

**The concept and lived experience of the notion of ‘cool’ for myself and  
for young adolescents: In-between life-writing and interpretive study**

**Robert Head  
Faculty of Education  
University of Ottawa**



*Photo: Robert Head, Parlee Beach, Moncton, NB, c. 1984. (Collection: Robert Head)*

**~ A thesis and bio-ecological album ~**

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for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

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## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

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## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

### **Dedication**

This thesis [and my Master of Arts in Education degree, for that matter] is dedicated to Margaret Hourston, Eric Chen and Corey Mitchell. We are a family of lifelong learners - whose support for each other makes the shared journey immeasurably worthwhile.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

### Abstract

Autobiographical life-writing as literary métissage about cool through stories grounded in auto-ethnographic reflection as a|r|t|ographer. An act of literary sharing. A past to present summed up as parts, as portraits or vignettes, building towards an attempted understanding of cool. Introspective reflection on cool supported by photographs, drawing, paintings, and poetry. A consideration of Franco Ontarian minority language secondary school population adolescent conceptions and notions of cool (Drolet et al, 2009). An inquiry into cool presented as a bio-ecological album (Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994). A life-long journey from developing childhood cool to middle school cachet cool to high school contrarian cool to old school cool. Childhood to contrarian to cachet to Bieber’d [fucked] to adult cool. Historical cool. What is cool?

*Thesis Advisor:*                      *Professor Raymond Leblanc*

*Committee Members:*              *Professor Cynthia Morawski*

*Professor Patricia Palulis*

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## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

**Table of Contents**

<b>Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Carl Leggo Poem.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Chapter One: Review of the Literature/Historical Perspective(s) .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cool Rules .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Aesthetic of the COOL .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Coolness .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>‘Cool Boys’, ‘Party Animals’, ‘Squids’ and ‘Poofers’ .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Mucking Around in Class, Giving Crap, and Acting Cool: Adolescent Boys     Enacting Masculinities at School .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>War, Guns and Cool, Tough Things: Interrogating Single-Sex Classes as a     Strategy for Engaging Boys in English .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Staying Cool across the First Year of Middle School .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Status and Gender Differences in Early Adolescents’ Descriptions of     Popularity .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>To Be ‘Cool’ or not to be ‘Cool’: Young People’s Insights on Consumption     and Social Issues in Rio de Janeiro .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Coolness: An Empirical Investigation .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter Three: Presentation of Finding Secondary Data Analysis.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Definition of Themes According to Leblanc &amp; Alphonse (2013).....</b>	<b>16</b>

The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

<b>Key Quotes from Each Category and Discussion .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>From Drolet to Bronfenbrenner: A Juxtapositioning .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Chapter Four: Life Writing .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Contrarian Detachment Cool-y Disentangling .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Surviving Through Cool .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Cool Can Re-Invent .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>The World Had James Dean, But I Had Uncle Mike! .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Fashion Cool.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Pop Culture Cool .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>School Cool.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Family Cool .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Hippy Cool .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Kenworth Cool.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Book Cool .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Cool Moves Forward .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Chapter Five: Conclusion.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Academic Cool .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Life Writing Cool.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>A r t ographic Cool .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Peer-Reviewed and Book Cool .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Limitations and Cool.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Journey of cool.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>In conclusion of Cool .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A: Chart – Anatomical History of Cool .....</b>	<b>60</b>

The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

<b>Appendix B: Table 1.1 Observed Frequencies .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Appendix C: Table 1.2 Coolness Adjectives .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>Appendix D: Dictionary .....</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Appendix E: Direct Verbatim Transcribed Responses by Participants .....</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Appendix F: Letter from Dr. Drolet .....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix G: Ethics Approval .....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix H: Secondary Data Codification Chart .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendix I: Secondary Data Schema .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Appendix J: Data Analysis – Coding: Cross-Referencing .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>Appendix K: Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) Ecological Model of Human Development Theory .....</b>	<b>84</b>
 <b>Figures</b>	
<b>Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner Model .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Figure 2.1: Cool Characterised.....</b>	<b>15</b>
 <b>Photo Credits.....</b>	 <b>86</b>
 <b>Endnotes.....</b>	 <b>88</b>

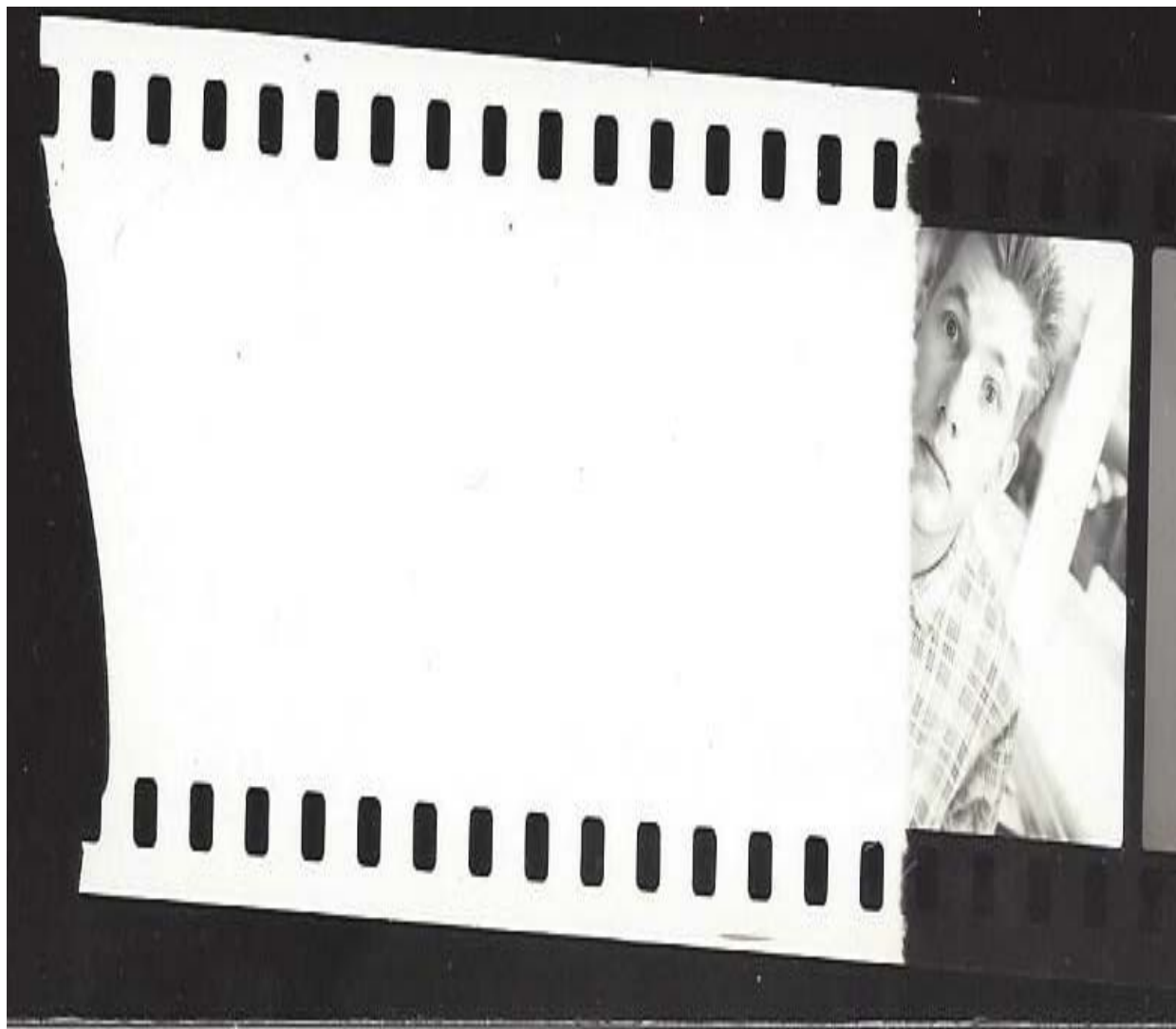
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**Too Personal!?**

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**Carl Leggo<sup>1</sup>**

I submitted my new collection of poems,  
*I Do Not Find It Easy to Be a Human Being*,  
to a publisher, and he responded, your poems  
are “too personal in nature to market successfully.”  
Too personal!?!? I took his rejection personally,  
especially because I know my poems aren't personal.  
They are impersonations, semblances of persona,  
traces of the person that is really invisible except  
for the swathes of language like bandage that  
disclose shape, an outline, a simulacra in Lycra.



**Photo: Overexposed. 1984/2014.**

**(Collection Robert Head)**

Taken in 1984, this photo lay lost in a box of negatives and proof sheets, until re|discovered in 2014. The look and fashion both belonged to cool then, and now. Perhaps overexposed and under-developed - speaking to the pursuit of coolness. Almost Bieber'd.

## Introduction

This thesis is as much an album as it is a monograph. The whole idea of writing a monograph was not what I set out to do when first approaching my research topic. It evolved from what I thought was going to be a thesis by article. And the evolution has been transformative for me as researcher and writer.

The literature on the concept of cool presented challenges. I found myself oppositionally mired with some of it. Upon reading and re-reading, and then reading again, I read past superficial or general texts, sinking my intellectual and academic claws and teeth into the threaded sinews of cool book cool and ink-gut articles on cool.

This thesis is like an *album*, for me: I share parts of my story, through a bio-ecologically founded re-telling. Other stories. Photos. Poetry. Paintings. Photos of Paintings. Paintings of Photos. Dreams in words. Words in dreams. Old Recordings. Recordings of the Old through art | e | - | facts. Presentation Photograph type albums are a component of my planned thesis defense.

Architecturally, this thesis is a monograph. It speaks to the concept and notion of “cool”, theoretically considering Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) and reviewing Drolet et al. (2009), gathering as it goes from an abstract to a Carl Leggo (Leggo, Hesebe-Ludt & Chambers, 2009) poem, then an introduction, an historical perspective through a review of the literature, a theoretical framework of systems of human development and “cool” development, the bio-ecology of human development, a presentation of findings from a “cool” study (Drolet et al., 2009) which explores theory and practice, connections and disconnections, interweaving participant interviews with qualitative data, a life-writing journey shared as a chronos of my “cool”, an interwoven album of cool through art, an in|conclusion discussing limitations and opined summations, to a winding end of end notes that are also intended as a further means to open up to musings, mutterings, and gob-stoppering cool-block-chipped chips of cool.

This thesis is a celebration of cool. An in-between space, of myself, of cool, of research speaking to cool, and of the reader. After all, we are each of us in-between, somewhere. Cooly.

In thinking about the methodology for this thesis, traditional approaches and constructs seemed to not present a best-fit approach. The research, by way of an experience of life writing and a secondary data analysis through interpretive study, framed by systems and themes, informed a different pathway – and that is what has been followed.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photo: Ubiquitously-cool in Jackie-O shades, c.1967. Moncton, NB. Spending vacation time at the seashore, sorting sea shells... (Collection: Robert Head)**

“I got my first sunglasses when I was about 13”, said Dar-Nimrod, “There wasn't a cooler kid on the block for the next few days. I was looking cool because I was distant from people. My emotions were not something they could read. I put a filter between me and everyone else. That, in my mind, made me cool.”

*Dar-Nimrod (University of Rochester  
Medical Centre Newsroom, June 07, 2012)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

By starting with the poem, “Too Personal!?”, by Carl Leggo, the reader is invited to consider that even in life-writing, we are not ourselves, and we are also the reader insofar as they consider what they are reading and experiencing to mean to them. The plasticene nature of perspective, and of interpretation, tugs at us, and takes us in directions we might not expect or imagine. And so, personally, the reader is invited to poke at the material before them, to make it their own, and from that, knowingly or not, pass it along to someone else. That is the impersonality of what is personal.

This introduction speaks of an architecture, to the flow of information and ideas, and to the ideas that led to the structure of the project, and to methodology.

The presentation of the Literature Review in Chapter I speaks to an historical context of Cool, where in reviewing the past, in a wider context, it may be more accessible, providing stepping stones for the work that follows.

The theoretical framework presented in Chapter II considers systems of human development, which are then, having been brought into the research equation, accessible as consideration for better understanding the developmental situations of the participants in the Drolet et al. (2009) study presented in Chapter III. This supports Bronfenbrenner, allowing, perhaps, for connections between the systems and themes to be made. Once those connections are made, then a more robust investment of understanding may be possible for Chapter IV, where life-writing takes literary centre-stage.

We all experience experiencing differently. Some people are more visual, some tactile, some more verbal, and so on – each one of us experiences the world uniquely. As an “overexposed” participant, the author presents Cool through a collection of interspersed bio-ecological visual presentations, through a sharing of photographs, poetry, and other art, as supported by linking research. Through sharing, we are exposed. And through that exposure, our sense of self is understood by others, which helps create our self-image, for ourselves and others. By including this chapter after the life-writing exercise, the reader is able to perhaps glimpse more exactly the author’s perspective, having first been able to more minutely enjoy the experience from their own perspective.

The conclusion follows. Yet the journey does not end there. Some important considerations follow in appendices and endnotes – presented there so as to have not prejudiced the reader more than necessary, as has necessarily happened through the act of being a reader. A



**Photo: The currency of cool at 5 years old – 1967: Lone-Ranger shirt and wing tips**

**(Collection: Robert Head)**

The lone wolf, James Dean, the solitary hero – “For social purposes we try to be cool and collected”

*Erber, Theriault, Wegner (1996, p.757)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

### Chapter I: Review of literature

Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?

*...you're like born with it...*

(Drolet et al., 2009)

#### Cool Rules

Scholarly literature on the theme of cool, such as Pountain & Robbins' (2000) seminal book, whose origins lay not in any particular study of 'cool', but rather in considerations of generational differences in musical tastes, is scant. Much of the earlier research that exists on 'cool' conflates concepts of cool with investigations of adolescent risk. It can be challenging to pick through literature that speaks of cool when studying other social questions – this clutter creates research challenges.

It is the more recent research found that speaks directly to cool, as a theme, as a social phenomenon, and as literature that speaks to components of adolescent identity. Pountain and Robbins claim that their book is the 'first to establish Cool as a cultural category in its own right' (Pountain & Robbins, 2000, p. 11) and begs the question, “Why?” Cool, it seems, has been with us for a long time, and so why has it taken so long to speak to it? The plan of this chapter, then, is to review the literature that speaks to cool, for which two key books (Pountain & Robbins, 2000; Thompson, 2011) and eight key studies have been identified (Harris, 1999; Martino, 1999, 2000, 2002; Closson, 2008; Bellemore et al., 2011; Pedrozo, 2011; Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012).

The Pountain and Robbins (2000) book, 'Cool Rules, Anatomy of an Attitude', by way of illustration, provides a charted timeline of cool – an “anatomical history of cool” (See: Appendix A). This map considers cool from Europe, the Americas and Africa. While it describes origins as long ago as 1000 AD, there is no claim that this is a definite date of the origin for Cool – that it may well *pre-date* that. Cool has spread through and across cultures, into virtually every corner of society.

Pountain and Robbins (2000) book considers Cool's origins, the looks, relations, psyche and rules. Peppered with images of cool, smartly explaining that “...Shades will always be cool” (p. 14); “Cool likes to live dangerously...” (p. 20); “...Masks can convey ferocity and a 'cool face' in the presence of danger...” (p. 36); “I play it cool|And dig all jive” (p. 41); James Dean is “...Cool's first martyr and saint” (p. 64); The inadvertent Black Panther cool of “...making Cool icons out of black berets and shades” (p. 95); That “Cool values personal freedom ... is egalitarian and hedonistic in temperament, but is fascinated with violence, drugs and criminality...” (p. 179).

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

For Pountain and Robbins (2000), cool is a cycle of renewal and re-use. New arbiters of cool are tasked with transforming the cool of the previous arbiters. The art and aesthetics, the sounds and generational soliloquys of cool slap against the old ‘cool’, and mesosystemically link the expressed systems of cool, with thin membraned walls separating what was and is now newly minted cool. The rules of cool are fluid, and cool does rule. There is no one universal in and out of cool; it is unique and different at the same time, in different cultures, at different times. The posture of cool changes, feet planted firmly in the shifting sands of now.

The Pountain and Robbins (2000) book, while perhaps seminal, is not all that can be found on ‘cool. There are books and studies which look at psychological considerations of cool such as self-identity, behaviour, and aggression, for example, while speaking of "cool", perhaps more indirectly or casually.

Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?

*...Je suppose que parfois vous pourriez dire leurs note...*

(Drolet et al., 2009)

### **Aesthetic of the COOL**

The Thompson book, "Aesthetic of the COOL" (2011), focuses on cool in the context of African-Atlantic art and music, where he is described by Gloria Kury as using "*an ancient term, 'cool', to describe the balance of ...percussive performance, polymetric dance, apart playing and dancing*" (p. vi). This historical perspective of cool is important to consider for contextualizing cool for adolescents. With a Kerouacian sense of drive and distance, with a storied journey that winds from Texas to Nigeria to the Caribbean to Brazil to Argentina and onward, Thompson's insights on race relations, black culture, class, intellectual boundaries, and their aesthetics are considerable. The story-telling of cool is all around us, Thompson reinforces. And so it goes. Thompson is a declared Joycean and Barnesian devotee, and his intellectual movements negotiate cool, as he describes this *undefinable thing*, as early as 1966 in *African Forum*, as "coolness". In his articles speaking to "the cool", Thompson discusses philosophy and cultural practices as linked to temperament, demeanour, conditions of place and territory, productions of "luster and/or luminosity" (p. ix). For Thompson, there is a "continuity of change" for this cool, this "indelible cultural code" (p. ix). He connects the mambo and salsa of the South Americas to hip-hop, and fuses "dance-music-painting-song-and spirit" (p. xi). Cool is situated in a larger socio-historicized context that gives face and form to this most ancient term. Cool is not new.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

There are new expressions and perceptions of cool. The literature of cool is emergent, though cool literature has been around a long time, and all of this both informs and questions, feeding just as surely as it creates new spaces for conversations of academic inquiry to take place.

*Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?*

*...Vous pourriez envisager de quelqu'un cool en voyant la façon dont ils s'habillent...*

*(Drolet et al., 2009)*

### Coolness

The Harris (1999) article, “Coolness”, says that “Coolness is an aesthetic of the street, a style of deportment specifically designed to alert potential predators of one’s impregnability to assault...such coolness grows out of a sense of threat where one’s equanimity is constantly being challenged...to a hyper masculine folk religion that fetishizes poise and impassivity” (pp. 39-40). This echoes the claims of Martino (1999, 2000) and Bellmore (2011), who speak to the aggressiveness of cool, and the defense of perceived cool by stable cool adolescents and less stable cool adolescents, where cool acts as a “form of aesthetic self-defence, a disguise that fends off aggression through the flamboyant charade of toughness and authority, a truculent insularity that provides psychological camouflage...projecting fearlessness and tranquility amidst danger” (Harris, 1999, p. 40). What of the Bellmore et al. (2011) study participants, who seek to protect their perceived stable cool through aggression, given their self-perception of a weak construct of cool they risk amongst peers? Harris (1999) reminds us that, “One of the appeals of coolness to insecure adolescents is its cultivation of obstreperous ugliness...that...Cool people actively deride conventional notions of physical beauty...the glamour of cool shows...the aesthetic of ugliness” (p.46). This cool-as-ugly cool, perhaps, superficially becomes less desirable to others, and so becomes easier to protect and keep.

*Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?*

*...In my class, they say they are cool when they like ... because they speak English*

*(Drolet et al., 2009)*

### ‘Cool Boys’, ‘Party Animals’, ‘Squids’ and ‘Poofers’

Martino’s (1999) study, “Cool Boys’, ‘Party Animals’, ‘Squids’ and ‘Poofers’”, interrogates the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities at school, and speaks of, “Foucauldian claims about the production of masculinities” (p. 239), and how they can be

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

grouped, in the case of this article, as cool boys, squids, party animals, and poofs. The Australian lexicon, translated into North American adolescent slang, would read as ‘nerds’ for squids and ‘pussies’ for poofers. This language, while used by participants, may seem inflammatory and sensationalistic. And unnecessary. Moving beyond what may be considered a poor lexical framework, Martino explains how his focus on “how the subject constitutes himself within a field or game of truth/power relations” (p. 240) is seminal to his understanding of Foucault. Martino, “highlights determining factors influencing statuses, enable a focus on ways desires are challenged, illustrate the hierarchy of masculinities for his participant population of boys tied to heteronormative peer systems, and then interrogate the normalised hegemonicism of heterosexual and heteronormative practices of masculinities within school contexts” (p. 242). The social dynamics of being a ‘wuss’ or ‘poof’ are deciphered, and we learn that there is a never-ending shuffle of participants ‘hassling someone else’ in order to reposition themselves on the social pecking order. The pejoration of different masculinities is peer group-focused, within the contexts of microsystems and macrosystems of boys on boys. Martino notes that this is a gendered process, and strangely that ‘cool’ boys ‘act dumb’ in order to establish a hegemonic form of masculinity (pp. 250, 251). Martino tells us that it is, “imperative for educators to create spaces for discussing the impact of hegemonic masculinities in school” (p. 259), which supports that he actually writes not as a supporter of hegemonic heteronormative masculinities, but rather as an agent for change, which becomes clearer once the fog of lexical sensationalism is navigated and lifts.

### **Mucking Around in Class, Giving Crap, and Acting Cool: Adolescent Boys Enacting Masculinities at School**

In Martino’s later (2000) article, “Mucking Around in Class, Giving Crap, and Acting Cool: Adolescent Boys Enacting Masculinities at School”, lexicon again includes pejoratives in reported dialogue from interviews with adolescent boys attending a Catholic coeducational high school in Perth, Australia. The inclusion of words such as ‘faggot’ seems to be unnecessary and provocative. While it may affront, it may also encourage a re-reading of his study to better understand what his work is really all about. In re-consideration of his article, we may note that he speaks to ‘the cool pose...in the context of African American Black hyper masculinity’ (p. 102), and, again, using a Foucauldian approach, examines how boys relate in peer groups, using ‘techniques of the self’ and practices of self-surveillance (which he does as a teacher at the boys school while completing a PhD dissertation and related research, interviewing the boys *in situ*).

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Martino shares that his research is informed by Frank (1987), whose article, “Hegemonic heterosexual masculinity”, reminds us that, “Political economy, with its quite recent discovery of gender, and it’s almost total omission of sexuality, is still seriously flawed” (p. 160).

On reading Frank (1987) further, Martino starts to make greater sense, not as a supporter of hegemonic masculinity, but as a researcher seeking to better understand it in order to seek redress. Through his experience of working at a Catholic boarding school, Martino was ‘Deeply immersed in ‘maleness’’, where, “we have developed styles of thought, knowledge, and ways of doing centred around the values, concerns, and emphasis of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity” (p. 166). In his review of Martino’s (2005) book, “Being Normal Is The Only Way To Be”, Fowler (2006) repeats that, “The allegation of homosexuality within the school against an individual is tantamount to excommunication from the primary social group, which entails not just a loss of popularity but also renders the individual a target for teasing and bullying” (p. 329).

Going back to Martino (2000), he speaks of, “a desirable heterosexual cool masculinity”, of “acting cool”, “the imperative to act cool”, “a cool pose, disrupting classes or working hard at not ‘looking geekish’”, how, “they think it’s cool to muck around”, “they were like some sort of rebels”, “being cool involved giving crap and getting a laugh” (Martino, 2000, pp. 103, 104, 105, 107). Summarily, Martino tells us that “educators need to capitalize on boys’ already developed skills and capacities for self-problematisation and use these ‘techniques of the self’ to help boys to interrogate masculinities in their lives at school” (p. 110). Martino hopes that educators will re-examine the hegemonic heterosexual masculinities role as supported de facto lead in [male] adolescent social peer group development. Frank (1987), speaks of hegemonic heterosexual masculinities as, “Gender obedience...a social product embodied by individual men in...themes of competition with other men, the exploitation and subordination of women and other men, and homophobia...is socially constructed and socially imposed...because...there exists the possibility of change” (p. 161).

### **War, Guns and Cool, Tough Things: Interrogating single-sex classes as a strategy for engaging boys in English**

When reading Martino’s (2002) article, “War, Guns and Cool, Tough Things: Interrogating single-sex classes as a strategy for engaging boys in English”, we can read that Martino does not suggest a return to the hegemonic heteronormative architecture of a same-sex peer group learning environmen. Martino examines the call for more male role models and

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

single-sex classes in English as a possible way to address lower literacy levels, particularly amongst boys (p. 303). That the absence of boys would allow girls to perhaps feel less ‘harassed’ is duly noted (p. 306), *yet the possibility that some boys might be harassed more is not*. Martino acknowledges that school culture, peer group, cultural, and socio-economic backgrounds influence social and educational outcomes. He allows that such segregationist approaches as same-sex classes might reinforce particular versions of masculinities that are considered less desirable beyond the power structures of heteronormative political ecology. Martino includes that removing the ‘girl problem’ removes the need for ‘behaviours related to emerging heterosexuality from becoming central determinant factors for boys behaviour’, as they seek to impress and be ‘cool’ (p. 311). Martino concludes that the research supports, “developing professional learning communities in schools based on enhancing teacher knowledge of the construction of gender...gender stereotypical behaviours...creating spaces for interrogating and problematizing masculinities in the ...classroom” (p. 321).

*Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?*

*...Vous pourriez aussi envisager quelqu'un cool par leur personnalité...*

*(Drolet et al., 2009)*

### **Staying Cool Across the First Year of Middle School**

Bellmore et al.’s (2011) article, “Staying Cool Across the First Year of Middle School”, examines the extent to which the “maintenance, attainment, and loss of cool status was associated with physical, verbal and relational aggression” (p. 776). High social status, in particular that status associated with ‘coolness’, matters very much during early and general adolescence, given hierarchical peer structures where relationships such as friendships are often determined by peer approval – the gaining, maintaining, and potential loss of such ‘cool’ status can be considered as socially affirming or devastating for adolescents as they seek to form their identities as they perceive them to be, or desire them to become. Coolness, similarly, can be associated with higher levels of aggression, which may differ by gender, as the attainment of higher social status is not necessarily an easy feat, may involve social competition, and may need to be defended against incursions by other adolescents seeking to develop their own currency of cool at another individual’s expense of cool.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?

...*In our school, athletics is a huge thing...*

(Drolet et al., 2009)

### Status and Gender Differences in Early Adolescents' Descriptions of Popularity

Closson (2008) examines what it *means* to be popular, in her article, “Status and Gender Differences in Early Adolescents' Descriptions of Popularity”, using the specific language of cool, athletic, funny, defiant, risky, mean, liked, and attractive. She administered questionnaires to 387 early adolescents (grades 6-8), from three schools, and fairly evenly split by gender. The Closson study observes frequencies which went way beyond those of earlier studies, being far more complex in its treatment of popularity. Even the caveats of limitations are interesting – Closson tells us that “In the lexicon of early adolescents, the term *cool* appeared to be highly related to being popular...it was used by over half of the sample...*Cool* remains to be defined by early adolescents themselves...” (p. 423). And there lies a catalyst for the researcher. While frequently used, *cool* is not well-defined-by early adolescents. As an academic, Closson's logic seems sound; her approach seems to make good sense. Closson's comparatively widened research perspective and lexical consideration of cool is demonstrated in Table 1.1 (See: Appendix B), and not because it quantifies, but rather because it qualifies what early adolescents have to say about cool and components of cool.

There are different types of cool, such as *stable cool* and *unstable cool*. Adolescents can be ‘cool already’ or can ‘become cool’. The Bellmore et al. (2011) study examines this in the context of the classroom, where cool is considered an attribute of popularity. The classroom represents a venue where adolescents gather for extended periods of time daily, within both learning and social contexts. Bellmore et al. finds that the variables of physical, verbal and relational aggression differ between cool groups (*stable cool*, *became cool*, *became not cool*, *stable not cool*). *Stable cool* students are found to most likely be aggressive, followed by *became not cool* students. Limitations of the study include relying on subjective teacher ratings. The primary findings are that preserving cool status throughout the first year of middle school depends on having a reputation for being more aggressive, and that changes in aggression over the school year combined with classroom aggression norms moderated associations for coolness stability. This study is limited to early adolescents and notes the correlation between aggressivity and stable coolness for adolescents. Considering Bellmore, we learn about keeping one's 'cool' and being

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

'cool' when transitioning from elementary to middle school – but what about middle school to high school? Or students whose secondary school experiences do not include middle school, like high schools from grades 7-11/12, as is often the case in Canada?

Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?

*...you have to be humorous...*

(Drolet et al., 2009)

### **To be ‘cool’ or not to be ‘cool’: Young people’s insights on consumption and social issues in Rio de Janeiro**

The consumerist construct of Pedrozo's (2011) cool, in his study, “To be ‘cool’ or not to be ‘cool’: Young people’s insights on consumption and social issues in Rio de Janeiro”, looks at consumption and cool by conducting qualitative research through two types of interviews. The first is a guided approach and the second is a standardised open-ended format of fourteen high school students aged 16-18, in Rio de Janeiro. There is a great divide between the *haves* and *have not's* of a developing economy. Social desirability and social access are sometimes denied a common ground on which an individual adolescent might access the trademarks and icons of status and coolness. These factors may be taken for granted in Western financial and social economies, it is interesting to note what the perceptions of cool are for adolescents from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. Pedrozo’s consumer cache of cool: the wide open flood of cool without rules, flourishes for the study participants. Illegitimate cool or not, this is the cool of Kool cigarettes, of drinking Alcool. What are our cool wants, and are our cool wants cool? While many Western adolescents may think they have a handle on this very notion and conception of cool, they may remain as Pedrozo'd as any adolescents found in Rio de Janeiro. The agency of cool is sometimes premised on the consumerist driven putsch to relegate recently purchased icons of cool to the dustbins of yesterday for the sake of ‘fashion’ or style, which itself is often dictated to consumers by the corporate machinations of production that hope to define what is cool, for their own profit. Like the digital divide, which reflects access to technology between advantaged and disadvantaged adolescents, the cool divide reduces some adolescent’s equal access to agencies of cool. Pedrozo develops that self-perceptions of impeded access to the iconic brands associated with perceived social development may reduce some adolescents’ capacity to fulfill roles in society. Emotional health may be harmed through this denial of self-confidence and self-worth as components of psychological image building, even as narcissistic reflections of coolness.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?

*... You have to be active...*

(Drolet et al., 2009)

### **Coolness: An Empirical Investigation**

There seems to be scant peer-reviewed research-based literature on 'cool'. Some studies stand out, such as Dar-Nimrod et al.'s (2012) large scale survey-based study, “Coolness: An Empirical Investigation”. More than a thousand individuals from the Vancouver, BC area participated in a systematic, quantitative examination of characteristics which occur and recur in current and popular conceptions of notions of cool. The characteristics of cool included social desirability of dimensions of cool and dimensions of coolness for personality in friends. The study speaks to the colloquial coolness and lexical perspective of cool by suggesting, “The appeal of coolness is presumably enhanced by the mysteriousness of what cool actually is” (p. 175). Further, Dar Nimrod et al. tell us that prior research on the content of coolness is inclusive of ‘youthfulness, sexual appetite, risk taking, toughness, masculinity, muted emotion, rebelliousness, and rejection of effortful striving’ – but has yet to systemically and quantitatively outline the key features of coolness, which the study undertakes to accomplish. (p.176). The Dar-Nimrod et al. study is conducted in three phases whereby 1. Participants generate characteristics that they perceived to be cool; 2. Two samples of participants rate dozens of the mentioned characteristics on two dimensions: coolness and perceived social desirability; 3. Participants rate friends on their coolness and on various personality descriptors that are identified as previously relevant in the first and second research phases. Phase 1 of the study provides insight into people’s unprompted understanding of what it is to be cool. This is given by Dar-Nimrod et al. from the 1,639 entries compiled, by frequencies, as a table (See: Appendix C), and here rethought as a poem:

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

*The coolest kids, the hippest teens, it seems.*

*The ones who rule the boosted roost of friendly social popular jocular.*

*Personally competent cooly entranced the jealously lamented fashionably trendy.*

*Current & hip lipped: (s)he’s so cool...*

*Down down the Rock Lobster of going aground uncool*

*like knock offs and cast offs and almost cool or just must just be cool.*

*Awesome teens handsome or hot or not.*

*Individualistic or unique perhaps a geek which does not speak to cool.*

*The flounders of teen cool the wall-eyed wall-flowered prosocially honest and caring not daring.*

*Laughably funny and unfunnily not cool.*

*Brimming with confidence with not a cool chance.*

*Dancing with tears in their eyes, partyers of loneliness under coolless skies.*

*Dar-Nimrod says, people say, teens say. Cool says. Man, that sucks for some. Cool Adj. me. Cool me. P’ease.*

**Robert Head 2015**

Phase 2 of the study, which incorporated two samples – the one being the original sample from the previous phase and the second being an additional 155 students recruited from Introductory Psychology courses, results which indicate significant conceptual overlap between coolness and social desirability, as well as denoting conception of the 14 categories as more coolness or social desirability, except where contrarian coolness is seen to transcend desirability or undesirability.

Phase 3 of the study required participants to rate their friends’ coolness as being active, outward-looking, expressive, status-bolstering, withdrawn, rebellious, and antisocial or contrarian. The results may be read to suggest that ratings of coolness are primarily about peer-relevant social desirability. Of course, who our peers are is of considerable importance to the question. It is interesting that Dar-Nimrod et al. qualifies that no behavioural data was collected, and that “Investigation of how perceptions of coolness affect behaviour is an important next step” (p. 184). This speaks of a disconnect between earlier sociometric research on behaviour and popularity/unpopularity and more current qualitative and quantitative research

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

on coolness.

The literature raises many questions. Many questions about cool remain unanswered or not as yet researched. What influences our decisions about cool? Urie Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical model, “the Bioecological Model of Human Development” (1979, 1994) perhaps speaks to an architecture of influences that may be applied to the perceptions of the conception and notion of cool. There seem to be nested experiences of cool as individuals develop. The literature reviewed represents stepping stones of invitation towards further inquiry.

## Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) theory, “the Bioecological Model of Human Development”, speaks to systems built upon influences moving outwardly from the individual system to technosubsystem, microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem of contextual connectedness, which he later suggests are influenced by a chronosystem of time and history.

I found myself drawn to Bronfenbrenner's framework. Not because it was convenient, but because it reflected Life, and cool, for me, like the irregular rings in a tree. The metamorphosis of “cool”, spreading and encircling the individual, as we progress through one Age or experience of Life to another. Life is very much like rings of experience [although, like relationships, I think they are more bent-concentric than we usually acknowledge].

Thinking about what that experience of Life as a series of bent-concentric rings is really all about, I put it in the context of shared thoughts from participants in the Drolet et al. (2009) study, my own life-writing, and my developing ‘cool album’. There are the basics of demography that need to be acknowledged, even if only insofar as they help us to identify the subjects living their “cool”.

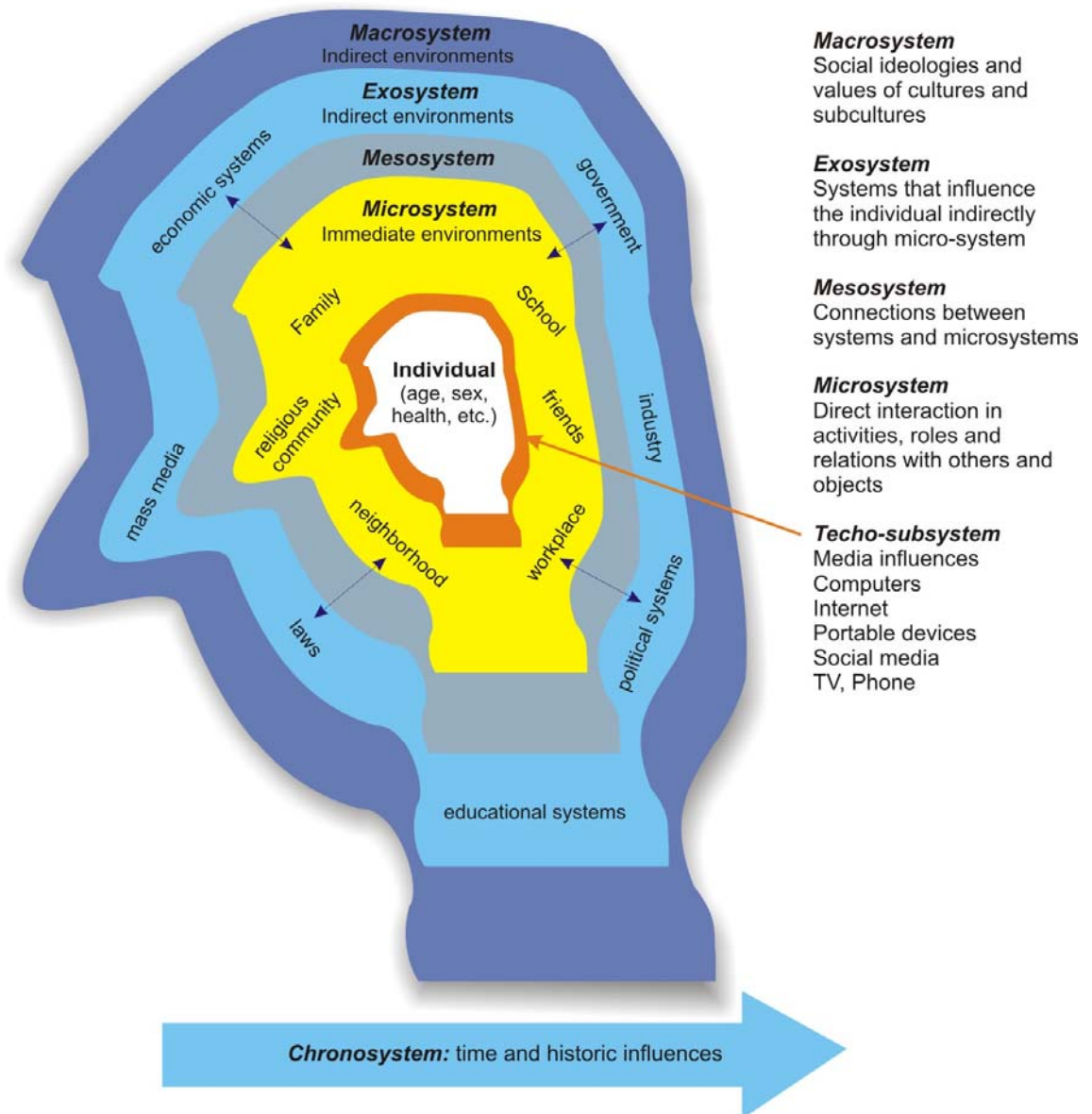
As individual, I am a male, I am now past middle-age, my mental and physical health is reasonably sound, and I do identify myself [willingly or not, in agreement or not, even perhaps lamentably, but without real regret] with a variety of labels. Right and wrong, no matter, these are my perceptions of myself [and some are also those shared or imposed by others], and they inform me as I move forward towards my daily re-interpretation of my own “cool”. The Drolet et al. student participants also represented certain populations, such as Anglophones and Francophones, grade 8 and grade 9 students [at different schools], males and females.

With our self-supposed microsystems, exosystems and mesosystems of family and school and community or neighbourhood influences to macrosystemic cultural conceptions and notions of cool, where do we begin? I began with myself. I then contextualized my life-writing to events and surroundings immediately graspable, techosystemic influencers such as popular culture, iconic television programs, music, and literature. The students in the Drolet et al. study did likewise, speaking of cool in relation to their technosubsystems of sweet onion layered experiences of the world.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994) layered system is culturally variable and suggests that development is influenced by environmental systems, which he identifies as distinct

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

environments: The Individual; Technosubsystem; Microsystem; Mesosystem; Exosystem; Macrosystem; and Chronosystem (See: Appendix K).



**Figure 1.1.** Bronfenbrenner Model.

(Inspired by and copied from Lichtenberger, 2012)

The drawing for Figure 1.1 is inspired from a figure drawn by Drew Lichtenberger<sup>1</sup> (2012), which looks like more of a bull’s-eye representation of development, consisting of circles inside of circles, and systems within the rings of the circles. The text is copied verbatim. I thought about this – and it occurred to me – the circles represent individuals, and so why not include ‘rings of silhouettes’ to represent the individual and systems influencing development?

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

For this purpose, I thought back to a painting I completed in 2002, which was influenced by something I had learned about the 1800’s Western art form of silhouette cutting. Like rings of growth on trees, moving from the ‘smaller’ I to the ‘larger’ I, by the passage of years or development, I thought the representation through silhouette a clearer contextualization, a visually impactful delivery of Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical model.

Our experience of the world informs our relationship to it, and how we choose to respond to experience and information. Cool constructs and is constructed, and thereby informs and is informed by our identities.

Larger connections to less direct larger environments and systems to which we are connected, get made, including mass medias and those systems which financially and socially support our societies, such as industry. How these systems affect and determine and mirror our norms and values as individuals (Technosub|systems) and relationships of individuals (Microsystems) and systems of people and individuals (Exosystems) are also informed by our current ideological perspectives which consider social and sub|cultural values and historical perspectives (Macrosystems).

### Chapter III: Presentation of findings from the Drolet et al. (2009) study, “Les clés de l'adolescence”

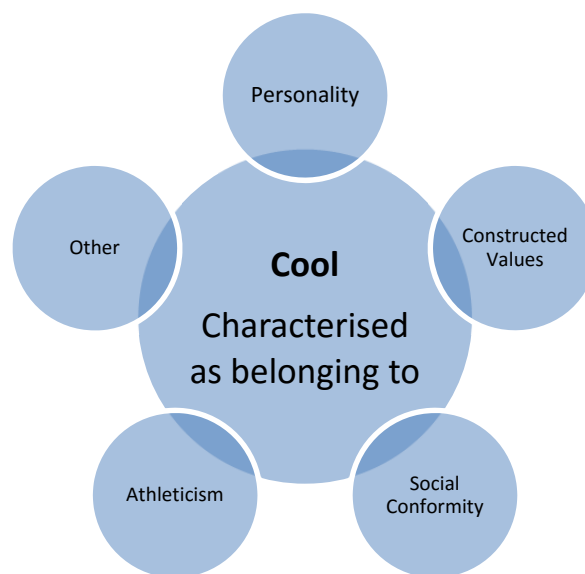
The plan of this chapter is to review the findings of the Drolet et al. (2009) study of risky behaviour amongst adolescents, and to present them qualitatively as secondary data analysis, lensed through Urie Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of human development theory, where the study speaks directly to ‘cool’.

The Drolet et al. study of 16 youths, male and female, in grades 8 and 9 [from several secondary schools], represents Anglophone and Francophone populations within a minority French speaking sector of Eastern Ontario.

The selections are participant responses to being asked “Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool, pour toi/ What makes someone cool for you?”

Of the sixteen (16) participants from the Drolet et al. research project, “Les clés de l'adolescence”, from communities of youths, both Francophones and Anglophones, when they are directly asked, “Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool? / What makes a person cool?”, Participants provide thirty-one (31) entries overall. The emerging themes and definitions of cool were coded by the researchers as belonging to five categories: personality; constructed values; social conformity; athleticism; and other, as represented in Figure 1.2.

#### Codification schemata applied to ‘cool’ as characterised in the Drolet et al. (2009) study



*Figure 1.2. Cool Characterised.*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Some of the raw data from the Drolet et al. study is presented in selected quotes, as whittled from participant interviews, with interpretive observations speaking to findings as emergently coded and to evident aspects of the Bronfenbrenner theoretical model. The raw data through interviews, transcribed in its entirety, follows (See: Appendix B). In both instances – selected quotes are given verbatim, and are translated to/from French/English.

### **Definition of themes according to Leblanc & Alphonse (2013):**

The emergent themes of the Drolet et al. (2009) study, “Les clés de l’adolescence” encompass the descriptive of the five categories, which include personality, constructed values, social conformity and athleticism. We are informed, by Leblanc and Alphonse (2013), that personality is reported by study participants as people being *friendly, fun, nice, drôle, confidant, donner des blagues et jokes, to be smart, to be A students, to perform their best, be creative, act a certain way, do something important/outstanding (nice art), what they did in the past (nice things), à cause de leur personnalité et de leur style, être populaire, avoir beaucoup d’amis, être social*. Still, for constructed values, Leblanc and Alphonse share that study participants named qualities of *être authentique, être soi-même, être mature, qui ne rit pas des autres, pas de bullying, n’être pas effronté, qui ne juge pas les autres, someone who is happy and upbeat, qui se respecte et respecte les autres*. When considering social conformity, we are invited by Leblanc and Alphonse to consider study participant responses indicating *être à la mode, porter de beaux linges, avoir de beaux cheveux, parler Anglais, or être high (faire de la drogue ou fumer)* as being reflective of social conformity. More simply, Leblanc and Alphonse report, athleticism is described as *être sportif* and *être actif*. As given by LeBlanc and Alphonse, study participants also stated that *everybody can be cool in their own way, you cannot judge people, everybody has their own qualities – like their traits, I don’t think people should have labels but they should qualify what they do*.

### **Key quotes from each category and discussion**

#### ***Personality***

*“Hum...[silence] Qu'ils soient eux-memes.”*

*(“Um ... [pause]. They are themselves.”)*

Understanding this dialogue on ‘coolness’ in relation to the Individual within Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1994) theoretical model, this adolescent idealises characteristics of the individual. As well, this same participant appears to speak to individual social ideologies of the

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Macrosystem as encompassing values of learned self-worth and self-expression within the larger context of self-expression within cultures and subcultures.

*“Oh...Je dirais pas mal comme s'ils ont tout le ... s'ils ont du beau linge, beaux cheveux, I guess...Pour moi, cool, tu es comme né avec ça là.”*

*(“Oh...It would not hurt like they have everything...For me, cool; you're like born with it.”)*

It is not clear what determines what ‘cool’ one is born with – ‘Everybody can be cool in their own way’, whatever that implies...a perceived innate “coolness” where “cool” is *natural*... an extension of personality, an expression of the self, and beyond.

### **Constructed Values**

*“...Dans ma classe, ils disent qu'ils sont cool quand ils aiment...parce qu'ils parlent en anglais.”*

*(“...In my class, they say they are cool when they like ... because they speak English.”)*

Some adolescents may find other cultures, languages, and customs cooler than their own. As the individual develops, it can be suggested that interactions within the Microsystem, which expose the Individual to others, can create interest in other groups, which are further explored as they move outwardly into a Mesosystemicism of increased connectivity. An exoticism may be attributed to newly experienced groups by some adolescents, which is expressed as coolness.

*“...Cool? I don't know. Funny, nice, not bullying or anything...”*

*(“...Cool? Je ne sais pas. Drôle, gentil, pas d'intimidation ou quoi que ce soit...”)*

Adolescents speak to “cool” with a whimsical sneer - an “I don't care” attitude. Bullying, on the other hand, is anathema to adolescent cool, supporting Dar-Nimrod's (2012) conclusion that cool has been dislodged from its sometimes violent historical roots. Influenced by the various systems and microsystems, connected by Mesosystems, this contrarianism acts as an insulator while investigating connections and establishing links, like wires from an electrical junction box, threading outwardly, this way and that.

### **Social Conformity**

*“...I guess sometimes you could say their academics... You could consider somebody cool by seeing the way they dress... You could consider them cool*

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

*because of their popularity...”*

*(“...Je suppose que parfois vous pourriez dire leurs notes...Vous pourriez envisager de quelqu'un cool en voyant la façon dont ils s'habillent...Vous pourriez aussi envisager quelqu'un cool par leur personnalité...”)*

Representing an aspect of Social Conformity as theme, fashion is ever-present in adolescent conceptions of cool, it seems. For Bronfenbrenner, this mirrors influences of the Techno-subsystem as a platform for social connectivity. The Chronos of this is what delineates what we sometimes call trends or style periods, which determine the cool of what is ‘in’ and what is ‘out’. What was ‘in’ will go ‘out’, and come back ‘in’ again, eventually, for the most part.

*“...OK, ben ce serait comme la popularité, à notre école...Puis, comme il y a un gars que je connais, ben il est un peu populaire, là, parce qu'il ne va pas rester avec certaines personnes, il va aller de groupe à groupe...”*

*(“...OK, well it would be like popularity, to our school...Like a guy I know, he is a little popular here, and he won't stay with the same people, he changes from group to group...”)*

Adolescents seem aware that “cool” can change and be seen differently, from place to place, group to group. And they seem interested in going from group to group, to try out different “cools”, seeking peer acceptance. This perhaps supports Bronfenbrenner’s theory of human development as being represented by stages of development, as suggested by his systems. Individual adolescents may sort themselves differently, from one group to another, first by groups based on age, sex, gender identification, health or ableness or ability, and then proceed to also sort themselves socially and sub|culturally along more sophisticated and developed lines, subject to review, revision, re-visitation, and processes of experimentation and tentative connectivity from stage to stage. The journey may in fact be concentrically configured like the wheels of a spirograph, with human development and the development of adolescents through their ‘cools’ spiralling and looping throughout.

***Athleticism***

*“...if you like, with our group we play sports and we're good at academics and that's usually what gets you more popular...”*

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

*(“...si vous le souhaitez, avec notre groupe, nous pratiquons des sports et nous sommes bien aux études et c'est généralement ce que vous obtient plus populaire...”)*

Different school cultures foster different concepts of “cool”. As do different students within schools. For Bronfenbrenner’s perspective, this respondent focuses more heavily on aspects of the Microsystem.

*“...In our school, athletics is a huge thing...or you have to be humorous... You have to be active...”*

*(“...Dans notre école, l'athlétisme est une chose énorme...ou vous devez avoir un bon sens de l'humour... Vous devez être actif...”)*

This respondent seems to be speaking in broad strokes, addressing the themes of Athletics. A caution here would be that some adolescents are more active than others at some times or others, and some adolescents are famously lethargic during growing spurts. Also, not every school is ‘huge’ on athletics – this is a matter of variations within cultures (Macrosystems) and economics/educational systems (Exosystems) and schools (Microsystems), as spoken of by Bronfenbrenner.

**Other**

*“...il n'y a pas vraiment de sujets de cool ou pas, populaire ou pas, à notre école.”*

*(“...there's really no topics that are cool or not cool or popular or not, in our school.”)*

A certain aloofness to “cool” is also “cool”; a “contrarian cool”, and “cachet-cool”, which Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012) speaks to, a studied casualness.

*“...Um, I don't think anything makes...I don't believe in cool...I don't really get the meaning of cool...”*

*(“...Euh, je ne pense pas que quoi que ce soit fait...Cool, je ne comprends pas vraiment le sens de cool...”)*

Another example of an othered response of contrarian cool (Pountain & Robbins, 2000), because if *I don't care about it, don't think about it, then I can't be affected by it, and maybe that is cool...* This posture taken from a position of insecurity may be thought protecting, given that adolescents are often socially insecure. It can perhaps also be seen to reflect the challenges in

traversing between systems, which underscores the importance of strong Mesosystems being present to help adolescents bridge systems as they develop.

### **From Drolet to Bronfenbrenner: Juxtapositioning themes and systems**

The Drolet et al. (2009) study participants provided responses speaking to components of what makes a person cool.

On reviewing components of the systems for Bronfenbrenner’s Bio-Ecological Model of Human Development Theory, it may be possible to situate Bronfenbrenner’s systems with mentions by the adolescent study participants, speaking to cool factors which determine individual coolness. How this might impact our understanding of Bronfenbrenner may present a line of inquiry deserving consideration. An interpretive analysis of secondary data, then, on the formation of identities of cool, may also be lensed by a perception of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1994) Bioecological Model of Human Development Theory (See: Appendix H).

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photos: Cool '72 Ford COE that preceded the KW COE 100. c. 1973 & 72 Ford COE dressed for winter, in the Alberta foothills. c. 1973. (Collection: Robert Head)**



**Photos: Epitome of [then] teenage cool, at 13/14 years of age, bell bottoms, long hair, Jaysus toe sandals, & a Lee jean jacket. c. 1975 & View on high in a KW COE of Hell's Gate, BC ~ a long way down. c. 1975. (Collection: Robert Head)**

Swagger and rawness; sounds and sights; diesel'd smells and a perched big rig perspective of bi-coastal hauling. Air horns and Jake brakes, truck stops and smoke stacks. Eighty feet of steel and rubber, moving 105,000 lbs at 95 feet per second. Like highway'd freight trains. Iron horses. Modern cowboys.

*Robert Head (2014)*

#### Chapter IV: Life-writing

My concept and lived experience of the notion of 'cool' is informed by the time and culture and circumstance and history that I have been born into, wandered into, rushed into, and have perhaps sometimes emerged from. My journey transforms my understanding and brings new experiences with it and to it, encompassing more than fifty years across seven decades, two centuries, and two millennia. My Age of Cool. As cool as blue feels to me.

Most assuredly, any life writing narrative I present here is an act of memory (Bucci, 2011), a reconstruction and validation process where present and past inform each other, where I speak of myself as adolescent and adult, re|exploring my retrospective past<sup>2</sup>. Therein perhaps lies a certain subjectivity of the now that cannot be avoided, as if an editing that takes place consciously or unconsciously or both (Lionnet, 1989). It is as inevitable as the human condition; weaknesses construed as strengths, intention presented as an accident of memory, a self-reflective discourse of part-truths presented as whole parts. This does not invalidate the exercise, but does put it into perspective. This is what Marta Bladek (2012), speaking of Ondaatje's (1982) narrative, “Running in the Family”, recounts as a, “growing genre of return memoirs, or autobiographical narratives organised around the authors’ journeys to places from their ancestral or personal past...return memoirs...the autobiographical impulse, or the desire to tell one’s life story,...intimately bound with specific locations that inspire and facilitate remembering...lends the past new urgency and propels...narrative reconstruction.”<sup>3</sup> I consider a colleague’s thesis discussion of re-searching her story (Cloutier, 2014), through a hauntology of silenced ancestry<sup>4</sup>, and I cannot help but think we are all haunted by our own silences as well as those we are limited to through the nowed-lenses of our perceptions and those affected by our edit-buttoned desire to manipulate our world, and the perception of us in our world, to a specific view. And so this is how I come to an exercise of life writing in narrative. Knowing that there are imperfections and idiosyncrasies of selective recall that will shade the tales told, and that it is the audience as editors and examiners who interpret for themselves, taking and discarding what works for them or not, adding, deleting, modifying, supplanting or appending. This brings me to Leggo (2009), who skittles around lingering, immersed in our wholeness' of initial intentions, mulling our shifting shapelessness' amid realms he tells us we can re/shape as we re/search ourselves in new and innovative ways.



**Photo: Cool, Cool & Cool. Derek, John (Jack), & Robert Head. June 1975.**

**(Collection: Robert Head)**

The collected neighbourhood parents were scandalised – look at that long hair. They must be hippies! Stay away! Danger! We were pretty cool.

***Robert Head (2014)***

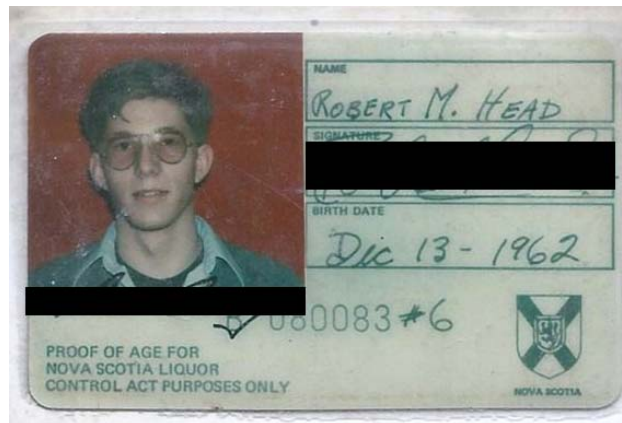
## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

There is risk, and life writing as component to an a|r|tographic<sup>5</sup> exercise is about vulnerabilities, yet I acknowledge that when I write about myself, I am doing so from a perspective of profound prejudice. My edit button is on where it should be off, and off where it should be on, and no matter, because the audience has their own finger on their dead-man's switch, and could just as easily snuff me out of their literary existence. It is a fickle thing to lay your histor/hyster/ical self upon the tracks, locomotive yet dependent upon the driving perceptions of others. That is to say that a life-writer steps boldly forward, as Kiinaksaapo'op says, “It takes courage to write from life experience” (Hasebe-Ludt, 2009, p. xvi).

My life writing narrative journey, followed by poems, paintings, and photographs reflecting popular-cultures perhaps icons of "cool", draws upon my personal experiences as questions and experiences, some new and some not new, grounded in writing where I recognize my earlier works and others works as I re-dedicate and re/search my own work, as found within the many'd in-between-spaces of now/then in reflection/contemplation/theorizing, negotiated and sprung like a picked scab-lock of medi/ation/tation/. Mounting my Solomonized steps to marbled temples of personal purpose, I feel Hiram Abif'd along my foaming narrative journey, wanting not to be misunderstood except as discovered in mis/understanding. Squared and compassed, not rubbled, ruffianed, roughshod and hoodwinked. I will letter-it, and so let us proceed.

How many ways was I/Am I cool? In life-writing, I feel I must consider the broader brushstroke of my past, not just gliding over the niceties. We learn from Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012, p. 176) that coolness can refer to youthfulness, and whatever follies and idiosyncrasies are found therein. I have certainly fostered my own. And I recount some, to a point, without necessarily life-writing myself into a corner, describing my past as I prefer to, and leave it to others to do more or less. I was called “Old Man Head” in elementary school, where I had some serious ideas and interests, and preferred the company of adults; Fred Strodbeck (1962) speaks to sexuality and some children being more sex-mature, to which I can relate, however, Strodbeck would have me believe I was a retreatist, which I consider laughingly on reading “The Analysis of Self-Descriptions by Members of Delinquent Gangs”. Not that being cool is easy, as Vuolo (2014, p. 1) reminds us, “Being cool is hard. Staying cool is harder. It's an elusive quality, in part because it's an elusive word with layers of nuanced meaning that peel off.” I had my own “gang” at 11 years of age, to the horror of some peers’ mothers, no doubt, as I was also popular, and, “Popular

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



~ Cool was getting your NSLCB ID, 1981. ~  
 (Collection: Robert Head)

... Even more cool was living long enough to graduate high school - a number of friends and classmates who risked drinking and driving were not so fortunate.

*Robert Head (2014)*

"Perceived self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in ... process of self-management because it affects actions not only directly but also through...impact on cognitive, motivational, decisional, and effective determinants"

*Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli,  
 Gerbino & Pastorelli (2003, p.769)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

boys become the gatekeepers of acceptable and desirable behaviours for boys” (Martino, 2000, p. 106).

As I moved into my teens, I moved away from childhood hooliganism and gangsterism, preferring to embrace contrarian cool and rejecting cachet cool (Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012). My embrace of risk-taking behaviours began long before I even considered cachet cool. I rode a cool bike with a banana seat, ape-hanger bars, chrome fenders, redline tyres and a candy-red paint job at 10/11 years of age. A favourite game was “chicken”, where we would go to local parking lots or paved areas such as school outdoor courtyards and ride an agreed upon and pre-set Lemans, leading up to jumps and straightaways where we would rush pell-mell towards each other. I never blinked. I stayed the course. Hockey and baseball cards clicking and clacking against spokes, wide-eyed kids realizing I was going to ride right over them, flinching as I rode down on them (Martin & Leary, 2001).

With five siblings, blue collar parents, and a legacy of hand-me down clothes, reputations, and teacher-prejudices to contend with as I went through school, I was pretty tough. There was no alternative at my actual and ideological table, as it was about survival (Aloise-Young & Hennigan, 1996; Denborough, 1996; Rodkin, Farmer, Pearl, & Van Acker, 2000). My perceptions of masculinity were challenged daily by my brothers, by my family circumstance, and by my own self (Czopp, Lasanne, Sweigard, Bradshaw, & Hammer, 1998; Denborough, 1996; Martino, 2000).

If skewed or aligned as Othered, school was not the place of my re-direction, and my teachers often failed the younger me, considering “...educators need to capitalize on [boys’] already developed skills and capacities for self-problematization and use these ‘techniques of the self’ to help [boys] to interrogate [masculinities] in their lives at school” (Martino, 2000, p. 110). One teacher who died at a pivotal point, when I was in grade six, left me and my peers without a voice coach to direct our interrogations of the world as we entered our shouting adolescences. And boy, were we pissed. That does not mean I/we blamed our [late] teacher for our behaviour, which research shows us would have been misplaced blame (Pickett et al., 2006, p. 90). Oddly, though, we had ‘peer connectednesses’ without ‘school connectedness’. We burned through more than a dozen substitute teachers, sending them scurrying, sometimes in tears, for the parking lot [in some cases mid-day]. Until She arrived. Unassuming. Toddler in-hand. She was a

The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photos: In 1983, over-sized clothing, Ottawa’s tulips, fine china, John Lennon clip on sunglasses, hair gel and spikes were definitely cool. 1983. Despite or because of psychosocial and biological risk factors and great adversity being present within the family, I grew up resilient and resourceful. (Collection: Robert Head)**

“In the mid-1950’s ... behavioural scientists had tended toward a more simplistic account of the impact of biological and psychosocial risk factors on the development of children ... in the last two decades, our perspective changed...the phenomenon of resilience ... leads to positive adaption within the context of significant adversity.”

*Werner (2005, pp. 3-4)*

mother, and could mother us back into school-connectivity. She followed the dots, and we graduated to high school. Mrs. Millett. God bless her mothering henship.

### **Contrarian detachment cool-ly disentangling**

As I now know, from reading Pickett (2006), a feeling of school connectedness can play an important causal role in healthy development for youths (p. 87); while I was a sensitive child, I was thusly so under a thick skin, and so learned muted or cached emotion was how I survived (Beckerleg, 2004; Erber, Wegner & Therriault, 1996). The many and varied degrees of rebelliousness I engaged in were expressions of testing limits, exerting control, manipulating circumstances, and establishing individualism within a fractured social construct, particularly as my family disintegrated before my eyes during my teens (Eggersten, 1965).

### **Surviving through cool**

Creating a perception of purposeful diminution of extended effort, lessened [I thought] expectations, and allowed me to pursue my own interests more fully (Czopp et al, 1998; Osborne, 1999; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002); I bullied and was bullied, as “...dominant boys can engage in self-problematizing practices and interrogate the behaviour and attitudes of their peers” (Martino, 2000, p. 110). I was a victim of violence, and I was sometimes violent. I usually gave as good as I got, and sometimes, though, to somebody else who was not deserving. Kick a dog long enough, somebody is bound to get bit (Denborough, 1996; Houndoumadi & Deree, 2001; Strodbeck et al., 1962); after all, “...being cool involved giving crap and getting a laugh.” (Martino, 2000, p. 107).

My engaging in risky behaviours was not a-typical for the period. I started smoking cigarettes at 11, engaging in other risks at 12/13 at social/tribal rituals such as parties and school dances. In high school in Nova Scotia, I was far removed from such peer groups. This was typical of my behavioral swings from one extreme to the other. From my junior to senior high school period of cachet cool to contrarian cool (Frank, 1997; Pountain & Robins, 2000; Dar-Nimrod et al., 2012). Like a weathered silhouette of my formerly adolescent self, I come to this life-writing introspection of attempted post-adolescent understanding of my adolescence and adolescent self, breathing Martino.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photos: Winter 1983/ Summer 1984 - Ray Bans are just as cool in any season - A Summer of Cool spent hanging with a friend, wearing Ray Bans, often having afternoon drinks at the rooftop pool at l'Hotel de la Montagne, and evenings of posturing on Montreal's uber chic Crescent Street and environs. (Collection: Robert Head)**

"Genuine since 1937 - Originally developed for military use, the iconic G-15 and B-15 offer optimal levels of clarity, comfort and protection."

*Luxottica USA LLC S.p.A. (www.Ray-Ban.com) (2015)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

On looking back upon those mem/st/oried vignettes of “cool” that influenced my adolescence and beyond, I also consider that I have faint recollections of some of my earliest pre-adolescent notions of “cool”, where many involved fashion, popular culture, and colours, for instance, which did very much inform my notions of “cool”. Some perceptions were also in-part influenced by geography, living in the country, and other lenses likely focused by family and family lore, like umbilical cords streaming across worlds tied to the bumpers of weeping willow trees.

### **Cool can re-invent**

Cool has a way of spring boarding back towards the individual, like the stainless cable roped whiplashing effect of teenagers running past you as you try to inch across the Capilano Suspension Bridge, eying the 140 metre length of the bridge before and behind you, and the 70 metre drop that awaits anyone not surefooted enough to manage their crossing. I consider the Dar-Nimrod et al. (2012) investigation as slap splashing the cool waters of reflection for me, seeing my young self, forked roads before me, detouring and leaving the mainstream, as I read that “scholarly perspectives converge on the idea of coolness as a kind of rebellious and emotionally self-protecting stance against what is perceived to be mainstream.” (Frank, 1997; Heath & Potter, 2004; Lasn, 1999). In the Maritimes, re-invented, as a new kind of cool, grade 10 forward, socially, I learned that, “As...found for working-class schooling, these boys learn that contravening the rules establishes a form of rebel masculinity” (Martino, 2000, p. 108).

### **The world had James Dean, but I had Uncle Mike!**

America had James Dean as rebel role model. I had Uncle Mike. A family character, Uncle Mike drowned when his getaway Nash Rambler Rebel careened into a milk tanker, while evading police in a car chase following a bank robbery. Having never actually met Mike except in (my middle) name, I have imagined his Kelvinator-bliss, tu-toning teutonically a reckless path to Valhalla. His coolness as a gangster for me as a child survives in the cold white forever of a glub-glubbed homogenised end. So Danny Howl of you, Uncle Mike (!) (Quarrington, 1989). The sometimes heard complaint of life-writing as being overly-anecdotal washes over me, and dissipates, is distal, a distant echo of critical blithering and blathering, ignominiously greyed, jellied. Piffle-winkle.



**Photo: Low-tide near Yarmouth, NS. c. 1986. (Collection: Robert Head)**

*"Words, like water, re|cover our ways."*

***Robert Head (2014)***

"Effects of an exposure to the other-fragile and fragmented traces of a 'standard-yet-not-standard' language is re-written-unlike the home language and yet inseparable from it."

***Marilyn Low & Pat Palulis (2006, p.45)***

### **Fashion cool**

Perhaps fashion is shaded for me by my having been a child model [NOT a model child]. I am one of six children. My mother has recounted to me that she learned that children who modeled kept the clothes, and so we were immediately signed up with Montreal's famed Constance Brown Agency. I recall when we were hired to model at Montreal's Expo '67. For the Summer. Wearing Hudson's Bay winter Strathcona coats with bold green, red, yellow and blue stripes. I can also recall auditioning or being observed within a group of children where we were left to select the coolest toys in a playroom with a large [one-way] mirror. Running to an audition for a fashion show, magazine or catalogue shoot, or even a cattle call for films, it was all great fun (for us kids), and provided for more than a few missed days of school. The clothes, well, they were not always kid-cool, more often than not being adult-cool, and so we were forced to wear them to school, shucking them like so many St Mary's Bay clams on arriving at the hallowed hooked hallway outposts leading to our soldiered desks within. Conformity. A conformity of cool leading us on, shadowing our every pose, posture, and pretense. What I wear now, my current currency of cool, I rejected then. In different sizes, and seen in mirrors, different mirrors. Any childhood consumerist pouting (Sweeting, Hunt & Bhaskar, 2012) long forgotten as I circle back towards that seventh stage of man (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 1599)

### **Pop culture cool**

Popular culture of the day, in the 1960's and 1970's, which was the period leading to my adolescence, as I reached 13 years of age in 1975, was certainly different than the current experiences of youth in the Canadian context. I grew up listening to [CKGM] AM radio, watching black & white television, and reading books, and not surfing the Internet (that option only presented itself to me around 1983, as a McGill University undergraduate student taking Computer Science for Arts Students 101B). We played outdoors a lot, as children. We interacted with others our own age and older and younger. And the world was in flux.

Thinking back to the late 1960's and early 1970's, the news of the days was edgy. Hard. Transitioning from Mayberry to Main Stream. And it was not always pretty. Not cool. The

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photos: Rolled jeans: Cool separated by +/-35 years. (Denimfuture for: Nordin Denim House, 2013) & Robert Head at Musée des Beaux-Arts du Montréal Pop Art Exhibit c. 1987 (Collection: Robert Head)**

"James Dean will ALWAYS be cool"

*R.N.Lebanc (in conversation, 2014)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Vietnam War was in full-swing, with daily death tolls reported by Lloyd Robertson on the nightly news; John Lennon and Yoko Ono held a bed-in at Montreal's Queen Elizabeth Hotel; I recall the grainy images of fire swept jungles and self-immolating Buddhist monks (Thích Quảng Đức) that plagued our news gathering channel-switching between episodes of *The Price is Right* and *The Partridge Family*; I recall being shocked by television images of a napalmed and naked Vietnamese girl running down a street in flames (Vietnamese-Canadian Kim Phuc) and the killing fields that followed soon after and close by. Tiny skulls with gaping eye sockets. So young...my age...younger...A Khmer Rouge of uncool.

### **School cool**

School also meant a new currency of “cool”. Fondly, I can still see my newly bought shiny black September boys' wingtip shoes with miniature animal - wolf, bear, mountain lion, rabbit - paw prints extruding from the rubber soles, and cowboy shirts and corduroys trousers, not unlike those worn by child-star Timmy Martin (John Provost) in the black and white broadcasts of “Lassie” (post-Jeff Miller / Tommy Rettig). Oh no, that wasn't all of it - television had made its mark. I watched Adam West's and Burt Ward's “Batman” and Bob Denver's “Gilligan's Island” (in my teens he spent summers living not far from me, as a recluse in a shore-hugging mansion along Canada's Nova Scotia coastline), Eddie Albert and Eva Gabor's “Green Acres”, resplendent with Mr. Haney and Arnold The Pig as well as the colourful cast of Hooterville residents, and The Lone Ranger. Jackie Gleason's *To the moon, Alice* shenanigans on “The Honeymooners” and Lucille Ball's ever-esplanin' “I Love Lucy”. Star Trek was scary, with Roddenberry's Vulcans and Tribbles and antennaed Andoran assassins lurking aboard the Federation starship NCC1701-C Enterprise, but sometimes we were allowed.

For a taste of what was happening in the real world, but seemed unreal, I recall watching Neil Armstrong stepping off of the Apollo 11 module and onto the surface of the Moon on July 21, 1969.

### **Family cool**

My parents were hard working and blue collar, which was a distinction I did not then have an awareness of. My father used to be a soldier, and I wore his army shirts with sleeves rolled up and shirt-tails dragging on the ground as my school painting smock. He drove big trucks. He smelled of Old Spice, which was cool. My mother went to school at night, which was

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Painting & Photo: ‘Going Back’ - DRHS Reunion 1991. Photo taken on deck of Princess of Acadia Ferry, 1991. Oil on wood. 2012 by Robert Head. (Collection: Robert Head)**

“Cool is an oppositional attitude adopted by individuals or small groups to express defiance to authority ... a permanent state of private rebellion ... a stance of individual defiance”

*Pountain & Robbins (2000, p. 19)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

cool. My sisters were majorettes in the school band, which was cool ...tina melinda joanne tina melinda joanne toss and catch toss and catch tina melinda joanne... they got to march in the Santa Claus Parade, while my grandmother would take me and my brothers by bus to see the Christmas window at Ogilvy’s Department Store on Montreal’s Ste. Catherine Street. I vividly recall how, as children, we snacked on bread and molasses or corn syrup, often while watching television, and I could not fathom the desperation of children eating scraps of scrambled eggs on the edges of elegant picnic parties we were seeing broadcast into our living room, when we had so much (we were poor, but didn’t know it). This television flashpoint was disturbingly uncool. And was burned into my consciousness.

### **Hippy cool**

The Crown Corn Syrup Corporation flogged cool dust jackets at 10:3 for product labels - featuring 3 Dog Night, Deep Purple, B.T.O., Steppenwolf, and others.

There was a coolness in the chants and mantras and anthems of the day for ‘The Man’ to Stop the War, to Give Peace a Chance. And sometimes, swimming at the local quarry while my older sister smoked pot and giggled from inside her boyfriend’s Volkswagen bus, as Simon & Garfunkel reminded us, we were ‘Feelin Groovy. And the echoes of our freedom underscored our Sounds of Silence.

### **Kenworth cool**

When I was a teenage boy, I sometimes travelled on short hops with my father, a Korean War veteran and then a long-haul truck driver. Especially memorable, one summer I travelled across Canada with him and this was an epic adventure. Like a vestigial of myself, I immersed in the job of observing, happily gargouilled to my seat, perched high above the trailer-towing station wagons filled with suburban families rusticating along the Trans Canada from photo op to photo op and the sample-laden salespeople’d sedans plying their trade westward, in a brand-new 1974 Kenworth 100 cab over engine [COE].

My vantage point was excellent as we crossed the Galipeault Bridge, just past Ste-Anne-De-Bellevue’s Veteran's Hospital. Heading up Highway 20 towards Ontario, we traveled west and skirted Toronto via the massively 6-laned Queen Elizabeth Expressway. Heading north and then west again, we horse-shoed Thunder Bay as we thundered across the windswept Prairies, leaving the cool air behind us as we dust devilled towards dusks. Mounting the precipitous trails

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



“I have lived the life of an alien, and it is coolly detachedly cool.”

*Robert Head (2015)*

**Englishman in New York: Sting ~ Ode to Quentin Crisp ~ Nothing Like The Sun. 1987.** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d27gTrPPAyk>

I don't drink coffee I take tea my dear/I like my toast done on one side/And you can hear it in my accent when I talk/I'm an Englishman in New York.

See me walking down Fifth Avenue / A walking cane here at my side / I take it everywhere I walk / I'm an Englishman in New York.

I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York / I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York

If, “Manners maketh man” as someone said / Then he's the hero of the day / It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile / Be yourself no matter what they say

I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York / I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York

Modesty, propriety can lead to notoriety / You could end up as the only one / Gentleness, sobriety are rare in this society / At night a candle's brighter than the sun

Takes more than combat gear to make a man / Takes more than a license for a gun / Confront your enemies, avoid them when you can / A gentleman will walk but never run

If, “Manners maketh man” as someone said / Then he's the hero of the day / It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile / Be yourself no matter what they say

I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York / I'm an alien I'm a legal alien / I'm an Englishman in New York



Photo: Quentin Crisp - source unknown.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

of the TransCanada Highway, which beckoned us past Alberta’s mounting Jurassic foothills, we came upon the landslide gravesite of Frank, pushing further into the jaws of Hell’s Gate. Beyond that, the weeping willowed gardens of cedar-shingled West-End Vancouver and the Sequoia-lined Pacific Ocean soon lay before us.

As we journeyed, I noted the beauty and biodiversity of Canada, which was cool. And I also tasted a palpably air-sucking and iron-tasting very uncool situationality and despair of those people I witnessed en route as longitudinally and latitudinally boxed-in by poverties of third-world proportions, who were hedged in by experiences of colonial othering, struggling while living in tarpaper shacks with junked-car yard ornaments; in trailer parks hidden behind row upon row of dividing pines, and in the outer-limits of suburbia’s mansard-roofed townhouses with over-chlorinated pools and splash-rashes of tough-as-nails townie tenants’ children. It was like the smell of blood on a loose bandage, almost hiding gashes, masking the pain somewhat, but really just feeding the festering for anyone with the scen|ts|se to notice.

Looking through a not-rose-coloured tinted windshield, I was seeing my Canada, my home, and my people, for the first time, in a big way. While sometimes unsettling, from my vantage point of adolescent adventurer, it was very, very cool - seeing all of this for the first time, through young eyes, being relatively poor myself. Just travelling with my father was a cool thing to do, I thought, and I felt then-favoured as one from a brood of six children. Big rig trucks were also cool, I thought, as an emerging gear head<sup>6</sup>.

I felt drawn to the forests and coastline when we arrived at the formerly millennially occupied territories of the Haida, Tsimshian, Nootka, Coast Salish, Kwatkiutl, and Bella Coola Pacific Peoples<sup>7</sup>, visiting Stanley Park and its dwarfing woodland.

Before long, after a few days’ stay at the Austin Hotel, which was and still is a swankless refuge advertised to budget travelers and low-income urbanites by the day, week or month (not the hour, at least, I think), we turned around and headed back east towards mussels and red sands; moose and evergreens; the rolling orchards of the Annapolis Valley; the house-high tidal rushes of the Bay of Fundy; the rocky Viking landfall of windswept blueberry bushes and dulse-draped clotheslines glinting off the beaten shingled abodes stumping the landscape, b’Jaysus.

This first big trip, my own All-Red Route<sup>8</sup>, with all its ups and downs, Jake-braked shimmys and hydraulic exhalations, wavering asphalt and horizons, bends and corners, near and far - all of this and more informed my adolescence and beyond in ways I could not then foresee.



**Painting: “Tupper Street is London Bridge is...”, acrylic on canvas. Robert Head, 1992. (whereabouts unknown)**

*“...risk is to risky as hot is to cool...”*

***Robert Head (2014)***

“Our dada is raw...surreal...disconcerting in the shiftings of resonance and dissonance. Ink spillage and watermarks. Fragments within light and dark. Vibrant tensions in-between. Some invisible and some that can only be seen”

***Morawski & Palulis (2009, pp. 11-12)***

**Book cool**

When I was too tired of sitting and watching, I lay in the Kenworth’s bunk and read Swiss Family Robinson and Treasure Island. This trip was to be my one real shared significant experience with my father. It still ranks as pretty cool for me. My perception of the coolness of Canada, adventures, and observation, from this epic experience, grew. As a young man, my own identity was forming and being informed. Its narrative was being written, like spring run-off, slicing and coursing its way through the roughshod ahead.

**Cool moves forward**

My life has been full of journeys, adventures, trials, and challenges I have thought cool. I have engaged in marathons of extremes where risks and rewards were seen as cool. I have embraced the coolness of surprises and unimagined possibilities. I am glad to be the sort of person who likes to explore, and for my experience of the world and cool as it has entered into and through me - like diamonds in darkness, lighting my cool path. My art tells me, informs me, and guides me. Invisible guidance strings tell my future, strings pull me on.



**Painting: “Out Through the Mountainside, Strings Pull Me On”. Acrylic & Modeling Paste on Canvas. 72”x 96”. Robert Head. 1992. (Collection: Robert Head)**

“Unequal access to ... symbolic resources will...reduce [young] people’s capacity to exercise agency...”

*Pedrozo (2011, p.120)*

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of "Cool"

"...just past the open chamber where marble floors and columns  
cast shadows on people past

all human fortune.../

...past them I scratch through a tunnel darkened and muddied  
a blast under my belly smelling of sulphur steel fragments

this is the easy part/

...long as i travel i come upon the end

a dirt end wall and a hand reaches in

pulls me out through the mountain and brilliance shines

on the hand

an old man asks me where am i from and where am i going..."

**Robert Head (1982)**

## **Chapter V: Conclusion**

### **Academic cool**

Cool is an emerging field of academic research. Ironically, every single person with whom this thesis topic has been discussed has said, on first hearing of the topic, “that’s cool.” This speaks to the relevance of the topic (Butler-Kisber, 2008, 2010) and the ubiquity of language.

The academic literature reviewed is somewhat varied, if only because there is not a great deal of literature on adolescent cool out there – earlier academic literature is less directly about coolness, however more recent academic literature, in some cases, is finally speaking directly to cool and coolness and to adolescents. It is a good beginning to a newer approach – a more forthright and considerate examination of coolness as it is experienced and expressed by adolescents, informs adolescent identity, and contributes to the body of collective consciousness of our cultures and society.

What is the ‘cool’ of Drolet et al. (2009), and what is the ‘cool’ of Bronfenbrenner? What is the relationship of either to the experience of cool? While they may map, do they touch the cool they study? Is the experience of cool necessary to an academic understanding of it? If we all experience cool differently, then, academically, what certainties can be drawn from such studies?

This thesis speaks to the cool of subjective life-writing and an interpretive analysis of Drolet et al. (2009) as a secondary data source. Where little has been done, what has been done can more readily be researched, gaps identified, and further research undertaken. More follows less. There is still hope for cool - which is ... cool.

### **Life writing cool**

The life-writing exercise, as a writing-exercise, has been liberating. And at the same time



**“Into Silhouette”, Oil on Mahogany, Robert Head. 2002. (Collection: Robert Head)**

“Halls do tell a story. Often, many stories.

In fact, the writing is on the wall.

Sometimes on the surface. Sometimes hidden.

The self [re]emerges from under  
the layers of paper, paint, and plaster.

Clear your desk. Dip your brush...”

*Morawski & Palulis (2009, p.7)*

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

cautionary. How much is enough? How much is too much? Life-writing is a process of editing, like portraiture – the painter perhaps glossing over the pimples and imperfections of the subject, intending to show the subject in his or her best possible light, to the satisfaction of the artist’s patron(s). Significant editing has taken place. Facts have been verified. Histories double-checked, and recollection challenged by sharing the writing with family and friends and colleagues. Privacy has been a consideration – respecting it for the writer, by the writer, and for others. The “I” of me and we and them has had to be reined in – if only because the life-writ|er|ing is imbued with deep pockets of anecdotal information, and so knowing when enough is too much is challenging. Life-writing being an invitation to take away from the “me” of the writer to the “you” of the reader, on the topic of cool, a goaled subjectivity of coolness creeps in, jumps in, wades in with an attitude all of its own.

### **A|r|t|ographic cool**

The inclusion of photos and paintings and poetry is meant to bridge the life-writing and theoretical framework with the literature review, and to present a linearly drawn historicization of cool, from the perspective of the life-writer, and others who are component to the lived-experience of Life for the life-writer, directly and/or indirectly. The connections are not always obvious, and are not meant as having to be immediately so, rather, they are drawn to serve the reader as inferences of cool, to be understood, found intriguing, or not. The experience of compiling such an album has been like life-writing itself, as it acts as a story, the telling of a developmental process of experiencing coolness and/or seeing it experienced for and by others, the reading acting as witness. Words from the lyrics to Simon & Garfunkel’s (1970) song, “The Boxer”, spring to mind: “Though my story’s seldom told,/I have squandered my resistance/For a pocketful of mumbles,/Such are promises/All lies and jest/Still, a man hears what he wants to



**“Puzzled”, Oil on Zebrawood, Robert Head, 2004. (Collection: T.Y. Chen)**

*“...in our shadows, we are seen...like so many Hiroshima’d crouching tigers...”*

***Robert Head (2014)***

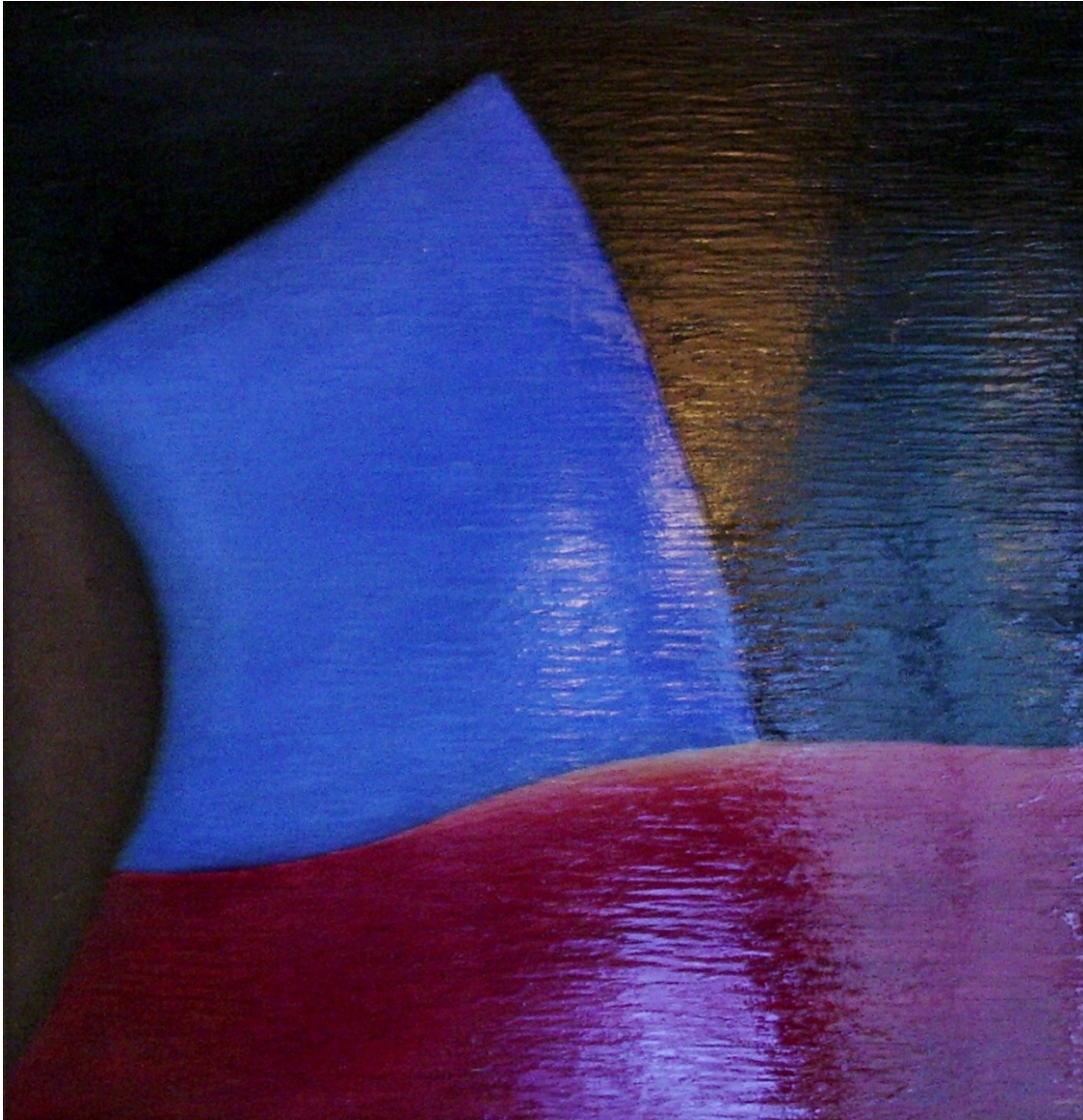
## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

hear/And disregards the rest”. The collection of interspersed artwork presents a perspective different from but complementary to the life-writing component, gives form to theoretical model variables, and a higher definition to aspects of some of the literature reviewed.

### **Peer-reviewed and book cool**

There is limited [peer-reviewed] academic literature published that speaks to cool. There are a few sociometric studies that are dated, and address young adolescent behaviours, risk taking and aggression to be found within the area of psychological educational studies. And not much else prior to Pountain and Robbin’s (2000) book, “Cool, Anatomy of an Attitude”.

Thompson’s (2011), “Aesthetics of The COOL”, helps shed light on cool from historical and social and cultural perspectives. More recently, academic research has started to shift away from cool as an associated variable of risk taking only and to belong more expressively as an attitude, perception, and expression of characteristic of individuals, cultures, subcultures, and cross-variable groupings of these societal components. The agency of cool is becoming less obfuscated, and our understanding of the undefinable cool improving. This limitation will lessen with more research in this area for study. There will likely always remain a limitation in understanding cool, as cool changes, is ever-changing, and is studied through subjective lenses that may or may not reflect the realities of the coolness being studied, or as understood by others. This, even if a limited reflection of the literature and the available research, keeps researchers of cool on their intellectual toes, and discussions on cool and coolness academically interesting, socially charged, and culturally relevant.



**“Sleeping on the moon”, Oil on Zebrawood, Robert Head. 2006. (Collection: T.Y. Chen).**

“A hazy blue pill|ow, powder/s to rest upon.

Dreams to fall into.

Dreams to wake from.

Somewhere along on a moon of my making,

Where footfalls silent echoes march,

for billions of eons.

Gram told me,

‘Go, shoosh, you’re not supposed to be here - yet.’”

**Robert Head (2014)**

**Limitations and cool**

Considering limitations is like regarding a half a glass of water as being half empty, whereas the glass may also be thought of as half full. While this cliché may be dated, its value is not diminished by this. The limitations of life-writing are perhaps radical subjectivity, the unease of readers to confirm or understand wholly the stories being reported and shared, to “walk in the shoes” of the writer, except as observers - yet these same limitations may present powerful and positive aspects for the interpretation and experience of reading the life-writing narrative shared, enriching the accumulated experiences of the reader. The readers as participants in the stories shared come to carry the stories within, re-written for themselves. The writer engages in a transactional process with the reader by sharing, and the informational tidbits shared are absorbed by the readers, into their own experiences of things. The life-writing feeds the life-readers. This ‘limitation’ is like ‘limitations of life’ which refract our lenses of how we see the world. That is our perspective. No matter how open we are to the lived-experiences and realities of others. These limitations are also what inform individual experiences, as they are shared, and then broadened by additional perspectives and others experiences and viewpoints. Limitations are perhaps the opportunities for understanding. That we do not all see and think and remember the same – those individual limitations make sharing a richer experience.

The experience of moving from intention to write by article to monograph, to life-writing as a component of that monograph, has been transformative. And challenging. It has sometimes been frustrating, finding research that spoke to aspects of cool through very limited studies, or spoke of it in considerations that seemed not especially relevant of the conception and notion of cool itself.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

The sharing of stories, photos, poetry, paintings, photos of paintings, paintings of photos, dreams in words, words in dreams, old recordings, and recordings of the old through art | e | - | facts has been de|nuding.

### **Journey of cool**

While circuitous, the journey from considerations of the concept and notion of “cool”, weaving from Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994) to Drolet et al. (2009) to life-writing snowballs as it goes. From an abstract to a Leggo (2009) poem, which sets a tone, to establishing a foundational conceptual framework. Proceeding to a mid-drift speaking to systems of human development and “cool” development, the bioecology of human development, and findings on adolescent cool given as adolescent definitions of cool for peers. This is followed up with a life-writing journey shared as a chronos of “cool”. Interspersed throughout, a collection of paintings and photographs and poems and quips and excerpts, tap tapping at the readers minds-eye window, re-calling the need to breath and to see. Finally a summarily dissected, an historical perspective of, cool and coolness through a review of the literature.

### **In|conclusion of cool**

The in|conclusion for researchers is to investigate further, to immerse further in a relatively under-encumbered area of research, where there is considerable room to seek to know, to build on what has been done, and to build yet still where tremendous gaps in understanding can be seen. Invisibly obvious. Begging inquiry, escaping definition.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”



**Photo montage: a|r|t|efacts - Chinese silk cloth depicting songbirds & spring-blossoms; masonic bible; centenary apron of Master Mason; amethyst chalice; owl; representation of Temple of Solomon; coins from the realm; a timepiece; a Scottish figurine. Robert Head, 2013. (Collection: Robert Head).**

"Coolness escapes us, and our perceptions of it as adults are ubiquitously absent for youths...Coolness is a fleeting shadow, a flickering light. You may have it today but you won't tomorrow, and, despite their protestations to the contrary, your parents never did"

*Vuolo (09h30, October 01, 2014)*

"My son sees an old guy wearing a funny apron. I see the coolest club going...Life lived in circles...cool..."

*Robert Head (2014)*

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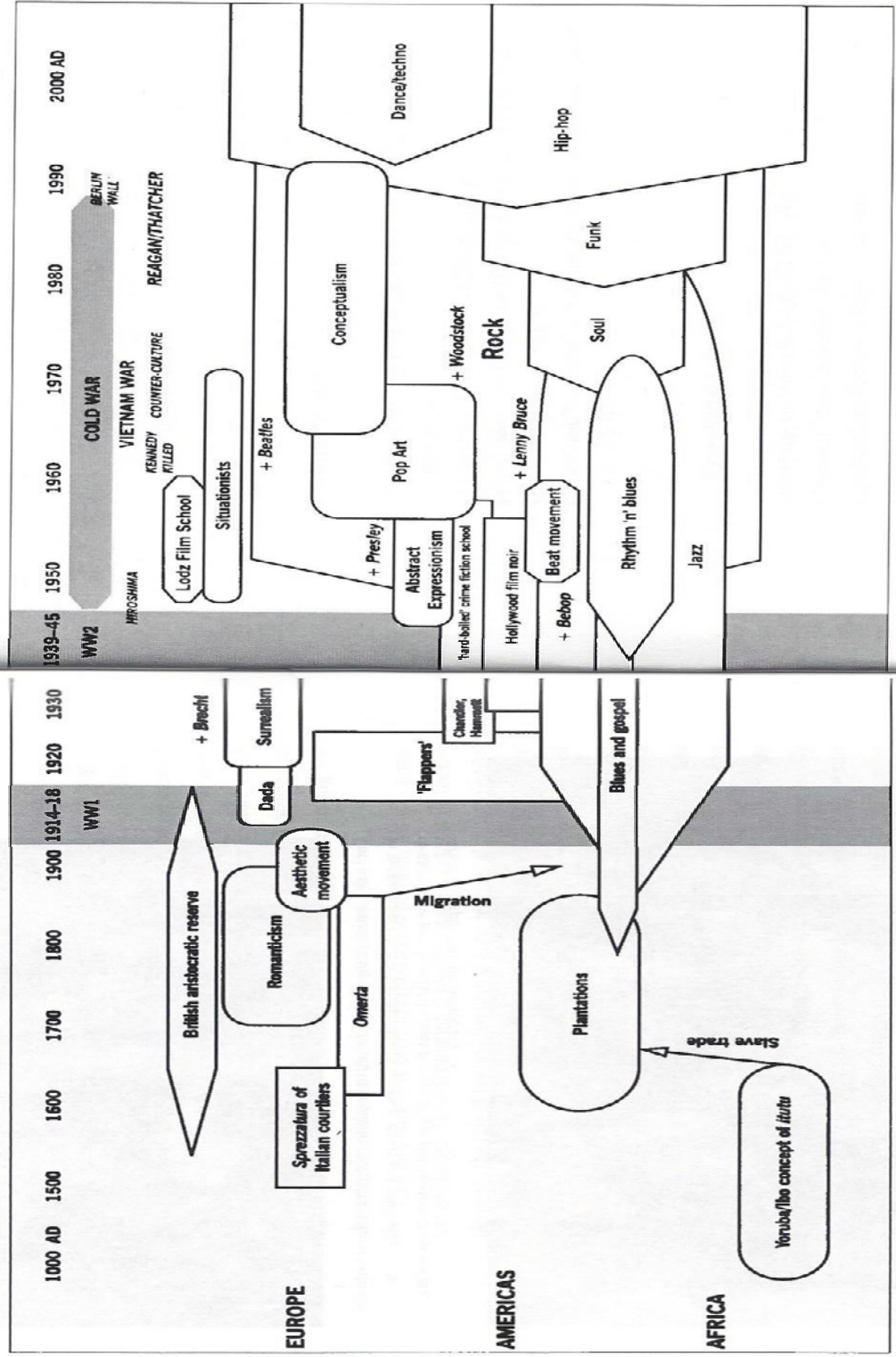
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The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of "Cool"

Appendix A:



**Chart I.1**  
 Anatomical History of Cool  
 [Source: Pountain & Robbins, 'Cool Rules, Anatomy of an Attitude', 2000, Pp.80-81]

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

## Appendix B: Observed frequencies of cool.

**Observed Frequencies (and %'s): Participants Who Used Each Descriptor of Popularity as a Function of Gender**

	Boys	Girls
Cool***	118 (65%)	81 (40%)
Attractive***	39 (21%)	115 (56%)
In a group/has many friends	56 (31%)	73 (36%)
Clothes***	29 (16%)	65 (32%)
Athletic**	55 (30%)	35 (17%)
Rich/has many things	30 (17%)	43 (21%)
Nice/kind	28 (15%)	44 (22%)
Mean*	19 (10%)	40 (20%)
Funny*	33 (18%)	23 (11%)
Smart	20 (11%)	34 (17%)
Snobby***	11 (6%)	38 (19%)
Liked	21 (12%)	21 (10%)
Rude*	8 (4%)	22 (11%)
Powerful/dominant	12 (7%)	20 (10%)
Conceited	12 (7%)	15 (7%)
Known	12 (7%)	17 (8%)
Fun to be with	15 (8%)	13 (6%)
Sociable***	3 (2%)	22 (11%)
Defiant/risky**	17 (9%)	6 (3%)

Note: \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 1.1 Observed Frequencies (Copied from Closson, 2008)**

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

## Appendix C: Table 1.2 Coolness Adjectives.

**Frequency of coolness-related adjectives and their categories (Study 1, N = 353)**

Category	No. of entries	No. of different adjectives	Examples of the adjectives
Friendly	167	14	social, popular
Personal competence	166	26	smart, talented
Trendy	141	16	current, hip
Desirable	98	23	awesome, great
Attractive	91	15	handsome, hot
Unconventional	81	10	individualist, unique
Prosocial values	71	25	caring, honest
Humorous	66	5	funny, hilarious
Confident	65	6	assured, self-assured
Emotionally controlled	61	12	aloof, calm
Hedonist	53	3	fun, partyer

**Table 1.2.** *Coolness Adjectives (Copied from Dar-Nimrod et al, 2012)*

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

## Appendix D: Dictionary

Bent-concentric.....	like rings or circles, but bent into irregular shapes, like tree trunks.
Bieber'd.....	like a pop star of current cultural renown whose career is tanking, Fucked.
Bioecological.....	bidirectional influences of individuals development and surrounding environmental contexts.
B'Jaysus.....	Maritimers lexical exclamation translates into By Jesus!
Contrarian Cool.....	being cool by being the opposite of cool – a detached cool.
Distal.....	a point situated away from a point of attachment or origin.
Dust devilled.....	racing along like a cloud of asphalt-hugging Prairie dust.
E-xperiences.....	the experience of Life through electronic media and formats.
Gargouilled.....	glued to a spot or perch, surveying.
Glub-glubbered.....	sounds of drowning.
Hauntology.....	the presence of the past blocking or guiding or informing the present and future.
Henship.....	a mothing instinct.
Kmer Rouge.....	a brutal regime in Cambodia responsible for millions of acts of genocide.
Monography.....	like a tombstone, a slabbed collection of data.
Piffle-winkle.....	nonsense!
Pulpitted.....	expostulated and driven home or preached.
Spirograph.....	a weaving concentric configuration.
Nowed.....	fitted to the present.
Silhouetted.....	detailed in shadow, recognizable, yet subject to interpretation.
Rubbled.....	deconstructed.
Ruffianed.....	made coarse, ruffed up.

## Appendix E: Direct Verbatim Transcribed Responses by Participants

**Drolet et al. (2009) study interview transcripts (including translations by R.Head)****Participant #1****ENF5 / Carrefour / Male / 04.03.2010**

Q: OK. Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool, pour toi?

R: Hum...[silence] Qu'ils soient eux-mêmes.

Q: OK, c'est intéressant. Quand tu penses à un personne, si tu as une personne à laquelle...je ne sais pas... que tu peux penser que tu dis qui est cool, quelles sont les caractéristiques de cette personne? Ou est-ce que c'est différent pour chacun?

R: Oui, toute le monde.

Q: Alors, c'est juste que s'ils sont honnêtes avec eux-mêmes, comme s'ils sont...

R: Oui.

**Translation:**

Q: OK. What makes someone cool to you?

A: Um ... [pause] Let them be themselves.

Q: OK, that's interesting. When you think of a person, if you have a person that ... I do not know ... you might think you're saying that's cool, what are the characteristics of this person? Or is it different for everyone?

A: Yes, all the world.

Q: So, it's just that if they are honest with themselves, as if they are ...

A: Yes.

**Participant #2****Casselman / Female / 23.04.10**

Q: OK. Mais pourquoi est-ce que tu penses qu'il y a des étudiants que c'est moins important pour eux (parle dans la langue français)?

R: Je ne sais pas. Dans ma classe, ils disent qu'ils sont cool quand ils aiment...parce qu'ils parlent en anglais.

Q: C'est moins cool de parler en français?

R: Oui.

Q: Pourquoi?

R: Je ne sais pas. Je ne sais pas. C'est juste ça qu'ils disent.

*...unrelated questions...*

Q: Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne es cool, quant à toi?

R: Ben...Qu'elle ne change pas tout le temps de personnalité vis-à-vis les autres, qu'elle est juste comme la personne qu'elle là, pis elle ne change pas d'humeur à chaque comme deux secondes, pis...elle s'habille comme elle veut.

Q: Alors, une personne authentique?

R: Oui.

## Translation:

Q: OK. But why do you think that there are students for who it is less important for them ( to speak in the French language)?

R: I do not know. In my class, they say they are cool when they like ... because they speak English.

Q: It's less cool to speak French?

R: Yes

Q: Why?

R: I don't know. I don't know. It's just what they say.

*...unrelated questions...*

Q: What makes a person cool, for you?

R: Well .... she does not change all the time personality vis-à-vis because of others, it is just like the person is who she is, and she does not change mood every two seconds, and ... she dresses like she wants.

Q: So a genuine person?

R: Yes.

**Participant #3**

**ENFANT2 / 21.01.2010**

Q: Mais, euh...Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool, pour toi?

R: Est cool? Hum...Si elle est comique.

Q: Oui?

R: Si c'est le fun apprendre avec, parce que si quelqu'un, il t'apprend, puis il fait rien que parler, puis il ne met aucune...comme...il ne change pas de voix, il garde pareil, c'est bien plate, donc tu ne peux pas apprendre. Ce n'est pas cool, ça.

Q: Oui, j'imagine.

R: Euh... Donc ç, c'est pas mal ça, puis...euh...

Q: Pas nécessairement juste avec les profs, mais...pour toi, qu'est-ce qui est cool. Je ne sais pas, une personne que tu trouves cool, un ami.

R: Bien, je n'aime pas vraiment le monde sportif.

Q: OK alors, pour toi, être sportif, c'est cool?

R: Oui. Ça ne me dérange pas si quelqu'un aime lire puis tout ça, comme il ne fait pas de sport, mais je ne vais pas me tenir avec eux autres. Je vais être quand même ami, mais je ne

## Translation

Q: But, uh ... What makes someone cool to you?

R: Is cool? Hmm ... If it's funny.

Q: Yes?

A: If it's fun to learn with, because if someone, it teaches you, then it's just talk, then he puts no ... like ... if he does not change voice, stares, speaks flat, so you cannot learn. It's not cool, that.

Q: Yes, I guess.

A: Uh ... So it's not bad it's then ... uh ...

Q: Not necessarily just with teachers, but ... for you, what's cool. I do not know, someone you

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

think is cool, a friend.

A: Well, I do not really like jocks.

Q: OK then, for you to be sporty, it's not cool?

A: Yes. It does not bother me if someone likes to read and all that, but I'm not going to hang out with them more if they like sports. I'll still be friends...

**Participant #4**

**ENFANT17 / Carrefour / 23.07.2010**

Q: Non? OK. Bon. Là, on change un peu de....Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool?

R: À notre école? OK, ben ce serait comme la popularité, à notre école. Ben, comme alentour de Rockland, ce serait comme qui fait quoi, comme les couples, là, puis là ce serait un peu comme comment que tu te sens avec d'autre monde, comme la popularité, là. Puis, comme il y a un gars que je connais, ben il est un peu populaire, là, parce qu'il ne va pas rester avec certaines personnes, il va aller de groupe à groupe. Des affaires comme ça.

Q: Alors, pour toi, quelqu'un qui est cool, c'est quelqu'un qui s'arrange bien avec beaucoup des personnes?

R: Oui.

Q: Alors, la définition de Rockland puis ton école, est-ce que c'est ta définition personnelle de quelqu'un qui est cool?

R: Oui.

## Translation

Q: No? OK. Good. Here, we change a little.... What makes someone cool?

A: At our school? OK, well it would be like popularity, to our school. Weell, like around Rockland would be like who does what, as couples, there then there would be a bit like how you're feeling with the other groups, as what is popular there. Then, as there is a guy I know, well what is popular with him, here, because I not going to stay with some people, we will go from group to group. Stuff like that.

Q: So for you, someone who is cool, he is someone who manages well with many people?

A: Yes.

Q: So, the definition of Rockland and your school do is your personal definition of someone who is cool?

A: Yes.

**Participant #5**

**ENFANT18 / Carrefour / 25.07.2010**

Q: OK. Bon, j'ime vraiment cette question très générale. Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool, quant à toi?

R: Oh. OK...Hum...Je dirais pas mal comme s'ils ont tout le ... s'ils ont du beau linge, beaux cheveux, I guess. C'est toujours quelque chose comme tu es jalouse d'une personne pour. Hum...Probablement comme s'ils ont beaucoup d'amis, s'ils connaissent beaucoup de gens, s'ils ont un sens de...Je pourrais dire que ça, c'est cool. Hum...La façon qu'ils agissent, il faut qu'ils soient assez matures, là, comme...si tu comprends qu'est-ce que je veux dire.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Q: Comme quoi?

R: Hum....Il y en a qui sont immatures, genre, puis moi, je ne trouve pas ça cool.

Q: Immatures dans le sens...?

R: Ils vont rire pour des stupides raisons comme...puis ils vont penser genre wrong à tout. Moi, je ne trouve pas ça le fun, là. C'est un peu plate, ça ferait un bout [phonétique]. Hum... C'est pas mal ça pour cool. Ce n'est pas comme des...C'est pas mal général, là. Pour moi, cool, tu es comme né avec ça là. Ce n'est pas vraiment comme...Tu sais qu'est-ce que je veux dire?

Q: Un peu. Est-ce que tu peux...?

R: Comme juste la façon qu'ils se tiennent, la façon qu'ils parlent, c'est juste qu'ils sont faits pour être comme sociables. Je dirais qu'une personne cool, c'est une personne sociable.

Q: C'est comme une personne extravertie?

R: Oui

### Translation

Q: OK. Well, I really like this very general question. What makes someone cool, as for you?

A: Oh...OK ... Hmm ... I would not hurt like they have everything ... they have nice clothes, nice hair, I guess. It's always something like you're jealous of a person. Hmm ... Probably like they have a lot of friends if they know a lot of people, if they have a sense of ... I could say that's cool. Hmm ... The way they act, they have to be mature enough there, like ... if you understand what I mean.

Q: Like what?

A: Hmm.... There are immature, genre, then I do not think it's cool.

Q: Immature in the sense...?

A: They will laugh for stupid reasons like ... then they will think wrong kind at all. I do not find it fun, then. It's a bit flat; it would end a [phonetic]. Hmm ... That's pretty cool for it. It's not like ... It's pretty general, there. For me, cool, you're born with it like that. It's not really like ... You know what I mean?

Q: A little bit. Will you be...?

A: As just the way they stand, how they speak, it's just that they are made to be as sociable. I would say that a person cool, it's a people person.

Q: It's like an extrovert?

A: Yes

### Participant #6

#### Gale / Grade 8 / Child 12

Q: I like this question. What makes a person cool?

There's so many answers for that question. What makes a person cool. I guess sometimes you could say their academics, like if they're smart or not in their class. So there could be like one person in the whole class that gets straight A's every time that everybody's stuck on a question, you can rely on that person and their like, consider them cool because that's a pretty cool quality for some person to have. You could consider somebody cool by seeing the way they dress, like you could say that one style of clothing that they wear, like designer clothing or whatever, and consider them cool because they dress cool. You could consider them cool because of their popularity and if you have this complete drama queen you can consider her cool even though you

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

don't really like her you could consider her cool because of her popularity. You could also consider somebody cool by their personality, and that's how I usually judge people as by their personality and not like everything else that I just named, but usually their personality.

Q: So what about their personality?

A: Like if they're a completely mean spirited person and they don't like anybody, then, yeah, I would never hang out with anybody like that. I've always wanted somebody that you could rely on and stuff like that.

Q: So, rely on, so somebody who is consistent? Trustworthy? Those are all important to you?

A: Yes. Yeah. It doesn't matter about like really the exterior or anything like that. I'd say I judge a person on what their personality is like, what their insides are like.

Q: So someone that you can... What are some of these qualities?

A: Like I said you can rely on someone, that's basically all I am looking for, reliable, for a friend. And to like, they don't act differently around everybody else, like when you're in a group. I find there's some people you can talk to one on one and you'd be like 'oh this is a really really nice person' and you get along with them but when you get in a big group of people then they act completely different and they act like a jerk and stuff like that I hate people like that, just double personalities. Drives me crazy.

Q: So it's more consistency, that they are the same no matter what the situation.

A: Yeah.

### Translation

Q: J'aime bien cette question. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

Il y a tellement de réponses à cette question. Ce qui rend une personne cool. Je suppose que parfois vous pourriez dire leurs universitaires, comme si ils sont intelligents ou pas dans leur classe. Donc, il pourrait y avoir comme une personne dans l'ensemble de la classe qui obtient des A chaque fois que tout le monde est coincé sur une question, vous pouvez compter sur cette personne et leurs semblables, considérez-les refroidir parce que c'est une qualité assez cool pour une personne d'avoir. Vous pourriez envisager de quelqu'un fraîche en voyant la façon dont ils s'habillent, comme on pourrait dire que l'un style de vêtements qu'ils portent, comme des vêtements de marque ou autre, et les considèrent comme cool car ils s'habillent cool. Vous pouvez les considérer froid en raison de leur popularité et si vous avez ce drama queen terminée, vous pouvez la considérer cool, même si vous n'avez pas vraiment comme elle vous pourriez envisager son sang-froid en raison de sa popularité. Vous pourriez aussi envisager quelqu'un fraîche par leur personnalité, et c'est ainsi que je juge souvent les gens que par leur personnalité et pas comme tout le reste que je viens de nommer, mais le plus souvent leur personnalité.

Q: Alors, qu'en est-il de leur personnalité?

A: Comme si ils sont une personne d'esprit complètement moyenne et qu'ils n'aiment pas quelqu'un, alors, oui, je n'aurais jamais sortir avec quelqu'un comme ça. J'ai toujours voulu que quelqu'un que vous pouvez compter sur des choses comme ça.

Q: Donc, s'appuyer sur, si quelqu'un qui est compatible? Digne de confiance? Ce sont tous importants pour vous?

R: Oui. Ouais. Il n'a pas d'importance sur l'extérieur comme vraiment ou quelque chose comme ça. Je dirais que je juge une personne sur ce que leur personnalité est comme, ce que leurs intérieurs sont comme.

Q: Donc, quelqu'un que vous pouvez ... Quelles sont ces qualités?

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

R: Comme je l’ai dit, vous pouvez compter sur quelqu’un, c’est à peu près tout ce que je cherchais, fiable, pour un ami. Et à aimer, ils n’agissent pas différemment dans tout le monde, comme quand vous êtes dans un groupe. Je trouve qu’il y a des gens qui vous pouvez parler seul à seul et vous seriez comme 'oh c'est vraiment une très belle personne et vous obtenez avec eux, mais quand vous arrivez dans un grand groupe de personnes alors qu'ils agissent complètement différent et ils agissent comme un crétin et des trucs comme ça, je déteste les gens comme ça, juste personnalités doubles. Me rend fou.

Q: Donc, c'est plus de cohérence, que ce sont les mêmes quelle que soit la situation.

A: Oui.

**Participant #7****Lescale / 30 March / ENF4**

Q: Est-ce que tu connais quelqu'un qui...? Qu'est-ce qui fait, d'après toi, que quelqu'un est plus cool qu'un autre? Est-ce que ça se dit encore, ça, « cool », ou...?

R: Oui.

Yes

Ça se dite encore? OK. Qu'est-ce qui fait que quelqu'un peut t'impressionner plus qu'un autre?

R: Surtout, comme dans les profs, c'est quand tu es drôle.

Q: Le sens de l'humour?

R: Oui. Ça.

Yes. That.

Q: Ça, tu aimes ça?

R: Oui. Ça fait un peu d'intérêt dans la classe.

Q: Puis, y a-t-il autre chose?

R: Oui. Bien, c'est sûr, comme...être poli, gentil.

Q: Poli puis gentil?

R: Oui.

Q: En général, tous les profs sont pas mal comme ça?

R: Que moi, j'ai, oui.

**Translation**

Q: Do you know someone who...? What is, in your opinion, someone's cooler than another?

Does it still said that, “cool”, or...?

A: Yes.

Yes

It's called yet? OK. What makes someone can impress you more than another?

A: Most importantly, as in teachers is when you're funny.

Q: The sense of humor?

A: Yes. That.

Yes. That.

Q: That you love it?

A: Yes. Sounds a bit of interest in the class.

Q: Then there is there something else?

A: Yes. Well, sure, like ... be polite, kind.

Q: Polished and nice?

A: Yes.

Q: In general, all the teachers are not bad like that?

A: That I, yes.

### Participant #8

ENF6 / Lescale / Female / 09.04.2010

Q: OK. Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool?

R: Personnellement, là, à notre école, il n'y en a pas beaucoup.

Q: Ah oui?

R: À cause c'est...Tu peux être cool, être dans la mode, ou encore être geek. Tout le monde a leur clique, mais tout le monde est tout ensemble, so comme nous, les sportifs, euh...Comme notre classe, on se tient beaucoup ensemble, mais il n'y a personne: « Ah, regarde, elle, elle est cool, elle porte du Bench [phonétique 23:30] » C'est la nouvelles mode. Mais on ne va pas dire ça. Hum, on va être plutôt comme: « Ah, regarde son beau manteau. Où que tu l'as acheté? Moi aussi, je veux aller m'en acheter un. J'aime ton manteau. » Dire des compliments comme ça. Mais nous, on n'est pas « jugeatifs », so on est tous comme une...ou est tout ensemble. Il y a ... Nous, notre classe, on se tient beaucoup ensemble, mais encore là, on est toujours avec d'autre monde d'autres classes ou d'autres années, puis il n'y a pas vraiment de sujets de cool ou pas populaire ou pas, à notre école.

Q: Alors, pas en rapport nécessairement avec ton école, est ce-que tu as une définition de c'est quoi être cool?

R: Non, à cause nous, on n'a pas ce problème-la, so je ne l'ai jamais, genre, vécu.

Q: OK alors c'est abstrait, pour toi?

R: Oui.

### Translation

Q: OK. What makes a person cool?

A: Personally, in our school, there are not many.

Q: Really?

A: Because it's ... You can be cool, be in fashion, or be geek. Everyone has their clique, but everyone is together, so like us, sports, uh ... As our class, you stand a lot together, but there is nobody, “Oh, look, it she's cool, she wears the Bench [phonetic 11:30 p.m.] “This is the new mode. But we will not say that. Hmm, we'll be more like, “Oh, look at her beautiful coat Wherever you bought it I also want to go to buy one I love your coat?” Say compliments like that. But we're not “jugeatifs,” so we are all like one ... or all together. There ... We, our class, you stand a lot together, but again, it is always with other people from other classes or other years, then there's really no topics not cool or popular or not, in our school.

Q: So not necessarily - Even your school report is this-you have a definition of what is to be cool?

A: No, because we were not the problem it, so I've never, like, lived.

Q: OK, so this is abstract to you?

A: Yes.

**Participant #9****Sec I / l'Escale / Female / 21.06.2010**

Q: Qu'est-ce qui fait qu'une personne est cool, quant à toi?

R: Ben, comme... une personne qui est cool, comme... elle est comme...elle est drôle. Comme il ne m'insulte pas. Comme pour moi, qui n'insulte pas personne, qui ne rise pas de personne, qui ont comme une personnalité comme cool, comme le fun. Comme mes amis sont cool, comme leur personnalité, ils sont tous drôles. Ils sont toujours comme...il ne risent pas de personne, mes amis, puis ils ne sont pas comme super...comme ils ne sont pas comme ma voisine, genre. Ça, c'est comme the worst, ce n'est vraiment pas cool. Puis, ils ne sont pas comme Michaël non plus, trop comme hyper. Ils sont comme...C'est dur à expliquer.

Q: Je comprends.

R: Come ils sont drôles, puis...

Q: Tu dis qu'ils ne sont pas comme ta voisine?

R: Comme ma voisine, comme... Ils ne fument pas, puis des affaires de même. Ça, c'est comme le pire. Ça, ce n'est vraiment pas cool. Comme dans les tests de CAPP [phonétique], ça dit: « Quelles sont les chances que quelqu'un te trouve cool si tu fumes? », puis tout ça. C'est comme... aucune chance, ce n'est pas cool, selon mon opinion. Ce n'est pas cool.

Q: Alors, dans ton opinion, quelqu'un qui est cool, c'est quelqu'un qui est très drôle, mais qui ne rit pas des autres?

R: Qui ne rit pas des autres, qui est comme gentil. Pas comme bully.

**Translation**

Q: What makes someone cool, as for you?

What makes someone cool, as for you?

A: Well, like ... someone who is cool, like ... she is like ... she's funny. Like for me, she doesn't insult anybody, who doesn't laugh at others who has a cool personality that's fun. Like my friends are cool, like their personalities, they are always funny, they are always like...they don't make fun of others, my friends, and they are never like super...like they're not like my neighbor, for example...

Q: I understand.

A: Come they are funny and ...

Q: You say they are not like your neighbor?

A: As my neighbor, like ... They do not smoke, and things like that. That's the worst. That's really not cool. As in tests CAPP [phonetic], it says: "What are the chances that someone finds you cool if you smoke?" And all that. It's like ... no chance; it's not cool, in my opinion. It's not cool.

Q: So in your opinion, someone who is cool, it's someone who is very funny, but not laugh at others?

A: Who does not laugh at the other, which is as nice. Not like bully.

**Participant #10****Rockland / April 27 / Child 7**

Q: What makes a person cool?

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

A: I'm not quite sure, I suppose in some people's opinions it is just whether they have a lot of friends or not that makes you cool or if you act a certain way, people think now I am cool cause I do this. I don't know, personally I don't get that...like I don't see why your friends have to be cool or not cool. Why can't you be friends with a whole bunch of people?

Q: Do you find yourself saying; oh this person is pretty cool? Do you think you have a different definition of cool than those people or you don't?

A: When I say cool, it is not like I think this person is popular, it is just this person is cool cause they are really nice or they are just my friend or they do something that is really cool like...I don't know, my one friend she did this really nice art project so she had this really cool art project...not necessarily peoples definition of popular.

Q: So cool for you does not mean popular but nice, creative...

a: Yeah, creative, they can be sporty, they can be...doesn't really matter...yeah, to me it does not matter if my friends are popular, like I have some what I guess some friends people would consider popular friends and I have hat people would consider not popular, so it doesn't really matter...so, it is as long as they are your friend and nice to you...it doesn't really matter.

Q: So it is the relation to you that is the big factor?

A: Yeah.

## Translation

Q: Qu'est-ce qui rend une personne cool?

R: Je ne suis pas tout à fait sûr, je suppose, dans certains peuples avis, il est juste qu'ils ont beaucoup d'amis, ou pas que vous fait froid ou si vous agissez d'une certaine manière, les gens pensent maintenant je suis la cause cool que je fais. Je ne sais pas, personnellement, je ne comprends pas que ... que je ne vois pas pourquoi vos amis doivent être cool ou pas cool. Pourquoi ne pouvez-vous pas être amis avec tout un tas de gens?

Q: Pensez-vous vous dites, oh cette personne est assez cool? Pensez-vous que vous avez une définition différente de cool que ces personnes ou si vous ne le faites pas?

A: Quand je dis cool, ce n'est pas comme je pense que cette personne est populaire, il est juste que cette personne est cool parce qu'ils sont vraiment bien ou ils sont juste mon ami ou ils faire quelque chose qui est vraiment cool comme ... je don't sais, mon seul ami qu'elle a fait ce projet d'art vraiment sympa si elle avait ce projet d'art vraiment cool ... pas nécessairement peuples définition de populaire.

Q: Donc cool pour vous ne signifie pas populaire, mais belle, créative ...

a: Oui, créatif, ils peuvent être sportif, ils peuvent être ... ne pas vraiment d'importance ... oui, pour moi, il n'a pas d'importance si mes amis sont très populaires, comme j'ai un peu de ce que je suppose que certaines personnes voudrais amis envisager amis populaires et j'ai des gens de chapeau considéreraient pas populaire, donc il n'a pas vraiment d'importance ... donc, il est tant qu'ils sont vos amis et agréable de vous ... il n'a pas vraiment d'importance.

Q: Donc, il est la relation de vous qui est le facteur important?

A: Oui.

**Participant #11**

**Rockland / Gill-G8 / June 7, 2010.**

Q: Don't be so sorry, you're doing fine. Um, okay. What makes a person cool?

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

A: Um, I don't think anything makes...I don't believe in cool. I don't know, I just, I don't think it's right to like, um, group people, like like you know, these people are cool, these people are not cool, you know? 'Cause cool, everybody can be like cool in their own like way and you can't just judge people by what see, especially if you don't know the people, like the person...yeah, so...just.

Q: When you say everybody can be cool in their own way, what do you mean?

A: Well, I don't know 'cause everybody has their own um like qualities and their own personality like their traits, yeah...Um, and I don't know, like what um I think is cool and what... Like if I think oh like that person is cool, somebody may not think the same thing and I just, I don't really think any, I don't know... Cool, I don't really get the meaning of cool, like I don't...

Q: Do you think you have a different way of seeing it than other people do?

A: Um, I don't know, like some people have lots of friends and some people have not very many friends, or not as many friends, but I don't think that's what makes people cool or anything. Like, 'cause there may be the people, like some people qualify as un-cool; they may think they're cool and that the other people are un-cool and uh, like all it just depends on opinions as well and...

### Translation

Q: Ne soyez pas désolé, vous faites bien. Euh, d'accord. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

A: Euh, je ne pense pas que quoi que ce soit fait ... je ne crois pas dans un endroit frais. Je ne sais pas, je viens, je ne pense pas que ce droit d'aimer, euh, les gens du groupe, comme comme vous le savez, ces gens sont cool, ces gens ne sont pas cool, vous savez? Parce cool, tout le monde peut être comme frais à leur manière comme et vous ne pouvez pas juste de juger les gens par ce voir, surtout si vous ne connaissez pas les gens, comme la personne ... ouais, donc ... juste.

Q: Quand vous dites que tout le monde peut être cool à leur façon, qu'est-ce que tu veux dire?

R: Eh bien, je ne sais pas parce que tout le monde a sa propre um comme qualités et leur propre personnalité comme leurs traits, ouais ... Euh, et je ne sais pas, comme ce euh je pense que c'est cool et ce... comme si je pense oh comme cette personne est cool, quelqu'un peut pas penser la même chose et je viens, je ne pense vraiment pas, je ne sais pas ... Cool, je ne suis pas vraiment le sens de cool, comme je le fais pas ...

Q: Pensez-vous que vous avez une façon différente de voir ce que font les autres?

A: Euh, je ne sais pas, comme certaines personnes ont beaucoup d'amis et certaines personnes n'ont pas de très nombreux amis, ou pas autant d'amis, mais je ne pense pas que c'est ce qui rend les gens froids ou quoi que ce soit. Comme, parce qu'il peut y avoir les gens, comme certaines personnes admissibles à titre de non-cool; ils peuvent penser qu'ils sont cool et que les autres sont non-cool et euh, comme tout cela dépend juste sur les opinions et ainsi...

### Participant #12

#### Rockland / Female / Sec II

Q: I love this question, it is very general, take it as you want. What makes a person cool?

R: Well, I think it was some of the things they did in their past. Either nice deeds or things that are considered common. I think confidence. I think that, I don't know. I was going to say they can twist things.

Q: Manipulate?

R: Yeah, but a tive at the end.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Q: Manipulative?

R: Yeah. You can trust them but they can also hold things against you. I don't know, it's not really cool but I guess that is how you become popular.

Q: Is this your definition of someone you think is cool or someone who is considered cool?

R: Someone who is considered cool. Someone who I consider cool is someone who is happy and upbeat and expresses themselves and confident and tries.

Q: So there is a difference then for what you think is cool and what others generally think of as cool?

R: Yeah.

### Translation

Q: J'adore cette question, il est très générale, prendre comme vous voulez. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

R: Eh bien, je pense que c'était une des choses qu'ils ont fait dans leur passé. Soit bonnes actions ou des choses qui sont considérées comme communes. Je pense que la confiance. Je pense que, je ne sais pas. J'allais dire qu'ils peuvent déformer les choses.

Q: Manipuler?

R: Oui, mais une tive à la fin.

Q: manipulatrice?

R: Oui. Vous pouvez leur faire confiance, mais ils peuvent aussi tenir des choses contre vous. Je ne sais pas, ce n'est pas vraiment cool, mais je suppose que c'est ainsi que vous devenez populaire.

Q: Est-ce votre définition de quelqu'un que vous pensez est cool ou quelqu'un qui est considéré comme cool?

R: Quelqu'un qui est considéré comme cool. Quelqu'un que je considère comme cool, c'est quelqu'un qui est heureux et optimiste et eux-mêmes et confiants et tente exprime.

Q: Donc, il y a une différence alors pour ce que vous pensez est cool et ce que les autres pensent généralement aussi cool?

R: Oui.

### Participant #13

**Rockland / Sec II / Male / 04.06.10**

Q: Well, that's good. What makes a person cool?

R: Just being themselves and not acting like who they aren't. Just acting who they are and doing like they like to do and not saying, “Oh, I like to do this.” but they are actually just faking it, just to look cool.

Q: Just like being genuine or authentic

R: Yeah.

Q: OK, that's important to you.

R: Yeah, genuine, unique.

Q: Do you think that is how a lot of people see cool people or just your definition of cool?

R: I think that my definition but I think a couple people would agree with me. I'm not sure all people see cool people that way.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

## Translation

Q: Eh bien, c'est une bonne chose. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

R: Le fait d'être eux-mêmes et ne pas agir comme ce qu'ils ne sont pas. Qu'imiter ce qu'ils sont et de faire comme ils aiment à le faire et ne pas dire, « oh, je tiens à le faire. » mais ils sont en fait juste semblant, juste pour avoir l'air cool.

Q: Tout comme étant authentique ou authentique

R: Oui.

Q: OK, c'est important pour vous.

R: Oui, authentique, unique.

Q: Pensez-vous que c'est la façon dont beaucoup de gens voient des gens cool ou juste votre définition de cool?

R: Je pense que ma définition, mais je pense que quelques personnes seraient d'accord avec moi. Je ne suis pas sûr que tous les gens voient des gens cool de cette façon.

**Participant #14****Sec II / Child 13 / Rockland / 61B**

Q: ...for yourself. What makes a person cool?

R: In this school?

Q: Sure.

R: I would think it's somewhat the opposite of the other schools because if you like with our group we play sports and we're good at academics and that's usually what gets you more popular if you are very intelligent and you join activities throughout the school. Not just sports but we had a relay for life on Friday and when you volunteer for you that gets you...

Q: People think that's cool?

R: Yeah.

Q: OK, so it's sort of performing or based on performance?

R: Yeah, kinda.

Q: So if you perform well in school you perform well in sports and participate in activities that's what makes you cool. And that is your definition of cool or is that what people at your school think is cool?

R: It's kind of mine and kind of what other people think.

Q: So you think the same thing as what think most other people think?

R: Yeah.

Q: So important qualities for you to consider someone cool is someone who performs their best I guess?

R: Yeah they don't just sit around at school and do nothing.

Q: So they're putting a lot of effort for. Who are the students with whom you hang out with everyday?

R: Like, what's that...

## Translation

Q: ...pour vous. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

R: Dans cette école?

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Q: Bien sûr.

R: Je pense que c'est un peu le contraire des autres écoles parce que si vous le souhaitez avec notre groupe, nous pratiquons des sports et nous sommes bien aux universitaires et c'est généralement ce que vous obtient plus populaire si vous êtes très intelligent et vous joindre à des activités tout au long de l'école. Non seulement le sport, mais nous avons eu un relais pour la vie le vendredi et quand vous faites du bénévolat pour vous qui vous fait ...

Q: Les gens pensent que c'est cool?

R: Oui.

Q: OK, donc ça sorte de l'exécution ou basée sur la performance?

R: Oui, un peu.

Q: Donc, si vous effectuez bien à l'école que vous effectuez bien dans le sport et de participer à des activités c'est ce que vous fait frais. Et qui est votre définition de frais ou est-ce ce que les gens pensent à votre école est cool?

R: C'est un peu de la mienne et la nature de ce que les autres pensent.

Q: Vous pensez donc que la même chose que ce que pensent la plupart des autres gens pensent?

R: Oui.

Q: Donc, qualités importantes pour que vous considérez que quelqu'un est cool quelqu'un qui effectue de leur mieux je suppose?

R: Oui, ils ne restent pas là à l'école et ne font rien.

Q: Donc, ils mettent beaucoup d'efforts pour. Qui sont les étudiants avec lesquels vous côtoyez tous les jours?

R: Comme, qu'est-ce que ...

### Participant #15

#### Sec II / Child 14 / Rockland / 61B

Q: I like this question. What makes a person cool?

R: In our school, athletics is a huge thing. If you're not an athlete you either don't fit in or you have to find something else to help you fit in. So like our whole group plays sports. You have to be humorous, you have to have a good sense of humour cause we joke around like a lot so. You have to be active, like you have to want to do things.

Q: Like put effort forth.

Uh-hum.

Q: So athleticism, being funny and putting effort. So those are things that make a person cool. Do you think that's a definition that a lot of people have in your school or is that your definition of what's cool?

R: It's pretty much my definition. I'm sure other people have different explanations of it.

#### Translation

Q: J'aime bien cette question. Ce qui rend une personne cool?

R: Dans notre école, l'athlétisme est une chose énorme. Si vous n'êtes pas un athlète soit vous ne correspondez pas ou il faut trouver autre chose pour vous aider à mettre en. Donc, comme tout notre groupe joue des sports. Vous devez faire de l'humour, vous devez avoir un bon sens de l'humour parce que nous plaisantons comme beaucoup donc. Vous devez être actif, comme vous avez à vouloir faire les choses.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Q: Comme mis en avant l'effort.

Uh-hum.

Q: Donc, l'athlétisme, d'être drôle et de mettre les efforts. Donc, ce sont des choses qui rendent une personne cool. Pensez-vous que c'est une définition que beaucoup de gens ont dans votre école ou est-ce votre définition de ce qui est cool?

R: C'est à peu près ma définition. Je suis sûr que d'autres personnes ont des explications différentes de lui.

**Participant #16**

**Sec II / Child 15 / Rockland / Male / 7B**

Q: What makes a person cool according to you?

R: Cool? I don't know. Funny, nice, not bullying or anything. The friends I hang out with they're just relaxed and playful. They don't really care.

Q: Do you think that your definition of cool is different than the general sort of conception of cool?

R: I honestly don't know. It probably changes everywhere you go so.

Translation

Q: Qu'est-ce qui rend une personne froide, selon vous?

R: Cool? Je ne sais pas. Drôle, gentil, pas d'intimidation ou quoi que ce soit. Les amis que je fréquente avec elles sont tout simplement détendue et ludique. Ils ne s'intéressent pas vraiment.

Q: Pensez-vous que votre définition de frais est différente de la sorte générale de conception de cool?

R: Honnêtement, je ne sais pas. Il change sans doute partout où vous allez faire.

## Appendix F: Letter from Dr. Drolet

August 23, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

Robert Head (uOttawa 7110636) has my authorisation to include results from the study “Les clés de l’adolescence” [Dossier 09-09-06 University of Ottawa Research Grants and Ethics Services], which I co-authored with Drs. Ducharme, D., Flynn, R., and Leblanc, R., for secondary data analysis for his Master's thesis, “The concept and lived experience of the notion of ‘cool’ for myself and for young adolescents: In-between life-writing and interpretive study”.

Do not hesitate in contacting me should you require further clarification.

Prof. Marie Drolet  
Directrice de l’École de service social  
L’Université d’Ottawa  
Pavillon des sciences sociales, 12022

marie.drolet@uottawa.ca

613.562.5800 poste 6397

## Appendix G: Ethics Approval

File Number: 09-14-01

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/17/2014



**Université d'Ottawa**  
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

**University of Ottawa**  
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

**Ethics Approval Notice**  
**Social Sciences and Humanities REB**

**Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)**

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Raymond N.	LeBlanc	Education / Education	Supervisor
Robert	Head	Education / Education	Student Researcher

**File Number:** 09-14-01**Type of Project:** Master's Thesis – Secondary Use of Data**Title:** The concept and lived experience of the notion of 'cool' for myself and for young adolescents: In-between life-writing and interpretive study

<b>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Approval Type</b>
09/17/2014	09/16/2015	Ia

**(Ia: Approval, Ib: Approval for initial stage only)****Special Conditions / Comments:**

N/A

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

File Number: 09-14-01

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 09/17/2014



**Université d'Ottawa**      **University of Ottawa**  
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche      Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled “Special Conditions / Comments”.

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the “Modification to research project” form available at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://www.research.uottawa.ca/ethics/forms.html>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: [ethics@uOttawa.ca](mailto:ethics@uOttawa.ca).

**Signature:**

Kim Thompson  
Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research  
For Barbara Graves, Chair of the Social Sciences and Humanities REB

Appendix H: Secondary Data Codification Chart

Traitement des entrevues sur la notion de « cool », 13 janvier, 2013:

**FEUILLE DE POINTAGE CODIFIÉ: CONCEPTIONS DES ÉLÈVES SUR LE CONCEPT DE COOL**

Consignes pour la feuille de pointage :

- Dans la première colonne, écrire la totalité des différentes réponses données par les élèves, à raison d'une réponse par ligne.
- Dans les autres colonnes, mettre un « x » dans la colonne si l'élève a mentionné et était d'accord avec la réponse figurant dans la première colonne.
- Dans la colonne de total, additionner le nombre de « x » pour chaque réponse.

LÉGENDE : E = Elève

G = Garçon

F = Fille

P = Parent

CODE	GARÇONS										FILLES										TOTAL
	E2	E4	E10	E12	E13	E14	E15	Ss-total	E1	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E11	E17	E18	Ss-total	TOTAL		
1	X	X		X	X	X	X	6	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	7	13		
2	X		X	X			4	X	X	X							X	4	8		
3				X			1	X	X	X			X				X	4	5		
4	X						2											2	3		
5																	X	2	2		

Codification: 1 personnalité; 2 valeurs construites; 3 conformisme social; 4 sportif; 5 autres

Commun entre les deux groupes  
Différents entre les deux groupes



## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

Appendix J: Cross-Referencing Mentions (Drolet et al., 2009) with Systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). (Source: Leblanc & Alphonse, 2013)

N=16								
Definition (Source: Drolet et al., 2009)	System							Total
	Individual	Techno Sub	Micro	Meso	Exo	Macro	Chronos	
1. To be smart, an A student, perform optimally, be creative	3		3	3	3	3		15
2. Fashionable, nice clothes, outwardly attractive		3		3	3	3		12
3. Popular, have lots of friends			6		6	6	6	24
4. Be social			1	1		1		3
5. Because of personality and style	1				1		1	3
6. English speaker		1	1	1	1			4
7. Recreational drug user			1		1	1		3
8. Friendly, fun, nice, tells jokes, good humoured	9		9	9				18
9. Does not laugh at, ridicule, bully others			3			3		6
10. Athletic			3			3		6
11. Respectful of others, deserving of respect			1	1		1		3
12. Authentic, true to self, mature						2		2
13. Nice, happy, confident	1			1		1		3
14. D/K, No opinion								0
15. Act a certain way, do something nice, outstanding, nice art		2	2		2	2		8
16. Past action		1	2	2	2	2	2	11
17. Manipulative, hold grudges	2		2	2				6
18. Happy and Upbeat	1			1				2
19. Qualities, traits - individual.	1			1	1	1		4
20. Not by labels but actions explained		1	1	1		1		4
<b>Total Mentions</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>146</b>

Appendix K: Urie Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1994) Ecological model of human development theory.

1. The Individual as a compilation of system functions within a variety of groups and contexts. We order ourselves according to the demographics of groupings such as age, sex, gender, physical status, health, ability and ableness. That is the core, and from that place, we seek to orient our relationships with the world outwardly.
2. The Techno-subsystem which is informed by media and related systems. Of course, medias change, and today’s teens are influenced by the cool of computers, the Internet, portable electronic devices, and various forms of social media.
3. The Micro-system of individual centrality where direct interaction between the self and others [family, school, friends, the workplace, neighbourhoods, religious and community groups, and immediate environments] takes place, currently in the forms of Facebooking and IM messaging, for example, for today’s cool youths.
4. The Meso-system, where the relationships between relationships in the microsystem and exosystem are put into context, for example, for the Drolet et al. (2009) study youths, as what are the relationships between their friend’s behaviours and laws, or their schools and other schools in school boards, and friends to government in the larger context of societal apparatus?
5. The Exo-system reflects systems that influence individuals through indirect but existing links with components found within the microsystem. For the Drolet et al. (2009) participants, we are here speaking about educational systems, political systems, industry, government, economics, mass media, law, and other realities found within societies that must be confronted, acknowledged, and interfaced

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

with by the individual seeking to survive as a more roundly developed member of that society, even though the individuals here might not have a direct role with those systems (where links between an individual’s immediate and direct context are made with social systems for which the individual does not have an active role). In this context it is important to be able to inter-connect with individuals, and society.

6. The Macro-system, which is all about being where the social ideologies and values of cultures and subcultures in which an individual lives are described - what do they subscribe to, given the cumulative experience of them, as individuals developing through relationships within their techno-subsystem, microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem, moving forward to their macrosystem. For the Drolet et al. (2009) participants, this macro-system is reflected in their responses to cool as a bioecological measure of their [and peers’] development as individuals.
7. For the next point - the latterly seventh (1979) - which is Bronfenbrenner's chronosystem - that would be the “when”, and there is always the “when” for the person and the when for others, and the when's do not necessarily coincide or align perfectly. There is irony, of course, in that the chronos of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theoretical model of human development came after, and not before or during the model was first proposed. The universe being not static - things are different everywhere... Bronfenbrenner’s later-penned chronosystem, add to his theory the proposition that environmental events and experiences and sociohistorical circumstances are patterned and form a component of the bioecological model - whereby time and historic influences contribute to the bioecological model of human development theory systems suggested. This is also like saying we are influenced by the times in which we live - such as World War II or the Internet Age or the Cultural Revolution, given a corresponding cultural context, particularly as that describes our lensed lived experiences of cool.

## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

## Photo Credits:

1. At Parlee Beach near Moncton, New Brunswick, in c. 1984 – Robert Head wearing cool Rayban Wayfarer’s, an over-sized and very cool Japanese animée t-shirt with a Summer-cool white denim jacket. Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
2. Overexposed: 1984/2014, depicts surprise at being exposed, the insecurity of the moment – the pursuit of cool. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
3. Photo of Robert Head c. 1967. Depicts period sunglasses, fashionable sandals and a sweater hand-knit by a grandmother. The subject enjoying a moment of “being cool at 5 years of age”. Photo credit: (the late) Dorothy Steeves. (Collection: Robert Head)
4. School photo taken of Robert Head while attending Laval West Elementary School kindergarten, in 1967. The western shirt, bobby socks and wingtips being fashion statements of the period, very cool. Photo credit: Unknown. (Collection: Robert Head)
5. Photo c.1973 of a highly modified 1972 Ford COE track cab, considered very cool, property of John Head. Photo credit: John Head. (Collection Robert Head)
6. Panoramic c.1973 photo of 1972 Ford COE belonging to John Head taken near Alberta Rocky Mountain Range foothills. Photo credit: John Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
7. Robert Head exiting highly modified Kenworth K-100 COE in c.1975, wearing period cool bellbottoms, toe sandals and Lee Jean jacket. Photo credit: John Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
8. View of Hell’s Gate, BC, taken in c. 1975 from vantage point of inside of 1974 KW-K100 COE, considered an uber-cool perspective, by Robert Head at age 13. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
9. Family photo of three brothers looking as cool as they could as teenagers in 1975. Photo credit: John Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
10. Nova Scotia Liquor Proof of Age ID, 1981, of Robert head wearing cool aviator frame glasses. Photo credit: unknown. (Collection: Robert Head)
11. Photo of Robert head with cool over-sized shirt and spikey hairstyle, coolly sipping tea from a china cup with a silver spoon, at a table with a very cool antique industrial lampshade, acting contrarianly nonchalant cool Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
12. Photo of Robert Head walking through park in Ottawa, in 1983, looking cool in shades, spiked hair and fashionable clothing, as if in a sea of tulips – the flower of friendship. Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
13. Robert Head wearing cool Rayban Wayfarers, Wally jean jacket and Uomo winter longcoat in Montreal, photo taken in 1983. Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
14. Enjoying afternoon wine spritzers at Tuttles on Crescent Street in Montreal in Summer 1984, wearing cool Rayban Wayfarers and a tailored ensemble in red and pronounced pinstripes, with a friend in Coco Chanel and Cartier. Photo Credit: Benoit Karub. (Collection: Robert Head)

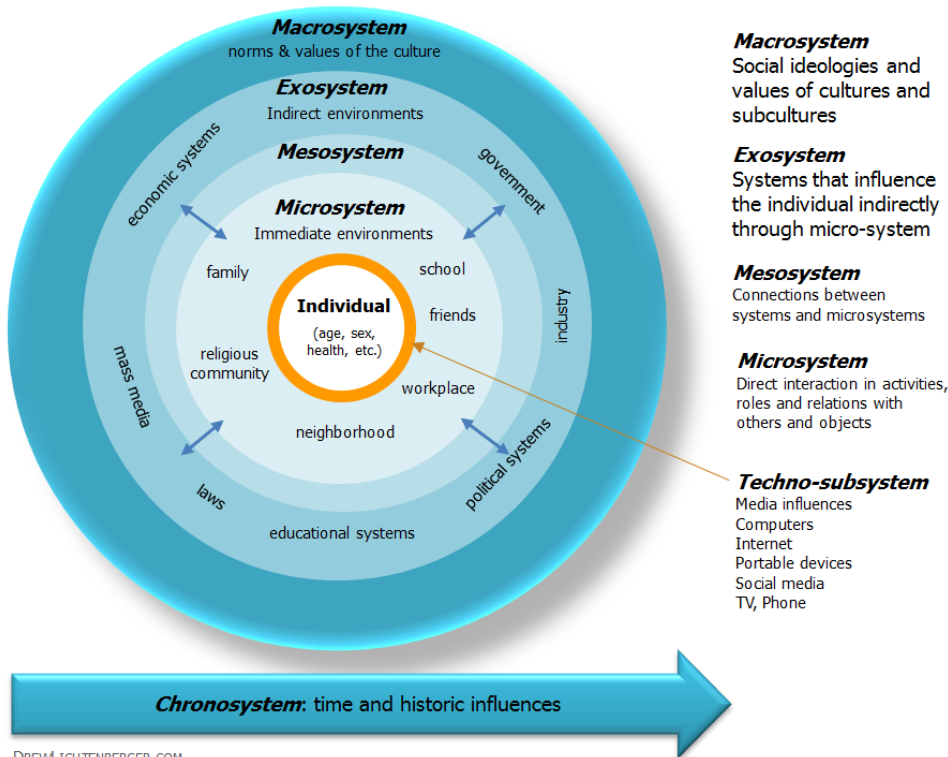
## The Concept &amp; Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

15. Wearing cool clip on John Lennon sunglasses and cool-again knee-length shorts, Robert Head wandering the beach at low tide, near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia in c. 1986. Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
16. Photo of cool James Dean made into cut out and incorporated into period advertising by Nordin Denim House in 2013. Photo credit: Denimfuture. (Collection: Robert Head)
17. Robert Head wearing cool rolled up jeans and black shoes, in the cool tradition established by the greasers of the 1950s, including James Dean, at the Musée des Beaux Arts du Montréal Pop Art Exhibit c. 1987. Photo credit: Unknown. (Collection: Robert Head)
18. Painting inspired by a photo of Robert Head on deck of Princess of Acadia in 1991, wearing cool canvas sneakers, oversized and rolled up jeans, and cool shades. Oil on wood by Robert Head, 2012. (Collection: Robert Head)
19. Photo of Robert Head returning to Nova Scotia for 10 year high school reunion, in 1991, looking cool. Photo credit: AndreYves Gagnon. (Collection: Robert Head)
20. Alien Resident Certificate for Robert Head, looking scruffy cool, issued by Government of Taiwan, Republic of China, 2002. (Collection: Robert Head)
21. Alien Resident Certificate for Robert Head, looking tropical cool, issued by Government of Taiwan, Republic of China, 2003. (Collection: Robert Head)
22. Photo montage of (the late) Quentin Crisp: Photo credit: Unknown. (Collection: Robert Head) Painting inspired by Tupper Street, Montreal at night, by Robert Head, acrylic on canvas, 1992. This was a cool and popular cruising area. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Whereabouts of painting unknown)
23. Acrylic on canvas painting that was coolly inspirational and was representative of a vivid dream, by Robert Head, in 1992. Photo credit: Tsai Yi Chen. (Collection: Robert Head)
24. Oil on Mahogany self-portrait painting of Robert Head in silhouette, 2002, which coolly depicts the person, while observing a contrarian cool distance. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Collection: Robert Head)
25. Oil on Zebrawood painting depicting cool interlinking representations of puzzlement, an attribute of cool, by Robert Head in 2004. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Collection of T.Y. Chen)
26. Oil on Zebrawood painting by Robert head depicting the blue cool of sleep and dreams and unearthly wandering, from 2006. Photo credit: Robert Head. (Collection: T.Y. Chen)
27. Photo montage from 2013 of ar|t|efacts by artist-researcher-teacher Robert Head, incorporating elements of Asia, such as Springtime and flower blossoms; religious Faith; Monarchist convictions; ancestral Scottish origins; maternal heritage tied to colonial expansionism of Canada’s railway; maternal heritage tied to the development of Canadian communications networks (Canada Post Airmail); and status as a Master Mason within the Grand Lodge of Quebec of Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, member of Centenary Lodge 81, Arundel, Quebec, as given by the apron of such lodge and distinction.
28. Photo of Robert Head as a vendor of antique auto parts and memorabilia, taken at Ottawa antique car show and auction in 1977, wearing cool aviator glasses, rolled up sleeves and Lee jeans. Photo credit: Unknown. (Collection: Robert Head)

**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> What is life-writing anyway? I have read that life-writing is literary métissage, an “intermingling of writing and of braiding autobiographical texts which describes experiences as well as acts as a strategy to interpret those experiences as documented” (Leggo, Hasebe-Ludt & Chambers, 2009, pp. 34-35). I have felt that life-writing is my post-colonial oral tradition. Not just for the reader, but for myself, as I speak my story to myself, hearing again what I have come to order as my narrative. It is indeed personal, and impersonally so. The bits I edit out through willed or involuntary recall or dismissal on my cable network of me make a channel, which I invite the reader to view, a snapshot. An emission. Leggo’s poem speaks to me and of me for me, and so I include it, that part that I hear as so close to my story, whispering: Poem copied from Métissage 6: Dangerous Strokes, Braid One, Too Personal, Page 185: Leggo, C., Hesebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C. (2009). *Life Writing and Literary Métissage as an Ethos for Our Times*. New York: Die Deutsche Bibliothek.

**Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological Model of Human Development**



<sup>2</sup> DREW.LICHTENBERGER.COM

Lichtenberger, D. (2012). Shaping influences–human development, <http://drewlichtenberger.com/6-shaping-influences-human-development/>.

<sup>3</sup> Marta Bladek (2012) shares with us [see her Notes] that, “Examples of return memoirs published in the past 15 years include both popular and literary texts: Jamaica Kincaid’s *My Brother* (1997); Andrew X. Pham’s *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam* (2000); Azadeh Moaveni’s *Lipstick Jihad: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America and American in Iran* (2005); Daniel Mendelsohn’s *The Lost: In Search for Six of Six Million* (2006); Danielle Trussoni’s *Falling through the Earth* (2006); Ruth Behar’s *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba* (2007), Saidiya Hartman’s *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007); Aziz Shihab’s *Does the Land Remember Me?: A Memoir of Palestine* (2007); Kapka Kassabova’s *Street Without a Name: Childhood and Other Misadventures in Bulgaria* (2009).” Bladek, M. (2012). *The Place One Had Been Years Ago: Mapping the Past in Michael Ondaatje’s Running in the Family*, *Life Writing*, 9(4), 391-406.

## The Concept & Lived Experience of the Notion of “Cool”

<sup>5</sup> “To be engaged in the practice of a/r/tography means to inquire in the world through an ongoing process of art making in any art form and writing not separate or illustrative of each other but interconnected and woven through each other to create additional and/or enhanced meanings. A/r/tographical work are often rendered through the methodological concepts of contiguity, living inquiry, openings, metaphor/metonymy, reverberations and excess which are enacted and presented/performed when a relational aesthetic inquiry condition is envisioned as embodied understandings and exchanges between art and text, and between and among the broadly conceived identities of artist/researcher/teacher. A/r/tography is inherently about self as artist/researcher/teacher yet it is also social when groups or communities of a/r/tographers come together to engage in shared inquiries, act as critical friends, articulate an evolution of research questions, and present their collective evocative/provocative works to others.”  
- R. L. Irwin [<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/r-tography->]

<sup>6</sup> A gear-head is a colloquial term for a person who is very interested in cars, trucks, motorcycles, and other types of vehicles and things mechanical.



Robert Head in his 1911 Ford Torpedo Gentleman's Roadster  
Photo credit: P. Seitz. (c.2003, Collection: Robert Head)

<sup>7</sup> [http://500nations.com/Canada\\_First\\_Nations.asp](http://500nations.com/Canada_First_Nations.asp)

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Wilby and Jack Haney completed the first “All-Red Route” Trans Canada Drive, in 1912, in a REO.



Photo: Wilby empties flask of Atlantic water into Pacific, 1912.

Copied from: Durnford, H. (1973). A Craven Foundation history: Cars of Canada, McClelland and Stewart, Toronto, Canada.



Ottawa Car Show & Auction. June 20, 1977 (Collection: Robert Head)