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This qualitative narrative study presents the interpreted experiences of seventeen female ROTC student-cadets enrolled in one of five traditional universities (as opposed to military institutions) located in the southeast U.S. I create a theoretical framework of four metaphors to represent university students and ROTC young women student-cadets; namely, '*minimalist*,' '*traditionalist*,' '*enthusiast*,' and '*reflective*.' My metaphors suggest the expression of social identity roles and characteristic communication and behavioral patterns of students and student-cadets in the university classroom and in their ROTC experience. I look at the multiple and competing ways these student-cadets navigate their ROTC role and their social identities between the competing forces of the of the distinctly patriarchal military culture marked by order, discipline, loyalty, and duty while engaging in a postsecondary educational environment marked by ideals of freedom, choice and fluidity.

I chose narrative research to allow me to ask the broad open-ended question of "tell me the story of your life" and to listen to the silences, observe the omissions, accept the selectivity, and catch the slippages in the young women's interpretive language (Casey, 1993).

In my final chapter, my research-to-pedagogy provides three classroom strategies utilizing technology, service and communication to provide students and student-cadets multiple ways of analyzing their personal and professional choices and their communication with selves and others. The goal is to bridge the gaps among each of the metaphoric representations of students with the goal of leading students and student-cadets to a '*reflective*' classroom environment.

NARRATIVES OF FEMALE ROTC STUDENT-CADETS  
IN THE POSTMODERN UNIVERSITY

by

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I was initially drawn to this study from two distinct perspectives: first as the mother of a ROTC student-cadet who has become a career officer in the military, and also as a university instructor who has observed student-cadets in my classroom, and who has become particularly curious about the young women I see in uniform. Thus, I decided to focus this dissertation on the narratives of seventeen young women student-cadets<sup>1</sup> enrolled in one of five traditional universities (non-U.S. Service Military Academy) located in the southeast United States and in a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program.<sup>2</sup> In this chapter I briefly discuss the identity dilemmas of female students-cadets living in a postmodern world, and I reflect upon my own identity as the mother of a military son. I then give short descriptions of my other chapters.

#### **ROTC Student-Cadets**

ROTC student-cadets negotiate their social selves in two distinct cultures: as cadets, they engage in a military environment that is viewed as conservative and rigid, while as students they engage in a postsecondary educational environment viewed as progressive and flexible (Harris, 2009). In discussing ROTC cadets' social identity, Axe (2007) suggests "male cadets are students first before they're soldiers" (p. 9). However, for my son, the values of the ROTC, namely loyalty, service, duty and discipline articulated in his military classes and in ROTC military field training impacted all aspects of his university education, his social identity formation and

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<sup>1</sup> Although the Air Force and Army ROTC students are cadets and the Navy and Marines are midshipmen, I use the term cadets for the sake of simplicity. I will refer to all students and cadets in my dissertation as student-cadets.

<sup>2</sup> The Army, Air Force and Navy (with Marine option) offer Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) as a scholarship program preparing students to become commissioned junior officers after graduating. A more extensive overview of ROTC training is provided in Appendix A.

performance. In discussing young women and the military, Axe (2007) states, “cadets and officers are soldiers first and women second” (p. 93). This would suggest that in spite of socio-political advances in support of women in the military,<sup>3</sup> ROTC is still focused on preparing them to enter an institution that is still entrenched in a combat, masculine-warrior paradigm (Dunivin, 2000). As Segal (1995) states, “it may be the most prototypically masculine of all social institutions. For women to participate in the military, they have to be perceived as changing in ways that make them more seemingly suited to military service” (p. 758). This would suggest taking on or mimicking male identity performative practices which Butler (1990) suggests are repetitive imitations of an ideal, imagined gender identity.

Several studies have noted, stereotypically, men are perceived as making decisions more easily and exercise more autonomy, self-confidence, competitiveness, and leader-like qualities than typical women. Women are characterized as being more helpful, care giving, relational and emotionally expressive than men (Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Chodrow, 1989; Diekman & Eagly, 2000; Gilligan, 1982; Nodding, 2003). Historically the military accentuates and privileges these stereotypic male identity traits for their leaders rather than the traits associated with women (Boldry, Wood, & Kashy, 2001; Sasson-Levy, 2003). Lucinda Peach (1996) terms this as an “ethic of accountability,” stating, “military leaders are deemed to have a special responsibility for the safety and protection of their troops as well as for the efficient and effective accomplishment of the military combat missions” (pp. 163-164). The

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<sup>3</sup> During the Reagan administration, a redefinition of combat roles excluded women from roles that had previously been open to them by the Carter administration and to declare a “women-pause” in the military. Then, in the beginning of the 1990s, Congress lifted the ban on women flying combat aircraft, and on women on combat ships and in 2010 lifted the ban on women serving on submarines. This changed the combat roles again. However, today, Women are still barred from joining combat branches like the infantry, armor, Special Forces and most field artillery units and from doing support jobs while living with those smaller units. Women can lead some male troops into combat as officers, but they cannot serve with them in battle. On paper, for instance, women have been “attached” to a combat unit rather than “assigned” (Peach, 1996).

military claims these standards cannot be maintained by women military leaders; they are not aggressive enough.<sup>4</sup>

Silva's (2008) investigation of the effects of military participation on a young woman's gender identity and gender relations while enrolled in a public university (as opposed to a military academy) found that "because their very identities as women were called into question in the military sphere, ROTC women must privilege traditionally feminine aspects of themselves in order to maintain a coherent sense of self" (p. 937). Morgan (2008) suggest that even as opportunities expand for women in today's military, the question of self identity comes into question and, therefore, young women are reluctant to be placed in a role that their family or friends feel is inappropriate. Sandel (1998) suggests the "unencumbered self" (p. 14) of postmodern contemporary life is marked by a lack of the moral and political commitments and obligations once prized in America. This postmodern unencumbered self is counter to Coser's (1974) portrayal of the military as a "greedy institution" (p. 3) that demands total commitment, obligation, sacrifice and service of its members. As Morgan (2008) states "these [military] standards are becoming less relevant to today's society" (p. 66).

### **Myself as a Military Mother**

"I'm going into the military." These few words can chill any mother's heart. However, when they were initially spoken by my eleven year old son following a visit to the Air Force Academy during a summer vacation, I indulged his fantasy. He was inspired and awed by the magnificent 26-foot "Fighting Falcon" sculpture representing the academy's mascot, jets positioned outside futuristic edifices, and the parade with jets flying in formation, men parachuting onto the field, and fit cadets marching in dress uniforms. It all fit into the media images he bought into that portrayed the adventures and life of an Air Force pilot. This passing

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<sup>4</sup> An elaborated discussion of the pros and cons on women in combat roles can be found in the works of Peach (1996) and Stiehm (1989).

fancy did not wane but turned into a more determined voice when my son was about to graduate from high school. He talked of enlisting in the military. My swirling emotions, resistance and even offers of bribes finally gave way to reluctant acceptance; but, with a compromise. My son agreed to defer the military until after university. He applied to and was accepted at several universities. However, my relief was short lived when he also applied for and was awarded a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corp (NROTC) scholarship to any university of his choice. Combined with a fully paid education including room, board and a monthly stipend, he was continuing the military vision he stated as an eleven years old. My hope and prayer was that his contracted commitment of four years of active duty after graduation would be served in years of relative world peace. This was not to happen.

He began his NROTC program, a college-based military officer training program along with his college engineering major. In addition to his full and demanding academic schedule, he took additional required courses focusing on military science, leadership development, military history, strategic planning and field and lab training. As a university student active in scholastics and social activities and his military training, he not only took on a student social identity (Baxter, 2005; Erikson, 1968; Hoare, 2002; Kegan, 2005; Marcia, 1968) but also embodied a military social identity. More specifically, he took on a marine identity, the NROTC option he chose.<sup>5</sup>

The best way to explain it is in the words of the commanding officer who commissioned Douglas as a second lieutenant officer when he graduated from university. He said, “We took a boy and made him a man and a marine. It was a ‘good fit.’” For the past 22 years my son has continued the “good fit” as a career marine officer serving in two wars, commanding artillery

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<sup>5</sup> There is no official Marine Corps ROTC program. Instead, individuals who want to enroll in the program and receive the Marine ROTC scholarship actually have to enroll in the United States Navy ROTC. After completing a required period in the Navy ROTC program, an enrolled individual has the opportunity to switch to the Marine option.

battalions, commanding military security personnel stationed in embassies around the world, as well as leading humanitarian efforts. The military has not only become a career of service and duty during war and peace, it has become a life of sacrifice, adventure and opportunities. For much of his military career, every two years, moving vans and packing boxes and a new home are a way of life for my son and his family; adjusting to new schools are part of his children's lives and developing new friendships become an ongoing task for his wife and two sons. Long deployments with uncertain outcomes leave family, parents and friends praying and tense and then relieved when he is once again home. This has been balanced by opportunities to obtain postgraduate degrees and Fellowships awarded to major universities.

In recent years my son's vision and assignments have shifted from commanding combat ready forces in wars to diplomacy and disaster relief roles. Leading in two wars, he witnessed the suffering and destruction brought on by violence. He has witnessed the psychological, cultural and human dimensions of war. This has led him to currently redefine his role as a military leader. His vision now is focused on supporting peace and humanitarian efforts. Nevertheless, his overarching goal remains the same. He is faithful and lives by the oath he took when he was commissioned as a second lieutenant junior officer and to the marine slogan of "Semper Fidelis." He states, "I am always mindful and faithful to honoring, serving, protecting the freedom and safety of our citizens and those around the world to the best of my ability. This is the ethics I live by personally and professionally." However, freedom and safety is now through a lens of leadership focused on nonviolent conflict resolution in the spirit of compromise and on work building mutually beneficial relationships based on a willingness to relate to and respect difference as a starting point of conversation rather than an end point. For him freedom is a process not a state. It is the recognition that some things can never be known about the other but he can work toward an in-between knowing that comes with hopes but no guarantees.

Looking back on his early years as he prepared for and engaged in a military life, our conversations were of the young men in his ROTC unit; discussions and any appearance of women either as students or senior commanding officers in the ROTC program were nonexistent. At the time, there was a strong feminist voice being raised throughout the university; however, these voices were raised in opposition or at a minimum ambivalent or nescience toward the military not in support of it.

As I forward to 2008-2009, and visit four ROTC units representing five universities in southeast United States, there is a distinct change. Young women are joining ROTC in increasing numbers despite the issues previously discussed; it is no longer uncommon to see young women on campus and in my classes dressed in military field uniform. In fact, young women enrolled in the army ROTC (AROTC) now represent 20% of the cadets (<http://www.goarmy.com/rotc>). At one university Air Force (AFROTC) detachment, I was told there were more women enrolled than males that year (Lt. Col. Kearney, personal communication, January 4, 2008). This leads me to question if the feminist message of resistance to military has been re-scripted by these young women who are fulcrums for change positioning themselves to enter the military not as enlisted but rather in leadership positions as commissioned officers. Are these young women disrupting and challenging the popular image of the male hegemonic military culture and electing the military as a way to de-gender the former masculinist military slogans of “be all you can be” or the marine slogan “the few the proud”? Or, I ask, do they subscribe to a master narrative of being socialized and walled completely by the esemplastic power of a tightly defined set of masculinist military practices and doctrines that overwhelm their minds and turn them into disciplinary clones losing all sense of identity and critical thinking? I question how these young women as military cadets and university students negotiate their social identity performance? To this end, I examine the multiple and competing interpreted experiences presented by these young women

students-cadets. The framework for the four student metaphors I develop in Chapter II are used to examine how these young women student-cadets interpret and negotiate their military ROTC role and their social identity performance as university students.

## **Chapter Overview**

### **Chapter II: My Journey into Education**

In Chapter II, I present my own story of pedagogic awakening. Ten years ago I entered the classroom as a university lecturer. My pedagogy at the time can best be described as traditional, static and focused on lectures. This was the model under which I was schooled and knew well. I created a syllabus that could stand the test of time for at least two years and classroom technology was limited to color PowerPoint presentations to supplement my lectures. My performative teaching practice ten years ago can be best described as “banking” (Freire, 1970; Shor & Freire, 1987) or “teacher talk” (Giroux, 1988, p. 3) both of which had much talking which I controlled, but little connection to a student’s lived experiences.

Fast forward to 2010 as times and my teaching have changed. My pedagogy of lecture with discussion has flipped. Today, I most often start with discussion and incorporate theory. I change my syllabus three times in one semester to meet the diverse needs of students connecting what goes on in the classroom with the rapidly accelerating global events that affect them inside and outside the classroom. Teaching today has become more like a conversation than a monolog resulting in a genuine need and capacity for surprise and flexibility.

Often referred to as Generation NeXt (Taylor, 2003) or Millennials (Strauss & Howe, 2000), contemporary students are living in complex, culturally diverse consumer driven, technological postmodern times. There is no doubt they live in a very different educational culture than the one I experienced and used as my model in my early years teaching. Young university students today have grown up stirred around in a digital stew and live in a world of

bits, bytes and information overload. Evolving modes of communication have changed not only the way they perceive language and ideas but also the world and themselves. In moving from the page to the screen, they want to see and experience the text, not read it. These digitally immersed students are what Gergen (1991) has termed “saturated selves” living in a consumerist saturated world and technological global library of facts, images and data.

While students are faced with challenges associated with their technological and consumerist addiction, they are also capitalizing on opportunities not imagined ten years ago. This is especially true for women. For example, according to the 2009 Digest of Education Statistics, over the last ten years, five percent more young women have enrolled in postsecondary education than males (Table 189)<sup>6</sup> and young women are feasting from the table of personal and professional opportunities set for them through the militant efforts of earlier feminist movements. As Woo (1992) states, “there is no doubt that American society has been altered forever by the women’s’ movements. Just as the Industrial Revolution created new economic and manufacturing systems, so, too, the women’s movement is an important part of a social revolution” (p. 134).

Today’s students and young women student-cadets have a foothold across the landscape of postmodern thoughts; they grapple with continuities with the past while moving into the novelties of the present and future. In doing so, they present many disparate and competing narratives on a continuum from modern to postmodern demonstrating a blurring, blending and reforming of modern/postmodern social identities rather than one grand identity narrative.

The students I have interacted with in the university classroom over the past ten years have been shaped by such formative collective experiences as 9/11, Hurricane

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<sup>6</sup>The population of women is gaining on men in university enrollment and retention; 57% of all bachelor's degrees conferred in 2007–08 were awarded to females. National Center for Education Statistics retrieved on 7/01/10 from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section5/indicator41.asp>.

Katrina, campus violence, financial crises, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and feminist messages of empowerment and entitlement. Added to these experiences is the acceleration of electronic modes of communication, the daily bombardment of media messages covering global issues of climate change, poverty, hunger, and human rights and social issues about class, race, relationships work and education. These dramatic cultural shifts deeply affect students in complex ways. Therefore, reflecting on the students and young women student-cadets I encounter daily, I have created a theoretical framework of four metaphors to represent their multiple and competing interpreted experiences and social identities. By social identity I mean the dynamic interplay between the self and the social environment. To this end, I have conceptualized four metaphors to frame how and what I observe and hear in the classroom. My four metaphors, the '*traditionalist*,' '*minimalist*,' '*enthusiast*,' and '*reflective*' suggest the expression of social identity roles and characteristic communication patterns students take on and how these affect their actions and interactions with me and their peers in the classroom.

The '*traditionalist*' metaphoric student through her interactions and discourse suggests a functional, modern orientation of education focused on education as a path to future career success. The '*minimalist*' metaphoric student represents the stranger in the classroom who refuses to invest in her education beyond the goal of getting through it. The metaphor of the '*enthusiast*' student with a postmodern consumer sensibility signifies the privileging of experience and participation over critical reasoning and discourse. This figure develops an episodic, fragmented, migratory social identity built on consumerism not only in needs but also in education becoming a consuming tourist (Bauman, 1995). The '*reflective*' student has a more modern *within* postmodern

orientation. While the '*reflective*' recognizes the definitional boundaries relating to authority, this metaphoric student resists blind obedience to the grand narrative as she engages in a more substantive, subjective exploration of self and others in her postmodern world view.

In summary, today's students represented in the four metaphors think and respond in a multi-layered, multi-modal fashion in forming social identities. The focus in Chapter three is a theoretical discussion of social identity formation.

### **Chapter III: Student Social Identity Formation and Expression**

I begin by reviewing the literature on psychosocial development of student social identities from multiple perspectives (Astin, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Gilligan, 1982; Pascarella, Bohr, Nora, & Terenzini, 1996), and on the impact of the university experience on social identity performance (Arnett, 2000; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Chickering & Schlossberg, 2002; Riehl, 1994). I then review literature of identity with theoretical viewpoints from modern to postmodern (Bauman, 1995, 2000, 2007; Gergen, 1991, 2003; Giddens & Pierson, 1998; Lasch, 1984).

These theorists suggest many students today are experiencing profound social changes as they move away from heavy/solid modernity represented by the idea of a 'job for life' and fixed definitions of the social, to fluid modern/postmodern sensibility characterized by uncertainty, risk, questioning beliefs, flexible forms of work and the fragmentation of social networks (Bauman, 2000; Giddens & Pierson, 1998). This transformation from solid to a liquid modernity to postmodernity has reconfigured the contemporary student into one that is highly individualized, fragmented, commercialized and entangled in consumer culture (Bauman, 2000). These students select from a pastiche of social identities shaped in part by media representations of gender, race, ethnicity, and class. In expressing their social identity, these students may variously define themselves by group membership (ethnic groups), relationships with others

(family, religious and other community memberships), or the various roles that they take on (student, military) to understand the self and values within a variety of contexts (Brewer, 1991). As Weeks suggests (1990), “social identity is about belonging, what we have in common with some and what differentiates us from others” (p. 88).

For some students, the classroom supports and encourages a modern social identity performance built on grade competition through risk aversion, conformity and for the student-cadets, a path to a defined, secure future. For the postmodern student, the classroom provides a site to celebrate and problematize the diversity, complexity and contradictions of who they are and what they want to be in a “shopping mall” (Bauman, 2000) consumer driven society. However, for many others, the classroom is a site in which they recognize and accept authority but are still willing to challenge the dominant modernist classroom dialectic of authenticity and universalism, certainty and order and embrace a modern *within* postmodern world of hybridized identities, electronic technologies, local cultural practices, and pluralized public spaces (Giroux, 1994).

#### **Chapter IV: Methodology and Data Analysis**

In Chapter IV I discuss my research methodology. I explain the procedures I employ in choosing narrators, collecting life stories, and analyzing transcribed narratives. Narrative research recognizes that people speak and act in patterned ways, and that the stories they tell us reveal the socially constructed reality of the world in which they live (Casey, 1993, 1995-96). The analysis of these individuals’ interpreted understandings “provides a lens of their experience in the context of their everyday lives, while simultaneously looking to the wider social/cultural resources on which people draw to help them make sense of their lives” (McCormack , 2004, p. 220). Narrative research does not seek to predict or create a theory, but its main focus is on description (Casey, 1993; Creswell, 2003, 2005).

This dissertation is based on narratives collected from seventeen (17) young women student-cadets over a period of one year. The multiple and competing interpreted experiences of student-cadets provide what Richardson (1990) calls a “collective story” (p. 22). The collective story displays an individual’s story by narrativizing the experiences of the social category to which the individual belongs, rather than by telling a particular individual’s story “Although the narrative is about a category of people, the individual response to the well-told collective story is ‘This is my story. I am not alone’” (pp. 25-26).

All the narratives are from seventeen undergraduate young women enrolled as residents in one of five universities and also enrolled in a ROTC program in one of four military service branches. The breakdown of institutions included three public universities and two small private universities. All were located in the southeast United States. One institution is a historically black institution (HBCU)<sup>7</sup>; the other four are historically white institutions. My narrators represent a range of ethnic backgrounds including nine (9) white student-cadets, seven (7) black student-cadets and one (1) Philippina student-cadet. Ages ranged from 18 to 22 with varied educational majors and professional interest. My student-cadet demographic includes five (5) freshmen, six (6) sophomore, two (2) junior and four (4) senior student-cadets.

My goal was to encourage the student-cadets to talk freely about whatever was important to them rather than what they thought I might want to hear. Therefore, I used Casey’s (1993) method: “Tell me the story of your life” to elicit the interpreted experiences of these young women. I believe that using the “Tell me the story of your life” prompt would invite these young women to begin at any point in their lives they wanted to and to talk about any part of their lives

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<sup>7</sup> Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) are institutions that were established prior to 1964 with the primary mission of educating Black Americans. In fall 2007, about 11 percent of Black students attended an HBCU. (National Center for Education, 2009) (indicator 39) <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2010/section5/indicator39.asp>.

that they wanted to talk about. My intention was to generate as much data as possible and not restrict or constrain the women in any way.

### **Chapter V: Student-Cadets' Interpreted Experiences**

For student-cadets, both the university and the ROTC community may be considered in a broad sense an “interpretive community” (Fish, 1980) where they interact and connect socially and culturally through a common language. However, it would be erroneous to assume that all student-cadets speak and experience a singular voice. Instead, within the larger ROTC “community” there are multiple, and competing voices privileging individual experience just as there are in the classroom. For all student-cadets there is a commonality in discussing the pillars of cadet life – scholarship, military leadership, field training and physical fitness. However, their emphasis and motivation in each area varies.

The ‘*traditionalist*’ student-cadet has an achievement ideology where her worth connects to her ability to conform and attain a good grade point average (GPA) as a path to a secure future and leadership position in the military. Her military training is viewed as preparation for self-abnegating sacrifice and collective courage, a feature Morgan (2008) suggest as “modern military warrior ethic” (p. 69). The ‘*enthusiast*’ student-cadet maintains a view of the ROTC as a fluid, playful, provisional commitment and focuses on physical training, community and individual choice. Difference and fragmentation are privileged and absolute authority is challenged as are the cultural norms of a masculinist military. As Morgan (2008) states, “these attitudes are perhaps related to a belief system that frequently coexists with the postmodernist relativism among many American youth today” (p. 7). The modern *within* postmodern ‘*reflective*’ student-cadet challenges the masculine identity and warrior image that conflate soldiering with a hegemonic masculinist ideology. These student-cadets reject the absolutes of existing military power structures; they celebrate difference. They provide a visionary element of what it means to be a

twenty-first citizen-soldier. They look at a military that can become rather one that is – one that builds global relationships rather than one that compromises global relationships. The ‘*reflective*’ ROTC student-cadet views herself engaged in a leadership position supporting humanitarian missions with outstretched hands rather than outstretched guns.

## **Chapter VI: Moving Forward—A Pedagogy Considered**

Within the academy there is an opportunity to initiate a critical analysis and discussion of responsibilities associated with participatory citizenship for all students, including student-cadets. This suggests the classroom is a site where the curriculum taught and the instructional tools used should reflect today’s world. This involves both a technical and dialogic process. The classroom experience provides an opportunity to stop thinking in terms of students as stable and fixed social identities with all of their properties established and known and start to think of processes, shifting identities and subjectivities, always in the process of becoming. Students can be invited to move toward a ‘*reflective*’ student model by exploring and reflecting on how they construct social identities through negotiating the tensions and complexities between a student as consumer and as agents with civic obligations. My goal is to help bridge, or at least narrow, the gaps among each of the metaphoric representations of students with the goal of leading students and student-cadets to a ‘*reflective*’ classroom environment. Accomplishing this goal is to have them become as Shapiro suggests, “. . . morally sensitive citizens that think and are wide awake” (H. S. Shapiro, personal communication, November, 2004).

In this final chapter I offer three curriculum strategies utilizing technology, service, and communication to provide young women students and student-cadets multiple ways of analyzing the professional choices they make, their communication and their relationships with themselves and others. Accomplishing this requires inviting students into more thought-filled learning experiences focused on high impact experiential opportunities rather than the Friere’s ‘banking’

method of checking off subject boxes. Dewey (1938, 1997) wrote, “We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflecting on experience” (p. 78). Boud and Walker (1992) assert, “We experience as we reflect and we reflect as we experience” (p. 168). Freire (1998) contends that real education is about the formation of people’s identities through a process that liberates people to think critically of ways of existing in our world.

For young women student-cadets, educators have an opportunity to combine ideals and practices to bring together what Stiehm (1996), suggests “civilian minds” together with a “military mind” in order to make “might” and “right” congruous (p. 292), to develop and support ‘*reflective*’ citizen-soldiers. This offers many of the undisputed virtues of military service which Barber (1984) states are “fellowship and camaraderie, common activity, teamwork, service for and with others and a sense of community” (p. 302).

In Appendix A, I provide a schematic of the four metaphoric representations of students and ROTC student-cadets and three suggested learning strategies to engage students in a *reflective* classroom.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **MY JOURNEY INTO EDUCATION**

As I undertake the task of untangling over two hundred fifty pages of narratives from seventeen young women enrolled in ROTC programs while attending traditional universities, I find it useful to begin with my own story as a student and then as a faculty member in a public university for more than ten years. Thus, through my personal reflections first as a student and then as a classroom instructor, I appreciate how the lens through which I teach is impacted by my own background, ideas, beliefs and values as well as the ideas, beliefs and values of my students. It is through my reflections as well as observing the classroom interactions of my students and their stories that I construct a framework of four metaphors to represent twenty-first century students as well as an analysis of the narratives and social identities of young women student-cadets.

#### **My Story**

When I entered the university classroom as a lecturer more than ten years ago, I initially used a Friere's "banking" method of education based on my own experiences as a student. Let me explain. I was raised in a patriarchal environment where my father made all the decisions and my mother responded without complaint. My mother often said, "I'm his wife, it's just the way it is." The messages were, "always listen to your father," and "beware of the belt if you don't." Although my brothers experienced the belt, none of us girls ever felt the results of my mother's threats. We girls were all frightened of him and saw him as almost mythical in strength and knowledge. Therefore, we never felt able to disobey or question the limitations he placed on us.

My parents left their family, friends and all connections to the familiar when they emigrated from Ireland during the depression era with my oldest sister in tow and my mother pregnant with my brother. They arrived in America with limited financial resources but rich with dreams of “making it” in what my father referred to as the new land. “Making it” meant working hard, being frugal and questioning nothing. This model worked well for my parents who eventually moved from a lower middle working class neighborhood to the middle class suburbs of New York. Owning a large beautiful house for the nine of us in the suburbs in a waterfront community gave me the sense that we were both a working class and middle class family. We owned a house within a short walking distance of the water where we swam and sailed all summer and ice skated during the winter, but my dad worked very long and hard hours to maintain it financially and structurally. My mother was not expected to contribute financially but rather to devote her entire life to raising seven children; staying in constant contact with the nuns to be sure we were behaving in school, and haggling with every vendor in town for the best prices for everything from food to furnishings and home repairs. Her contribution to my dad’s household happiness was to keep the brood quiet when he arrived home to a clean house, a good home cooked meal and his chair ready so he could enjoy his pipe in peace. Politics and world events were not dinner time conversations or any time conversations. This made my early life harmonious, secure and isolated from all the ‘messy’ issues in society; it was a life that seemed to be replicated among all my friends in our mono-ethnic culture neighborhood.

Both of my parents grew up on farms in Ireland where raising animals, hard labor and what my father called “common sense” were privileged over any formal education. Their classroom education was limited at harvesting and sheep shearing time and by everyday chores at home and on the farm. While formal education was limited, the stories that were told by my mom and dad described a rich life lived in a far off land of leprechauns and rolling hills covered with

sheep and cows. Those stories also provide my siblings and me some of our best lessons in geography, history and the value of hard work.

Moving to America made them realize that to ‘make it’ in their new homeland, education was critical but more so for my brothers than for me and my sisters. As each of my sisters completed high school in the 1950s and 1960s, dreams of higher education beyond secretarial or basic nursing training were not even considered. They were expected to pursue the American dream through a good, financially successful, sound marriage. As Sylvia Walby (1997) writes in *Gender Transformations*, “women at the time were oriented towards a domestic future as unquestioned fate” (p. 10). This concept of gender socialization was unchallenged and taken for granted in our household. We were to get married and start a family. The life course planned for each of my two brothers was to attend university, enter a profession and then settle down and get married. When one brother decided to enter the military instead, it was a family crisis and changed the family narrative.

As my oldest brother was heading off to the military, my family decided to deal with the crisis by redefining their educational philosophy and put me, the youngest in the family of seven children, on a different education path than my sisters. They made the financial sacrifices to send me to primary and secondary parochial schools, and reminded me often of the sacrifice everyone was making for my education.

My primary and secondary education can best be described as structured and disciplined, both physically and mentally. My teachers and my parents instilled a belief that hard work built on recitation and transfer of information from textbook to test would lead to future rewards and happiness. Absent was any encouragement to engage thoughtfully or critically analyze or question ideas contained in the text.

The narratives of hard work and success I heard and adopted as my own were connected to the idea that conformity was privileged over creativity and play; rote memory took the place of critical inquiry and the exploration of imaginative possibilities. At a very early age, I came to value education in terms of a business model of long/short term goals weighed against a cost/benefit analysis. My educational currency was reward or punishment with little in between. In grammar school, a numeric grade on the report card became a public declaration of praise or humiliation, then assignment to a class seat in order of grades, then a posting of gold/silver/no stars on class bulletin boards. In high school the task was taken over by my parents. Grades bestowed a degree of freedom or brought about home detention and lectures around the need to work harder or I'd have to give up the dream of "making it." I was the product of the "endless process of being judged, graded, sorted and ranked" (Shapiro, 2006, p. 128).

With this framework I came into the academy literally programmed with a technological, mechanical model of education of input/output. This perspective continued throughout my undergraduate years. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business with a minor in Economics and became a well schooled product focused on my own self interest rather than any serious consideration or critical engagement with larger societal issues.

Completion of a post graduate degree was put on hold as I continued to live out the narrative of my parents. Modeling my mother, I married and stayed at home to raise two sons and manage the household for a financially successful husband. Our sons' educations were less structured than mine but with the same subtle underlying message of discipline and order. Unlike my education which focused on work, their education was packed with extracurricular activities including sports, music lessons and clubs. Dinner conversations, when there was enough time to gather together, were spirited and included current personal and political issues around work, school and the community. Still missing were conversations around the larger social issues

affecting us nationally and globally; our vision didn't extend that far. As both of our sons headed off to university, one on a military path with a ROTC scholarship, my marriage ended and I returned to the academy to continue my graduate degree in Communication Studies.

My graduate work in Speech Communication had an organizational communication focus and most of my coursework was in applied communication in the Department of Communication Studies and in the Business School. The goal was to continue building my professional resume and corporate success. The successful result of all the studying and testing was that I could look again to "making it," this time on my own, as I pursued a relatively short but successful career in the corporate world. I now had the credentials that were the currency of power in the job market. However, while involved in building a corporate identity, I was suffering from what Jacoby (1997) labels Social Amnesia. He describes this as repression and resistance to critical thinking. The media, pop culture and corporate life taught me that the consumption of products and services defined success. However, while my happiness was expressed in the language of dollars, it was built on a shaky foundation. I eventually left the corporate world when a teaching opportunity became available at a university; however, I was still operating from the consumerist mindset.

During the early 1990s my son started his military career as a junior marine officer and was deployed to areas of unrest around the world. At the same time, I began to awaken to and listen to the voices of people marching, fighting and even dying for civil rights and justice. I started to rethink my embedded beliefs, values and ideas. As I listened and read, I started the difficult process of opening myself to the stories of those with views different from mine. However, it was not until I enrolled in my doctoral classes that the gates of resistance to critical thinking broke and I allowed myself to really go to the scary place within myself. Critical Pedagogy, Feminist Theory, Servant Leadership and Philosophy of Education classes provided

breadth and depth to my questioning process, increased my self-awareness, and brought a deeper understanding of my role and responsibility as a teacher and citizen. I came to appreciate that to be an educator; one has to do one's own work first. Goodson (1992) states, "Life, experience, and background are obviously key ingredients of the people we are, of our sense of self. To the degree that we invest ourselves in our teaching, our own experience and background therefore shape our practice" (p. 116). Clark (1992) suggests teachers' life experiences affect what they believe, and consequently, how they teach. To embrace and open myself up to the practice rather than just the theory of my graduate experiences, I had to experience disequilibrium. Joseph (2000) states, "one way to better understand our behaviors and the culture we adopt and under which we adopt and operate is to experience disequilibrium" (p. 20).

I had to question, to analyze and to understand the myths and narratives I created and lived by to consider my own attitudes, biases and interactions with others. As Butler (2002) suggests stepping out of the frame is a frightening experience as we lose our bearings and "find ourselves without a map" (p. 159). But it also offered me an opportunity to make own roads and challenged me to step over boundaries. Unfortunately, these Cultural Studies classes came only after I had been teaching for two years.

### **Entering the Classroom**

When I first entered the classroom as a new lecturer, uncertainty replaced confidence. Old embedded beliefs surfaced and I retreated into my comfort zone of a structured classroom. In essence, I could not relax my grip on the past. My early pedagogical starting point can be best described as a labyrinth and I was the gatekeeper. There was one way in, one way out; the route through which I was taken by my education. By this I mean, I came to class well prepared, I attempted to convey to students my own knowledge of the subject, I allocated time for group exercises, I assigned relevant readings and papers, and I posed questions for discussion. My own

expectations were that students would complete their assignments on time, come prepared to discuss the readings in class, study diligently, participate *enthusiastically* in group exercises, answer my Socratic style questioning with brilliance and to my satisfaction, and master the major concepts of the course. What could be simpler?

Though resistant to change, I came to realize that my pedagogy was not working. There was a disconnection between my teaching and students' learning. I was leading students to an endpoint by covering all the course material in the books rather than inviting them on a voyage to explore the broader implications and meanings of the course material and its implications in their personal and professional lives. In essence, I was there with the students, not for the students (Bauman, 1995). I was physically insulating myself in the stereotypic certainty of my role as teacher at the cost of emotional and moral engagement with unique individuals. I was teaching and acting out of a core of fear instead of a core of confidence and love.

No matter how hard I coaxed students to conform to my agenda of getting through course material, the students' expectations and life stories did not always align with mine; they often had different priorities, challenges and attitudes toward their work. Accepting this disconnection helped me realize teaching was not, in fact, a labyrinth; it was, and continues today, to be a loopy and perplexing maze full of unexpected turns and dead ends. I discovered mistakes are made when one's approach to education is static and assumed; there is no one size fits all in education. Students and their university experiences are not all alike. Giroux (2001) suggests that rather than the modern traditional narratives of abstract and objective forms of rationalized knowledge I experienced, true pedagogy today engages with the everyday and the particularities of identities and communities.

Just as events have shaped the lives of previous generations, the lives of students now entering the university have been affected and shaped by social and political upheavals,

technology and media messages of instant gratification colonizing every aspect of their lives. These dramatic cultural shifts deeply affect students in complex ways. So, reflecting on the students I encounter daily in the classroom, I have created a theoretical framework of four metaphors to represent their multiple and competing interpreted experiences and social identities. By social identity I mean the dynamic interplay between the self and the social environment. Today's students have access to a wide range of possible connections, ascribed and achieved identities. These may include group memberships (ethnic, cultural groups), relationships with others (community memberships), or as in my research, the interpreted identity roles as student-cadet and ROTC participants. As Brewer (1991) suggests, these social identities are typically used to understand the self continuously emerging, re-forming, and redirecting itself in the ever-changing experiences so prevalent in postmodern times.

### **A Framework for Student Identities**

Metaphoric tropes serve illustrative and educational purposes as a fundamental tool for understanding one kind of thing in terms of another. We use metaphors to explore similarities and differences and to construct alternative ways of using language (Krippendorff, 2005; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Krippendorff (2005) states, "metaphors invoke their user's experiences, encourage new experiences and inform their user's actions, experiences and engagements with others" (p. 51). Metaphors are closely related to stories told. They may become shorthand references to stories that are shared by many people (Docherty, 2004) and "are useful for making sense to organize relationships about relationships" (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2000, p. 159). As a researcher, I realize the limitations and dangers of using metaphors to represent students since they may create stereotypes leading to expectations, assumptions and prejudices. I recognize metaphors may cause me to shape, block, construe and misconstrue what transpires from the onset of my research to its culmination. However, while recognizing these limitations, I

also appreciate their explanatory and descriptive power. It is to this end I use four metaphors to conceptualize and frame what I observe from the interpreted experiences expressed by students in the classroom.

My four metaphors, the '*traditionalist*,' '*minimalist*,' '*enthusiast*' and '*reflective*' suggest the expression of social identity roles (Burke, 1950; Goffman, 1959) and characteristic communication and performance patterns students use and how these patterns of consciousness affect their actions and interactions with me and their peers in the classroom. As these metaphors suggest, the students and student-cadets in my study live in the contemporary technological and consumer driven times. They have a foothold across the landscapes of postmodern thoughts making meaning of their experiences as they grapple with continuities with the past while moving onto the novelties of the present and future. In doing so, there are many disparate and competing narratives on a continuum from modern to postmodern that demonstrate a blurring, blending and reforming of modern/postmodern social identities rather than one grand identity narrative.

Those perspectives I identify as '*minimalist*' and '*enthusiast*' suggest a postmodern orientation built on narratives of consumption and fragmentation. They tend to view themselves as the center of their own universe and privilege variability over universality. Those I label '*traditionalist*' would appear to have an overarching narrative theme that suggest a traditional *within* a modern orientation. They live in the "betweenness" as they embrace the traditional value system of structure and certainty while variously disrupting cultural and gender stereotypes that formerly characterized women as weak and disempowered. The endgame for these students is to follow the rules to achieve their valued goal of work unencumbered by their gender. Finally, those I identify as '*reflective*' suggest a strong liquid modern/postmodern orientation of reflection while maintaining a modern *within* postmodern orientation.

## Four Student Metaphors

### The '*Traditionalist*'

My first metaphor represents the '*traditionalist*' student. These students enter the classroom with a strong Western traditional/modern identity tied into values with a biographical narrative around certainty and structure. Many come from a patriarchal family and with an educational background where obedience, sacrifice, honor, duty, discipline and often, a religious faith have created and shaped their deeply embedded values, beliefs and opinions. It is through this lens that '*traditionalists*' build and sustain a social identity through which they can give meaning to their perception of reality.

The classroom experiences and interactions for '*traditionalist*' students are negotiated to maximize their achievement in forging a path to future success. Their primary and secondary education experience has been shackled by a powerful and pervasive authoritative, hegemonic and hierarchical ideology; being safe and right is privileged over risk and critical thinking. As university students, they have embraced the same traditional roles, expectations, and responsibilities for themselves as they did during their primary and secondary educations. For them maintenance of the status quo is in their own best interest and provides a sense of security. Each class is considered a folder of information and theory is absolute rather than integrated into any deeper, critical investigation, meaning or application. For these students the classroom is a site where they appreciate lectures, accept the word of authority without challenge and prefer to be told what and how to think rather than be invited to think about important issues. They engage the course material on a surface level that can be reproduced on and applied to the next quiz or exam with harbored hopes of a good grade and ultimately a good graduating grade point average (GPA).

In *Life in Fragments*, Bauman (1995) builds modern and postmodern cultural theories of identity by contrasting metaphors of the pilgrim and the tourist. While the postmodern tourist refuses a fixed, ordered identity, the modern pilgrim's individualistic journey is shaped by and preoccupied with building and sustaining an identity through which she can give meaning to the world around her. As a pilgrim the '*traditionalist*' embarks on a specific journey toward the future point of arrival. As Bauman (1995) states,

being a pilgrim, one can more than walk . . . one can *walk* to . . . pilgrims have a stake in the solidity of the world they walk to . . . the world of pilgrims—must be orderly, predictable, insured . . . it must be a kind of world in which footprints are engraved for good, so that the trace and record of the past travels are kept and preserved. (pp. 85-87)

This requires a degree of grit, and steely determination defined as perseverance with future expectations of career success in meeting their long-term goals. The identity development of '*traditionalists*' leads to what Erikson calls, "territorial defensiveness." These students "stake out their identities in the 'eternal security' of work protections" (as cited in Hoare, 2002, p. 53).

The role of pilgrims, who lived up to the hardships of Protestant work ethics so prevalent in modernity, suits the '*traditionalist*' student in the university classroom who has been straight jacketed and conditioned by modern, bureaucratic, rigorous and regimented educational curriculum of reading, writing, recitation and test taking. They have been stripped of imagination and the critical capacity to think and act against the grain. They are afraid to make mistakes because they've been taught to dichotomize everything into categories of 'right and wrong,' 'true or false.' For '*traditionalists*' the notion of inquiry and critical thinking seem to be considered unnecessary and lavish in their pursuit of "tangible connections to a better grade and job opportunity" (Shapiro, 2006, p. 14).

On the first day of class, I pose the questions, "why are you in this class? And what does a university education mean to you?" For the '*traditionalist*' student, her reticent response to the

question is often safe and controlled and more often is responded to with a question than a response. Carol, a first generation university student responded with “I’ve not thought about that question too much before, so can you tell me what you’re looking for?” With further prompting, she responded what she wants to get out of the course is a good grade, skills to apply to a future career and end her university career with a job. For her and other ‘*traditionalists*’ school is the front porch to success in the job market. Every assignment must have a clearly defined beginning and ending. They are most comfortable with time-managed schedules, lecture classroom and although they enjoy class discussions often resist contributing in fear they may get it wrong and be embarrassed or it will affect their grade. They regard professors as bosses to be pleased rather than authorities to be challenged. As Brooks (2010) states, “they are prudential rather than poetic” (p. A23).

### **The ‘*Minimalist*’**

Second, there is the metaphor representing the ‘*minimalist*’ student. These students are recalcitrant consumers of education and are defined by their lack of interest or motivation in their academic pursuit. They are the postmodern tourist just passing through or pausing long enough to pay their ticket and get through the system with as little effort as possible. For these students the classroom is focused on an easy means to the end; the end is simply a passing grade or, in a Maslow’s (1987) hierarchy as this relates to their education, they prioritize survival above other needs. The ‘*minimalist*’ have become university vagabonds (Bauman, 2000) as they nomadically wander through their university career “bodily ‘in the place,’ but they are not ‘of that place’ and often, whenever they wish, not bodily” (Bauman, 2003, p. 98). In the classroom information filters through their minds and vanishes as these students invoke defenses of withdrawal and numbing. Their interaction with others is minimal, questions from peers become monosyllabic responses as they sit behind laptop screens, searching the internet, slouched down behind a barrier

of books while texting or checking cell phone messages. They become animated only with the signal that class is ending.

To the question I pose regarding their motivation for taking the class and their university experience, the '*minimalist*' student responds, "I need three credits to get out of here" or, more boldly, "I need a Writing Intensive class and, by the way I sure hope this is an easy course. Tell me what I have to do [what's the minimum amount] in terms of work and I'll do it." The focus for this student is to minimize effort which often results in minimum results. The end goal is to get a grade and three semester hours on the transcript and get out. If, at the end of the semester, the grade the '*minimalist*' gets is not the grade to pass the course, it's a surprise and results in a flurry of emails. Recently, Dot, a poster child for 'just getting by' ended up with a failing grade in one of my courses and would have to repeat it or enroll in another course to graduate. She had been in and out of the university for several years and was confident she had mastered the art and the system of getting by. When a final failing grade was posted to her transcript, a series of emails came to me. Some of her comments stated:

I didn't think my final paper was supposed to be about what we discussed during the semester. It came from somewhere else. I don't think there is a single person in that class that would have given me a failing grade. I don't deserve to fail. I only missed a few [7] classes and btw when you asked what I was doing on my computer, I was working on my laptop 'cause I'm under stress with a lot of things to get done for other classes. I was listening even though I wasn't contributing to the class discussions. As long as I came to class it was your responsibility to be sure I was motivated to get through it.

Another student about to graduate felt safe telling me her strategy for taking classes. "I take at least three easy classes each semester in a large lecture where the professor doesn't take role so I can sit in the back and relax when I feel like showing up. I never buy a book for class and just borrow notes."

In another conversation, she indicated she avoids classes that meet before noon, meet more than two days a week and always registers for an easy Kinesiology elective class on the premise that it would be a good place to check out and meet buff guys.

Unfortunately for these students, wherever the disconnection with education occurred, they have carried it through their university educational experience and have developed minimal ongoing relationships with teachers, engagement in course materials and involvement with the university community. For them, the university has become “crude, cramming factory” (Shapiro, 2006, p. 6). Unfortunately, they will eventually leave with a degree but they have devalued academic and intellectual attainment. The ‘*minimalist*’ student is marking time with the implicit understanding the higher education is not a process of discovery but a series of skirmishes to be won. While the pressures that create the disconnects in these students’ lives are complex and highly individual, those who are hard core ‘*minimalist*’ will always be a challenge and dampen the energy in the classroom and at its worse, create frustration for the educator trying to reach them.

While the ‘*minimalist*’ appears resistant to embracing the educational experience, the ‘*enthusiast*’ eagerly embraces a strong postmodern tourist identity and becomes an explorer and sensation-gatherer during her university experience. These students embrace every new concept and idea with great energy and are ready to take on a cause du jour with minimal critical reflection. ‘*Enthusiast*’ students channel sensory, heuristic cues as a basis for their thinking.

### **The ‘*Enthusiast*’**

The ‘*enthusiast*’ metaphoric students are represented by Bauman’s (1995) tourists who are postmodern mobile pleasure-seekers. Their life strategy, as he states, “is not identity building, but the avoidance of being fixed” (p. 89). He continues, “Their strolling is not rectilinear but rather a meandering through series of episodes with neither a past nor consequences” (p. 92).

Their narratives contain a rich plurality of contending discourses, practices and representations shaped in part by multiple options available to them. They are marked by a “want now” consumerist attitude of experiences seduced in part by the power of media and consumer markets. They are defined, and come to define themselves, by their power to consume. Rutherford (2007) would suggest the ‘*enthusiast*’s’ social identity is “seduc[ed] with the promise that we can become ‘anybody we like’” (p. 10).

The ‘*enthusiast*’ tourist is the person of leisure, in search of ever new sensations as she wanders from shopping mall to shopping mall of experiences and from one exotic place to another in identity formation. In each case there are new and uncharted territories to explore – unknown lands and the uncharted territory of experiences (Bauman, 1995). The uncertainty and constant fluidity and flux of the life experiences of ‘*enthusiasts*’ create an ongoing search for a social identity—a search that remains elusive. With the ambivalence of a universal definition, quality of life becomes an individual identity issue. Like quality of life, identity is a process of recycling, of being reinvented, reconstituted and remolded. “Identity behaves like a verb rather than a noun – live one day at a time. Identity is an oblique assertion of the inadequacy or incompleteness of the ‘what is’” (Bauman, 1995, p. 82).

‘*Enthusiasts*’ are dedicated to exploring new ideas, relationships and new experiences through the concept of play. In developing their adolescent identities, Erickson states, “play explores a ‘new identity element’ that is lodged in fresh ideas . . . and in doing so, sees where such ‘experiences’ . . . may lead” (as cited in Hoare, 2002, p. 120). In other words, the ritual of play connects a life in its narrative that apprehends the roles, abilities, events and possibilities that are yet ahead. However, the wandering of ‘*enthusiasts*’ through playful experiences may also leave them disoriented and dislocated from their ‘home’ (Hoare, 2002, pp. 119-120).

In the university setting, the '*enthusiast*' is spirited, involved and enmeshed in a helter-skelter romp through life to defend, explain and understand her university and social identity. She views her university experience as a cornucopia of 'neat' things to do, see, and experience. Her restlessness drives her to flit around the university environment seeking excitement and pleasure while pursuing an education. In essence, the university is the shopping mall of experiences to be consumed (Bauman, 1995).

This social, educational butterfly's response to my class and university purpose question is, "wow, I love being in the university and taking all these neat communication classes and I absolutely love all my professors." She continues, "I'm really busy, I'm taking 18 semester hours, I'm doing community service work for one of my classes, and I'm social director of my sorority. I'm on the university activity board, I'm a University Ambassador, I work part-time and I have a boyfriend." I'm exhausted after hearing this overachiever's response and she is exhausted after one week of class. Image dominates and social identity becomes plastic, malleable and situated in relation to what is experienced through the daily flood of technologically mediated information. These '*enthusiast*' students come to class armed with a backpack full of books and their laptop. Their cell phone ear bud has become an appendage to one ear, their I-pod to their other ear. They arrive to class plugged in, amped up on espresso caffeine and celebrate their lack of sleep. With these students, class lectures will put them to sleep and class interaction and discussions will wake them up. They willingly and eagerly engage in class discussions; the discussions are lively, often contentious and often morph from larger social issues to a relaxed recitation of personal self-disclosure about the minutia of their social life. The rhetoric of '*enthusiasts*' are focused on "I" with little regard to how their responses connect to deeper, collective social implications. They embrace and hold sacred a culture of personal freedom, pleasure, and freedom of expression. There is an inconsistency in their practice and understanding of citizenship. They

believe in it and will discuss it, but they demonstrate shifting commitments contingent on their available time and the emotional cost involved. I consider these students, “soft citizens.”

Technology has become a “God-term” (Weaver, 1953) and has been assimilated into every aspect of the life of the ‘*enthusiasts*’ from a very early age, leading to both positive and negative outcomes. To the good, they have become more aware of global issues and how they situate themselves in society. However, at the same time they have created an ever-changing social identity that moves and shakes on a fault line of tenuous stability. These digital age students are what Gergen (1991) has termed “saturated selves in a saturated world.” By this Gergen suggests that in an increasing technologically dependent world, we have reached a tipping point of social and cultural saturation that is in turn influencing ways of conceptualizing the social self and how we go about making ourselves intelligible to each other in a postmodern world. Elliott (2008) offers the claim that the media provides viewers perusable, consumable identities with media images becoming almost more powerful than reality and distinction between representation and what is represented becomes diminished. For the postmodern ‘*enthusiast*’ the manufactured world she sees in the media and imagine in her dreams can become quite pleasing leading the naïve student to take the image to be reality and seek it out. In this context, everything is more informal, there is no interest in traditions and heritage; what counts for the ‘*enthusiast*’ is amusement and novelty. Giroux (1994) suggests “electronically mediated images, especially television and film, will represent one of the most potent arms of cultural hegemony in the twenty-first century” (p. 44). As we head into the second decade of the twenty-first century, the discourse of ‘*enthusiasts*’ and their dependency on increasingly new and novel technology devises and images will bear this out.

In her research, Nathan (2005) found that students like those I identify as ‘*enthusiast*’ typically spend their every waking hour multitasking. In her research of student life, Nathan

suggests multi-tasking is a way of life for students who are “online while they eat or chat on the cell phone while walking to class or doing homework while watching TV” (p. 35). More than any other time in history, students today find it unimaginable to consider life without electronic communication and information processing. They are actively on-line or available to engage with technology almost every waking hour. A 2009 Pew Research study suggests “they are history’s first ‘always connected’ generation. Steeped in digital technology and social media, they treat their multi-tasking hand-held gadgets almost like a body part” (p. 1).

With all this stimulation, ‘*enthusiasts*’ are barely aware when they are eating meals to nourish their body much less processing any meaningful information to nourish their mind or developing meaningful relationships to nourish their spirit. The ‘*enthusiast*’ means of communicating with peers and faculty has evolved from face to face interaction to cyberspace networks including the internet, cell phones, electronic bulletin boards, email, text messaging, social and virtual postings. This technology saturation increasingly creates a fetishism of individuality as these students prefer to *talk at* rather than *talk with* each other. With social identity so connected to technology, taking any part of it away creates an identity crisis and meltdown.

### **The ‘*Reflective*’**

The ‘*reflective*’ students blend the attributes of ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ students but situate the self as more reflexive (Beck & Willms, 2004; Giddens, 1990; Giddens & Pierson, 1998; Lasch, 1984). They are immersed in a reflexive modern *within* postmodern individualistic orientation weaving together elements of the ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ student. In resisting dogmatic truths, they seek new and creative ways of thinking on the periphery (Shapiro, 2006) as they reflect on possible trajectories of choices and options.

In using the term “reflexivity” Giddens (1991) suggests that in the modern/postmodern order, social identity becomes a reflexive project, an endeavor upon which one continuously works and reflects. According to Giddens (1991), unlike the past where the role of the individual was passive, in late modernity/postmodernity, the self becomes the focus of control within society. On a regular basis, the ‘*reflective*’ student reflects on and controls what she does, how to act and most importantly who to be (Giddens, 1991). As a student she is immersed in a reflexive modern *within* postmodern individualistic orientation. Her modernist impulse for creating order, boundaries and classifications is problematized and negotiated through a postmodern lens of tolerance for plurality, difference and uncertainty.

Although recognizing she may have more choices as old ways of doing things lose their hold, at the same time her propensity for individualization does not necessarily involve detraditionalization (Holmes, 2009). John Thompson (1995) argues that traditional ways of doing things are no longer widely seen as guiding norms, nor does doing things traditionally automatically legitimate actions, but suggests people still use tradition to make sense of the world and in forming identity. This suggests a variety of social forces and personal circumstances always play a part in shaping identity and influencing particular paths taken. Blackshaw (2005) suggests when discussing Bauman’s concept of liquid modernity, “men and women are forced to be above all else, at the same time both rational and self determined individuals” (p. 91).

As students who recognize the complex and competing demands of contemporary society, ‘*reflective*’ students can be compared to Lifton’s (1993) protean self. The Protean seeks to be both grounded and fluid “developing a multiplicity of varied, even antithetical images and ideas held by the self, each of which it may be more or less ready to act upon. It is a continuous effort without clear termination . . . it is a balancing act between responsive shapeshifting on the one hand, and efforts to consolidate and cohere, on the other” (pp. 8-9). In negotiating this

dichotomy the challenge for students is to find a way to bring the roles under the partial control of an organizing identity. The reflexivity of modern social life, suggests Giddens (1990), “consists in the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character” (p. 38).

*‘Reflective’* students also resonate with Bauman’s fluidity as they tend to live in a state characterized by constant change.

*‘Reflective’* students most often have strong family ties that create a foundation for their values, beliefs and professional choices. They acknowledge and respect the knowledge of superiors whether it is family or other dominant influencers in their lives, including their professors. However, while respecting knowledge they are willing to challenge it. These students have developed a keen sense of commitment and entitlement to a university education; they value their education and the process of gaining knowledge. They have high expectations and a need for fulfillment in their personal and professional lives in an increasingly competitive world. While the *‘reflective’* student is goal oriented, she still questions the concept of self and how her social identity roles are shaped in an increasingly complex, demanding, and multicultural, technological global society. She is willing to reflect critically on her own history to make sense of how her gender, class and race have affected the ways she thinks and acts in a postmodern world.

In the classroom *‘reflectives’* are willing to engage in discourse by reaching into their own histories to both celebrate and problematize the diversity, complexity and contradictions of who they are and how these aspects of self relate to larger social issues. In reflecting, they “effectively engage in behaviors such as asking questions that stimulate critique of practice and providing alternative frameworks” (Reitzug, 1994, p. 304). While they respect authority, *‘reflectives’* are also willing to challenge the dominant modernist classroom message of

universalism, certainty and order, to embrace a postmodern world of hybrid identities, electronic technologies, local cultural practices, and pluralized public spaces (Giroux, 1994).

Their response to my first class question will often involve a process of looping. They initially hold back a response wanting to listen to other student perspectives; they reflect on those responses and then express a viewpoint of their own in light of the class discussion. The following day with or without prompting they may continue the conversation with more discussion integrating conversations and theories from previous classes and courses taken.

Like the '*enthusiast*,' the '*reflective*' students represent technological exceptionalism (Pew Report, 2010). They have also been raised on technology and are now residing in a hyper-technological age resulting in what Gergen (1991) calls "an acceleration of the future" (p. 62). Complex, overlapping, and now a consortium of increasingly integrated technologies provide these students increasingly faster access to information giving them a real-time awareness of local and global issues and the forces acting to create injustices and marginalization both locally and globally.

A positive result of this technology results in '*reflective*' students having new and increasingly improved modalities of communication available to virtually cross global and information borders and open up global spaces for vastly expanded multiple narratives of how power is written on, within and between different groups and cultures (Bloland, 1995; Giroux, 1994). As their lives traverse with others through time and space, a connected voice of community and global connection becomes possible. This often creates a strong need to engage in active citizenship individually and collectively to remove the shroud around authoritarian censorship of free speech and rally for justice locally and globally as they see it. However, their access to remote control, click and search knowledge can also provide information overload. This may create fractured pieces of information without connection to the whole issue and thus

presents a difficult challenge and ability to separate the meaningful from the meaningless. In addition to this technological saturation and the goal to make the world a better place in which to live, these students also must deal with external pressures filled with stress as they find themselves struggling to balance school with family, peer pressure, finances, and jobs.

### Summary

An essential requirement of classroom teaching is to understand students and particularly their attitudes, behavioral roles and approaches to learning (Alexander 2001; Oblinger 2003). A student's experience of university is embedded in a complex environment made up of diverse, interdependent elements; the metaphoric students I outline above are characteristic of just one set of elements. In interpreting their multiple and competing classroom experiences and interactions, the concepts and realities of postmodern discourse are very much invoked in the lives of these students as they reflect on and talk about issues of choice, opportunity, social roles, social identities and how these impinge on their often fragmented social identity roles and selves.

It is for this reason I create and suggest four metaphors as illustrative of student's social identity roles in the classroom. The '*traditionalist*' student through her behaviors and discourse suggest a functional, traditional/modern orientation of education with a postmodern lens focused on her entitlement to higher education and future gender equality and success in a career of her choice. The '*reflective*' student has a more modern *within* postmodern orientation. While the '*reflective*' student recognizes the definitional boundaries relating to authority, she resists the grand narrative as she engages in a more substantive, subjective exploration of self and others. The '*enthusiasm*' student elevates experience and participation over critical reasoning and discourse. She has developed an episodic, fragmented, migratory social identity built on consumerism not only in needs but in education, becoming consuming tourists in her educational experiences. She lives in a sea of social and often superficial connections. She is so connected to

technology that she has blurred and even merged the lines between physical space and cyberspace. The '*minimalist*' student is a stranger in the classroom and refuses to invest in her education beyond the goal of getting through it. Disengagement and commitment-avoidance in classroom interactions is privileged over classroom community.

Now that I have identified metaphoric representations of students as a framework for my research, I turn my attention to selected theories within the existing scholarly literature that explicate and support my discussion of students' social identity development and how they play out within a university setting. This will merge with and provide a setting to continue my research discussion of the multiple and competing narratives of young women enrolled in a ROTC program and how they actively interpret possible ways of being in the course of constructing a university and military social identity in late modern/postmodern times. In the collected narratives of the student-cadets there is a blurring, blending and-reforming of traditional boundaries and borders. Rather than one grand narrative, there are many disparate and competing narratives on a continuum from traditional/modern to postmodern.

Identity is a theme in my research because the stories told by seventeen young women student-cadets reveal ways in which particular ideas about being a student and a future military leader make sense and become influential in their personal and professional lives. Their narratives reflect the socio-cultural impact of their past and their current classroom/military identity as they situate in the larger horizon of the university. Through their daily interactions, familiarity and interest are cultivated in ideas, arguments, issues, problems, perspectives and ways of being that might be quite distant from their own. For '*traditionalist*' students this often presents a challenge and generates resistance. For '*minimalist*' students it provides a distraction from their sole interest to get through the system efficiently and swiftly. For '*enthusiast*' and '*reflective*' students, reflection and action are differently interwoven—cycling between reflection and action

as a way to integrate their understanding of others within their own self-understanding. For ‘*reflective*’ students it is to develop a wider, more differentiated view of diversity and difference; for ‘*enthusiast*’ students it is to widen and expand on their marketplace of consumerist options for new experiences and opportunities.

I also introduce the term “negotiated identity” in my discussions to reflect the interaction between individual and the environment (Kraus, 2008; Mead, 1934). This negotiation affects the student-cadet’s interpreted experiences, actions and interactions in the classroom as a person training to become a military officer and a university student. While there is much research on aspects of the military and gender (Armor, 1996; Bourg & Segal, 2001; Carreiras, 1999; D’Amico & Weinstein, 1999; Francke, 1997; Herbert, 1998; Skaine, 1999; Steihm, 1996; Tokas, 2002) and some research on women enrolled in one of the military academies (Helms, 2008; Volker, 2000), I found only one research study of young women students enrolled in a traditional university environment and in a ROTC program (Silva, 2008).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **STUDENT SOCIAL IDENTITY FORMATION AND EXPRESSION**

#### **Identity—Who Am I?**

To define social identity it is important to acknowledge the dynamic relationship between the self and the environment – the student, their university and their ROTC experiences.

Oyserman, Fryberg, and Yoder (2007) stated that social identity theories describe how individuals come to define themselves through the social groups to which they belong. As such, they argued that these social identities are essential parts of one's self-concept. Within this framework for thinking of who they are, students and cadet-cadets have a wide range of possible connections contributing to the development of their social identities. In their narratives, they may variously be defined by group membership (ethnic groups), relationships with others (family, religious and other community memberships), or the various roles that they take on (student, military) and are typically used to understand the self and values within a variety of contexts (Brewer, 1991).

These students and cadets reveal how all of Gee's (2001) identities are concurrently mixed within the self. At its most basic, it may give a student a sense of personal location, the stable core of her individuality. However, it is also about her social relationships, her complex involvement with others. As Weeks (1990) suggests, "social identity is about belonging, what we have in common with some and what differentiates us from others" (p. 88). Identity becomes an evolving life story—the making of the self continuously emerging, re-formed, and redirected as one moves through the sea of ever-changing experiences.

In traditional societies where survival demanded adherence to a limited range of roles, activities, beliefs, and, thus, choices, identity was imposed on individuals (Calhoun, 1994). Cote

(2000) and Cote and Allahar (1996) suggest that from traditional to modernity in Western industrial societies, there was a shift from prescriptive to descriptive identities. An explanation of identity becomes something achieved, claimed and exerted. Davis et al. (2000) state “Through hard work and discipline ‘full realization’ of one’s self becomes dependent on expressions of independence and individuality” (p. 167).

The postmodern identity becomes constantly reconstituted, fluid and ever responding to an increasingly pluralistic, technological, consumer driven environment. Bauman (2000) claims identity within the postmodern framework is increasingly external, “something worked outside the body, rather than a sense of being” (p. 32). The modernist grand narrative of identity is essentially abandoned and identity is viewed as fragmented, open-ended and episodic in an unstable world. It is marked by indeterminacy and undecidability, reconstruction and redefinition (Bauman, 1995; Woodward, 2000). Quality of life becomes an individual identity issue. The postmodern identity is a process of recycling, of being reinvented, reconstituted and remolded. Stapleton and Wilson (2004) suggest, “A central means of enacting these processes is through the everyday use of discourse, and in particular, the construction of various accounts and self-narratives” (p. 46).

In summary, the student’s and cadet’s social identity is a complex, multidimensional, evolving layering of cultural, linguistic, and social influences ranging from a strong reliance on traditional/modern structure to postmodern fluidity. It provides meaning for their experiences, provides a way to construct meaning and a voice of self through verbal and nonverbal symbols. It also includes the rituals of her social, cultural, economic, and educational world. These symbolic systems of representation create places from which a student and cadet can position herself and from which she can speak in relation to other identities; namely, collective identities.

As postmodernism increasingly influences curricula and campus culture, the terrain of identity development continues to be important but also contested. For example, while the student-cadets in my research share and identify with many postmodern concepts including the multiplicity of choices and consumption of goods and products, they are also making decisions to enter a military environment where choices are restricted and structure is the norm. For this reason, I now briefly discuss the influence of university and ROTC experiences and its impact on social identity development.

### **University, ROTC Life and Identity Development**

In contemporary Western societies, the years from the late teens through the early twenties are a time of significant change and importance (Arnett, 2000) as students leave home psychologically and physically and transition to college. McAdams (1993) states, “to depart from the past is not to leave the world behind. It is rather to move from one world to another” (p. 79). Riehl (1994) suggests that to leave home psychologically is to leave childhood and begin the journey toward maturity and responsible citizenship in a social world. All of the student-cadets in my research will be crossing the threshold from a known safe and secure world of home into the unknown world of the academy. For many students, this means moving a great distance from their home state.

The process of transitioning from the family home and establishing a residence of one’s own is a distinct, overt manifestation of moving from late adolescence/young adulthood to an adult identity (Astin, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Hoare, 2002; Marcia, 1968). For all students and for ROTC student-cadets transitioning from home to a university becomes an important developmental experience of shaping and negotiating social and professional identity. Transition, as defined by Goodman, Schlossberg, and Anderson (2006) is “any event, that results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles” (p. 33).

As the students and student-cadets enter the university, they traverse the borderland between the old and the new of leaving home and creating a new “home” as they learn to function as independent adults. Erikson suggests, “Being an adult means among other things to see one’s own life in continuous perspective, both in retrospect and prospect” (as cited in McAdams, 1993, p. 91). In writing of Erikson’s identity-formation process Kroger (2000) states, “The process involves the ego’s ability to synthesize and integrate important earlier identifications into a new form, uniquely one’s own” (p. 207). In addition to a student identity, the seventeen young women in my research are moving forward in another identity role as ROTC cadets and the prospect of becoming future leaders in the military. This is a military role deeply embedded in and marked by a hierarchal, hegemonic ideology. For some it is a small step out of their comfort zone as they move physically and psychologically from one space to another; for others it is a giant step as they tread softly struggling to find a safe and significant place in new, unfamiliar settings both in a university setting and in a ROTC program.

In conceptualizing his psychosocial theory of life-span human development, Erikson (1968) states:

An individual life cycle cannot be adequately understood apart from the social context in which it comes to fruition. Individual and society are intricately woven, dynamically related in continual change and therefore, historical, cultural and social ideals, mores, and practices must be considered as significant influencers on and contributors to individual identity development. (p. 114).

As it applies to this study, Erikson’s theory is chosen to add one additional piece to my research to connect a student and cadet’s social identity development as she transitions to university life and military preparation. Scholars suggest identity formation is the experience of adopting meaningful roles and values that make one feel and act “most like oneself,” i.e., a coherent ego with a sense of coherence and continuity (Blustein & Noumair, 1996; Erikson,

1968) relating to the interplay of genetic and environmental influences within social, cultural and historical contexts. This resonates with the '*traditionalist*' whose values tie in with a biographical narrative around a coherent story of certainty and structure formed in her military upbringing and early school years. This allows them to realize their professional goals as they integrate their university experience with their future military career. Erikson (1968) suggest that the inability to resolve this identity conflict of coherence and continuity results in an inability to perform many of the necessary lifespan developmental, one of which is the career development process. For '*enthusiast*' students college is marked by a helter-skelter romp with episodic experiences of multiple and competing commitments and professional goals.

Erikson (1968) suggested that the identity formation process includes two related tasks that typically underscore the characteristics of the last adolescent stage: exploration and commitment. Adolescents begin a critical exploration of philosophical, religious, political, vocational and interpersonal domains, all of which relate to the adolescent's personal beliefs and values. This identity formation process resonates strongly with the '*reflective*' student who problematizes both who she is, her place in society and how she can make society a better place.

One aspect of identity formation Erikson (1968) viewed as critical is generational consideration. He points to the responsibility of the parent generation for providing an ideological framework for its young to follow or, in some cases to contest, reconfigure or even reject. Wood, Read, Mitchell, and Brand (2004) suggest that parental influences continue to impact social and professional choices even into college. Parental influences are evident in many of my student-cadet narratives. This includes continuing a tradition by attending the same university as her parents or modeling a parent's military career choice through her ROTC participation (Lawrence & Bridges, 1985; Legree et al., 2000; Wilson, 2009). However, for other student-cadets, habitual patterns of behavior familiar to them from previous years may begin to recede in importance,

creating a sense of ambiguity or even adventure and independence. Chickering and Schlossberg (2002) warned that family and friends make demands for stability and status quo while students are faced with novelty and opportunity. Tensions and insecurity along with excitement and exhilaration produce a cultural and social environment of shifting moods as students engage in a process of examining and questioning the system of values and ethics taught to them by family and peers while also experimenting with new systems of roles, beliefs and behaviors to match their self-definitions of identity and lifestyle. Students wrestle with questions of independence and interdependence. They want to be viewed as adults capable of making their own decisions while still maintaining positive relationships with their families (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998).

The student-cadets represented by the four metaphors of *'traditionalist,' 'minimalist,' 'enthusiast'* and *'reflective'* are very much in the process of negotiating and delimiting a sense of social identity and boundaries in interpreting their experiences and their life choices within the total gestalt of university life and military environments. Through their reflections and their narratives, they provide insight into how they present themselves, attempt to articulate and understand their life and how they connect, balance and negotiate their social worlds of university and ROTC.

### **Social Identity Development and Gender**

While Erikson's theories of identity development serves as a conceptual grounding and analytic tool for many models of student development (Josselson, 1996; Kroger, 2000) a major criticism of his model is its distinctly andocentric biased concepts (Sorrell & Montgomery, 2001). In emphasizing white middle class males and organizing human development and behavior with these standards, he excludes the lived realities of women in contemporary/postmodern times and is thus descriptively incomplete (Gilligan, 1982; Taylor, Gilligan, & Sullivan 1995). Scholars

suggest many young women have been socialized to grow up having to cope with culturally ingrained definitions of femininity and thus suggests that females experience greater difficulty than males in asserting themselves (Chodorow, 1989; Josselson, 1987); in seeing themselves as persons of value (Gilligan, 1982); in gaining professional recognition (Morrison, White, & Velsor, 1992). Carol Gilligan (1982), in viewing her own life and the narrated lives of other women in her seminal work of women's personal and moral development, introduced a distinctive "alternative concept of maturity" (p. 22) by including the voices of women .

With this addition as a new line of interpretation, Gilligan did not see personal and moral development in males and females as positive or negative, but rather as differently developed and valued socially and thus requiring separate approaches in their investigation. Gilligan contends that the capacity for care and relationships are part of human nature; however, in a society so wedded to patriarchy, the mind, reason, and self, are considered valued masculine traits and elevated above feminine body, emotion, relational traits. This leads to both conscious and unconscious biases as expressed in so many of the narratives of student-cadets. Wang (2008) described unconscious bias as "cognitive and motivational biases that lead us reflexively to categorize, perceive, interpret the behavior, remember, and interact with people of different groups differently" (p. 9). For example, while the military publically supports the participation and rights of women in the military, often resulting from legislation and societal pressures, many deeply held essentialist views about female military effectiveness remain.

In interpreting their experiences, many student-cadets enrolled in a ROTC program grapple with problems related to both conscious and unconscious biases. For many of the student-cadets, discussions of their anticipated military leadership position becomes as much about negotiating the perceptions of those around them in reference to their gender as it is about their

leadership style. As one female student-cadet stated, “I have to try harder to prove myself and become accepted.”

Gilligan’s (1982) “ethic of care” is a dilemma expressed by many student-cadets. Their concern is that in order to serve as a gender minority in a military leadership position, they may have to give up relationships with themselves; they must separate from their own knowledge, desires, and needs in following the hierarchal and patriarchal military culture. Gilligan (1982), calls this the “crisis of connection” indicating there are rigid standards women must meet in order to negotiate the power and relation dynamics. Debold, Wilson, and Malave (1994) echoed Gilligan’s premise of a “crisis of connection,” as when young women experience themselves as coming up against a wall. Once in a military leadership position, these student-cadets anticipate being asked to make moral decisions as military leaders. They conceptualize this within the current military top down hierarchy marked by rules, policies, standard operating procedures (Bolman & Deal, 1991); some contrary to their leadership preference. With an expressed preference for relationships and collaborative decision making, some student-cadets expressed a concern they may be vulnerable to adverse judgments.

In describing the military field training (boot camp) program for military personnel, Rockman (2009) describes the archetype male warrior paradigm. “Maybe from a civilian approach we would emphasize cultivating happiness, or peace. But that’s not generally what a young soldier is interested in. They want to become the best warrior they can be” (para. 5). This resonates with the code switching expressed by student-cadets in discussing their military physical and field training. Several spoke strongly of having to take on a soldier social identity and mask any emotion that would demonstrate weakness in strength or emotional stability while in the presence of male peers and superiors. However, they find much bonding takes place in the company of their women cadets when they feel secure enough to share and support each other in

their frustrations and pain. It is within these networks of friends these young women find emotional continuity, companionship, pleasure, care and practical assistance.

The themes introduced in Gilligan's book, *In a Different Voice* inform her subsequent work, but these themes have been expanded with a critical feminist lens of gender brought into sharper focus against patriarchy and sexism. Her later works become explicitly political and engaged. Brown and Gilligan (1992) define their method as "relational *and feminist*" (p. 24) with the aim of their research to "create a more caring and just society" (p. 6) and for both young men and young women to "extricate themselves from the constraints of patriarchal logic" (p. 30).

One aspect that I find hopeful about Gilligan's arguments, especially in her later work, is the notion that identity resolution comes with awareness by both sexes of the importance of relationships, a sense of connectedness, and acceptance of the facts that the self and others are interdependent and sustained by the ability to care in relationships. It is with the awareness that, within one's very nature, there is the capacity for voice and relationship that are the foundation for just and democratic societies. This hope rests in the interpreted experiences of '*reflectives*' who are questioning the military hegemony and "warrior" paradigm. They are awakening their voice to challenge the patriarchal paradigm of the military where, military leadership and ways of thinking have traditionally been male privileged. They are developing a leadership identity as they see the ranks of women leaders slowly growing. In the context of care and interdependence, they see themselves working within the military institution to change the conversation about their place in the military leadership from a focus on winning wars through guns to winning hearts through humanitarian efforts.

A critique of Gilligan's early work and other social/moral developmental models is posed by Gerson (1985, 2002) who argues that assigning women and men to distinct, homogeneous moral groups may have seemed natural, desirable, and inevitable when social majorities lived in

traditional households. However, the demographic and ideological underpinnings of this framework are eroding in postmodern times. A new generation of young adults cannot rely on traditional notions of gender differences in moral capacities to make viable or satisfying professional and lifestyle choices. Young women today craft and negotiate personal identity and build connection to others through the lens of an increasingly globalized, multicultural, technologically driven world. Gerson (2002) suggests this presents social and moral questions and dilemmas for young women in late modern/postmodern times. These are social because they arise from living in postmodern times. The proliferation of options available to young women today including military service, shifting family dynamics and interpersonal relationships, creates conflicts, ambiguities and inconsistencies. They are moral because others judge these choices, forcing young women to reproduce, accept, or change prevailing moral codes. “Socially structured moral dilemmas force us to move beyond habits and routines to develop and justify new actions and beliefs” (Gerson, 2002, p. 13). By looking at the creation of, and strategic responses to, socially structured moral dilemmas helps to illuminate the process of gender identity. As Gerson states:

Focusing on dilemmas allows us to view gender as an “incomplete” institution. Gendered responses do not reflect inherent gender differences but are instead strategies developed by differently situated social actions coping with ambiguous circumstances. Change is possible in this framework but never guaranteed. It becomes more likely when social arrangements create conflicts that require innovative responses. (p. 13)

Many of the student-cadets in my research grew up in nontraditional households that underwent some form of change as fathers were absent for months or years, where both parents were military, and where frequent military relocations often out of the United States, caused uncertainty and dislocation. This full ranges of changes, as well as living in a postmodern society, now emerges in how these students may self interpret and negotiate their social identity. This

growing up amid a shifting family order and moving away from a nuclear family to a university have many student-cadets rethinking the conflict between self-interest and responsibility to others. Taking lessons from their parents' generation but facing new quandaries of their own as student-cadets, these young women are crafting strategies that challenge traditional views of gender. Their emerging views on how to balance autonomy and commitment, to define care, and to develop a personal identity amid ambiguous social postmodern cultural changes are presented in their multiple and competing narratives. While these views suggest a blurring of gender boundaries, they also underscore how persisting obstacles often create a gap between young women's emerging egalitarian aspirations and their more limited opportunities for achieving them. This was most evident in a student-cadet's questioning her goal to reach the top level leadership in the military and the military essentialist response she received from seasoned male military officer who suggested she could not attain it.

In summarizing her concepts, Gerson (1985) states that "a complete theory of women's behavior must include how women themselves, as actors who respond to the social conditions they inherit, construct their lives out of the available raw materials" (p. 37). While childhood experiences are important in determining values and gender roles, a person's life course is not always predetermined. The salient idea is how a woman responds to the myriad of choices that are presented to her in a postmodern world.

### **Postmodern Identity**

Postmodern theorists have also challenged developmental interpretations of a coherent personal identity which focuses on the construction of an autonomous, intentional self; they have replaced it with the concept of fragmented or multiple selves existing simultaneously in an ahistorical universe (Butler, 1990). Butler does not accept that gender does exist in some essential form that remains unchanged. She states, "there is no gender identity behind the expression of

gender . . . identity is performatively constituted by the very *expressions* that are said to be its results” (p. 25). As performances, identity in general, and gender specifically, do not have a fixed substance, rather, meaning is attributed to them through the enactment of socially approved expressions of gender; identity development thus becomes a story without closure, constantly open to change.

### **Summary**

While Erikson provides a framework for understanding life span identity development, the feminist approach offers a useful vantage point from which to highlight and correct the omission of women’s (and others’) experience. Sorrell and Montgomery (2001) suggest feminist developmental scholars find the vocabulary of self as active and intentional to be more useful than the vocabulary of the self as simply a passive recipient of environmental contingencies or an illusion created by the intersection of language and culture.

While each of the above researchers contribute to identity development literature, it is important to connect these theories to those of late modern/postmodernism scholars previously discussed in my student metaphors (Bauman, 1995, 2000; Gergen, 1991, 2003; Giddens, 1990). Bauman argues that old identities of class, ethnicity and so forth are breaking down in the face of consumerist individualism based on choice, fragmentation and fluidity. In a globalized information technological world, today’s students-cadets increasingly inhabit cultural and social spheres marked by a plurality of languages and cultures. Giddens (1990) suggests that in the post-traditional order, self-identity becomes a reflexive project—an endeavor on which we continuously work and reflect. We create, maintain and revise a set of biographical narratives—the story of who we are, and how we came to be where we are now. Self identity, then, is not a set of traits or observable characteristics. It is a person’s own reflexive understanding of her biography. Gergen (1991) proposed, “As belief in essential selves erodes, awareness expands the

ways in which personal identity can be created and re-created in relationships” (p. 146). Davis et al. (2000) suggest “it is through language use there is the capacity to create senses of personal identity” (p. 169).

These theories provide the framework for understanding the interpretative experiences of young women student-cadets in their social and professional identity development. As Kraus (2008) states, “it is no longer a matter of just constructing and realizing one’s own personal project. Instead, identity implies the continual rearranging and reframing of one’s selves, testing and negotiating their interconnection” (p. 104).

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS**

More than any time in history, young university women living in postmodern conditions are provided expanded choices and opportunities about their education, professional and personal lives. This study and a research goal are to explore the interpretive experiences of seventeen young women student-cadets enrolled in a traditional university. This provides a lens to appreciate the “what” and “how” elements of their narratives as they negotiate their multiple and competing social identities as students in a university classroom and simultaneously as cadets in a ROTC military program. While the lives of women in the armed services continually garner interest from political science, sociological, feminist areas (Armor, 1996; Bourg & Segal, 2001; Carreiras, 1999; D’Amico & Weinstein, 1999; Francke, 1997; Herbert, 1998; Steihm, 1996; Tokas, 2002) the primary focus has been on enlisted women or retrospectively as women military officers. Research on ROTC has generally focused on men in ROTC (Hinojosa, 2007) and women enrolled in a military academy (Helms, 2008). This research examines the narratives of currently enrolled student-cadets in seemingly distinct institutional cultures; the university and the military. The student-cadets are enrolled in traditional universities and have commitments in a ROTC military sponsored program ranging from full commitment to a tentative or contingent commitment in one of four units of the military.

This chapter explains my research methodology considering first the rationale for this study’s qualitative approach and narrative design with attention to the narrative research interview. I have also included a description of my role as a researcher, as is customary in

qualitative studies. I explain the site and participant selection, data collection, data analysis and interpretation.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Design**

A qualitative design is used to facilitate this research. Interpretative methods can be used to uncover interpretations of a person's experiences about which little is known (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Maxwell (2005) explains how qualitative research is particularly useful for understanding the processes by which events and actions take place and lead to a particular outcome. This method recognizes that research should credit the views of study participants and ask broad, open questions (Creswell, 2005). In respect to qualitative inquiry within student identity development, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) remark about its potential contribution: “[J]udicious and creative qualitative, naturalistic, approaches may simply be better and more sensitive ways of capturing many of the subtle and fine-grained complexities of college impact than more traditional quantitative approaches” (p. 463). Thus, qualitative inquiry I argue is particularly well suited for me and for this project because I can discover and make visible unanticipated themes and patterns, multiple and competing beliefs as well as consistencies and conflicts as told through student-cadets' stories. This can lead to broader and more insightful questions, possible answers, and greater understanding about the development of a student-cadet's social identity and interactions. At the very least, the narratives will provide an “encounter” whereby we might be “stirred by another's words and possibly enlightened by them as well” (Cottle, 2002, p. 536; Jordan, 2007).

Qualitative research is inductive; while the literature provides a backdrop, the real theory and meaning of this work are evolving as the stories are collected and explored. Creswell (2003) argues that inductive research moves from gathering information, to forming themes and categories, to looking for broad patterns, and finally, to generalizing those patterns in

juxtaposition to other existing theories and literature. As Casey (1992) has observed, “listening to [participants’] own interpretations of their experiences can result in the radical reconstruction of the researcher’s own understanding of the problem” (p. 206). These scholarly viewpoints highlight how much qualitative inquiry requires openness and a tolerance for ambiguity as ideas and themes arise during the research process.

### **Narrative Design**

With roots in literary, historical, anthropological, sociological, psychological, communication and cultural studies, narrative research is a process in which researchers collect and record narratives about an individual’s understanding and interpretation of her own experiences (Casey, 1995; Creswell, 2005; Krippendorff, 2005). Whereas other theories rely heavily on controlled settings for empirical data gathering (Murray, 1997, 2004) as a research method, narrative may be defined as collecting and analyzing the stories people tell. The common thread among those who collect narratives is an interest in the ways that people live and interact and make sense of their life and the world around them (Murray, 2004). Narrative stories can tell us about life, shape personal identity, “tell us who we are” (Widdershoven, 1993, p. 6), give us new awareness, and contribute to making sense out of lived experiences. As importantly, narrative research is a paradigm that limits the researcher’s voice and positions the voice of the participants and their experiences as the focal point of authority.

As a postmodern strand of research, it arises out of the social movement in the twentieth century, as a “celebration of ordinary people’s heroism . . . (which) undermines the conservative glorification of great White men in the established autobiographical tradition” (Casey, 1995, p. 215). It is a “way of knowing carved out of experience, experience as it is inflected by particular cultural, geopolitical, and material circumstances” (Langellier, 1999, pp. 136-137). Gergen

(1992) suggests one of the defining features of narrative is that it is a social activity and our stories are embedded within a variety of social relationships.

In my research, I was invited into the life stories of seventeen young women student-cadets. Their narratives contain a rich tapestry of sometimes multiple competing and often complementary stories of how they make sense of their experiences in the context of growing up, of leaving home, developing independence and making decisions about their military future. Through the dailiness of their lives as student-cadets and in the communities they interact with these student-cadets have created their realities and have constructed their social identities. They reflect on and talk about issues of choice, opportunities, social roles, and how these impinge on their often fragmented sense of identity and complex involvement with others. In telling of her experience of leaving home and her early university experience, Caitlin, one of my narrators, states:

It was a good opportunity for me to learn a lot about myself. Uhm, I knew there were a lot of things I wanted to change about myself coming into college. I was not as confident in my own abilities. I wasn't self motivated; I was self motivated to make my parents happy, not make myself happy. And coming to orientation, having that happen right before school started, I think helped me realize there were those things that I really wanted to change and become a different person. It was also the first time I'd been given free rein over what I wanted to say and who I wanted to be and who I wanted to be with. Uhm, I grew up in not a strict household but where there were rules and I followed the rules and I always followed them very closely. By having someone tell you can and can't do certain things at a certain time and basically micromanage your life really tells you who you were and how much you really like your freedom and your personal ability to go out and choose your own stuff and so, it was also a really good bonding experience with myself and who I wanted to become.

The novelty of the narrative approach is that it attempts to bring personal experiences and bridge them with the larger stories that other people may relate to. Caitlin's story is similar to others of leaving home and gaining independence. Murray (2004) states, "We do not describe our world as a series of bits and pieces, but as a series of stories, some more coherent than others" (p.

97). This provides an option to explore personal experiences beyond the boundaries of a questionnaire, providing insight into how the young women in my research negotiate their identity as a student and as a military cadet. This is demonstrated as Ivy relates her experience of putting on her military uniform and how it transforms her perception of self:

I guess, I can be kinda of a baby out of uniform, I can cry over a bad quiz grade that I know that is not even worth one point of your overall grade but when you're in uniform it definitely makes you, I guess, toughen up in some respects because as females we do tend to be more emotional and in uniform you have to remember that you're no longer female or male, you are a cadet or a soldier or military officer.

In the case of this study, narrative theory helps to guide how the discourse given through narratives can provide a storyline to situate the student-cadets social identities with their military and classroom identity and communities. When attempting to understand the experiences of student-cadets, it is necessary I pay attention to each respondent's experience so as to understand the complexities and the "many layers of truth, the hazy line between data and interpretations" (Josselson & Lieblich, 1995, p. xi) that each experience may provoke.

### **Framing Narrative Methodology**

Narrative research displays several major characteristics (Creswell, 2005). As The Popular Memory Group (1982) posits, "(t)he principal value of a narrative is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories and with selectivities, silence, and slippage that are intrinsic to its representations of reality" (p. 234). Equally important is the incorporation of the context and place of the narrative site. For example, I provided my narrators an opportunity to choose a location where they wanted to meet with me. Several students chose their university military detachment facility and, when we met, many of them were dressed in their military battle or field dress uniform (BDU). In those situations, the stories were filled with

military talk of dedication, protocol and service. It appeared that the uniform drove the selection of topics discussed.

While Creswell (2005) does not acknowledge the significance of the political within narrative, Apple (1993) offers “the context is set by the ideological conditions of the larger society” (p. xii). Hence, narrative researchers must be on the lookout for how the narrator’s stories are part of a distinct “cultural framework of meaning,” structured by “particular patterns of inclusion, omission, and disparity” (Casey, 1995, p. 234). According to Casey (1993, 1995-96) every text has context. That is, the participant’s perspective is constructed and reconstructed within a much larger worldly perspective. In this way the narrative approaches “illuminates the intersection of biology, history, and society” (Riessman, 2002, p. 697). In my research, the stories of women are framed within a culture of student-cadets entering an entrenched patriarchal institution that depends on masculine ideology (Abrams 1993; Enloe, 1988, 2004). Braudy (2003) defines military masculinity as “a ritual of differentiation and distinction: who we are versus who we are not” (p. 23). Caitlin, whose goal is to serve as an officer on a carrier, explains the challenges she is concerned about as she considers her leadership role on a ship mainly inhabited by males. She states:

I think for females it’s especially difficult to be in the military because females tend to come off either as hard core or over exuberant or they come off as the girl who want to flirt and is trying to hold hands with everybody and wants to be everybody’s best friend and looks like they’re trying to date everybody. I think it’s a very difficult line for a female in the military because males don’t have to deal with the sexual harassment issues. They don’t have to deal with personal relationship issues as much. I think that it’s much easier for male in the military to step into that role and automatically have the authority that his rank requires or his rank deserves and already have the respect of people just because of who he is especially with the enlisted men on a ship.

What is important in narrative analysis is not the accuracy of the event, but what and how the person has selected to reconstruct the event. In conducting narrative analysis, there were

several major concepts to consider, including *selectivity*, *silence*, and *slippage* (Casey, 1993; Casey, 1995-1996), which Casey argues are intrinsic to the representations of reality.

*Selectivity* refers to a choice about what a student-cadet includes and what she leaves out of her myriad life experiences (Thorne, 2006). “Meaning is fluid and contextual, not fixed and universal. All we have is talk and texts that represent reality partially, selectively, and imperfectly” according to Riessman (1993, p. 15). Casey (1993) posits that *selectivities* are necessary in all research, and what participants select and reject depends on who they are, who they talk to, what they say, how they say it, and when and where researchers listen. It is likely that the participants in narrating their life stories had varied reasons for telling certain stories and not telling others.

The stories we tell are not meant to be complete chronicles of our lives, for obviously no one can tell the entire story of her life. Instead, the stories people tell “are snippets of (their) experiences, events, thoughts, and feelings at a particular time and place. They are capsules of the experiences that are most important or meaningful to (the teller) —the things that (they) value” (King, Brown, & Smith, 2003, p. 1). Undoubtedly then, the stories the student-cadets told me about their experiences are those they remembered and likely, those events are value-laden (Bruner, 1987; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The stories the participants told me about their experiences were also likely shaped by the selectivity and limitations of their memory.

Even though I posed the open-ended question, “Tell me the story of your life,” every student-cadet spent a good deal of time discussing her early years and relationship to her family and to her current university experience. Many related long detailed descriptions of growing up in a military environment and frequent relocations. In relating their early age memory they selected happier memories of life surrounded with stories of making new friends in different parts of the world, stories from their father’s military experience and the positive rather than the negative

aspects of his deployment. Every one of the student-cadets talked about the importance of her education and how it ties to her professional success as a military leader. Thus, their stories became part of the cadet-student's culture. While *selectivity* is what a participant chooses to include, *silence* highlights what a participant chooses to exclude.

*Silence* refers to ruptures in the story of the narrator, those parts of the narrative that the narrator chooses to leave out of her story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000); what the narrator does not say (Ely, 2003). Casey (1993) argues that the emphasizing of one aspect of one's life "cannot fully explain silences on some [other] aspects" of one's life (p. 18). Ely (2003) contends that what the narrator does "not say is often important—nay critical. It tells us something" (p. 234). It is important, consequently, that researchers note *silences* in participants' stories.

In their narratives, although all of the student-cadets will eventually be in the military, there were topics associated with the military culture that will impact their future that they did not talk about. For example, other than selective statements of discrimination, harassment issues and current policy practices that ban gays in the military, other divisive issues regarding military issues were not part of any narrative. I look at those gaps as *silences* or as parts of their military life they did not talk about either for political or personal reasons or simply situations over which they currently have no control. For many, although there were stories about growing up with a father that was often deployed and the significant control their mother had over all aspects of their early years at home, there were often *silences* in talking about the significant influence of their mother in their decision to join the military; the focus was largely around the influence of their father in making a military decision.

*Slippage* refers to contradictions within narratives, or inconsistencies that pop up in the narrator's story over time. As Casey (1993) argues, ". . . the internal organization of a life history does not often follow as neat, sequential chronology" (p. 49), and sometimes narrators forget

what they said earlier, creating a disparity in their story. Since people's memories are not infallible, I was aware that disparities were possible in the participants' stories. For example, one student talked about the displeasure and concern her parents had with her decision to sign up for the ROTC program; however, as she continues her story, she relates the pride her father has in shinning her boots, and talking about his military experiences when she is home and the pride her parents take in telling their church members that their daughter is in college on a military scholarship.

In summary, the "patterns of inclusion, omission, and disparity" are spoken by the narrators (Casey, 1995-96, p. 234). As the Popular Memory Group (1982) attests each narrative is a representation of reality to those who author the story. Narrative research respects the integrity of the storyteller while making visible the cultural lens of the researcher. Briefly stated it is an analysis of relationships. It is my belief that delving into the university educational and the ROTC military experiences of young women students' through a narrative lens will help me to understand the power of narratives. This includes understanding the effect of significant others who act as influencers in the life of the student-cadet as well as life situations that contribute to identity development. Also, it may provide a greater understanding about my interactions with my students in the classroom.

As Apple (1993) observes, narrative methodology is "deceptively simply, though grounded theoretically in quite a sophisticated way" (p. xiv). Participants are "not only creations of discourse but makers of discourse" (p. xv). Through this methodology, the researcher gives choice and power to the storytellers; they are the authors of their own stories, and may tell them however they desire. When participants' accounts are internally or externally inconsistent or include factual disparities, it does not mean that participants are unreliable. Instead, researchers believe that mismatches represent a source of insight about contradictions between how

participants tell their stories at a particular time and the circumstances surrounding their cultural standing (Casey, 1993).

### **Role as Researcher**

As I go into the research experience, I bring with me the totality of my background, my beliefs and my values. As Peshkin (1988) states, “subjectivity is like a garment that cannot be removed” (p. 17). I appreciate the fact that experiences shape, block, transforms and construes what transpires from the onset of my project to its culmination. As I conducted my narratives, I was fully aware that both my narrators and I are using verbal and non-verbal language and our use and interpretation of it was being filtered through our personal perceptions. We cannot have our experiences without interpretation and, therefore, the story being told and the story being listened to have a shape. As I reflect on my research, I observed myself, my actions and reactions as I interacted with the seventeen young women I interviewed.

In my narratives, I deal first with the non-research Human “I” (Peshkin, 1988). I am an adult collecting narratives from postsecondary students, who, to the gaze, can be identified as significantly dissimilar by our age difference and my position of perceived power by virtue of my age as a mature woman and a faculty member in a university as well as mother of a military officer. How do I perceive myself as a credible researcher? I enter the narrative not as a military but as a mother of a son who is has gone through the ROTC experience and has been in the military for more than twenty years. I have listened to his stories of going through the identity issues as a student-cadet while in university, the issues of training to become a military leader and the issues associated with his current senior military leadership position. I recognize that I may interpret the experiences of those I interview as having the same actions and reactions to their student-cadet experiences as those told to me by my son. I am in danger of interpreting their story in the framework of my experiences and “listen” to their story (Riessman, 1993) within the

framework of my son's story. By doing this, I am in danger of focusing on the stereotypes often associated with young women student-cadets instead of the person who is a unique individual who is simply of another gender than my son. By doing this, I may compromise the credibility of my relationship and the experience with the person I am interviewing.

Although I have worked hard to reduce my personal bias within this work, my goal is not to rid this study of my subjectivity, but rather find, embrace, and disclose to the reader my conscious lens of analysis. Therefore, the research process has evolved to create a joint relationship between "self and subject" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17). I acknowledge then that I am just as much a participant within this study as the research subjects through our interdependent relationship. They want their story told and I want to relate their experiences as told to me in my research.

Punch (2005) states, "ethical issues can arise in all research methodologies but they are more likely in some qualitative approaches. This is because, while all social research intrudes to some extent into people's lives, qualitative research often intrudes more" (p. 177). As we consider the complexity of personal and social settings one challenge is, which members of the culture being studied should be elected as "representative," or "legitimate" spokespersons? As Goodall (2000) states, "every text, every story, privileges someone's point of view" (p. 160). In partially responding to this he states, "The question, 'who owns the truth about a culture?' is not easily resolved by simply increasing the number and diversity of voices in a text. What you might gain in ethical display, you may lose in narrative coherence" (p. 160). Other ethical concerns revolve around issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of data.

As in all ethical dilemmas, there are no fail-safe solutions to resolve these broadly political and highly contextualized ethical issues. A faithful and rigorous adherence to IRB guidelines and fully explaining and gaining informed consent from participants about what I am

doing and who I am prior to conducting the interview (Appendix C) is the only acceptable way for legitimate academic work to precede. “However, even with this highly structured method, ethical issues can invade even the most tightly stringent and structured guidelines,” states Goodall (p. 106). Being conscious of ethical issues and questions while in the interview situation should be foremost in the researcher’s mind and should be raised within the text and dealt with for the least opportunity for harm or negative impact of our research on the lives of those we document. This means, an ethic of care and responsibility should permeate all interactions between the research participants. For this reason, my narrators were told of my son’s involvement in the military and my own position as a university professor. This, I sensed was a responsibility I played in the role of a researcher. I actively collaborated with the participants through email prior to meeting (Appendix D) with them and again prior to posing my research question and debriefing them after the interviews by letting them know my goals in hearing their stories and assuring them they could withdraw from the research at any point during or after our meeting. I also assured them I would maintain the tapes in a locked cabinet and later either destroy by shredding the tapes and transcripts of their interviews or send them to a person of their choice. One participant requested her tape be sent to her family; all others requested I destroy the tapes and transcripts at the conclusion of my research.

### **Site and Interview Procedure**

Over a period of one year I collected the stories of seventeen undergraduate young women students enrolled in a four year university while enrolled in a ROTC program in one of four units of a military service branch. The breakdown includes: six (6) from the Army, six (6) from the Air Force, and five (5) from the Navy. One Navy ROTC cadet is planning to switch to the Marine ROTC unit. The breakdown of institutions includes three public universities with enrollment in each institution in excess of 15,000 students and two small private universities with

an enrollment of approximately 2,700. All were located in the southeast United States. One institution is a historically black institution (HBCU); the other four are historically white institutions (HWCU). I chose my sample from each the three service branches to provide a wide range of stories and experiences to draw from as well as to avoid university specific experiences. I intentionally did not choose to solicit student-cadets to interview from the marine option of the Navy ROTC program to avoid any conflict of interest since my son is currently a marine in a senior leadership position. I also did not interview Coast Guard candidates since there is no ROTC sponsored program for this branch of the military. My narrators represented a range of ethnic backgrounds including nine (9) white student-cadets, seven (7) black student-cadets and one Philippine student-cadet. Ages ranged from 18 to 22 years with varied educational majors and professional interest. My student-cadet demographic includes five (5) freshmen student-cadets, six (6) sophomores, two (2) juniors and four (4) seniors. The sample includes ten (10) student-cadets attending university on a full ROTC scholarship; two (2) student-cadets received scholarship after enrolling in a university and five (5) student-cadets are currently enrolled in the ROTC program but, at the time of our meeting had not received scholarships because they are still considering whether to pursue the ROTC scholarship and a military future. Although the number of young women enrolled in each ROTC unit at any time is dynamic, during the duration of my interviews, less than ten percent of the army and navy ROTC service units included females. The air force did have more young women student-cadets than men at one point in my narrative collections. In only one detachment, the Air Force was there a female officer in any supervisory positions; all other military officers were male.

I found respondents in two ways. I scheduled an initial meeting with a senior officer in each of the military units or detachments to explain my research and interest in adding young women's voices to the ROTC experience. Each officer I met with fully supported my work and

agreed to discuss my research and receive approval from their Commanding Officer to provide me a list of names of young women currently enrolled in a university and in their ROTC program. Each officer then sent an introductory email either to all women cadets or to selected young women indicating he had met with me and supported my research and to expect a follow-up email from me. A list was forwarded to me and I then sent each cadet a personal email outlining my research goals and invited them to meet with me for no more than one hour at a time and at a location of their choice. In one instance, a cadet who was an AFROTC officer for her detachment supplied me with names of her ROTC cadet subordinates and I also sent each of these cadets an email with the permission of the detachment Commanding Officer. In my email, I indicated I would ask one question, "tell me the story of your life." I chose this methodology because it "allows the individuals to become the autobiographical narratives by which they tell about their own lives" (Reissman, 1993, p. 2); the narrator is able to reflect on her strengths and resiliency.

My goal was to motivate the student-cadets to talk freely about whatever was important to them rather than what they thought I might want to hear. Also by notifying the young women ahead of time about what they could expect during the interview, I felt confident that initiating the interview using Casey's (1993) method: "Tell me the story of your life," would be effective. I believed that using the "Tell me the story of your life" prompt would invite these young women to begin at any point in their lives they wanted to and to talk about any part of their lives that they wanted to talk about. My intention was to generate as much data as possible and not restrict or constrain the women in any way. My use of Casey's method, which Apple (1993) says "is deceptively simple, though grounded theoretically in quite a sophisticated way" (p. xiv) worked well with all the participants in telling their story once they were confident I wasn't looking for specific responses. Although many of the young women seemed hesitant about where to start, they became more animated, natural and free flowing as they traversed back and forth around

topics about their family, home town, their early school years, and their university and ROTC life. To encourage elaboration of stories, I did not interrupt their narration but did encourage elaboration by means of nonverbal and paralinguistic expressions of interest and attention, such as “mhm,” “ah,” “wow” (Rosenthal, 1993), and by questioning remark which I hoped would encourage elaboration. This was “interesting,” or “tell me more,” which was posed more as a question and encouraging declarative statement than a simple declarative statement.

The response rate to my email was forty to fifty percent. Suggested reasons for not receiving a higher response rate were the extremely busy schedules maintained by the student-cadets with their university and ROTC classes, field training, and other curricular and co-curricular activities. This limited accessibility to student-cadets for an extended amount of time. As one cadet who was able to carve out an hour to meet with me over a weekend discussed her daily schedule:

I've got to up at 5:00 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday. You go to PT [physical training] and get out of PT by 7:15. Your first class might start at 8:00. You might get out at 8:30 and in between other classes you go to the library, not to your dorm 'cause you're going to go to sleep. So you do all the homework you had for your math class, the one that has the least assignment. But you need to grab food you only eat for 15 minutes with your friends. Then I have lab from 2:30-5:00 and then I have class from 5:30 to 6:45. Then to the caf which closes at 7:30. Then you have to work out at 8:00 p.m. and find time for a run as part of PT training twice a week. So, your day starts at 5:00 a.m. And you get out around 11:00 p.m. but you still haven't studied. So, at 1:00 a.m. you go to bed and you do it all over again. Oh, and I still have to make time for my two tutors for chemistry and math, for my dance team and my coral group practice and for my boyfriend.

Variations on this schedule were echoed by most student-cadets all of whom are taking a minimum of 18 semester hours to satisfy both their university and ROTC semester hour commitments. Although this student-cadet was aware of my research, she initially did not think she had time to meet with me but since it was being discussed by other student-cadets in her detachment, she wanted to be part of my research.

Once a student-cadet agreed to meet with me, a follow-up email was sent confirming time, date and location as well as a copy of my IRB. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, held at a public space and audio recorded with the permission of the respondents and then transcribed and coded by me. The narratives were collected over a period of one year because of interruptions in working through the military chain of command, arranging appointments on student-cadet's schedule and semester breaks. No interviews were conducted during semester breaks or summer break because of the military field training deployments for most cadets.

I provided the respondents the option of remaining anonymous, using a pseudonym or using their given name in my transcriptions. Most students indicated they would prefer a pseudonym to allow them to provide comments from behind the veil of anonymity and, thus, speak more freely. For this reason, I will use pseudonyms for the nine (9) respondents who requested it in order to strive toward un-definability. The names chosen were generic and common to the university population today. During my interviews I also incorporated my own field notes from the interviews. For example, in my initial email and repeated in our initial introductions and relationship building remarks, the respondents became aware that I have a son who was enrolled in a university ROTC program several years ago and who is now an officer in the marines. I also indicated my goal was to provide a women's voice to the ROTC program. I noted their interest in my son's success as my observational experience of a military connection provided a frame of reference and a connection with their lives; it added credibility to my research. I will note however, although I did not actively recruit respondents from the Marine ROTC, one cadet who I interviewed is in the Navy ROTC program but planned to switch to the marine option. This I did not know until she began her story.

### **Student-Cadet Participant Profiles**

Each participant was given the option of having their name identified in the tapes or choosing a pseudonym. For confidentiality purposes, I have changed the names of nine (9) of my participants. The names chosen are random and suggest popular names found in my classes. I am also including background information on student-cadets to provide a frame of reference.

#### **Air Force ROTC (AFROTC) Cadet Profiles**

Amber (who is white) is a freshman in AFROTC, enrolled as an out of state student in a private university in the southeast. She entered the university on a full ROTC scholarship. Her major is criminal justice with the goal of becoming a special investigator or defense intelligence officer in the military and would like to remain in the military for at least ten years. Her father was a 20 year Air Force enlisted military. Amber indicates she was not pushed into the military by her parents but felt it was where God wanted her to be. She was raised a southern Baptist which has influenced her military “cause you have to have belief, you have to have faith and that’s what ultimately gets you through.” She is also a flutist by training.

Ashley (who is black) is a junior in AFROTC, enrolled in a public historically black university (HBCU) in the southeast. She enrolled in the army ROTC program as she states, “out of curiosity and to try it out.” Her dad was an enlisted marines and cousins enlisted in army. Her decision to join the ROTC was independent; she did not tell her family until after she signed the papers to commit to service. Ashley is an art major and plans to serve active duty in the Air Force in four years which is her required time. She chose the AFROTC because she feels it is a family friendly service and thus appeals more to women.

Monique (who is black) is a sophomore in AFROTC, enrolled in a traditionally white public university in the southeast. Her father was enlisted military. She did not enter the university with a ROTC scholarship but enrolled in AFROTC in her sophomore year and has still

not signed commitment papers. She initially was curious about the ROTC program and initially joined it as another “activity” among her already full schedule as a resident advisor in her dorm, her church and school activities. Now in her second semester of the ROTC program, she sometimes wonders, “Am I determined enough? Do I have enough energy to put in the extra work to learn the information to get physically fit to be in it? This is the hardest thing I’ve done in my life.” At the same time, she claims the discipline has changed her and the ROTC is becoming a way of life. Her major is sports medicine/therapy.

Jessica (who is white) is a senior in AFROTC, enrolled in a traditionally white public university in the southeast. She is a Communication Studies major and now receiving a full AFROTC scholarship. She was initially drawn to the AFROTC “to maintain a physically healthy lifestyle after playing varsity sports in high school,” but found it also provided a way to enhance leadership skills and build confidence. Although her only military connection to the military was her grandfather who was an enlisted marine, she pursued the AFROTC because it is, “better to women.” Jessica’s goal is to become a space flight engineer. Now in her senior year she has reached the highest cadet rank in her AFROTC detachment; she is a Cadet Colonel.

Whitney (who is black) is a sophomore in AFROTC, enrolled in a southeast public HBCU. She is in her first year of AFROTC classes and not currently receiving a scholarship. She joined because she doesn’t know exactly what to do with her Mass Communication major and she states, “the military would be an honest career.” She chose the AFROTC because, “the recruiter gave her a relaxed feeling.” Although she has not chosen a military duty focus, her primarily goal is to have a leadership position because as she states, “the military involves a lot of leadership . . . and everybody deserves to be a leader, ya know, especially if you can handle the work.”

### **Army ROTC (AROTC) Cadet Profiles**

Kelly (who is black), a freshman in Army ROTC, is attending a small faith-based private university in the southeast on a full Army ROTC scholarship. Her father is enlisted army and currently serving active duty. Kelly attended a military high school academy and was involved in JROTC. With her major in international studies, her goal is to become a military officer in the State Department working on foreign diplomacy issues. She feels the Army ROTC training is a way to meet milestones and overcome challenges. The challenges she has overcome are weight issues, fear, shyness and stuttering. She states, “Through the military, through ROTC, it really helped me come out of my shell . . . I’m really motivated. I was scared to open my mouth, I always second guessed myself. Now I want to get dirty for everything, I just want to run up and do it.”

Ivy (who is white), a sophomore nursing major, attends a traditionally white public university in the southeast. She received a full Army ROTC scholarship to attend university. No family members or relatives were military and, as a female with six female siblings, her parents didn’t expect to have a child in the military and initially discouraged her from pursuing a military career. Her military motivation started in the fifth grade with a teacher who conducted class, “in a very militaristic way. I actually enjoyed it so I stayed interested through middle school and into high school when I started looking at my future goals and things.” Now in her major, she likes the job security and the opportunity for a military leadership position with a nursing degree.

Beth (who is black) attends a public HBCU in the southeast. She is a senior computer engineering major on a full Army ROTC scholarship. Her interest is in a leadership position in the Army leading humanitarian efforts. Although she has relatives who served as enlisted in the military, her parents have no military background. As an only child, her parents strongly discouraged her from pursuing a military scholarship; however, her military determination

developed from her high school JROTC leadership experiences. As the only female in her senior class of ROTC cadets, she states, “I have to be an example to the rest of the females below me . . . a lot of the girls told me that they admire me and they look up to me so that’s kind of made me feel good about what I am doing.” She is concerned about discrimination as a black female officer.

Danielle (who is black) is a junior attending a public HBCU in the southeast. She is participating in the Army ROTC program but has not yet committed and receiving a scholarship stipend. She was raised in single parent home and although two uncles were enlisted in military no immediate family members have a military background. Her major is Spanish Education and wants to utilize it in the diplomatic ranks in an embassy and feels that “. . . the military a lot of times is the fastest way to work in a government career like that.”

Maria (who is black) is a sophomore at a traditionally white public university located in the southeast and in the Army ROTC program. She has not yet signed commitment papers or receiving scholarship. She is majoring in Spanish Education and International Global Studies with the goal of becoming a foreign officer or helicopter medic in the Army. Until she was in eighth grade she was raised by her mother. After her mother’s sudden death Maria relocated to another city to live with her father, a successful businessman. He served four years in the army. In talking about her father, Maria described him as “a corporate American guy . . . I knew him as a person not as a father.” Maria’s narrative describes a father as caretaker who was very disciplined in contrast to a mother who was liberal in raising her. Maria’s military motivation in developed from her participation in high school JROTC which she joined, “to find something I could be part of, something I could be proud of.”

Tonia (who is black) is a freshman at a public HBCU located in the southeast and first semester cadet in the Army ROTC program. She has not yet been accepted into the scholarship

program and enrolled in the ROTC program to “stay fit and try it out and possibly help with college expenses.” She is a premed major with the goal of becoming a pediatrician. She was born in Germany to military parents and has relocated several times throughout her primary school years. In seventh grade, Tonia states, “that time was really the time I started to not get attached to my friends ‘cause I noticed how much we were moving.” In eighth grade she enrolled in JROTC and remained in it until her junior year in high school. This experience improved her self confidence, leadership skills and, “the athletic side of me got to shine.”

### **Navy ROTC (NROTC) Cadet Profiles**

Kristen (who is white) attends a traditionally white public university in the southeast. She received a full Navy ROTC scholarship to attend university as an out of state student. She is in her senior year and an International Studies major. No immediate family members were in the military; however many relatives attended college through ROTC scholarship so she was encouraged to do so by her parents and relatives. Kristen sees the benefit of her scholarship as an opportunity go to any university that had a program without worrying about how to pay for it and still have a job right after college. Her goal is to become a Navy foreign affairs officer. Kristen has a younger sister, a sophomore, attending the same university on a Navy ROTC scholarship.

Caitlin (who is white) is sophomore chemistry major attending a traditionally white public university in the southeast. Her career goal is to enter public policy or law relating to international trade of chemicals. She is an out of state student attending university on a Navy ROTC scholarship. Her father, grandfather and uncles were all enlisted military and her grandmother was a navy nurse. Caitlin identifies herself an over achiever in sports and in her curricular and co-curricular activities. To round out her military and scholastic experience she is enrolled in a sorority and a bible class to, as she states “to round out my university experience and identity.”

Carman (who is white) is a sophomore, attending a traditionally white public university in the southeast, is currently mathematics major but considering changing to an economics. She entered the university on a full Navy ROTC scholarship and would like to consider a leadership position in public policy or perhaps aviation because, as she states, “aviation sounds like a lot of fun.” Both her father and grandfather were enlisted military which she attributes to her military motivation and goals. Her sister was previously in the same NROTC scholarship program but withdrew after one year because of the discipline of military training. Carman wants to prove she can do it.

Erika (who is white) is a sophomore enrolled in a traditionally white public university on a full Navy ROTC scholarship. She is enrolled as an out of state student. She is a sophomore pursuing a nursing major with the goal of serving on a humanitarian ship travelling worldwide. She sees her military commitment as, “a cool way to keep travelling and an opportunity to serve others.” Her father is a retired Air Force colonel and although he would have preferred her join the Air Force she states, “He was just excited to have one of his kids to into the military someday because none of my brothers were interested in it.”

Holly (who is Philippina) is a senior biology major enrolled in a traditionally white public university in the southeast. She is an out of state student receiving a full Navy ROTC scholarship. She will be a surface warfare officer when she graduates and considers eventually pursuing another degree in nursing, perhaps while in the Navy. Her father is retired military and she has many relatives enlisted; however, she will be the first military officer. She participated in a JROTC program in high school and feels indebted to the Navy because, “my life in America is due to the navy taking in my dad.”

Liza (who is white) is a sophomore enrolled in a traditionally white southeast university on a full NROTC scholarship as an out of state student. However, she plans to transition to the

marines as her military choice. She has no parents or relatives with a military background but was raised in upstate New York in the shadow of the West Point. She is a classical music and English major with an interest as an aviation officer in the marines.

### **Data Analysis**

All narratives were conducted face-to-face, held at a public space and audio recorded with the permission of the respondents and then transcribed and coded by me. In the transcriptions, I made every attempt to record “silences, false starts, emphasizes, nonlexicals like ‘uhm,’ discourse markers ‘ya know,’ overlapping speech, and other signs of listener participation in the narrative” (Riessman, 1993, p. 12).

During the study, I also focused on language, associations, and underlying assumptions surrounding the student’s student-cadet experiences which allowed me to consider the participant’s individual reality (Schram, 2006). Through their stories and descriptions I was able to gain a better understanding of the participant’s experience with and perceptions of their classroom and ROTC experience and the effects this has on their social identity development.

Once the narrative was collected my goal was to begin the transcription process using voice recognition software (Dragon). However, frustrated with the inaccuracy of the words being transcribed, I then reverted to headphones and foot tapping the play/stop button to transcribe the tapes one sentence at a time. I then carefully went back listening to the tapes against my typed transcriptions before I began the real work of analysis. As Riessman (1993) explains, this listening is a very important step between the collection and analysis process because “transforming spoken language into a written text is now taken quite seriously because thoughtful investigators no longer assume the transparency of language” (p. 12). Although transcribing does not provide the most accurate “picture of reality,” it does provide some resemblance when it includes pauses, inflections, emphases, unfinished sentences, short periods (Riessman, 1993).

Reissman (1993) also states that narrative analysis is a “systemic study of personal experience and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects” (p. 70). Analyzing the narratives is a crucial step in the understanding of the research topic, basically it is the putting together of individual impressions or responses into a meaningful conclusion that is beneficial to the audience (Stake, 1995). In qualitative research the analysis process involves identifying themes, reducing the data, and coding the interviews correctly (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Seidman, 2004). There were two levels of analysis for this study: first was individual analysis followed by collective analysis.

My analysis process included an analysis of “reading” the narratives during the first weeks after data collection of each student-cadet. During this phase of analysis I began to “read” or opportunity to “listen” to the data that had been collected (Maxwell, 2005). This “rough” analysis gave me the opportunity to write notes regarding what I saw and/or heard initially in the data. I began to develop tentative ideas regarding relationships and categories and the metaphors I use in my analysis. This “rough” analysis also served to simulate the analytical thinking process that guided the categorizing and connecting strategies and my initial connections between my student metaphors and the student-cadets. This analytical process included exploring the data for individual metaphors, experiences, and chronologies and by comparing and contrasting patterns in the form of a collective voice. I looked for patterns within their narratives among the collective stories.

After this “rough” analysis, I began the formal phase of data analysis on both individual and collective levels by using the constant comparative method (LeCompte, Millroy, & Preissle, 1992). This method assumes “that the data collection and analysis are recursive, one informing the other throughout the course of the study” (Howard, 2003, p. 7). This formal analysis phase of data analysis is also referred to as coding (Maxwell, 2005). This formal data analysis phase

begins with a strategy known as categorizing. This process involves unitizing the data or developing chunks of meaning within the narrative related to the researcher's focus of inquiry (Maxwell, 2005). I accomplished this process by using different colored highlighters to mark various chunks of meaning. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), highlighting the "chunks" will serve as the foundation for developing broader categories of information later in the analysis process.

The technique produces small pieces of information that can stand or be "fractured" from narrative. These "fractured" pieces of data can then be rearranged into larger categories to make comparison during connection phase easier (Maxwell, 2005). The goal of each unit is to provide an understanding for the researcher to determine what chunks of meaning need to be taken forward to the next level of analysis.

Next, the smaller "fractured" pieces of information are transferred from the unitizing process based on similar themes or meanings into larger groupings. Catherine Riessman (1993) refers to this as "reducing the data." These were compacted from the different narrative data collections from an individual and collective level of analysis. Hence, the data was collected, analyzed, and re-analyzed to identify reoccurring themes across individual and group narratives.

I looked for instances of repetition, which perhaps demonstrated a participant's emphasis about certain parts of her story, and hesitation, which perhaps revealed possible struggles to voice certain parts of her story. Casey (1993, 1995) advises complementary tactics previously described: identifying *selectivities*, the inclusions a participant chooses to share; *silences*, the gaps a participant chooses to leave out; *slippage*, the parts of the story that disagree. Another tactic utilized was *intertextuality* to enhance this study. *Intertextuality* provides valuable data from multiple sources. It seeks to develop themes by connecting various texts from complementary and contrasting perspectives.

As I elaborate in my analysis chapter, the student-cadets share a repertoire of language and experiences and they interpret experiences in similar ways. For example, their relationship to their university and ROTC commitment, the impact of wearing military uniform on campus and how it contributes to identity and classroom behavior can be compared or contrasted across individual texts. In talking about her identity and classroom behavior, Maria's comments were similar other narrators when she states, "I feel like I'm really girly and when I put on that uniform I'm real reserved. When I get it on like, if I don't make it on time, she's late in the uniform, what's wrong with her. I sit up straight, try to sit up straight in my class. And people look at me differently so my actions have to speak as loud as my uniform does."

In contrast, Holly did not feel different in uniform which she attributes wearing a uniform during high school when she was enrolled in JROTC. However, her classroom behaviors are similar to Maria's as she states: "If I'm not doing so well in a class, a teacher might expect more from me since they see me in a uniform and they know theoretically I should be more responsible and understand how to manage my time and things like that."

As Maria and other student-cadets develop an awareness of the popular narratives within the culture of the university and ROTC, they learn how to regard themselves, how to make themselves intelligible to each other and how to fashion their identity stories inside and outside the classroom.

### **Summary**

Beginning with a discussion of qualitative inquiry and narrative design, this chapter has explored the unstructured nature of narrative interviews and issues related to conducting narrative data collection and analysis. A reflection about my role as a researcher has made me more aware of the ways in which my personal qualities are intertwined with my subject.

Narratives are valuable because they are discursive and interpretive (McDrury & Alterio, 2004), replete with all sorts of “stuff” that tells how people really live their lives by the words they choose and the images they convey (Casey, 1993). Collecting narratives emerged as the optimum method to understand identity development and social interactions. In summary, narratives provide one method for individuals to construct their identities and connect their actions with others humans and events through conversation and stories.

## CHAPTER V

### STUDENT-CADETS' INTERPRETED EXPERIENCES

Now I turn my lens to my interest and research of young women students who are enrolled in traditional universities and in ROTC. I look at the multiple and competing ways these student-cadets navigate their military role and their social, cultural and behavioral roles. Each of the cadets interviewed are engaged in a ROTC program leading to becoming commissioned as an officer in the Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine. The young women I interviewed navigate their student and military identities between competing forces of the modern culture of the distinctly patriarchal military institution marked by order, discipline, loyalty, and duty while engaging in a postsecondary educational environment marked by ideals of freedom, choice, and fluidity where realities are constructed and re-constructed.

In my experience over the past ten years of having young women students in class and also enrolled in an ROTC program, I suggest their lives reflect both the tension and commitment of their experience moving back and forth across the borders of a military and student life. I use the same metaphors of '*minimalist*,' '*traditionalist*,' '*enthusiast*' and '*reflective*' because, during my interviews with these cadets and more importantly after I transcribed and reflected on the information, while I saw differences in the nature of the narratives, I saw clear parallels in how these student-cadets approach their ROTC commitment and how they approach their social identity roles both inside the academy and in their military career goals.

As in the narratives of the metaphoric representation of students discussed previously, there is a blurring, blending and-reforming of traditional boundaries and borders. Rather than one grand narrative, there are many disparate and competing interpretative narratives on a continuum

from modern to postmodern. From the narratives, while the term “postmodern” was not specifically articulated by the students-cadets, the concepts and realities embedded in postmodern discourse was very much invoked in their lives as they reflect on and talk about issues of choice, opportunities, social roles, identities and how these impinge on their stories of often fragmented social roles and selves.

### **The ‘*Minimalist*’ Student-Cadet**

While the ‘*minimalist*’ student can be identified in the university classroom, is it more problematic to identify an ROTC student-cadet as ‘*minimalist*.’ Although students may elect to enroll in ROTC leadership classes prior to a military commitment, acceptance into and remaining in the program is scholastically and physically competitive. For students to qualify for and maintain a scholarship, they must adhere to strict moral, physical and academic standards. ([www.navy.com](http://www.navy.com), [www.afrotc.com](http://www.afrotc.com), [www.goarmy.com](http://www.goarmy.com)). Once accepted, the ROTC classes the cadet must take focus on leadership development, field training and intense summer assignments similar to ‘boot’ camp. Since the cadets receive a stipend in the form of scholarships or grants for education in return for their military obligation, the student-cadets are motivated to maintain a satisfactory grade point average (GPA) and conform to explicit and implicit military behaviors. This makes it difficult to academically, physically or psychologically disengage from the university and their ROTC experience. However, one student-cadet in my study challenges this concept and can be identified as a ‘*minimalist*’ relative to her university classroom experience.

Maria is a sophomore majoring in global studies. Her only reason for enrolling and remaining in the university is at the insistence of her father. Maria’s mother died when she was in eighth grade and has been raised by her father, a former marine. The strong military influence comes from being raised by a militant father. As she states,

My life is all about the military since high school when I was in JROTC. I had absolutely no desire to go to college; I've wanted to go into the military since high school. However, my dad told me I could not enlist right out of high school and insisted I go to college and then decide. He was hoping I'd change my mind. Right now I'm just going through the motions to get through the next two years so I can go where my passion is, into the army. I am so bored and uninvolved in class; I feel really isolated. But, when I go to physical field training (PT) I come alive and feel like a person again. All day I sit in class and all I hear are lectures that mean nothing to me. But put me on the field running, and being with other cadets and I'm a different person.

I think all professors should go to boot camp to learn how to motivate students to want to learn. We cadets have to be at PT at 5:30 in the morning two days a week and by 6:00 our instructors have us really pumped and totally motivated to face any challenge. In our leadership classes we don't just talk about war and killing, we talk about important military issues like ethical conduct, what it means to lead and live an officer's life. Our military professors make it like real, like we have real discussions 'cause our instructors are in the military and they've been through it and can relate. We talk about important things and not just theory, they really make me think not only while in the class but I remember our discussion a long time and think about them and what it means to be a soldier and lead other soldiers who are real people with families.

Maria still thinks about dropping out of the university, giving up her ROTC experience and enlist in the military but is concerned about the negative consequences with her family and to her career if she does so. She says, "I'll just endure it." For Maria, the university classroom is seen as little more than Freire's "banking" passive learning experience alien to her existential experiences. The active experiences of ROTC field training to stay fit and the interactive experiences in her military classes are relevant, connect to and tie into Maria's frame of what it means to be called a military leader. In closing Maria indicated her military ambitions as wanting to be both a helicopter pilot and a diplomat. She suggests that working with medics in crisis areas as she states "she can work toward a more humane and compassionate military."

### **The 'Traditionalist' Student-Cadet**

Of the seventeen young women I interviewed, twelve have a parent or relative in the military. One Army cadet had both parents in the army. Five of the '*traditionalist*' student-cadets come from a military background. These '*traditionalists*' can be considered more grounded in

identification with family than individuation. For these individuals, carrying on the family's deeply embedded military tradition and values or a perceived higher power calling was important. Several of the cadets are first generation university students and the ROTC scholarship is the only way they have to fulfill the dream of a university education and at the same time a perceived secure future in a leadership position. Kelly, a freshman Army ROTC cadet whose mother was a high school dropout and whose father is an enlisted noncommissioned officer stated her goal is to follow her father's military footsteps but to enter the military as a commissioned officer rather than enlisted.

It's every girl's dream that grew up like I did in the ghetto or Section 8 housing before my dad got in the military. Every girl's dream if you saw your father in the military and wanted to be just like him. I think that's one of my main things, I want to be just like my father 'cause I really do admire him for everything he does. From what I hear, he's pretty tough. But, ya know, I was daddy's little princess. Ya know, it's wonderful but I gotta do good. I'd really love to have my father; he's enlisted, to pin my gold bars on my jacket.

Another cadet whose father, mother and brother are all enlisted military stated, "We are a big ole military family and it's important to continue the family legacy and military values. My ROTC scholarship will allow me to accomplish that and also be able to do what they were never able to do. I'll be a commissioned officer when I graduate."

Amber was raised in a military family and for sixteen years lived on Air Force bases. This segregated community living cloaked Amber in a deeply embedded military ethos which she is continues today as an AFROTC student-cadet. As she stated,

I just remember growing up in that life, it was so much different and I mean, I enjoyed it because everybody played war. That's what we did, we went out and played war 'cause that's what we knew our parents were doing. And we wanted to be just like them. And I remember coming home and like scrapes, bruises, getting beat up and my mother thinking I can't even buy you a dress. So, I remember that like it being my entire life story and always being sure that knowing that when my dad left, that if he didn't come home it was because he was doing it for me. I always knew that in my life. So, when he

was gone, I never had a fear of, oh, is my dad not coming home because he doesn't love me, I knew he was gone because he did. That was just life growing up on a military base.

When she was in high school, Amber's father retired. She states, "It was the weirdest time in my life because like once in my life I was normal and I didn't know how to do it because I'd always been a military kid." In picking a college and a career choice Amber finds everything coming back to military and the life in which she is most comfortable.

Amber's father encouraged her to primarily follow her own professional dreams rather than in his military footsteps. However, when she announced in her senior high school year, "this is where God wants me to be and that's where I'm going [military]," he was ecstatic. Because she was not accepted in the Air Force Academy, she applied for and was awarded an AFROTC scholarship and is now enrolled as a freshman in a small private college which she feels is closely aligned with her disciplined background. In relating her future goals, she plans to, "have everything figured out for the next ten years in the military by her sophomore year." In her closing remarks, Amber stated, "My scholarship is Air Force. Like my dad was the Air Force so in my heart, I want to be a legacy for him because he did it, he served his country and I want to serve my country. If I ever get married and have children, it would be my dream that one day maybe one of my children would want to follow me."

By embracing her family values of military service and religious faith, she will be able to enter the defense intelligence field if she successfully meets the requirements of her scholarship. Additionally, this student indicated that she has the extra benefit of not only being a special investigator; she will be also become the first military officer in her family by virtue of her education provided she does well in her studies.

Ivy, a second year AROTC cadet indicated that there are no boys in her family so, in announcing her decision to enter the AROTC program, her father initially resisted but now offers

to “shine her boots and help her do all the military stuff she needs to do” as a AROTC cadet. Her mom claims this is a ‘win-win’ situation because the military pays for school and Ivy is excited because she loves all the discipline she’s experiencing in her ROTC training and carries it through her university experience. Her ethical grounding is legislated in the army creed which she recently memorized and proudly indicated she carries in her heart; This student then proceeded to recite “I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same” (<http://usmilitary.about.com/od/army/1/blofficeroath.htm>).

For Ivy, like Amber, not failing is carried into the classroom because the stakes are high. As she strives to do well in her coursework, Ivy states, “ROTC is not just ROTC now, it’s a way of life for me . . . it’s like part of my life because it’s going to be my career and what I’m learning in school is not just some extracurricular thing, it’s my life. And education is the biggest thing right now. I’m not taking any chances; all I want are good grades at any cost.”

Blakshaw (2005) states, “The solid modernist imagination looks to the future in search of perfection or at a minimum, certainty. Logic and reason become the dominant discourse as a way of gaining knowledge, creating classifications and providing structure and order to individuals and their lives” (pp. 40-41). Ivy’s future oriented life demonstrates this modernist viewpoint of structure and certainty. These cadets suggest that choosing structure is an act of freedom – protects them and keeps them on a righteous path.

Ivy’s military model was her fifth-grade teacher. As she relates:

I had a teacher who had a son who went in [the military] and she conducted our classroom in a very militaristic manner. And I actually enjoyed it. I like the structure and all that so, I stayed interested in the military through middle school. In high school, I really started looking at my future goals and things and the army seems really interesting and helpful because it maintains that structure after high school. In ROTC program you have certain classes you have to take. There’s a lot of freedom in college and I think some people really mess it up there. So it’s good to maintain some kind of structure and

then the structure of job security after college. So, that really intrigued me just having all that structure, I like the structure a lot. I have a plan for the next 8-12 years in my life already helps me a lot because I don't like everything to be up in the air. I think it's kinda giving me a template for how to, how to be able to plan the rest of my life.

Holly feels serving in the military is an obligation and her way of paying back a debt to her parents' adopted country since the military was the means by which her family was able to emigrate from the Philippines. Unlike her cousins, who she claims "all enlist because it's a practical way to gain skills until they figure out what to do," Holly had the grades to obtain a navy ROTC scholarship and anticipates being the first naval officer in her family. This will raise her family status and, at the same time meet her goal to "pay her debt back to the military for the opportunities afforded her family." Nevertheless, her dad, who was enlisted for twenty years, still holds the belief that rather than entering the navy as an officer, she should earn the respect and title rising through the ranks through, "hard work, determination and true grit."

The overarching narrative of these students and their social identity formation is to follow a path that is paved with, as one student-cadet indicated, "the morally right way." This is primarily to continue the family military tradition, continue the structure of their early education or answer a higher calling. The university has become the means to that end. These '*traditionalist*' student-cadets incorporate and are bound to the traditional roots of their home culture, family, and religious principles, and hold a modern quest for certainty and order. By virtue of successfully completing their education, they expect to receive a university degree and enter the military as an officer. By making this choice they are dismantling economic and gender roadblocks and travelling a route not available to their parents who served as enlisted military.

In identifying today's students as Millennials, Strauss, and Howe (2000) state, "while this generation of students accept their parents' exacting values, they think they can apply these values and run the show a whole lot better" (p. 70). 'Better' in the case of the '*traditionalist*'

student-cadet includes rising to the top and engaging in and structuring decisions as an individual military officer rather than the decision to become a follower as enlisted military. In this respect, the focus on individual agency and self actualization (Maslow, 1987) forms the motivation for '*traditionalist*' to buy into the army's slogans, "An Army of One" and "Be All You Can Be."

The focus on individual accomplishments while still maintaining traditional family values reflects the modern emphasis on the individual as author of her own behavior; one who self constructs and is responsible for her own achievements, both positive and negative. However, as Gergen (1991) states, "Within the academy a profound challenge to the concept to autonomous self is posed. Concepts of the individual as the center of knowledge (one who knows) . . . as one who creates, decides, manipulates, intends . . . is all put in question" (p. 156). As Shapiro (2009) states, "students are invited to examine the social structure of their realities, reflect upon and experience themselves as rational and sensual beings, and be brought to question the significance and meaning for their own lives" (p. 194). For '*traditionalists*' with high stakes in guaranteeing their pilgrims "walk to" (Bauman, 1995), in their case, professional success in the military, this is often too risky and thus risk avoidance behaviors are taken by resisting critical thinking and self exploration. These students seek the comfort zone of the familiar traditional, disciplined school environment they experienced in their primary and secondary schooling. Their identity narratives suggest they seek safety in their approach to the challenging discussions and issues often raised in the classroom. They have a functionalist attitude toward the classroom and view their education both as structure and freedom. Provided they maintain structure and do well in their course of studies, they can realize their aspirations to be free from worrying about obtaining a job after university. This also comes with the security of a guaranteed professional career with opportunities for increased promotions and leadership advancement when they leave the university. Their narratives minimize any cognitive dissonance with their professional choice as

they realize that with the privilege of education comes the security of a professional job. For many without the perceived benefit of ROTC, neither would be likely.

### **The Public Display—Social Identity Representation**

When it turned to social identity representation and interactions while in military dress, the '*traditionalist*' concept of how to act and behave while in uniform, was very evident in her presentation and discourse. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) suggests that the many roles that comprise one's social identity surface and are displayed through dress. Dress, thus, is both the vehicle for communication and the means of transforming the self (Lentz, 2008). According to Helms (2008), "while civilian clothes represent individuality, a cadet must suppress that individuality to be part of the military culture, rules and regulations" (p. 123). Expectations and boundaries are clear; recognition is unavoidable. The uniform alters the behavior of the '*traditionalist*' student-cadet by virtue of the public gaze.

As Herman Brock (2002) states in talking of the military uniform, "a uniform provides its wearer a definitive line of demarcation between his [her] person and the world. It is the uniform's true function to manifest and ordain order in the world, to arrest the confusion and flux of life" (as cited in Fussell, 2002, p. 14). For a student-cadet, the military uniform including requirements for certain hair styles (above the collar), as well as restrictive personal adornment requirements shape who she is and her social identity performance and provides a practiced professionalism. This is the hallmark of the United States military.

One or two days a week, a ROTC cadet will often wear her field uniform to class because of the tight schedule between her ROTC class and university class. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) suggest that "dress may be seen in social encounters before conversation can be initiated, and therefore may have a certain priority over discourse in the establishing of identity" (p. 5). Military recognition is unavoidable; the uniform which the student-cadet wears shapes who she is

and how to perform her identities. As one cadet states, “You can’t identify someone in civilian clothes but when you put on the uniform, it’s already identity, they know you’re a hard worker, they know you run fast, they know that you work for something that they don’t want to do.” This suggests a uniform is safe; yet expectations and boundaries are clear; recognition is unavoidable.

Goffman (1959) suggests that clothes signify a way of belonging within a setting and must be considered when evaluating one’s role in that setting. Unlike students attending a military academy, the military uniform as dress is unexpected especially for young women in my study at the public and private universities. Therefore, when in uniform, the cadet’s social identity in the classroom and the expectations placed on her by her peers and superiors is affected. The uniform puts the cadet under a microscope of expectations and boundaries through unavoidable recognition while in uniform. Managing one’s impression becomes paramount and one’s dress serves as a vehicle to present the proper self (Enninger, 1992). As Amber commented:

When I get it on (uniform), if I don’t make it on time, she’s late, what’s wrong with her? I always sit up straight in my class and don’t mess around. And people look at me differently so my actions have to speak as loud as my uniform does. I feel like I have so much purpose. I just feel more obligated all the time when I’m in my uniform. But I’m ok with it ‘cause that’s who I am.

When discussing an interaction with her university professor, one student stated, “If I’m not doing so well in class a teacher might expect more from me since they see me in a uniform and they know theoretically I should be more responsible and understand how to manage my time and things like that.”

Rhetoric around behaviors and expectations while in uniform were filled with identifiers suggesting responsibility, duty and certainty of what one must do and be as a military cadet. For the ‘*traditionalist*’ student-cadet like Kelly, wearing the uniform has a spiritual-like transformative power of moral responsibility, and even sacrifice.

It's a big responsibility to be able to wear that uniform that people have died in and people, ya know have given, have professed freedom. It's also just a wonderful, wonderful feeling, ya know, I'm part of something, I'm part of a group of people, like everyone can't be a part of because everyone does not have the same ideals. How many people can say right now, I'm willing to die for my country because I believe in and live by the ideal of my country? It's a wonderful thing to be part of. Every time, I'm able to put that uniform on and then walk down the street, I'm so proud of my country, I'm so proud. Despite people saying this, saying that, I'm behind my country's every decision it makes. We have to believe in our leaders, we have to be able to say, ya know I'm behind you in everything you say and do without question.

### **Leadership Training**

ROTC training programs combine classroom with field exercises to teach cadets how to be leaders on the battlefield as well as in the office since, as officers, they may hold both types of jobs during their careers. Of the approximately 205,000 military officers serving active duty in all four branches of the armed services in 2009, approximately fifteen percent of these are women officers. (<http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/miltop.htm>). This provides both a challenge and opportunity for the young women student-cadets in my study.

In articulating their vision and goals, many '*traditionalist*' student-cadets expressed a strong need to succeed in career milestones they have mapped for themselves. Aligning their goals for individual success and recognition has come at the cost of compromising their own emotional relationships. A need defined by Kanfer (1990) is an "internal state of tension or arousal, or uncomfortable state of deficiency that people are motivated to change" (p. 249).

Stiehm (1996) states, "In the military rank matters" (p. 60). For many '*traditionalists*,' what matters is to continue the military tradition of their family but in a leadership position not reached by their parent(s) who served as enlisted. As one student stated, "My dad is so proud of me now, and this provides meaning in my life." It is this meaning and purpose which serves as a keystone to the structure of social identity as a future woman officer for many '*traditionalists*.' For this reason, student-cadets have a strong need to keep safe and play the system. They have

adopted the masculine “warrior ethic” (Ulmer, 1988, p. 348) of military toughness rather than put at risk the approval of those they care about be it family or their ROTC peers and instructors. As Heifetz and Linsky (2000) state, “The experience of disloyalty to our deeper attachments is often so painfully unacceptable that we avoid wrestling with them all together” (p. 29). In Kelly’s case, it’s her determination to succeed by compromising her emotion make-up that might demonstrate weakness in strength or emotional stability.

Kelly finds her leadership and physical fitness training in ROTC difficult but is unwilling to display any fear or failure. As she states,

If I present myself as a weak, the guys are going to believe you to be weak and girly; not a real soldier. I can’t show my fear or that I’m shy or that I still stutter a little when and I’m unsure of myself. If you’re a woman, you have to fight for everything, become a soldier and hide all your emotions and just kind of do things by the book. I just get out there and put all my stressful things inside.

After a thoughtful moment, she continues,

I do this and stay tough because my absolute goal is to graduate and be commissioned. I would really love to have my mother and father, preferably my father to see, he’s already in the military and he’s enlisted, to pin my gold bars on my jacket. And my father will have to salute me. That’s, oh my goodness, then maybe I’ll bust out and cry.

Kelly’s narrative suggest that to be successful in becoming a military leader she will have to adapt to a military culture shaped by a deeply entrenched military cult of masculinity with accompanying masculine norms, values and lifestyles some of which she witnessed growing up in a military household.

This resonates with the need to develop code switching behaviors expressed by student-cadets relative to their military leadership and field training. Several spoke strongly of having to take on a stereotypic soldier social identity of toughness and mask any emotion that would demonstrate weakness in strength or emotional stability while in the presence of male peers and

superiors. However, they find bonding takes place in the company of other women cadets when they feel secure and confident enough to share and support each other in their frustrations and pain. It is within these networks of friends these young women find emotional continuity, companionship, pleasure, care and practical assistance. Coates's (2000) labels this "classic backstage talk" (p. 257) behavior. She suggests this occurs for women when they can relax the form of self presentation they are obliged to uphold in public.

### ***'Traditionalist' Summary***

Jessica, in her last year at university about to enter the Air Force, demonstrates the behaviors of responsibility and discipline in her work and class interactions. In reflecting on her experience as a university student and a ROTC cadet she nicely sums up the profile of a

*'traditionalist.'*

People look at me, like I can't imagine people yelling at you, and I can; it's real to me; it's how I grew up and learned. In ROTC you should develop as a person, not saying you should discover the meaning of life and all these great having an epiphany or nothing like that, but you should somewhat develop as a disciplined person. You should become more responsible and have some more self control, and just ya know become a better person, become a better team member, ya know a better group participant, ya know what I'm saying. You understand what it means to be disciplined and obey authority mostly. As far as my discipline, college itself is like a wild haze of days and stuff for some people. College can be in and of itself a growing experience but I think my family and ROTC helped me to learn and to keep my discipline in my classes and with myself. I realize that I am responsible for my actions and can't just go out and do everything. There are consequences and repercussions for foolishness of taking chances in school and whatever. So, uhm, plus, we're cadets and children of military and everything and we still have rules and regulations that we have to live by. I can't see how somebody can be in ROTC for four years or the military and all and still be the same person they were four years ago or whatever time it was. It should be, there should be some types of change in you. Maybe school won't change you but ROTC will. You have more discipline over your life. I think it's like the most prominent development from field training or just the military altogether. So if you can't handle stress or get yelled at or have lots of discipline in questioning authority in school or the military, you just can't do it. We just can't send anybody to Iraq and if it wasn't for field training or boot camp or whatever, everybody and their mama would be in the military.

In embracing MacLeod's (1995) "achievement ideology" (p. 468) of success based on hard work, nose to the grindstone, don't rock the boat, self preservation and face saving, the university classroom becomes a site where the student imprisons participation in critical analysis of social issue discussions to private thoughts rather than public discussion. Their career ambitions quiet the voice. The student's background, family role models and need for achievement privileges a content driven pedagogy over critical pedagogy.

These students illustrate several themes which characterize social identity development among '*traditionalists*.' They emphasize closeness with their families and the values instilled by a military influence. There is a strong emphasis on future security while at the same time a sense of autonomy in making this happen. Early lives are marked by a relationship usually with father who is perceived as powerful and strong but at the same time nurturing. Their task is to continue this relationship through identification and reward in their life choice.

Developmentally there is a general inability to tolerate ambivalence preferring instead structure and certainty. For those raised in a military environment, there is nostalgia about the homogenous communal life of military and idealization of military culture and structure where conformity is absolute. This is carried into the university classroom with behavior that can be best defined as a general retreat into conformism (Bauman, 1995). They tend to exhibit high self control and focus their energies on careful planning for the future. While the '*traditionalist*' seeks certainty, conformity and order, the '*enthusiast*' student-cadet seeks excitement and options. She is the wistful thinker with postmodern identity defined by fragmentation and spontaneity.

#### **The '*Enthusiast*' Student-Cadet**

Bauman's (1995) use of the postmodern tourist metaphor in *Life in Fragments* resonates with those I identify as '*enthusiasts*.' His tourist metaphor is marked by the postmodern emergence of a new morality of self-gratification marked by a "want now" consumerist attitude

of experiences seduced in part by the power of media and consumer markets. While some of the interviewees had a family role model impacting their military decision, many '*enthusiasts*' did not. Also, most '*enthusiast*' student-cadets in my study had not yet committed by signing a ROTC contract obligating them to military service after graduation; they were simply adding ROTC military leadership classes, labs and PT to their academic schedule. However, for those '*enthusiast*' cadets who have signed a contract there is uncertainty as the reality of a long term military commitment with no easy out dawns on them and becomes more of a reality and obligation as they approach graduation.

With an ego-gratifying persona of 'sensation gathers' (Bauman, 1997), the responses of '*enthusiasts*' resonate with their roles and relationships with a military career. The search for new and exciting ventures, inspired by military film pop culture heroes and military media coverage, a personal challenge to 'get fit' were cited as reasons for initially enrolling in ROTC.

Erika, a sophomore NROTC cadet, whose father was in the Air Force still carries a childhood image of seeing her father leave for a tour of duty as an adventurous and exciting opportunity; similar to the media images she saw in *Top Gun*. Her father returned from these assignments with stories of far off place that, as a child sounded exotic, almost fairy tale like. This cadet is now embracing an early army slogan of, "It's not a job, it's an adventure!" even though she is in a NROTC scholarship program. With a degree in nursing she would like to serve as an officer on one of the Navy goodwill mission ships that travels around the world. However, she acknowledges there is no guarantee of this. She recognizes that at least for the first two years, it is likely she will be assigned to one of the four main Navy hospitals on land. While ultimately holding on to the dream of traveling and seeing the world by being assigned to a hospital ship, she still frames her rhetoric in adventure terms as she considers a land assignment. She states,

“San Diego would be my choice ‘cause I’ve never gone to California and that would be fun and a neat adventure.”

The rhetoric of Tonia, a freshman AROTC was peppered with ‘fun’ and ‘exciting’ rhetoric as she describes her AROTC experience. She joined a JROTC in high school which as she explained, “was so much fun since she was on the drill team and color guard.” Now that she’s in university and has a goal of becoming a pediatrician, she is trying out the ROTC classes “to be nice to my parents and eventually help with tuition if I continue with the program.” However, later in the narrative she speaks of testing herself to become physically fit, “to be honest, the ROTC is here and I enrolled in classes to stay in shape; I need something to keep me active. I’m a little over concerned about my physical I guess. The classes and PT are pretty fun. It’s new and exciting.” For her, the ROTC PT is similar to a gym exercise class; she has not internalized the philosophy of the Army that says, “Train as you fight so that in combat, reactions are reflexive and automatic.” Perhaps this can be attributed to Tonia’s taking ROTC classes as electives; she still has several months before she has to make a commitment. Even if she chooses to make the commitment, Tonia said, “If I decide I wanna go through with it, I think I’ll enjoy it to where it won’t be too much of a burden for me.”

Ashley indicated her reason for enrolling in the AFROTC classes was to “try it out ‘cause it’s not like the real military” as well as to “try it out and to get in shape” without making a long term commitment because as she states, “I was just curious, very, very curious and if it doesn’t work out, oh, well.” She made this nonbinding choice without notifying her parents knowing it would be met with resistance. As the daughter of a former marine, her father reluctantly accepted her decision. However, as expected, this independent and somewhat rebellious decision resulted in a less than positive reaction from her mother and grandmother who had primary responsibility for raising her during the long wartime absences of her father. In her ongoing jester-like

comments to her family about deployments, she continues to demonstrate her rebellious nature as she continues to keep her options open.

I'm an only child so when my mom found out that I'm trying out the ROTC and my grandmother they blew a gasket. They flipped, they did not want me in the military. Every time they see something on the news and I'll make a joke like, I'm going to be in Iraq one day, they go crazy. My grandmother would get mad, she was like she doesn't know why I want to do this military thing, they get upset about it and it's very uncomfortable for my mom. Like it's fun and easy right now but I know when I graduate it's going to be a whole different story but that's not for a while and I'm not sure I'll really sign up for the whole program so I'll just keep having fun with it. My dad, he's ok with it, but mom is um, I don't know.

The performative aspect of identity inspired by the semiotics (Chandler, 2002) of pop culture also had some effects on the decision of Erica is also expressed by Liza. Erica indicated that she grew up watching *Top Gun* and thought Maverick, played by Tom Cruise, reminded her of what her dad would be like if he was still flying. Additionally, as she states, "it was just so romantic." The hero of this film is Erica's ideal; she sees herself as the female version of Tom Cruise even as she's dressed in her navy blues. This was echoed by Liza who indicated she has been influenced by the marine's uniform because, "I liked the uniform for women, they're really awesome. I mean compared to, I mean the Air Force or the army." Liza has also been influenced from a young age by watching depictions of military personnel in film and in the media.

I don't know, the military always looks like a special thing when you see it in the movies or on TV. Like, ya know, you have heroes that came from the military; they're the ones that are supposed to be respected and the ones that people look up to. And, ya know, I always wanted to be there, I always wanted to be just like them doing what they're doing. My dad told me, ya know, he was smart when he talked to me when I was a kid because he said, Ya know, enlisted is good ways to go but you really need to get an education. So, I'm here on a Navy scholarship but will probably select the marine option.

However, now in her sophomore year, Liza expresses a conflict with continuing the fantasy of becoming a military hero with the competing issue of wanting to realize her other

dream of joining an opera theatre group. Prior to coming to the university, she took classical voice lessons for six years and is currently a double major in Music with a focus on vocal studies as well as English at the university. She expressed a certain pride with her continuing practice of spreading herself too thin with her multiple intentions and interests. She reeled off her exhausting semester schedule of taking eighteen semester hours each term, 5:30 a.m. ROTC PT twice a week, and military lab twice a week as well as weekend field exercises. Added to this are several hours weekly devoted to music rehearsals and practice. She then confessed to falling asleep in class because “I’m tired all the time because I work myself to exhaustion.” In dealing with her conflicted ambitions at the moment, Liza’s fragmented self leads to a search for elusive stability. She states, “Like, I’m a little washy on my way of thinking like what I want to do. Like I’m so young and am thinking, do I really want to do the military or do I want to do music. I really think I may want both options.” In thinking out loud, she elaborates on her ROTC choice,

I really, really want to do this, it’s gonna be hard it’s not going to be easy but that’s what I like, the challenge knowing at the end of the day every day if I do become an officer in the marine corps that you know what, I did a lot to do it. Ya know, I’m very competitive, I just wanna prove people wrong, not only prove them wrong, but prove my worth [after a long pause] but I just don’t know.

While technology was not mentioned very often in the interviews, Ashley indicated that Facebook is her primary means of staying in touch with her class and ROTC peers. However, unlike her classroom peers, she does not live her life out loud. “I am much more self-censoring in my sharing ‘cause it may affect me later in my military career.” Her busy school schedule, her track training and schedule, and ROTC obligations minimizes leisure and social time with friends. Facebook is Ashley’s way to keep connected. She also admits it’s becoming an addiction that takes up most of her late evening hours which should be devoted to sleeping. Her cyber ROTC connections have an added bonus; Ashley now has the ability to know other cadet’s first

name. “Although we’re very close we’re all on last name basis.” In the military, cadets are stripped of their first names. The fluid concept of first names is common for Ashley and her postmodern friends. “A lot of people have the same first names, and my friends change their first name a lot ‘cause as we get older, our given names don’t fit our personality. But it’s more likely you’re not going to have the same last name so it doesn’t matter.” Ashley indicated she plans to keep her same last name even if she gets married.

Whitney, a mass communication major decided to enroll in ROTC classes because she doesn’t know exactly what she wants to do with her major and wants to create and try out several options for the future. She states, “I felt the military would be an honest career. So far the ROTC has been more of a laid back relaxed situation just getting to know other cadets. It’s like another fraternity. So, I’m not losing anything in the ROTC, I’m only gaining.” However, when discussing a long term commitment, Whitney continues:

I know that one of the, one thing in the Air Force is that, ya know, service before self. But ya know to be perfectly honest; I honestly don’t see it that way. Ya know, in my heart my needs and my family comes first, ya know if I have to step out to serve my family first, ya know, they are my service. So that’s why, I really need to think if this is where I really want to be. Because if I’m over in Japan or Germany or something happens, ya know, my dad gets sick and I can’t just leave, ya know, that’s something I need to think about. It’s not like working at Harris Teeter or, you can’t just drop. You’re contracted for four years. So, that’s why I really want to think if this is somewhere I really want to be. The money’s great, job seem fair, fun and easy but on the other hand, out in the business world there’s a lot more money to be made. Ya know, I don’t just want to be hanging out in the ROTC program ‘cause there’s other things I could be doing. But right now it’s fun and I’m staying in shape and I still have options.

The lore of community has a strong pull for many of the student-cadets who are living away from home. As Caitlin, a sophomore navy ROTC cadet talks about leaving home:

I was the only person from my high school that came here and I didn’t know anybody . . . and I was scared to death. Having a group of 12 people that went through orientation with me that I knew, I recognized, we had the same experience, I had their phone numbers. We called each other and said, we don’t know anybody, let’s hang out. So it was a great

place to start for me. But then I went through sorority rush a week later. I didn't want ROTC to dominant my life, ya know, ROTC is a very masculine kind of thing to do. And then I joined a bible study group and since I'm a Chemistry major, I also joined the Chem club. Now I'm trying to find balance in my life between studying and having fun and finding myself. I feel pressure from my group obligations and my boyfriend but at the same time I feel as though I need the safety net of all these connections. Sometimes it's nice having all these friends but I then again I don't know it feels so confining.

The conundrum facing Caitlin is the Janus faced dilemma of emancipation and coercion that Bauman (2001) discusses in *Community*. As he states, "If you want security in community, give up freedom or at least a chunk of it . . . missing community equals missing security; gaining community equals missing freedom" (p. 45). This conundrum leads to fragmentation and uncertainty. For '*enthusiasts*' the military is a community that provides the security they desire but at the same time becomes a prickly experience of restrictive freedom and choice. Lifton (1993) suggests, "in contemporary times, communities are partial, fluctuating and may be the most grave problem facing the postmodern meandering, fragmented self" (p. 103).

For young women, psychological health and happiness is inextricably bound to their sense of relationship (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982) in their communities in military, social, and religious organizations. For many student-cadets there is a high degree of reliance on friends, as a surrogate for biological kin particularly for the provision support in everyday life. To this extent it could be said for many, including those in my study, community of friends' acts as an anchor for social identity. However, at the same time, for many postmodern students, the anchor is not firmly grounded; commitments are fluid and contingent to limit any impact on commitment in their technology saturated daily lives. In their ROTC and their university there is what Bauman (1995) calls "*postulated togetherness*" (p. 47) which relates to the construction of a student-cadet's identities. It is "an urge to feel at home, to recognize one's surroundings and belong" (p. 47). For student-cadets, this belonging whether it is to the classroom or ROTC community, her social organizations or social media contacts, has seductive

powers for “as long as it keeps it portability” (p. 48). For student-cadets, portability is framed in options and having fun and for many ‘*enthusiasts*’ a fit body. Boredom, or lack of instant gratification, commitment becomes problematic and tentative and the journey continues with hopes of finding another place that fills the promise of ‘home.’

### **The Public Display—Social Identity Representation**

The ‘*enthusiast*’ role in uniform is marked by fluidity of personal identity, behaviors and roles as she steps out of a world of pastels into the drabness of camouflage uniform and conformity in personal appearance and adornments. Roach-Higgins and Eicher (1992) define dress as an: “[a]ssemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body” (p. 2). Examples of this include cutting one’s hair, trimming one’s fingernails, or tattooing the skin. Body supplements, such as apparel or footwear, are other aspects of dress, and can be combined with modifications for the total effect. “Dress is at once both an intensely personal and a socially meaningful process” (Lentz, 2008, p. 3) and carries significance for student-cadets. In essence, a sense of being fragmented in various situations exists (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995). As an individual incorporates different objects or items of dress, some items may communicate certain aspects, such as one’s attitude or personality.

Marjorie Garber (1992) describes the design of uniforms for women as “not too feminine (pants and short hair) and not too masculine (softer lines) but rather a uniform that feminizes masculine elements with feminine contours” (pp. 21-25). When in uniform either field or dress uniforms, these women construct and reconstruct their social identities roles.

As Caitlin described her social identity in and out of uniform:

I don’t think I become a different person, I think I harness different parts of my personality. I think that, I don’t know, when I’m in uniform, I play my ROTC and my kinda, my boyish, tomboy hat on. And I put it on and I have no problem doing that. When I’m in uniform, I don’t wear makeup, I don’t tend to wear jewelry ‘cause we’re not

allowed to. I still look feminine but I don't worry much about looking pretty per se. So, I think I just channel different parts of my personality.

This was echoed by another student who stated,

I'm probably less feminine in the aspect of the way I carry myself. It's kinda hard to walk lady like in boots but it definitely gives you a different confidence. Because you can be confident one day that you look pretty with your flowered shirt on and then you can be confident the next day that you're a strong female in uniform that that you are protecting right of others and you're not just, I don't know how to put it, like the 50s female character in pearls and polka dot dress.

As these cadets suggests, the iconic idea of a masculine military is still shaped by military dress and, therefore, the public gaze. These '*enthusiasts*' negotiate their identity as androgynous by shedding their adornments and segment their identities into different social identities in order to accommodate the many different spheres in which they operate.

### **Leadership Training**

Leadership is the essence of the military profession (Baker, 2008; Skaine, 1999; Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000). Thus, for ROTC student-cadets, a cornerstone of their leadership training is team building and group cohesion. For '*enthusiasts*' teambuilding was couched in words of 'fun' and 'adventure' but at the same time, connection and separation. In discussing recruitment and retention of postmodern military junior leaders navy Captain E. Tyler Wooldridge III (1998) states:

Give good junior officers opportunities to have fun in a culture willing to confront problems and take care of it own, and they will stay. "Fun" provides an essential tonic for the armed forces. It is almost entirely to product of leadership, both local and strategic. The fun of military does not mean freedom from responsibility or hardship. It means adventure, challenge, companionship, mutual trust, and a broad sense of satisfaction. It means being able to train to standards and to be proud of excellence. (as cited in Hasty & Weber, 2000, p. 212)

Liza's description of her leadership training would support much of this but at the same time problematized through the lens of gender:

Teamwork is really an important part of leadership training in ROTC and especially field training 'cause even though you are in a sense competing against each other, you can't do it without each other. It's a catch 22 so we have to be a good leader and a good follower and a good team member as well, we have to be all of these at the same time. This is challenging 'cause it shows my strengths as a leader by supporting everyone together as a team. But may also show my weaknesses 'cause I can't be as competitive and wanting to stand out; but we still need a good team to accomplish any mission. When I'm in the real military and I'm leading mostly men who are macho, I'll have to balance all these things. Like, when I'm leading all these guys, sometimes I'll have to yell and they'll call me a bitch and mean. Ya know, I'd rather be social; I don't like to be mean but it may be considered ineffective and they'll think I'm too weak. It's going to be a challenge and sometimes I'll have to tap into all the pieces of me to work this out. They'll be a lot of 'me's' in me as an officer, ya know what I mean? But, ya know, I'll just get out if it's not challenging and fun in a good sort of way.

Liza's leadership dilemma in creating and maintaining leadership in a team, a structured and defined hallmark of traditional military leadership, suggests a complex, fluid weaving together of social identities with identifiers of "me" and "not me" simultaneously. Chusmir and Koberg (1990) contend that individuals may have "two different gender identity images—one they consider descriptive of their at-home situation and another of their at-work situation" (p. 546). These postmodern student-cadets will be challenged to develop strategies to maneuver in potential inimical environments.

### ***'Enthusiast'* Summary**

*'Enthusiast'* student-cadets live in the world Bauman (1995) describes as postmodern spontaneity which, "makes nonsense of concern with the future except the concern that being free from concern with the future—and able to act, accordingly, in an unconcerned fashion" (p. 27). For these students the self is engaged in serious play. Their postmodern identity is a splicing of the life-process into a series of self-contained and self-enclosed episodes and as Bauman (1995) states, "the result tends to render human relations fragmentary and discontinuous; they bar the

construction of lasting networks of mutual duties and obligations” (p. 155). Their mantra is to keep their options open; however, at the same time seeking the security and authority of a place to call ‘home’ which for the time being is their military experience.

If ordering and duty are the battle cries of modernity and ‘*traditionalist*,’ fragmentation, difference and ambivalence become the catch words of postmodern ‘*enthusiasts*.’ Bauman (1997) summarizes the postmodern self as the avoidance fixed identity and ordered structure in the following way: To refuse to be ‘fixed’ one way or the other. Not to get tied to one place, however, pleasurable the present stopover may feel. Not to wed one’s life to one vocation only. The hub of post-modern life strategy is, “not making identity stand—but the avoidance of being fixed” (p. 89).

While the complexities and contradictions suggests an ‘*enthusiast*’ as a wistful thinker, the ‘*reflective*’ is a mindful thinker.

### **The ‘*Reflective*’ Student-Cadet Metaphor**

The students-cadets I identify as ‘*reflective*’ integrate elements of ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ in narrating their life story. Their modernist impulse for creating order, boundaries and classifications is problematized and negotiated through a postmodern lens of tolerance for plurality, difference and uncertainty. For this reason, I suggest a sensibility of modern *within* a postmodern self.

In blending ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ attributes, a veil of conflicting thoughts weave through their narratives as they talk about the tension of following a traditional upbringing often with a military role model while at the same time exercise agency as their own person. As Blackshaw (2005) suggests when discussing Bauman’s concept of liquid modernity, “men and women are forced to be above all else, at the same time both rational and self determined individuals” (p. 91). The narratives of these young women deal with the more problematic

existential in-between dilemmas facing them as student-cadets in their everyday lives. These student-cadets negotiate their sense of self and identity. They go through the reflexive process of reshaping, modifying, adding to, and mixing together the individuated and unindividuated aspects of the self. For example, these '*reflectives*' are torn between the connection they have with the protective social webs and values of their traditional family and military upbringing while at the same time a personal need to question the hegemonic, paternalistic metadiscourse of a traditional military ideology of "military manliness" and institutional way of life. Often they demonstrate a search for a familiar home away from home as they transition to university and a ROTC community. However, while a sense of identity was broad and supported in their former home, it is often disrupted as these student-cadets have more exposure to new knowledge, understandings and interactions with others bringing into question the meanings for their own lives. After critical examination of the childhood identity fostered by their parents, these young women form a social identity of their own after considering who they were in the past and who they want to become in the future. In essence, home has changed and this changing relationship to the past, being in the present and looking to the future frames the work of Lifton (1993) and Giddens (1991) work on reflexivity. This speaks to my '*reflective*' metaphor for student-cadets.

Carmen, a first year ROTC student-cadet, talks about the battle within herself as she struggles to mediate her own needs with a sense of family instilled duty. Throughout her story, she weaves back and forth with discourse of the '*traditionalist*' and the '*enthusiast*.' There is a sense of duty to continue not only the military tradition of her father and grandfather who were enlisted but to avoid the path of her sister who dropped out of the ROTC program last year. Growing up, Carmen lived in a house where structure was set and enforced.

After all my life of my parents telling me what and what not to do, where I should go and what I should do now I'm here at university. It's like dad's not here and I am growing up fast and I'm thinking on my own and finding I really can think out things and not have

someone tell me what to think and do. Discussions in my school classes are making me think and it carries over to my ROTC classes. Right now I'm in Military Ethics and I'm thinking about what a 'just war' means. Somehow it doesn't make sense. But I'm surely not going to ask my dad or pop what it means.

Carmen also reflects the '*enthusiast*' rhetoric of an exhausting, hectic life style and having 'fun.' After reeling off her daily schedule of getting up at 5:00 a.m. for 6:00 a.m. PT, followed by a full schedule of classes, and co-curricular activities, she confessed to enjoying the adrenaline rush she gets from working under all these pressures even though she is attempting to take on a schedule that almost defies human ability. She states, "I find the navy ROTC to be fun and exciting," and then continues, "at the same time I'm here to obtain a degree in mathematics or economics" that, as she states, "I can always fall back on."

A more *reflective*, if not conflicted tone was evident as Beth expressed concerns about being marginalized because of her gender and race. In talking about these issues, Beth relates her leadership goals when she becomes a woman officer following graduation next year realizing she is aspiring to take on a leadership role not available to her enlisted relatives. Additionally, as a black female officer, a distinct token population of the military (Moore & Webb, 2000), Beth realizes she is highly visible which, in turn, intensifies polarization.

I feel like there aren't many women in powerful leadership roles I feel like the military involves a lot of powerful leaders and I can be one. Ya know, I asked a gentleman about being a four-star I general and he replied no, women don't become four-star generals, and I said, just because most women don't become four-star generals, why can't I be one? And, it was just his facial expression, ya know, he realized there was no answer to that. Ya know he knew he had messed up by even stating that. Ya know, I'm going to ride this out as far as I can. My dad told me to just be happy with being a good officer, but I feel like I can be a great female leader. Just because women aren't per se violent, just 'cause we don't like to run in there and start blowing up things, ya know, that's not what a leader is about. Ya know, uhm, because men everywhere are aggressive, ya know, men all around are aggressive whereas women like me, we like to more or less talk things out and connect with people.

As a young black woman, Beth's challenge is to transgress the highest ranking male dominated senior position in the military and to influence change in the military away from a warrior image to a humanitarian and diplomatic image. Currently, a dearth of women General Officers exists in military leadership positions. Beth is concerned that being black and a woman in the officer ranks becomes an additional marginalizing challenge.

I think black males may, ya know see more discrimination than the females. Maybe because of [being] a female, they might see us oh as, she's not going to get far anyways 'cause she's black and female, so it's no point in trying to bring her down. Ya know I have a right to be in the army and being equal. Blacks have fought for equality ya know and I'll do the same for all blacks *and* for all females.

Later in her narrative Beth elaborated on her current ROTC training and her race, she reflects on a deeper issue of discrimination that had to be overcome by her uncles and for all black military personnel.

Something that does discourage me is that, uhm, a lot of officers who have gone to field training, told me that, ya know, since the black community is a smaller group there, there's going to a lot of people that believe you don't belong here, that you can't be here and they were saying, ya know you just have to keep your head up. There's going to be a lot of things said about you, a lot of things said to you, you don't let those people discourage you 'cause when you enter the real military, that won't be tolerated. But I remember my uncle told me, he said, uhm when you get into the military, everybody's green—that used to be the color of the army uniform. But, ya know, the person that I'm standing beside might be the same person that might save my life, So, in the end, ya know, I have to decide whether to stand up to them or keep quiet but I really think it's in our best interest to just respect each other. Figuring out how to do that is the trick.

While Beth's concerns may signal a conflicted voice, her final statement demonstrates her resolve once she works through all her issues. "Ya know, they didn't tell me to come. But the thing is I signed up, I better show up. I made a commitment, I'll be there and I'll make a difference." For Beth, with choice comes responsibility.

As junior commissioned officers, several cadets narrated concerns about their leadership roles and the minefields they anticipate having to negotiate of inequality, discrimination, or oppression—real or imagined. Kristen's, military socialization in military traditions came from many relatives who have or are serving active duty. She problematizes the resistance she anticipates as a military leader.

It's going to be difficult for me commissioned as an officer coming right out of college. Like I'm a 5'4" a little blond girl trying to tell some guy who's been in the navy for twenty years, ya know, longer than I've been alive, what to do and he may or may not respect what I have to say based on who I am. Ya know the way I was brought up was to be nice and quiet so I'll have to find a balance with my leadership persona. Ya know, the way that females are brought up to think and act is different than guys. I'm much more unlikely to go and yell at someone and curse them out than a guy would because that's the way society trains us.

However, she continues, "but when you are responsible for the lives of others, ya know, I don't want to hurt someone's father or mother, something happens to your fears and you realize you have important things to do and you have to get on with the job at hand and whatever that requires."

Danielle who is a first generation college student of a single parent planned to enlist in the military as she states, "just straight up like my uncles did." With her parent's desire to see her with better professional opportunities in the military, her father insisted she pursue a ROTC scholarship which she is doing now. She now sees herself in a leadership position stating,

This is my country. It has given a lot now I have the opportunity to give back to it. And I see that women have strong leadership potential and we have to get over the stereotypes that females can't do it. I have, uhm, the ability to seek that out and change those stereotypes. With my Spanish and International Global major I'm learning to understand and relate to all kinds of people of all culture. I know now I'm supposed to be here because I have faith in God and my abilities and that's what ultimately gets you through.

Kristen who is about to graduate and soon to be a commissioned officer considers the challenge as full of exciting adventures; however, the excitement is tempered by very real sacrifice and danger associated with a potential military assignment in war. As she stated:

I've had the discussion with my parents of the very real possibility I could be a junior officer leading a boarding party and become captured and be a prisoner of war. I've had the conversation with my parents of what happens, what do I do. I've definitely read the code of conduct and everything and not just read it to recite it and memorize it like we do [Appendix E] but actually, like thought it over and figured out what it means to me, it's more important to do something that I believe in and I firmly believe that everybody should do something whether it's working in a hospital or serving in the military or teaching in a school; everybody should give back for some amount of time. And for me, I think this is the best way I can come up with to do it.

Kristen's concerns are echoed by Waldman (1996) who states, "those in the military must grapple with moral dilemmas most of us skirt: when should you put your life on the line for your fellow man? Is it ethical to put completing a mission before saving a life? Is it honorable to put saving your own life before completing your mission?" (pp. 104-105).

While maintaining a belief in diplomacy rather than conflict, Danielle holds on to the right and obligation to challenge the institutional forces that structure and obstruct her military life. In discussing restrictions placed on females in combat positions due to physical abilities, she states:

I think if I can do the job, there should be no restrictions on what I can do or what I should be allowed to do. The military argues that females don't have the same physical abilities that males do. And, ya know, yes, in some respects that may be right. I can't always lift a telephone pole by myself like some of the guys can. But then again, I know guys that can't do that either. I know guys who I can do more sit-ups than, I know guys I can run faster than, I know guys I can out push than. Ya know, I think if they have the opportunity to do something, then I should have the opportunity to do something. And I don't think that my gender should restrict me on what I can and can't do. However, I think that the military has to change their macho talk about showing force; how about men showing a little care and compassion and understanding. We females have a lot to teach them about it ya know. Giving books and medicine and building people up rather than shooting them down is like giving life not taking it.

Danielle, and other '*reflective*' cadets enrolled in ROTC, fully intend to dent the armored ceiling and break gender codes in traditionally patriarchal male dominated military leadership positions commanding Navy goodwill ships, flying cobras or hewies, and foreign affairs, and leading worldwide humanitarian missions. However, these post-feminist postmodern cadets who feast from the feminist menu of options in many ways are still clearly conflicted with traditional expectations when it comes to social relationships, marriage and children and how it connects to a long term military commitment.

Carman expressed frustration regarding relationships and the perception of women in the military. She stated,

When I'm dating somebody or something, I do have in the back of my mind can this person handle the fact that I'm in the military. That does scare some of the guys I date and I think it makes it, it's like, when a girl sees a guy in uniform, it's the classic, like guys are really cute in uniform, girls all want to date them. When a guy sees a girl in uniform, uhm, is she really masculine? That really drives me crazy just the guys always get the benefits and we're always like, oh, you're in the male profession-uhm, congrats.

Kristen, related an experience when she was on a summer training cruise:

I was on a ship for the summer and they had family day and all the guys brought their girlfriends and wives and they all thought, ya know, it was really cool to go see where their boyfriends worked. I didn't see any of the females bring their boyfriends. They brought a friend, like another girl or parents, ya know because that's when I started thinking, ya know, you're gonna go on a six month deployment and it's cool for a girl to, look oh my boyfriend's over in Iraq right now but what kinda guy is going like oh, my girlfriend's on deployment for six month. I think there's a kind of machismo associated with the military like going out and protecting and defending. If your girlfriend is more macho than you, it's kinda not cool.

When the narratives of '*reflectives*' included marriage and long term military commitment, there was clear conflict about their future role as wife and mother and the impact of this on military commitment and leadership ambitions. '*Reflectives*' who discussed social relationships indicated they are resisting serious commitments in university in favor of their

careers but the longer term challenge was a concern. It is clear that the cadets who discussed aspirations for top military leadership positions were reluctant to sacrifice career for marriage and family at least in the long term. In fact, one Navy cadet indicated it would be harder to find a husband while she is in the military because as she stated, “. . . there’s kind of a stigma involved with the military and generally it’s the man’s place kinda deal.” This cadet anticipates that when marriage is considered, it will no doubt be to a military person. For her, social connections are more narrowly defined once she is in the military. With their fragmented and fluid future, relationships are ‘confluent’; they will last or expected to last until both parties find them satisfactory (Blackshaw, 2005).

While many cadets see an opportunity to remain in the military when they are married, they took a very ‘*traditionalist*’ viewpoint when children are involved. Everyone who discussed this topic including those who aspire to top military leadership positions indicated they plan to leave the military when marriage includes starting a family. As Gwyn Harris (2009) suggests, “when female officers experience conflicts between family and career, they are more likely than male officers to voluntarily terminate military service” (pp. 408-409). In her earlier research, Harris, Steinberg, and Scarville (1994) found that 80% of women who planned to leave the Army, despite their leadership position, were leaving because of family issues. This attitude points out the fallacy of the military’s attempt to bring women into officer’s ranks under the guise of equality and gender neutrality (Snitow, 1990). As Coser (1974) suggested, the military is a “greedy institution” (p. 3), taking total claim of individuals even extending to the role of motherhood. As Westwood and Turner (1996) state, “If the Army wanted you to have children, you would have been issued them” (p. 9).

In dealing with the tension between a military career and motherhood, Kristen indicated that as a naval officer she will strongly advocate for family leave for both men and women

serving in the military. As she stated, “unless the military becomes more family friendly and recognizes our [women’s] leadership worth, we will never see a change in the military. I don’t understand why they offer us a scholarship and then treat us like second class citizens when we have children.”

### **‘Reflective’ Summary**

In summary, while these ‘*reflective*’ students expressed a ‘*traditionalist*’ moral imperative to do the right thing by committing to military service, they also interrupt this modern rhetoric as they try to make meaning of their ROTC military social identity role. Their integration of the ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ metaphors discussed above, is punctuated by the gender biases deeply embedded in the military iconic image of American masculinity. While they recognize significant, positive, social change can get stymied when confronted with power that refuses to let loose of its hold, they are not willing to surrender to the deeply embedded hegemonic culture of the military in their goal to reach leadership positions and the possibility of enacting change. These student-cadets are inspired by the possibilities and hopes for the future and the responsibilities of challenging and questioning the ‘whys’ of things as they are in the present. Attempting to deal with these competing forces can be found in the storied discussions both in the classroom and around their ROTC role, military dress, negotiating gender relations and their leadership vision. They are the first generation to grow up with true images of female empowerment and in a culture that has made gender neutrality a possibility. With the traditional family norm (homemaker mom, working dad) negotiated through a military lens, these student-cadets understand the fluid nature of life, have learned to fend for themselves, and this no doubt has had a profound effect on their attitudes.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **MOVING FORWARD—A PEDAGOGY CONSIDERED**

My narrative research with student-cadets and my informal daily interactions with university students demonstrate the power of listening to students' narratives. I appreciate the ordinary and extraordinary everyday life experiences of these young women, the significance they ascribe to these experiences, and the impact these have on their social identities. Their narratives contain a dialectical interplay between experience and emergent selfhood as they relate stories of growing up, of family relationships, of university experiences and of the ambitions of young women to break through the leadership ceilings of glass and armor. Their stories provide insight into how their personal histories, the feminists' movements and media representations, along with embodiments of gender, race, and class, shape their social identities. Their stories express a process of becoming and of realizing hopes, dreams, and aspirations and reveal the world as they see it at this point in time.

However, in listening to them share the rich details of their lives, I pause with some concern and trepidation as I reflect on the challenges these students face today and in the future. For ROTC student-cadets the military with its historically dominant masculine warrior ideology has not been kind to women. Its macho image has stigmatized women as lacking in skills, abilities and talents resulting in a lack of respect and marginalization. For all students, the media presents a daily cacophony of political, social, environments and economic news, threats, scandals. These reports provide students bits and bytes of 'news' creating information and sensory overload. The temptation is to become cynical or apathetic and to turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to critical thinking about issues of war, poverty, environmental degradation and social

injustices and to decide it's someone else's problem to consider as they head to the mall and another shopping spree. While I pause with misgivings, I am encouraged by the tenacity and determination of '*reflectives*' who contextualize meaning and discover a new way of making sense of the postmodern times we live in.

Student-cadets, while recognizing the inherent difficulties of becoming military leaders, can still see opportunities to influence attitudinal change and institutional reform when in a leadership position. This may include a voice at the decision making table to repeal exclusionary and discriminatory policies against women as a matter of simple justice, aggressive pursuit and prosecution of abusive or harassment crimes against any military personnel, advocacy for a family-friendly military, and support and enforcement of the recent policy proposal to allow gays to openly serve under the same standards of conduct as heterosexual military personnel.

'*Reflective*' students are willing to wrestle with the challenge of who they are and what kind of future they are inheriting. They respect, they question, they reflect and they challenge.

### **Teaching in Postmodern Times: Contemporary University Students**

Students today leave their footprints across the landscapes of postmodern thoughts, making meaning of their experiences as they grapple with continuities with the past while moving towards the novelties of the present and future. They are young adults immersed in an information age where databases with vast amounts of information are available at their fingertips. This has provided a generation of young adults with life choices and complexities affecting their perceptions about class, race, relationships, work and education in multiple and competing ways. In an effort to understand students and particularly their attitudes, social identities and approaches to learning I created four metaphors '*minimalist*,' '*traditionalist*,' '*enthusiast*' and '*reflective*.' These metaphors are an overarching representation of university students and the influencers of social identity. These metaphors provide a lens to interrogate the

diversity of student identities with a goal of developing pedagogy for twenty-first century students.

In my metaphoric representations, students represented as '*traditionalist*' maintain a modern social identity characterized by a need for security, certainty and structure; others, for example, '*enthusiasts*' and '*reflectives*' embrace a social identity of ambiguity, uncertainty and multiplicity. These postmodern students have been raised to aim for the stars and have developed a keen sense of entitlement (Sacks, 1996). This results in sky-high expectations and a need for fulfillment in their personal and professional lives. For many young women the classroom is a site for finding their 'voices.' These students are willing to challenge the dominant modernist classroom dialectic of authenticity and universalism, certainty and order, and embrace a postmodern world of hybridized identities, electronic technologies, local cultural practices, and pluralized public spaces (Giroux, 1994).

For '*reflective*' students, this means the classroom is where they both celebrate and problematize the diversity, complexity and contradictions of who they are and what they want to be. Their late modern/postmodern reflexive narratives provide insights into how they present themselves, understand their own life story, and connect with the social world. They draw on the past to reflect on the present and look toward the future and new possibilities. For '*enthusiast*' students, technology and media representations of gender, race, ethnicity, and class have colonized every aspect of their daily life resulting in packaged selves (Turkle, 2005) and consumerist instant gratification in their personal and professional choices.

Table 1 provides an overview of my four metaphors of university students and a summary of the conceptual framework for social identity formation.

**Table 1*****Metaphoric Student Overview***

<b>Dimensions of Social Identity</b>	<b><i>'Traditionalist'</i> w/in modern</b>	<b><i>'Enthusiast'</i> postmodern</b>	<b><i>'Reflective'</i> postmodern within modern</b>	<b><i>'Minimalist'</i></b>
<i>Values</i>	Embedded in beliefs and opinions influenced by family and religious community	Shifting, fluid, fragmented influenced by media/pop culture messages of consumption	Reflexive intersection of structure and agency	Shifting, uncertain values, beliefs and opinions
<i>Education</i>	Future oriented toward career goal. Functional, risk averse. Seeks structure/authority	Present oriented Excitement, fun adventure. Dialog becomes narcissistic monologue	<b><i>Reflective</i></b> of past on present and future. Integration of critical reflection and dialogue. Challenges modernist classroom	Minimal effort in reflection
<i>Community</i>	Within traditional cultural framework of family and religion	Multiple, episodic fragmented, social oriented, ego gratification	Relationship builder embraces difference and diversity.	Resists community, focused on individualistic needs
<i>Technology</i>	Dependent	Saturated	Saturated	Saturated

**Teaching in Postmodern Times: Female ROTC Student-Cadets**

More than twenty years ago I witnessed my son's identity transformation in the ROTC from a carefree student to a man dedicated to the unique Marine culture of service and duty. At that time military leadership was predominantly male; today it is not uncommon to see women-cadets on campus in military dress as they prepare for careers as military leaders. My interest in

asking them to *'tell me the story of your life'* was to gain insight, appreciate and understand how young women in a historically masculinist and unfriendly environment negotiate their social identities among competing forces. On one hand they participate in the university and larger social culture surrounded by postmodern thought and discourse marked by ideals of freedom, choice, and fluidity where realities and identities are constructed and re-constructed. On the other hand they are engaged in a hegemonic, hierarchal culture focused on duty, service and loyalty. In my analyses of their narratives, I investigate how they negotiate these borders and the impact it has their classroom and social identity roles and interactions. I use the same metaphors of *'minimalist,' 'traditionalist,' 'enthusiast'* and *'reflective'* because, during my interviews with these cadets and more importantly after I transcribed and reflected on the information, and while I saw differences in the nature of the narratives, I saw clear parallels in how these student-cadets approach their ROTC commitment and how they approach their social identity roles both inside the academy and in their military training.

For all student-cadets there is a commonality in the language of the four pillars of ROTC cadet life – academics, military culture, leadership and physical development. While the *'minimalist'* privileges military ambitions and culture over her university education, the *'traditionalist'* relies on academic achievement and discipline to provide the safety net of a secure future as a military leader. For many, the goal is to maintain a family history of military service.

The *'enthusiast'* student-cadet, influenced by media representations is engaged in play and pleasure. For those with a tentative commitment to the military, the ROTC field training to maintain a physically fit body is an attraction for joining. *'Reflectives'* respect traditional military culture, but with a moral sensibility that questions blind conformity. They frame their social identity through the lens of past experiences but are not imprisoned by them as they adapt to changing circumstances and envision new possibilities for themselves as young women. As

military leaders they view themselves in the vanguard of change expressing an ethic of care as agents of peace rather than as managers of violence.

Table 2 provides a summary of four dimensions of ROTC that contribute to the student-cadet's social identity formation.

**Table 2**

***ROTC Student-Cadet Overview***

<b>Dimensions of Social Identity</b>	<b><i>'Traditionalist' within modern</i></b>	<b><i>'Enthusiast' postmodern</i></b>	<b><i>'Reflective' postmodern within modern</i></b>	<b><i>'Minimalist'</i></b>
Values	Conservative, moralistic, faith based. Follow military legacy	Fun, adventure, physical fitness. Build on media military imagery	Reflexive recognize and contest military culture. Build on family and forge own military legacy	Embraces military values
Military Orientation	Duty, discipline, service, trust and obey authority. Sacrifice private interest for public good.	Present oriented Excitement, adventure – sensation gathers. Provisional commitment	Challenges embedded stereotypes and warrior image.	Minimal effort in reflection
Military Leadership	Pragmatic, appropriate and adopt dominant military structure of duty, sacrifice	Negotiates risk and opportunity within personal achievement. Absolute authority challenged	Warrior structure challenged, personal/political intersection problematized. Nonviolence, ethic of care and relationship highly valued	Pragmatic
Military Dress	Identity with expectations and boundaries. Represents purpose, sacrifice and expectations	Military dress - fragmented, fluid identities	Military dress-transform/transcend	Military dress-strong identification

### **What Does this Mean for Us as Educators?**

As educators, we have an opportunity to turn the spotlight back on ourselves and reflect on how we are providing a classroom experience that cultivates critical thinking and responsible citizenship. This means challenging conformity for the *'traditionalists,'* motivating the *'minimalists,'* guiding the *'enthusiasts,'* and encouraging and supporting the *'reflectives.'* To this end, I propose three classroom strategies to help bridge, or at least narrow, the gaps among the student metaphors with the goal of leading all students to the *'reflective'* model. While each metaphor provides an understanding and appreciation for student particularities, as educators we have a responsibility to challenge and fan that spark of love for critical thinking evident in *'reflective'* students.

My metaphors suggest students' relationships form their social identities in community. As educators, our primary task should be to nurture and encourage community engagement and reflection (Dewey, 1938; Freire, 1998). Our goal in educating students should be to prepare them not only for a productive, meaningful professional career but also to invite them to consider critically their intellectual and moral actions and decisions in their professional and personal lives. We have an opportunity to help student reinterpret their own lives and uncover new talents. This means to engage students in developing the ability to communicate, to think critically, and to engage in citizen preparation (Bok, 2006). Freire (1998) contends that real education is about the formation of identities through a process that liberates individuals to think critically and to see various ways of existing in our global community. He believes that true education helps us examine and analyze our social identity constructions to understand and address issues of power and oppression.

I recommend we provide young women students and cadets multiple ways of analyzing and thinking about the consequences of their personal and professional choices as well as their

communication and relationships with themselves and in community. In guiding these students to this end, my research-to-pedagogy would incorporate curriculum strategies utilizing technology, service, and communication. These strategies help students employ various modes for interpreting their multiple and competing narratives and social identities. As Davis et al. (2000) state, “students will be most inventive when engaged in tasks that ask them to think freshly about forms that they [may] already know very well. Creativity is mostly a matter of rethinking the everyday and often-used” (p. 199).

### **Three Classroom Strategies: Technology, Service, and Communication**

#### **Technology**

While many educators view technology as *in our culture*, the postmodern student and student-cadet views technology *as an essential* of her culture. These students are technophiles having been raised in a technology rich environment from their earliest years. While immersion in a technologically saturated world (Gergen, 1992) of media images may contribute to the construction of a postmodern fragmented, fluid identity, it also provides students an opportunity for active and real time learning that leads to reflection and awareness of social responsibility. Today, digitally-based communication platforms, such as the internet more than any other technological tool, offer a space for global equalizing experiences regardless of race, class, or gender. As an example, web information sharing has helped disrupt the grand hegemonic narratives that have historically created barriers and discrimination in military leadership opportunities due to sexual orientation and gender marginalization. Debating “voices” delivered through the power of technology have contributed to the reevaluation of the U.S. military’s policies regarding gays serving in the military and duty assignments for women. This now opens up opportunities not previously available to the student-cadets in my study.

Creating an active learning environment utilizing visual and audio technology can serve as a catalyst for meta-cognitive and critical thinking in students through information inquiry, creative problem solving, and reflection. This interactive environment bridges and balances traditional instructor-led knowledge transmission with more postmodern student-focused knowledge construction and discovery; the instructor becomes, “a guide on the side not a sage on the stage” (King, 1993).

As a specific example, a communication studies class curriculum would focus on the sociopolitical considerations of consumption and its effects on resource depletion and the potential for violence. As a starting point, the ethics of consumption would be viewed within five philosophical frameworks of deontology, utilitarianism, virtue, rights and relationships (Boss, 2004). These frameworks have students intentionally examine and confront the daily practices by which they live and work. Skaine (1999) states “many people do not want to confront [ethical] questions because they realize they may not like what they find” (p. 146). However, she continues, “if a person has given thought to ethics in advance of difficult moments or, as the military say, seconds, she or he will be more prepared to deal with hard decisions” (p. 146).

For ‘*traditionalist*’ students who have come from an educational system that punishes creativity and rewards compliance, starting with a theoretical explanation of each concept provides higher level cognitive discussion. From there, students approach the ‘*reflective*’ student metaphor in higher-order thinking (application, reflection, synthesis, evaluation) by learning beyond the text. This incorporates theory and praxis as several opportunities, both structured and creative, are presented to supplement the lecture. Students are provided an opportunity to examine the effects of their own consumerist habits through the lens of each framework, and from a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches. Heifietz and Linesky (2000) suggest

habits, values, and attitudes, even dysfunctional ones, are part of one's identity. They state, "To change the way people see and do things is to challenge how they define themselves" (p. 27).

Integrated with the lecture are small interactive student discussion groups. Each group is asked to research specific case studies with guidelines provided to insure group participation and involvement of the '*minimalist*.' Specifically, within their assigned group each student provides a researched case study point-counterpoint argument from each theoretical foundation as well as a personal reflection of their position and their vision for concrete action. In class, each member then presents the case and/or provides a group produced media project in a roundtable forum followed by open class discussion during which they support their position. Through the process of connecting lecture with technology with reflection, the '*traditionalist*' is more likely to apply the learning experience of technology to dialogue and to her social environment.

Using this assignment, the most technically saturated Dionysian '*enthusiasm*,' characterized by consumerism, superficiality, and knowledge fragmentation, can investigate the meanings they give to their consumerist choices from multiple points of view not always available or current in textbooks. Rather than being told of the consequences of their actions, these students become their own author by sharing their experiences and employing various digital platforms to interrogate from different perspectives the implications of their consumerist lifestyle. Using the ethical frameworks and consumerist and environmental theme, each student engages in autobiographical reflection, collaborative and cooperative interdisciplinary internet case studies, global blogs, videoconferencing, wikis, and virtual chats. Classroom videos and films are supplemented with other web sources highlighting our insatiable desire for things that results in exploitation of labor, environmental theft of resources and human violence. This is followed by class discussions, personal journal writings and reflections on each student's own ethical framework and consumerist behaviors.

By exploring real-world issues, students can consider the moral and ethical choices and consequences of their pastiche personality and lifestyle of consuming dreams and magic so artfully produced by advertisers. For example, by investigating the likely oppressive conditions under which the multiple hands that produced *their* jeans, and their complicity in buying into the ad's promises, they can pause, reflect and peel back the layers of their 'want now/need now' instant gratification addiction by becoming newly-aware of consequences. This shifts these '*enthusiast*' students from, "'me' to 'we' consciousness" (Keating, 2009, p. 215). It provides a way to mediate ethical conduct between the competing claims of my right to happiness and others' equal and human rights.

For ROTC student-cadets the ethical case studies can provide a way to examine their own military goals and motivations and how these connect with what is moral and just in a global pluralistic world.

Palfrey and Gasser (2008) state, "No major aspect of modern life is untouched by the way many of us now use information technologies" (pp. 2-3). Nonetheless, I suggest that while technology can aid in teaching by providing learners more flexible and interactive learning environments independent from time and space, we must realize they are simply tools and provide only one facet of learning. I suggest the art of teaching is face-to-face interactions among student/instructor/community. It is indispensable for the social aspect and the co-creation of knowledge through critical thinking, engaged citizen and leadership. To this end, I discuss Service Learning and Servant Leadership and classroom dialogue.

### **Service Learning**

I argue that throughout much of their educational experience many students have not engaged in what Freire calls "restless questioning" (1998) that challenges the all-too-dominant narrative of social injustice from aspects of class, gender, race, power and privilege. Giroux

(2001) states, “students should be provided possibilities for linking knowledge and social responsibility to the imperatives of a substantive democracy” (p. xxiv). A curriculum that includes community engaged scholarship through critical service learning (Mitchell, 2008) provides students an opportunity to interrogate societal systems and structures of justice and injustice by connecting academic study, community outreach and student reflection. Jacoby (1996) offers a definition of service learning as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed by the teacher to promote student learning and development” (p. 5). Dewey (1938) believed the interaction between and among community members allows us “to learn to be human” (pp. 331-332). There is also evidence that service learning experiences contribute positively to problem-solving, critical thinking and academic achievement (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Astin & Sax, 1998). Service Learning provides a lens through which students represented in each metaphor can model the ‘*reflective*’ student.

Service learning gives student an opportunity to examine societal issues of justice from two perspectives. First it provides students an opportunity to examine how they filter their worldview through their own multiple and competing social identities against those who may inhabit economic, cultural, or ethnic worlds quite different for theirs. This provides an opportunity to explore the connection of their socially constructed identity narrative with those of others. This human connection can lead to building a moral ethic of care, as discussed in the work of Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (2003) or what Allahyari (2000) calls ‘carepartnering’ (p. 7). Second, it provides students an opportunity to examine and experience systems of authority, power, and privilege. In experiencing and reflecting on these issues, service-learning calls students to, as the Dalai Lama (1999) states, “think, think, think” (p. 91). This means, in

reflecting and analyzing the impact of their observations, feelings, and learning experience, they turn off the buzz of technology and go to a place within themselves of quietness and stillness.

Although the military requires civic engagement for ROTC student-cadets, it is through targeted volunteerism rather than service learning. This volunteer community service is unlike service learning which is curriculum based with substantial reflection and learning outcomes. Therefore, for student-cadets a curriculum including service learning is an effective strategy for integrating volunteering with building community relationships and deeper civic engagement. For example, rather than just participating in a class outing for children in low income school districts, service learning engages the student in an extended class research project exploring inequities in schools systems from multiple points of view. Opportunities are presented to attend and speak out at a school board meeting and in other political arenas, work with community partners in developing and sustaining a tutoring program, and organizing cultural programs at neighborhood community centers where residents live.

While service learning provides an opportunity for students to develop community and enhance self awareness, and to recognize the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, servant leadership provides a view of leadership as a relationship building rather than authoritarian driven strategy.

### **Servant Leadership**

In the area of leadership, young women today are writing a new chapter. For many women after completing university their professional goal is to crack the glass ceiling or, for student-cadets, dent the armored ceiling in their leadership role. In discussing their future leadership role, student-cadets acknowledge the need for technical military skills, rituals and training. However, more commonly heard in the narratives of '*reflectives*' is a leadership vision

of transforming a hierarchy of power and conquest into a hierarchy of values focused on care, justice and compassion. As one cadet stated:

The world seems so complicated, we can't seem to bring peace through wars, we have to figure another way and I think it's through good works. This is where I want—no wait, where I'll be when I'm in the Navy. I want to lead people who also want to do good and I know from my summer ROTC field training more and more guys and girls are talking and thinking like me. You don't hear about it in the media because it's not what makes news but it's changing.

In supporting and advocating the vision of all students as future leaders, I suggest as educators we have an opportunity to introduce them to a framework of leadership built on the ethical values of care, connection and justice (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 2003) rather than the bureaucratic, patriarchal rule-based leadership embedded in many western institutions today. Noddings (2003) suggests a caring community brings out the best in each other and is imperative in enabling individuals, particularly women and minorities, to find their voice. Care also connects to social intelligence (Goleman, 2006). Goleman states, "being intelligent [is] not just *about* our relationships but also *in* them" (p. 11). It is the integration of heart and mind, enabling one to be sensitive and understand the interdependence of self and others as leaders and followers. It is about inviting other voices and perspectives to be heard in an honest, open, authentic environment. The concepts of fostering an ethic of care and social intelligence are embodied in servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 2002). Greenleaf's work calls to leaders to build people and community, to dream great dreams and instill those in others.

By introducing and incorporating this value based leadership paradigm within a curriculum, students are provided an opportunity to intentionally examine their current leadership style and values against the servant leadership tenets of empathy, service, moral integrity, compassion and trust. These leadership tenets are especially important for ROTC student-cadets

who, when commissioned as officers, may be leading under uncomfortable uncertainties, stresses and pressures.

The words of General Shinseki (2003), former army chief of staff speak to the core values of servant leadership: “You must love those you lead before you can be an effective leader. You can certainly command without that sense of commitment, but you cannot lead without it” (as cited in Prince & Tumlin, 2004, p. 1001). The language of love so seemingly alien to military discourse is to build a leadership style not on absolute, assigned power of command and control, but rather on a moral calling to serve and make a difference.

In providing a model for this servant leadership calling, Barbuto and Wheeler (2002, 2006) provides five essential leader dimensions. These include altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. Altruistic calling is the desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others; emotional healing is a commitment to and skill in fostering spiritual recovery from hardship or trauma; wisdom is a combination of awareness of surroundings and anticipation of consequences; persuasive mapping involves influencing others rather than forcing others with sound reasoning and mental models; and organizational stewardship involves extending leadership beyond the organization by taking responsibility for the well-being of the community and ensuring that strategies and decisions undertaken reflect the commitment to give back to a larger community.

For many, becoming a servant leader may require a spiritual awakening. This awakening according to the Dalai Lama (1999), is “a reorientation away from our habitual preoccupation with self. It is a call to turn toward the wider community of beings with whom we are connected, and for conduct which recognizes others’ interest alongside our own” (p. 24). The Dalai Lama (1999) suggest unless one’s moral compass is directed toward compassion, love, and justice we have no hope of authentic leadership.

Though the military is unlikely to fully adopt servant leadership as its mantra and eliminate its hierarchal structure, if young women bring a servant leadership vision into their future positions, interject the servant and service model into their leadership focusing on care, love and heroic judgment, at its best, it may bring to bear the statement of Sam Davis, “when the infrastructure shifts, everything rumbles” (as cited in Covey, 2005, p. 12).

While servant leadership is focused on maintaining a servant attitude in relationships (Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004), it is also about change and vision. Greenleaf (2002) claims the voices of the past should not be ignored “one does not awaken each morning with the compulsion to reinvent the wheel. But if one is *servant*, either leader or follower, one is always searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel for these times is in the making” (p. 23). For all student and educators, the time is now to lead in a way that fosters connection in developing human potential rather than separation and alienation so evident in postmodern society.

### **The Dialogic Classroom**

In contrast to a monologic authoritarian Truth-carrying pedagogy that closes dialogue, a dialogic pedagogy is relational and organic, continually becoming and forming. May (2004) suggests, “Narrative identity is the view of self in relation to others and the social” (p. 170). As Casey suggests, individuals ascribe significance to experiences based on their cultural frameworks of meaning, evident through interpreted experiences (Casey, 1995). In conducting my research, I attend to students’ voices and how they give meaning to the multiple and competing interpretations of the social and cultural experiences that influence their social identity. Applying this interpretative paradigm to the classroom experience provides educators an opportunity to open space for democratic community (Shapiro, 2006). Shapiro describes this community as, “both a place that asserts the fundamentally equal value of all lives, and at the

same time, a place that compassionately addresses us as beings with differences that must not be treated as sources of humiliation or unfair disadvantage” (p. 77).

In encouraging students toward a ‘*reflective*’ model, a learning classroom community requires us to be active listeners, to maintain authoritative voice rather than authoritarian disposition, and to encourage dialog, reflection, and open exploration in a mutually respectful environment. In essence, our role is to negotiate and shift from teacher to learner and from authoritarian to collaborator. This suggests we apply our authoritative knowledge, experience and educational background to help students question, reflect and connect their stories to other voices and theories. We invite them to struggle. If they don’t question, we have a responsibility to ask “what does this mean?” The goal is not to find a definitive answer but to invite more questions.

In summary, the diversity of the classroom strategies previously discussed provide ‘*minimalist*,’ ‘*traditionalist*’ and ‘*enthusiast*’ the opportunity and encouragement to unfold ideas by questioning and reflecting on aspects of their lives that they may not have previously thought to question. We may encourage students to interpret their experiences and through this to discover how they construct and deconstruct their social identity in a way that empowers them to become thought-filled and effective citizens in their personal and professional lives. It is speaking unspoken facts and feelings, unburying the data of our lives. This opens possibilities not only for self discovery but, as Frey (1993) suggests, reveals patterns from one person to the experiences of several and thus creates new webs of meaning and observations.

For student-cadets, understanding the power of opening themselves up and compassionately listen to the voices of the others in a nonjudgmental way allows them to breach the borders of ethnocentricity, and moral certitude and become awake to the circumstances of others through eyes focused on what could be rather than what is. My hope is that in realizing their focus and goals on diplomacy and humanitarian efforts, these women leaders of the future

can bring a measure of peace and trust with conversation rather than violence and fear with guns. As Noddings (1984) states, it is, “an invitation to dialog not a challenge to enter battle” (p. 5). It may be a baby step with stumbling and hesitancy, but it is a step forward.

### **Final Thoughts**

Social identity is continuously emerging, re-formed, and redirected as one moves through the sea of every-changing experiences. Damhorst (2005) suggests social identity formation is a confluence created through an individual’s social interactions and experiences. As educators, we are challenged to recognize the diversity of social identity constructions and processes of identity formation in education. For instance, education can be understood merely as providing content to fulfill a student’s occupational goals or, in full contrast, as a continuous, organic process by which students experience meaning in their lives, have a sense of making a difference, and feel understood and appreciated.

After conducting this research I appreciate even more that the challenge in education is to guide each other through the maze of learning within an increasingly complex technological and global society and to be able to understand that there are many routes the students and I can take to reach our destinations—destinations known and still to be discovered. Each person that walks into the classroom brings her perspectives of religion, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class and physical abilities. To be effective, the curriculum and I as an instructor must acknowledge these perspectives, give voice to our differences and appreciate what we share and what we do not share. Bok (2006) suggests this means to develop the ability to communicate, to think critically, utilize moral reasoning, and to focus on citizenship and public service preparation. In doing so and in addressing issues of identity and dignity, not only do we improve education but we also promote justice and compassion in society (Slattery, 2006). As stated by Henderson & Hawthorne (2000), “teaching is the means through which we celebrate the possibilities of growth” (p. 42).

The way in which students negotiate and make sense of their contemporary social, cultural and professional identity is a complex process. It is mediated by all kinds of hopes, aspirations, desires, identities and needs. The challenge I face every day is to facilitate connecting the dots by incorporating the strategies discussed above not for the sake of schooling to ‘make it’ but truly educating them to become thought-filled and response-able ‘*reflective*’ citizens of the world.

There are huge challenges ahead as we enter the second decade of the twenty-first century that call for new ways of thinking and being. My hope is that for young women who choose ROTC and future military leadership positions, and for all who lead and follow, is to nurture a spirit of *reflective* mindfulness in honoring and being present to the self and others. Because each of us draws our sense of self identity from others, we are thus thoroughly interconnected. In opening ourselves to others, we open ourselves to possibilities of being there for each other with compassion and sensitivity. As the Dalai Lama (1999) states,

When we enhance our sensitivity toward others’ through deliberately opening ourselves up to it, it is believed that we can gradually extend out compassion to the point where the individual feels so moved by even the subtlest suffering of others that they come to have an overwhelming sense of responsibility toward those others. (p. 124)

Building these relationships within and outside the classroom is our best hope for continued survival.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **ROTC OVERVIEW**

There are three routes to earning a university education degree while training to become a commissioned military officer in the United States military. One is to attend one of the U. S. Service Military Academies; namely, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, U.S. Coast Guard Academy. A second way is to attend one of the six senior military institutions (Title X, 2007). These include Texas A&M University, Norwich University, The Virginia Military Institute, The Citadel, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and North Georgia College and State University (Title X, Neiberg, 2000). Another more common option and the focus of my research is to participate in a military training program through an ROTC program.

Unlike those attending U.S. service academies, ROTC is not an active duty experience; it is a federally funded military program designed to assess the leadership potential of and to commission those who meet the requirements as officers in the U.S. military. ROTC students enroll at the university in the same manner as other students and take a full course program which is supplemented by military training and education.

#### **ROTC Background**

The United States Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) as we know it today dates from the National Defense Act (NDA) of 1916 which was built on the Land Grant Act (Morrill Act) of 1862. The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Program was established in 1926. The Morrill Act established military training at land-grant colleges and universities; the signing of the NDA brought ROTC training under a single, federally-controlled

entity authorizing the President to establish ROTC units not only at land-grant colleges but at all accredited four-year institutions.

In 1964 the ROTC Vitalization Act improved the program by adding scholarships, establishing a two-year ROTC program and expanding junior ROTC (JROTC) opportunities. The inclusion of women in ROTC programs as early as 1956 in the Air Force and by other service branches in later years is another milestone in the ROTC program. Today, women constitute 20 percent of the Cadets enrolled in Army ROTC programs. (<https://www.goarmy.com/rotc/legacy-and-value.html>)

The purpose of ROTC was and continues to be a formal Reserve Officer Training Corps to help supply the U.S. military with educated officers in each of the military service components (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines) and to supplement the output of the military academies. The importance of the ROTC program to national security is highlighted by the fact that about 75% of all officers commissioned each year currently come from ROTC sources. According to Neiberg (1996), “In the 1950s the program was primarily composed of white, male students from private Eastern schools and Land-Grant universities nationwide. By 1980 and continuing today, ROTC students are primarily Southern and Midwestern and include a large numbers of women and minorities” (p. 1). Currently there are ROTC programs available in every college and university in North Carolina either on the campus of host school or at a partnership school within the same city or within a specific geographic area.

The national resurgence of interest in ROTC today is also clearly evident by the involvement of over 70,000 college students in ROTC courses and by the more than 300 college institutions and 600 cross-enrolled schools which offer the ROTC program on their campuses. ([www.jscc.edu/uploads/ROTC/Documents/ROTC%20HISTORY.pdf](http://www.jscc.edu/uploads/ROTC/Documents/ROTC%20HISTORY.pdf)).

### **ROTC Training**

Two options are available for students who participate in ROTC both of which may provide financial assistance to student participants. A student completing high school can apply for a full ROTC scholarship at available universities and participate in a four year ROTC program. A two year program option exists for students who do not enter ROTC during their freshman year. Both programs are highly selective and competitive with GPA and physical fitness requirements. Students who sign a contract to serve after graduating are given a monthly stipend, and may be provided tuition assistance including room, board and supplemental fees (Wilson, 2009).

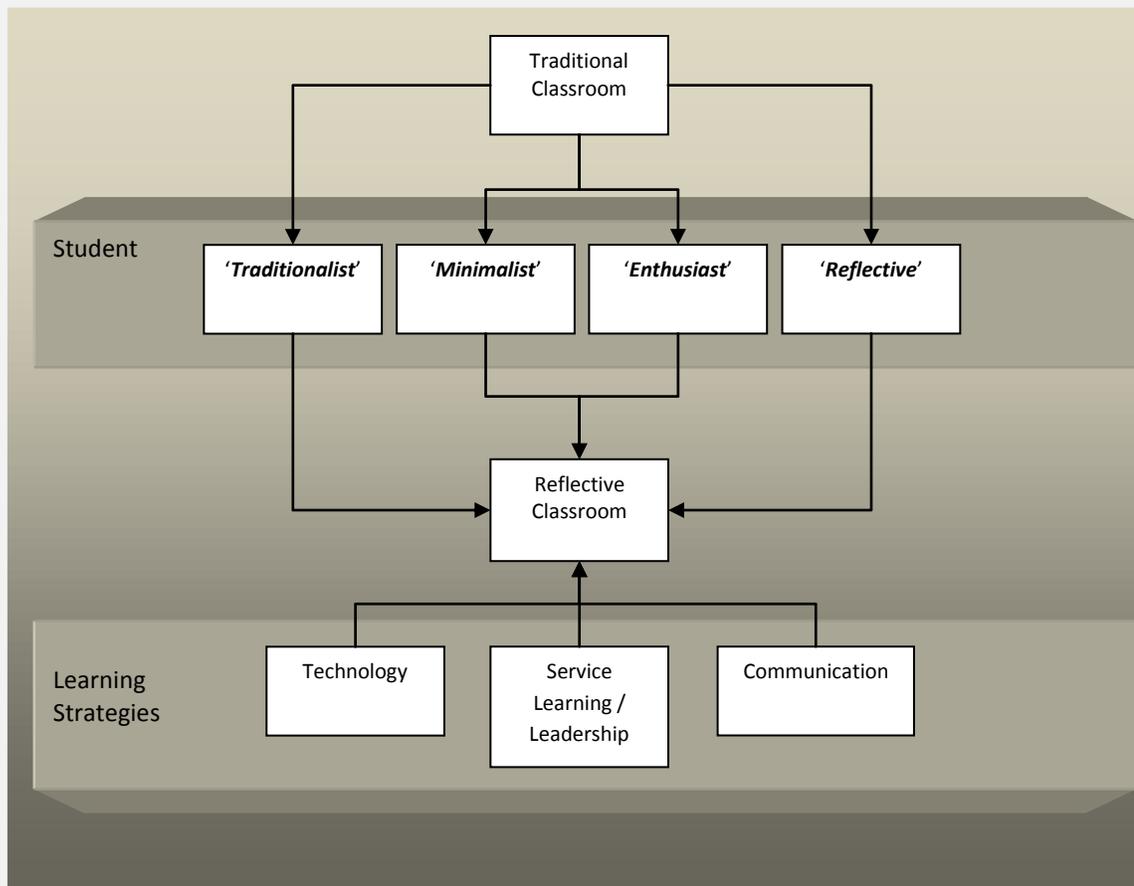
While each branch of the military maintains different program structures and experiences, they all provide education offered through academic courses, military training, and co-curricular internships and special camps (Center for Army Leadership [CAL], 2001; Chief Naval Education and Training [CNET], 2002; Lester, 2001). Each student (referred to as Cadets if they're Army or Air Force and Midshipmen if they're Navy or Marines) is given training in military science and leadership courses, physical training and tactical field training exercises to develop character, leadership, and other attributes essential to their development as an officer in the armed services. (*United States Army Cadet Command*, 2002).

Throughout the year students participate in a continuous process of training, assessment, and feedback, with the goal of instilling and enhancing desirable behavior. The program utilizes a leadership development program, which consists of an integrated system of structured leadership opportunities to maximize potential and predict student success as a military leader. As an example, before they graduate, cadets and midshipmen are tested by Active Duty staff away from the university. For the Army, this takes the form of the Leadership Development Assessment Course, a month-long exercise between cadets' junior and senior years. For the Navy and

Marines, it is Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID), taken between the freshman and sophomore years, and summer cruises are available to juniors and seniors as well. For the Air Force, it's the four or five week Field Training program, taken between the sophomore and junior years. During their final two years, students also hold leadership positions within the military units and take responsibility for many of the program activities.

To stay in the program, students are required to keep their grade point averages above a certain point and maintain physical fitness requirements. In their personal lives, they are held to a higher standard than the average college student. Upon graduation, the student receives his or her commission as an entry officer rank in the military. Obligation for newly commissioned officers from the army ROTC program is either four years of Active Duty service or eight years in the National Guard or Reserves; for the Navy it is five years active duty and for the marines four years.

## APPENDIX B

FOUR METAPHORIC REPRESENTATIONS OF STUDENTS AND STUDENT-CADETS: LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR A *REFLECTIVE CLASSROOM*

**APPENDIX C****UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO  
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT**

Project Title: Narratives of women students currently enrolled in a university and in a US military branch ROTC program

Project Director: Patricia Fairfield Artman

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES:**

This project is a qualitative preliminary study in the form of narrative interviews for a PhD dissertation in Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. I will be collecting narratives from currently enrolled university women students also enrolled in a military branch of ROTC program.

The goal of my research is to investigate through narrative stories a student's perception of self and leadership. By posing the initial interview question, "tell me the story of your life," I will investigate the particularities of how the dual role of university student and ROTC military training plays into the lives of the respondents and how they negotiate this dual identity.

A secondary goal of my research is to investigate if community among interviewed ROTC women is constituted and, if so, how it has been defined and sustained in an education environment and in a military training environment which may or may not reside in the same location

**RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:**

The interview process will have no risk to you, the participant. Participation in the narrative is completely voluntary; you may decline or withdraw at any time during or after the session or before completion of the final study without penalty or prejudice.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS:**

The narrative will provide you an opportunity to articulate how you perceive yourself in the dual role as an enrolled university student and as a current or future leader in a military environment

and how the experience of being a student and a candidate for leadership in a military environment shapes your life.

The results of this pilot study will further contribute to society by helping to understand how women students perceive themselves in the dual role as an enrolled university student and as a current or future leader in a military environment and how the experience of being a student and a candidate for leadership in a military environment shapes their lives. Further, an additional goal of the interviews will be to understand if community among interviewed ROTC women is constituted, and, if so, how it has been defined and sustained in an education environment and in a military training environment which may or may not reside in the same location.

Collection of Data, Storage and Disposal:

The narrative procedure which will be audiotaped is estimated to take approximately one hour. As a participant, based on your preference, you may be named in the study, use a pseudonym or remain anonymous. The tapes and all transcriptions of the tapes will remain in a locked file drawer in my home and the disposition of the tapes and transcriptions of the tapes at the conclusion of the study will be based on the preference of the participant. If you wish to have them destroyed, the magnetic tapes will be erased and smashed and paperwork will be cut or shredded. If you request they be returned to you, it will be done. If you have received approval and wish to have them donated to another facility for archiving, you will identify the site and the tapes will be either returned to you or be sent by me to the address provided via Federal Express. In compliance with Federal regulations, this Consent to Act as a Human Participant will be maintained on file for a period of three (3) years past the conclusion of the study.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself will be answered by Patricia Fairfield-Artman

Email: [pfartman@uncg.edu](mailto:pfartman@uncg.edu) or my faculty sponsor, Dr. Kathleen Casey, email: [kacasey@uncg.edu](mailto:kacasey@uncg.edu), office telephone 336.224.3461.

Any new information that develops during the project will be provided to you if the information might affect your willingness to continue participation in the project.

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by Patricia Fairfield-Artman. I will be happy to answer any additional questions you may have prior to or during the taping.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Transcription Name Identification:

My name as identified on tape may be used in the transcription: \_\_\_\_\_

Name identified on tape: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to remain anonymous in the transcription: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish the pseudonym name identified on the tape to be used in the transcription: \_\_\_\_\_

Disposition of Tape on Completion of Research

I wish all tape(s) to be destroyed: \_\_\_\_\_

All tape(s) may be donated to: Name, address: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX D****STUDENT-CADET EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

Let me introduce myself. I am Pat Fairfield-Artman, a doctoral candidate in the UNCG Cultural Foundations PhD program. I am currently working on my dissertation and research passion. This passion is looking at females in the military and in military leadership roles.

My interest began several years ago when my son was enrolled in a ROTC program as an undergraduate at NC State. Since then, he has dedicated his professional life to a military career and is currently a marine Colonel. Needless to say I am not only proud of his accomplishments but also of all who make the commitment to serve either short or long term. My current interest and commitment is to provide a female voice for those university students who are also enrolled in ROTC programs. For this reason I am most interested in meeting with you and hearing about your experience. More specifically, I am interested in how you see yourself as a student and future leader in one of the most critical leadership roles in our country.

I have met and recorded the story of some of your peers in ROTC programs and would love to have your voice included in my research. I ask no more than one hour of your time and will meet with you at a time and location of your choice (including a weekend if more convenient).

I am interested in hearing if you are willing to participate in this important research, I look forward to hearing from you either by responding to this email or calling me at 336.297.9904 or 336.460.1462. Sylvia, I know you are especially busy this time of the semester and really do appreciate your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you and please do feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Pat Fairfield-Artman  
Doctoral Candidate, Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations  
UNCG

**APPENDIX E****CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF  
THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES****I**

I am an American, fighting in the forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.

**II**

I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command, I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.

**III**

If I am captured I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.

**IV**

If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information or take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.

**V**

When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service number and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

## VI

I will never forget that I am an American, fighting for freedom, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.