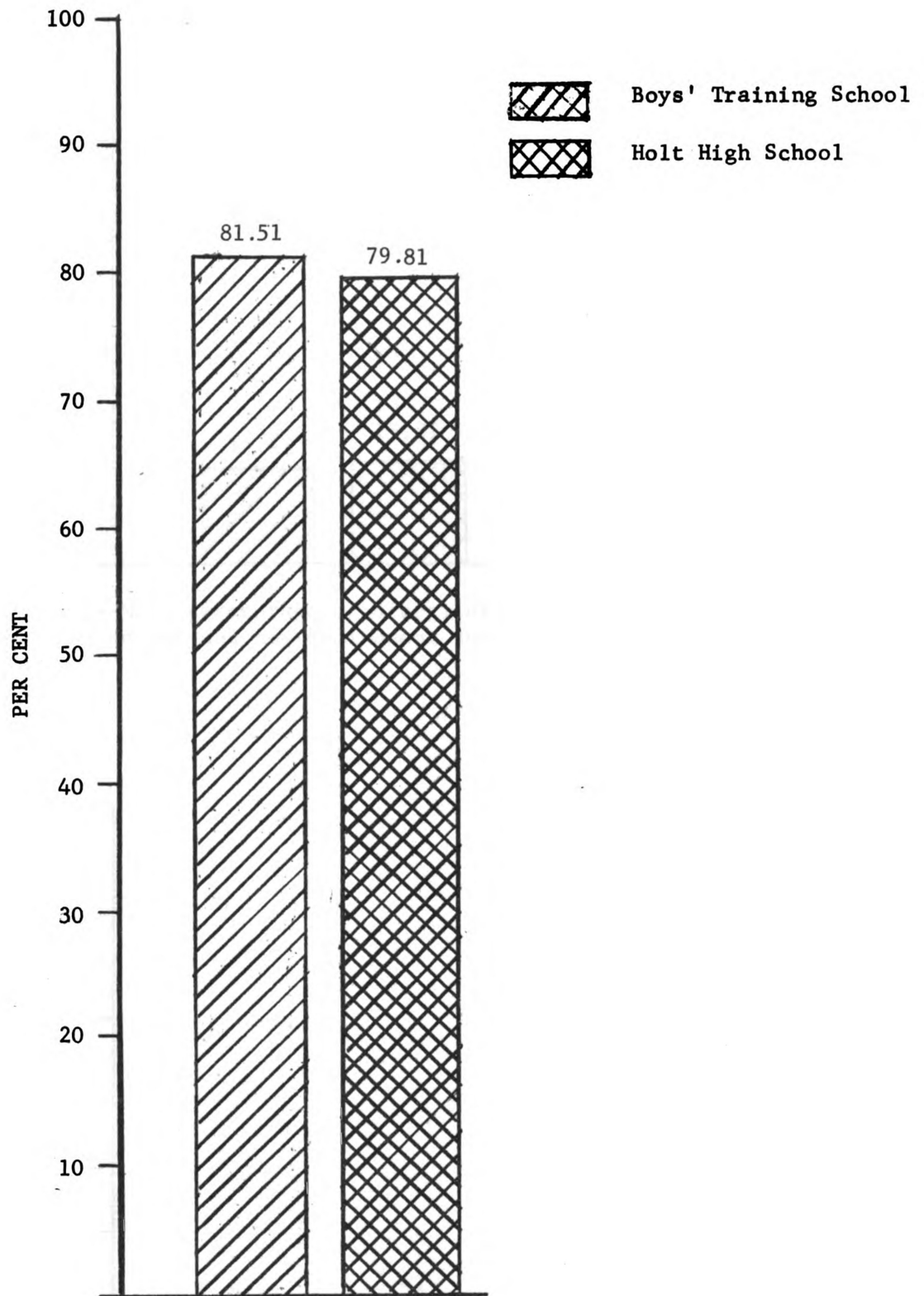


Fig. 1.--Mean percentage of monosyllabic words comprising total verbal output of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.

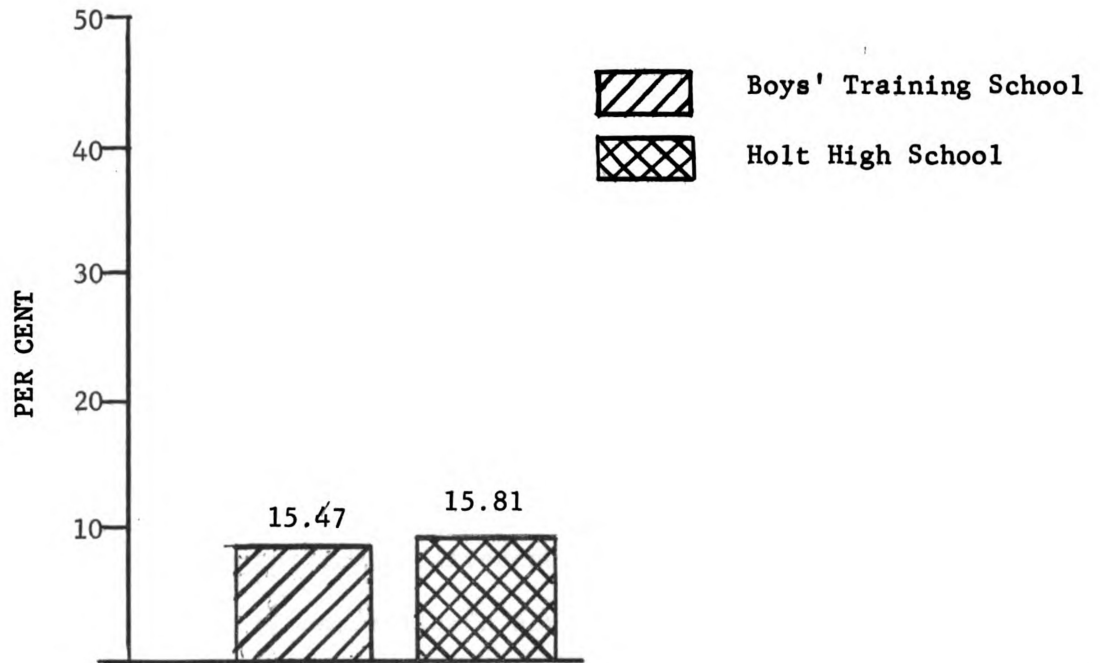


Fig. 2.--Mean percentage of dissyllabic words comprising total verbal output of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.

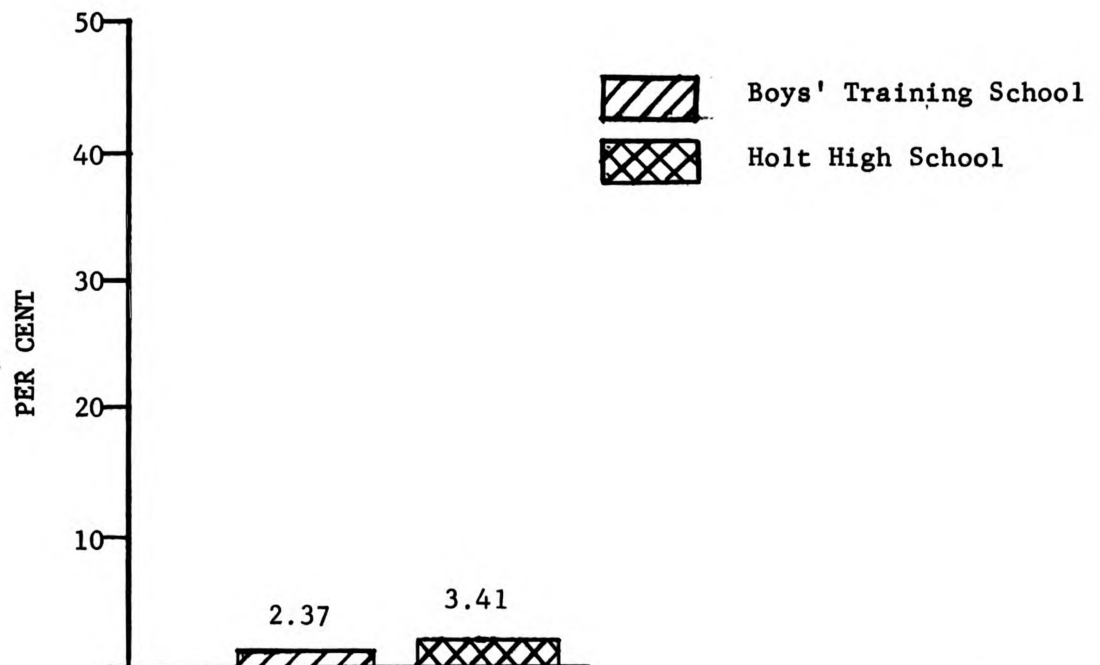


Fig. 3.--Mean percentage of trisyllabic words comprising total verbal output of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.



no significant difference between mean number of trisyllabic words used by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects is therefore rejected at the one per cent level of confidence. Figure 3 shows that the mean per cent of trisyllabic words used by the non-delinquent subjects was 3.41 and 2.37 for the delinquent subjects.

The above findings indicate that verbal abilities of the non-delinquent subjects were superior to those of the delinquent subjects. Significant differences in favor of the non-delinquent subjects were found for total verbal output and mean number of two and three syllable words uttered. Non-significant differences were found for type-token ratio and mean number of monosyllabic words used. The fact that a non-significant difference was obtained for the latter measure is noteworthy when the reader recalls that significantly more words were spoken by the non-delinquent subjects.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### Summary

The juvenile delinquent has been compared to the non-delinquent in nearly all aspects of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social growth and development. Language performance, influenced by all of these, is rarely mentioned in the literature. The possibilities for research in this area are thus promising and numerous.

The purpose of this study has been to determine whether a difference exists in language abilities of the one-hundred delinquent and one-hundred non-delinquent subjects seen. Language comparisons were made in terms of total number of words, ratio of different words to total words, and number of one, two, and three syllable words utilized in telling a story about each of two Thematic Apperception Test pictures shown to the subjects.

The delinquent boys were institutionalized at Michigan's Boys' Training School. The non-delinquent subjects were enrolled in a public high school near Lansing.

#### Conclusions

The findings of this study have indicated that the delinquent subjects utilized fewer total words and fewer polysyllabic words in their stories than did the non-delinquent subjects. No significant difference between the two groups was shown in regard to vocabulary

flexibility, however it will be recalled that the non-delinquent subjects utilized more words and hence there was a greater possibility of repetition. Significant differences were not found in mean number of monosyllabic words used by the two groups. This too is of interest when total verbal output for both groups is compared.

It is not possible to state specific reasons for the differences found. A review of the literature concerning juvenile delinquency indicates that a combination of factors may well be responsible. Poor family relationships, low socio-economic status, and a concomitant lack of interest in academic endeavors may all be contributing elements. All have been shown to be closely related to language development.

Conclusions of the study are:

1. The measures employed, comparison of (a) total verbal output, (b) type-token ratio, and (c) number of mono-, di-, and trisyllabic words utilized, are effective in quantitatively expressing certain differences among samples of spoken language.
2. There are differences in language performance between groups of delinquent and non-delinquent subjects. The language performance of the non-delinquent subjects was shown to be superior in terms of their greater total verbal output and utilization of more polysyllabic words.

#### Implications for Future Research

This study has been limited to analysis of only a few of the many possible elements of language amenable to investigation through quantitative measurements. Answers to the following questions might also reveal the existence of language differences between delinquent and

non-delinquent groups.

1. Is there a difference in the number of egocentric references made by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects in a given language sample?
2. How frequently do the most often and least often used words in English occur in language samples of delinquent and non-delinquent groups?
3. Is there a difference in the relative frequency of occurrence of certain parts of speech utilized in a given language sample by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects?

Through language, a person reveals a great deal about himself and his background. Answers to these questions would provide a more complete knowledge of the delinquent and non-delinquent and their respective language performances.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST

A description of the paired Thematic Apperception Test pictures is listed below.<sup>1</sup> On the back of each picture is a number. The number refers to the order in which the card is to be shown to the subject. The letter appearing on some cards refers to the age and sex group for which it is best suited--"B"-boy, "G"-girl, "M"-adult male, "F"-adult female. Those without a letter are suitable for any age level and either sex.<sup>2</sup>

#### Set 1

Picture #8BM An adolescent boy looks straight out of the picture. The barrel of the rifle is visible at one side, and in the background is the dim scene of a surgical operation, like a reverie-image.

Picture #10 A young woman's head against a man's shoulder.

#### Set 2

Picture #18BM A man is clutched from behind by three hands. The figures of his antagonists are invisible.

Picture #12M A young man is lying on a couch with his eyes closed. Leaning over him is the gaunt form of an elderly man, his hand stretched out above the face of the reclining figure.

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<sup>1</sup>Morris I. Stein, The Thematic Apperception Test (Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Press Inc., 1948), pp. 1-12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



APPENDIX A--ContinuedSet 3

Picture #18GF A woman has her hands squeezed around the throat of another woman whom she appears to be pushing backwards across the banister of a stairway.

Picture #1 A young boy is contemplating a violin which rests on a table in front of him.

Set 4

Picture #17BM A naked man is clinging to a rope. He is in the act of climbing up or down.

Picture #20 The dimly illuminated figure of a man (or woman) in the dead of night leaning against a lamp post.

Set 5

Picture #14 The silhouette of a man (or woman) against a bright window. The rest of the picture is totally black.

Picture #17GF A bridge over water. A female figure leans over the railing. In the background are tall buildings and small figures of men.

## APPENDIX B

### INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions were given to each subject before the first picture was shown to him.

I am going to show you two pictures and I want you to use your imagination and make up a story about each one. It can be any kind of story you like. You can tell me who the people are, what they are doing, what is going to happen etc. Make your story as exciting as you can and talk as long as you can about the picture.

## APPENDIX C

### RAW DATA

Space and time factors make it impractical to include the volume of raw data collected. Appearing on the following pages however, are sample stories as related by delinquent and non-delinquent subjects.

#### Boys' Training School

##### Set 1

Picture #8BM As the man lays on the operating table with two men, doctors working feverishly over his inert body, trying to restore the life which has been drained, draining from his body. After hours on the operating table, his body still lays there with just, oh, let's see, a minimum of life left within him. As his heart pulsates with the few seconds which seem to remain in his body, the doctors fight for his life, trying to retain what might be lost, to restore to this man and possibly his wife and children or what other loved ones he may have to keep him living so he may go on being loved one of these he has. As people wait in the waiting room for this man to find out whether he will survive or whether he will not live through this moment which means so much to everyone waiting and those who participate in this operation. The survival of this man may mean something to someone and even more to many others, and to others he may mean nothing. Probably to these doctors it means a great deal for it is another successful operation which has been performed for the extension

APPENDIX C--Continued

of human life which will in time lengthen and lengthen the human life so that man may go on living and enjoy the greatest part of which this earth has to bestow upon man.

Picture #10 A man has been in prison for five years. He is returning home to his loved ones, at least the ones that he loves. Will he be accepted in his neighborhood, by his friends or ex-friends? What will his children say? What will his mother say? His parents. What will he do when he returns to civilization or at least the outside world? Will he accept the outside circumstances which will confront him and which he will have to confront one way or the other. He has to, for if he does not, he will not survive in the outside world. He must not go back to the old ways of living for they will send him back to where he has just been released from. This is his chance to try and make good, and he must make good of it. He will be on probation for a length of time. He is returning home to try and straighten out and keep away from the penitentiaries and big-time operations which he has just spent time for. Will he get a job? Will he work? Will he be a drunk? Will he go on to dope? How will he take care of these many propositions which will be, will be thrown in front of him which he'll have to handle one way or the other. After being released from a prison, you walk out; what's it like when you first go on the outside, the first time you get to do something on your own. After not being trusted for a period of time, you don't know what to do first, or do you? Do you go back to what you used to do, the guys on the corners, the pool halls, beer gardens. Where do you go? Or do you go home and try to start over? Do you look for a job, go to school, or do you go and find a way to get a fast buck? These are some decisions which will have to be

APPENDIX C--Continued

made by any ex-convict, prisoner or inmate of any such institution which there are millions of people--maybe not millions, but thousands and thousands of people at least in the United States which will be confronted with many of these propositions at one time or another when they are released from such institutions. What will they do?

Set 2

Picture #18BM This story, well, now let's see. This story happened on a street. This man ran down a street stabbin' people. The police grabbed him; they caught him and put him in jail.

Picture #12M This story happened in a man's house. This man tried to kill, kill another man. He snuck up on him through the night and choked him, then he couldn't kill him that way 'cause the man was too fierce, then the man threw a pillow over the other man's head and choked, and smothered him. That's all. Then the police came and arrested him and put him in jail. Then the man went up to Jackson Prison.

Set 3

Picture #18GF Mother, don't die, please don't die, I will call ambulance soon, and he took the daughter to the hospital, she goes have an, she get an operation. Next day her mother came, talked to her for a while, and doctor came say you will be coming out few days, go home. She went home for a little while and laid in bed for a while. She started to walk around for a while. Mother helped her walk around the house, and few days she be walking around by herself.

Picture #1 This boy is looking at violin, he like, wish he like to play it. He can't very much. He may like to learn to read, to play the

APPENDIX C--Continued

violin. When he goes home, his mama helps him play the violin, and every day he goes to school, a man helps him read, to play the violin, then he goes home, his mama helps him again, every day his mama and dad helps him play the violin.

Set 4

Picture #17BM He's in a gym climbing a rope. He's climbing high, then he start and comes down, he looks, he thinking that he may fall, then he looks around to see if anybody's bothering the rope, then he stops and he starts coming down. He came down all the way. That's all.

Picture #20 It's a man waiting on the corner waiting for somebody to go by to rob her. He covers up his face, stands on a dark corner, nobody sees him, he walks by. Then he starts, then he robs them. Then after that the person who he robs, the man runs, then he goes back by the corner to see if the person is still there, and the person wasn't there.

Set 5

Picture #14 It's a guy here looks like my friend that, uh, when we got in an alley, we got in a fight, and then we jumped in this place and pulled up a little robbery, and then the guy comes over there, so we drop everything, leave it there; one the guys almost got caught, so we, what do you call it, jumped up the window, and that guy didn't make it 'cause that guy caught him. He was gonna call the police, and that's when we went back in there and helped him out. He climbs back out the window with us. That guy recognized that guy and pressed charges 'cause we, what you call it, came back and gave him all his stuff back. That's all there was to it, then we took off like down the alley again.

APPENDIX C--Continued

Picture #17GF That top guy up there reminds me of that cop that I saw when we took off from B. T. S., 'cept they caught us a half an hour later, took both, my friend was under the bridge, so was I. Somebody spotted us, I guess. Called the cops, and then my friend goes to go down the bridge, and then the cop goes over there sees him, so guess he calls a squad car, and they all came over there and went and surround the place, and then that cop, my friend starts running, and I go round and then the cop goes up there, puts his hand up there and says, "Halt." Us guys, they wanted to run, and they wanted to get, and he look like he's going to shoot us, so we do nothing; we just stood there, and then my friend had the knife. I don't keep it with me 'cause it was a rusty knife we found on our way, and that cop just took us, that guy threw down the knife, and took us there and brought us back here again. Then we go into five, locked up until, what do you call, Friday, Friday, Friday night at eight-thirty they let us go back to our cottage. Both in the same cottage, too. That's all my friend and me did.

Holt High SchoolSet 1

Picture #8BM My story is about Al Capone and one of his roughest competitors which Al Cappone shot and was hurt bad. They thought he was going to die, but they called in a doctor, and the doctor operated and took the bullet out, and they did not let the doctor go. They kept the doctor, and the doctor became one of the gang, and any time one would get shot, he would operate and take the bullet out, and finally he got shot himself, and nobody could get the bullet out. The doctor's name was Matt Dillon, and he was from Dodge City. And after he deceased,

APPENDIX C--Continued

he came back and operated with another doctor.

Picture #10 This story takes place in Holt Senior High School in Holt, Michigan, a little hick town right outside Lansing. This story is about a professor, a teacher that is twenty-five year old, that is twenty-five years old, and another teacher that is twenty-four. One of them teach home ec. and one teaches shop. Neither one of these teachers are married, and they like each other very much but do not associate very much with each other because they are teachers at Holt High School, and they don't want any of their students to get a bad impression on them. So they don't see each other very much. Once in a while they go out with each other, but not very often. When they do go out together, they go out on a show or just out to eat.

Set 2

Picture #18BM He was going to a party of some sort, and he was on his way home a back way, and as he was passing through an alley, somebody has stepped out and seized him from behind. Being as he was at a party, he was a little bit tipsy for he had previously indulged, and I would say that someone was going to possibly rob or attack him in a physical manner, and after this had taken place, if he was able to, he shall go and turn in a report to the police or local authorities and if possible, find the person and press charges.

Picture #12M The person lying on the couch is a patient who has come to the psychiatrist about some sort of a problem that he has had in his past and keeps occurring at frequent intervals, and he wishes to find out what the problem is and possibly stop it. The doctor has just put him in a trance to possibly review what has happened to him



APPENDIX C--Continued

through his childhood or previously in his life. Upon this hypnotic trance-uh, after putting him in this hypnotic trance, he was wishing-- he was in hopes of finding out something about the patient's past which is possibly concerning to the problem which is occurring to the patient. He will ask various questions and take notes upon the patient's answers, and most likely he will ask for another appointment or require-request another appointment from the patient at a further date and will continue this uh reviewing, and eventually he will find out what is wrong with the patient, and most likely he will help to cure him.

Set 3

Picture #18GF This lady just hit her head, and she fell down the steps, and this other woman is trying to save her life with artificial respiration because the breathing passage is clogged, and she could die, and this lady is getting pale and blue, and she was on her way downstairs because she was going to a party, and as she came down, she tripped over a roller skate which her brother had left on the stairs. Her brother should learn to be more careful. It's not that he--it's just that he has too many--problems in his personality structure, which makes it very hard for him to deceive a decision in intensified emotional stress, which means that he isn't very bright, leaving his skates on the stairs. If this girl should die, it seems like he'd have quite a burden on his shoulders because that would leave a scar on his mind, knowing that his sister died because of his roller skates being on the steps, and she tripped over them and uh and was unconscious.

Picture #1 This boy is unhappy because he has to take his violin lessons at two o'clock, and that's the time that all the rest of the boys go out and play softball, and he is very upset because the rest

APPENDIX C--Continued

of the gang is waiting for him, and his teacher is waiting, but he is trying to decide whether he should go and play with the boys or go to his violin lesson. If he doesn't take his violin lessons, the teacher will uh be very mad, and so will his parents, but if he does take his violin lessons, the rest of the gang will be very upset because he didn't show up.

Set 4

Picture #17BM John Doe, he got up this morning as usual, ate his breakfast, went to see his--but it was O.K., you know, wide awake, everything, and as soon as he got through with his breakfast, he went out and started for school, happy-go-lucky, didn't have too many cares in the world, and being having a beautiful body, as he has, strong, good physique, he just walked nonchalantly and let all the girls look at him, and when he reached school, he went through the day as he normally did, not caring too much about his studies but just getting through, and as he comes as the end of the day comes, he went out and practiced for track or for rope climbing, and being the best on the team, he felt quite confident that he didn't have anything to worry about, and they had a track meet that night, so he got himself in shape and ready and got a good rub-down and didn't have too many cares 'cause he thought he could beat everybody, but as time came he had a slight pain in his shoulder, but he thought nothing of it; thought he was too good to be beaten by anybody, so as the other team came, he got ready, and as it came time for him to climb the rope, he got all set and started to go up the rope as fast as he could. As he got about half way up, he sort of snickered and all of a sudden a pain shot into his arm, and he couldn't go up anymore. He tried and tried and tried, but he just couldn't. So with a disgusted

APPENDIX C--Continued

look on his face, he came down and sort of walked away with disgrace in his mind, but he didn't seem to care too much 'cause he felt that it wasn't his fault that he did it. So he went away. The next day they had another meet, and this day he'd had ointment rubbed on his shoulders, so he went up the rope, and he took the meet. He felt quite a bit better about it. So that's the story about John.

Picture #20 Do you know what it's like to walk through the nights as a street cleaner? Nobody to talk to, nothing to say, and try to clean something up, especially in the winter time. Well, this man has this problem. He'd walk through the streets; he'd do nothing but work, nobody to talk to, and his only comfort was a street light a street light on the corner of Maple and Vine. He'd go there every time at five o'clock, the same time every day, and he'd go to the street light, and he'd talk to it. It didn't talk back, but still he'd talk to it. He'd talk and talk; he'd tell it all his problems, all his wishes, and then when he'd get through, he'd go on with his work, and he'd work and he'd work, and he'd work, and the next night he'd come back again and do the same thing over and over again. Well, one night as he came, his street light was out, and he wondered what happened, and so he climbed up to see if the light was burned out and the light was O.K. so he went down; he started talking to it, and he asked it what happened, and surprisingly, the street light talked back to him, and he said I'm not broke, I'm just tired. I shine every night, do the same thing every night and every night. I just want to be different, so I'm off tonight. So the street cleaner, he said it was O.K., so he sat there and talked to the street light for a long time. Finally, he talked a little too long, so he got up, and he hustled around and did his work, cleaned some more streets.

APPENDIX C--Continued

The next night, sure enough, when he came back, the street light was on. So he was quite happy with himself, and so that's the story.

Set 5

Picture #14 The night was cool, the stars were out, shining brightly; John was studying in his bedroom. As he sat there, it seemed to him as if there were a strange power compelling him to go to his bedroom window, open it and look out into the star-filled sky. He got up slowly, walked to the window and looked out. It was a beautiful star-light night. He could see for miles in any direction. As he glanced up at the heavens, he thought of the great space conquest which was taking place. His dearest dream was to become one of the astronauts. As he watched the heavens, he saw a small flash of light in the distance. It grew larger and seemed to be coming nearer to him. As he watched, it suddenly materialized into a strange-looking space craft. It settled in a field at the rear of the house. As he watched, the entire field suddenly erupted into flame. Startled, he turned, ran downstairs and woke his parents. They rushed out of the house and out into the back yard. When they arrived there, the strange-looking craft had completely disintegrated, and there was no sign of it and that's the end of my story.

Picture #17GF The story takes place in South Carolina in the middle eighteen hundreds. A boat loaded with cotton had just come to the harbor at Charleston, South Carolina. The slaves were shouldering the heavy bundles and walking slowly tediously along the wharf. The sun was beating down upon them, and it was exceedingly difficult for them to even move in the sweltering heat. One tall, old Negro was having

APPENDIX C--Continued

extreme difficulty with his heavy burden. As he stumbled along the dock, the overseer continually goaded him on, at times using his whip. He kept walking, slowly, falteringly. His mind was anywhere else but in this miserable hole. He stumbled and fell, and suddenly everything was cool and peaceful and a beautiful, beautiful day. He saw himself standing up, tall and erect, not as a young man--not as an old man, rather, but as a young man. He felt refreshed, eager. Looking ahead, he saw uh a large bridge which seemed to arch upward. He couldn't see the end of it, but it kept going higher and higher. He stood up . . . . (End of three minutes).

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