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# PARENT-CHILD MYTH IN UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

By

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ABSTRACT

PARENT-CHILD MYTH IN UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

By

Daniel Ray Kittle

This study seeks to understand the dynamic relationships between students and permanent residents in university communities (relationships often characterized by frustration, anger and conflict). The purpose of this research is to more deeply understand the way community representatives (i.e., local government officials, community leaders, and long-term residents of university communities) have come to know what it means to be a college student.

Using a depth psychological framework (specifically the work of Carl Jung), this dissertation hopes to contribute to a better understanding of community representatives' beliefs and assumptions that provide the rationale and context for their opinions of, and actions towards, college students (Pietikaninen, 1999). A semi-structured interview protocol with symbolic and phenomenological approaches provides meaningful qualitative data to begin to uncover the life experiences and individual sense-making processes that relate to community representatives' understanding of college students.

The data reveals three themes (family, their own college experience, and their own socio-economic context) that serve to mediate how the participants have come to know college students. It is also argued that in addition to this conscious process of meaning construction, unconscious elements of the psyche are also influencing how participants understand college students. An interpretation is offered that argues that these unconscious elements are evoking a structured set of beliefs and assumptions that

come together to form a mythology of the college student. Finally, it is claimed that this evoked myth can be placed within the larger parent-child myth (Jung, 1954; Singer, 1994). This study points to a largely unconscious process of mythology in which the participant (and community) is parent, while the student is child. I speculate that their style of "parenting" (masculine versus feminine) is in conflict as a reflection of our society's struggle with the emerging feminine voice versus the established patriarchal structure (Bondurant, Donat, & White, 2001; Fine and Carney, 2001; Maraecek, 2001; Woollett and Marshall, 2001; Singer, 1994).

Dedicated to my parents, Gary and Jean Kittle and

In loving memory of my brother, Nick Floch

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A heartfelt thank you to my family. You gave me the freedom to attempt the impossible. I always knew that failure was okay, and on the roughest days, that acceptance was powerful. I share with you the satisfaction of completing this dream.

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# PREFACE

## Understanding Ourselves Through the Relationships and Stories of Our Lives

*The crisp, cool, restless air touches my nose. The dancing leaves float to their swan song, while my love's bright red mittens swing to the beat. We walk where the path leads us. Not far from home, we feel confident in the direction the trail takes us. "I think that's the way home," my companion says, pointing as a reminder that home is within the senses. Although the towering trees obscure our view of home, we trust the path. We trust those who walked before us.*

*Like the sun, we grow tired. We feel crowded by those who were here yesterday. They have knocked down the barriers of our journey, flattening the grass, and carving around trees; they have cleared our path, making it easier to see what lies ahead. Pushing aside the branches and the prickly vines we push deeper into the forest. Our senses heighten, and our hearts beat just a little faster as we become those to lead.*

I never met the person who carved the path my girlfriend and I followed that day. We noticed that parts of the trail were wide and well worn with tractor tracks, while other lefts and rights were more narrow and only crossed by the feet of strangers. Who was the first to walk this path? Even though I had never met that person, we were intricately woven in some larger tale. Somehow, we were part of the same story.

In much the same way that I never met the person who made my walk possible that day, I have never met the people who influenced those who inspire me. Mentors create paths for us. Sometimes we find them marching before us clearing the most dangerous branches and vines. But slowly, sometimes without us even noticing, we

begin to walk our own path. Growing more confident in our direction, we find ourselves pushing aside the challenges and moving away the heaviest branches. Then, we glance back and see others following us, walking cautiously, along the path we have just laid down. We are all part of one tale.

Wander, there is no path, we lay down a path by walking.

Antonio Machado

Author, teacher, and activist Parker Palmer (1998) writes about educators as caregivers, those who work to understand themselves and who are called to a vocation that helps others embrace the world through their authentic selves. Throughout his teachings there is a clear understanding of the interconnectedness that shapes who we are, what we teach, and how we teach it. It is this bond, between educator and student, which is of interest to me. Just as we often don't understand the relationship we have with those who came before us, mentors and trailblazers alike, we also miss the links to our past that shape who we are. This piece of writing attempts to help us uncover those links, and in doing so, giving us a better understanding of how we have come to see the world as children, parents, friends, and teachers. As Palmer (2000) would suggest, we can only understand others better by growing closer to ourselves. One way to understand and appreciate who we have become is to reflect on the forces that have shaped us (Jones, 1960). Another way is to slow down, glance over our shoulder at the paths behind us, and come to understand the beautiful web of people, places, and events that everyday shape both us and the paths that lie ahead (Bateson, 1983).

This is, because that is.

Thich Nat Hanh, from the teachings of Buddha (1999)

Buddhist monk Thich Nat Hanh (1999) has spent his adult life meditating, writing and living in community with others trying to live life deeply. He writes, "When you are capable of touching yourself deeply, and touching others deeply, you touch the other dimension, the dimension of the ultimate reality." As a reader, you are probably skeptical, as I was, thinking it is easier for one to fully live each moment of the day where traffic jams, unanswered e-mails, and voicemail messages don't exist. But as we come to know Hanh, we find that he is a man who has endured a life of wars, persecution, and more than thirty years of exile. While living the life of a seeker of the way, he has authored more than one hundred books of poetry, fiction and philosophy. He was nominated by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. for the Nobel Peace Price in recognition of the extraordinary gifts he has offered the world. If we can understand some of his teachings, we may come closer to understanding who we have become.

Buddhism seeks to grasp the relationship between one phenomena and another. They call this the world of dharmalakshana, and the practice of looking deeply into one thing to find that is made up of all others. Allow Hanh (1999, p. 4) to explain this fundamental relationship through a story.

> Let us visualize the ocean with a multitude of waves. Imagine that we are a wave on the ocean, and surrounding us are many, many waves. If the wave looks deeply within herself, she will realize that her being there depends on the presence of all the other waves. Her coming up, her going down, and her being big or

> small depend entirely on how the other waves are. Looking into yourself, you touch the whole, you touch everything – you are conditioned by what is around you.

Whether it's an ocean filled with chopping waves, or a well-worn path strewn with leaves, the interconnectedness of the patterns of our life are intricate and complicated (Bennet, 1961). Thich Nat Hanh's story allows us to see that the flow of your life is continually spilling over to others'; we come to know ourselves through an ever-changing landscape of people, places, things and events. The pattern of our life, who we are in some sense, is like an artist's canvas that is never quite complete. We are always adding a little color here, or a touch of paint there. What is difficult, yet of great value, is to step back and view our own evolving canvas, bringing to life those who first splashed life onto it. To understand the colorful strokes of parents, teachers, mentors and fellow students that have brought the shape, depth and character to how we engage with the world.

Of course, like any metaphor, ours can only take us so far. Hanh's waves of dependency do not reach into the past to tell the story of the winds that stirred the seas, and our canvas inaccurately illustrates a life that is framed by some sense of boundary. Although these stories have limitations, they open the door to who we are just a bit, just enough to peek in and find stories that smear shades of color across our canvas and provide a compass along our paths.

The thesis of this writing rests on the belief that one way to understand our place in the world, is to better know ourselves. I believe that if we can come closer to understanding the complex patterns (the brush strokes of our canvas so to speak) that have coalesced over time and space to shape our being we can open our eyes a little

wider to the world around us (Bateson, 1983; Jung, 1963/1989; Pietikaninen, 1999; see also Schwartz-Salant, 1995). Through our stories, and others, we can come to understand the past that has laid our paths and the stirring ocean that we are a part of each day.

> There is nothing to be overcome in making him your friend; he and you join like raindrops on a window.
>
> C.S. Lewis

Relationships are unavoidable. We are constantly in relation with others, whether it's in a passing nod of the head, a rhythm from the radio, or a warm kiss from a companion. Our community is easily noticed in the conversations we have, emails we exchange, and friendly hellos among neighbors. Often, what we miss are the intimate relationships we still carry with us of those in the past, those we have never met, and those with whom we will never speak. The books we read, the pounding messages of our parents, the passing glance of a stranger, all have the potential to touch us deeply in a way that is not obvious or distinguishable to us, or others. It seems reasonable to assume that we are complex creatures, with many layers that peel back like an onion to expose themselves at different times with different people, all the while subject to those curiously silent influences (Von Franz, 1997).

Following that logic, I ask you to open your mind and heart to my work. The layered nature of this study requires more than just the eye of a researcher; it requires the kind of personal reflection that is often pushed to the side as "soft" or, at worst, irrelevant. In addition to questioning how I go about my study, including whom I've selected to work with, how I engage them, and what I chose to highlight, this research requires that you think just as deeply about what *you* bring to this work. Because the

further you read, the more this becomes *our* work. What I write is intricately woven with who you are. We are engaged in a dialogue, albeit over extended time and space, that may lead you in certain directions. As you identify with particular cases in this text, ask why. When you find yourself tuning into particular stories, question why that might be. The intended tone, content and style of my writing are offered as guides, but it will be you that assigns meaning to what I write. You will find pieces of yourself in these stories. They will call you to think more deeply about the ways in which you interact with college students.

As members of a university town we interact almost daily with students. We wait with them in line for coffee, we nudge them out of parking spaces, and we talk with them about what's in the news. Often, we find ourselves in front of them discussing concepts, theories and formulas. Others of us meet with students to talk about their future, their goals, and their resume. Some of us sit with them to talk about academic probation, parking tickets, or problems with their landlord. On rare occasions a few of us will join them for lunch and talk about their passions and what they love. All the while, these students are taking something away from our conversations. They are finding what to talk about, how to posture, and what needs to be left unsaid.

Most college educators would agree that a student's time at a university is filled with small decisions that are molding who they are. They are vulnerable to peer influences, they look for models of behavior, and at the best institutions they examine their opinions, beliefs and values (Evans, et. al., 1998). Sometimes these conversations are marked by epiphanies, "ah-ha!" moments that lead to career decisions, spiritual awakenings and engagement proposals. Those days are indelible, but rare. More often

we search for the small educative interactions that are less assuming. They happen in meetings and classes that are otherwise banal and routine. But, the best of us search for educative epiphanies, those moments of emotion *and* substance. Those times where our life's work, be that teaching, administration, or city services, beautifully intersects with a student's personal development. In all these interactions we expect students to be truthful, engaged, and forthright. We look for them to scratch a bit deeper into who they are to be present and whole in our conversations. When we advise them, we try to create environments that are safe for them to bring all of their identity to the table.

Over time I have been able to witness a number of these interactions between educators and students. I vividly remember many as a student, and they surround me as an administrator and graduate student. All the while, I've noticed something. Something is missing. *We* are not present in these conversations.

I don't think we are being fair to our students. As we invite them to the table for personal conversations, we have not invited ourselves. We sometimes present a façade of ourselves that is fragmented, misrepresentative, and, at worst, manipulative. Surrounding us is a complex nature of interconnectedness that revolves around fear, anxiety, and failure that handicaps our ability to bring all of ourselves to these conversations. In turn, we often lead students to believe that we don't struggle with our work, that our family life is always perfect, and that there are "right" answers to all the questions out there. By doing this, we may make them feel inferior, incomplete, and lost.

*As I walk in from school I notice my mother's feet. I quickly open and close the backdoor (we certainly don't want to let the nicely cooled air to seep out). I catch a*

*glimpse of mom's swollen feet, propped up and dangling over the edge of the couch. My mom is a petite woman, maybe 5'2" on a day with high heels, so her swollen feet seem to take up an inordinately large part of her body. Her ankles are bright red, irritated by the heat and sweat that has punished them for almost 30 years. She has spent the day standing in Packard Electric, manufacturing electrical harnesses for General Motor's vehicles. After having only sat down for about 20 minutes, she will slowly make her way into the kitchen to stand on another stiff, unforgiving floor.*

*Closer to evening, my father arrives home. I hear his truck as he backs into the garage. He pats me on the head as he asks about my day at school. He rinses out his lunch containers, drops something in the trash, kisses my mother hello and goes to change his clothes. Little time passes before he's out the door again, going to the shed to fire up the tractor and start the yard work. As always, not much is said about the ten-hour day he just spent on his feet at the production line at the General Motors manufacturing plant. Surprisingly energetic, he spends the remaining hours of daylight outside lifting, pushing, cutting, and otherwise maintaining the space on this earth that decades of aching legs has provided for our family.*

Each morning we get up, slip the straps over our shoulders and carry it with us all day. From the coffee shop, to the classroom, we have personal baggage that can weigh heavy on us. The previous story illustrates simple moments in a family that all told would combine to spend over 60 years working in assembly plants. Only now have their beaten bodies shown wear in the form of carpel tunnel syndrome, throbbing backs, and aching legs. Although their bodies remind them of their time served, their spirits have

seen a rebirth. Within one week after my mother retired she was a different person. Energized. Funny. Strong. Sarcastic. It wasn't that you hadn't seen those qualities while she worked, but it was as if they were truly unearthed after she retired. It was as if each day of retirement was enough to shed a year's worth of layers of soot and sweat; she was relieved and refreshed. My father has taken his energy, too long controlled by someone else, and thrown it into hobbies, projects, and traveling. I wonder how often they think about the days when they left home before even the sun had begun it's day? Do they know how often I think about those days served?

This type of story provides the lens through which I see the world. Experiences like these provide a foundation of norms and values that frame the expectations I have of myself and of the students with whom I work (Whitmont, 1969). What are the stories, myths, motifs, and images that bring the color and character to your interactions with college students? How have you come to know students through your experiences? Are past experiences, maybe as a student, parent or educator shaping how you see yourself in connection with the students with whom you work? Is there a backpack of emotional baggage that you carry everyday that is going unexamined?

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# CHAPTER ONE: THE TENSION BETWEEN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND THEIR STUDENT NEIGHBORS

This study invites you into the conversations I had with seven people. Each in a different way, these individuals educate students. They are neighbors, administrators, city leaders, and police officers. They have agreed to open their lives to us, and bring forth the chapters and stories that provide the context and content of their lives. Through my conversations with them we find the often-subtle interconnectedness that Thich Nat Hanh (1999) writes about. I ask questions and have a dialogue that uncovers these peoples' life experiences that mediate their relationship with students. Sometimes, we discover connections that are not obvious to those I interview (Bennet, 1961). These emotionally buried links help us understand how their stories have created the assumptions and expectations that fashion the policies they draft, create the punishments they dole out, and generally understand the way they interact with students. Do they use their college experiences as models for what others should be like? Maybe they have children in college, and look to treat the students they work with as one of their own family members. Or, do we find that their assumptions and characterizations of college students come from what they see in the media? More than not, it is a complicated intervening of several factors; nonetheless, it is my thesis that the past and present will fold together. In the end, we will find our students and ourselves in these stories.

This study uses a variety of methods, particularly symbolic approaches (the way people explain and understand themselves and their relationship with the world through emotional symbolism), to gain a deeper knowledge of these individual's sense-making processes as they relate to understanding students (Von Franz, 1997). The theoretical

framework that shapes the process of understanding is Jungian in approach in that the individual's unconscious processes are key in understanding the origin of their beliefs, and thereby the everyday behavior of their lives (Pietikaninen, 1999; Whitmont, 1969). Furthermore, the study is based on my belief that the relationships between students and community representatives are characterized by tension and discontent (Von Franz, 1997). This lack of positive interaction results in anger and frustration that has an impact personally and professionally. I'm seeking an emotional understanding of this problem, whereas in the past, meaning has been attributed to only empirical dynamics. In that sense, past research has not been disciplined and intentional in their use of theoretical frameworks. Worse yet, their approach has not worked. The unrest in university communities is growing. Students and their community neighbors are not getting along (Burton, 2003; Sand, 2003). I hope this study provides a new lens to an old problem.

## University Neighborhood Unrest: Early Conflict

The university can be a place of engagement, exploration, and learning around those issues and ideas that frame personal choices and institutional contexts. A student's time at the university can be an important time to cultivate a commitment to citizenship – an engaged, thoughtful perspective of their place in the community. An outgrowth of this desire is the way universities have embraced the practice of service learning. Service learning has become one active tool in seeding a sense of responsibility that hopes to extend the web of learning at the university beyond the walls of the campus (Bringle, R.C., Games R., & Malloy A. (Eds.) 1999). Therefore, the laboratory of learning is not bound by the traditional classroom walls, but reaches into towns and cities across the

world. The practice of service learning has been one place of interaction between universities and their surrounding communities, but the Town and Gown relationship has a colorful history that has produced the likes of service learning, student unrest, legal battles, outreach activities, and community partnerships.

> In 1775, when Columbia University was still King's College of Wall Street, a mob of local townspeople marched on the campus seeking the neck of the college president, Miles Cooper, a known Tory sympathizer. While undergraduate Alexander Hamilton kept the angry crowd at bay, Cooper in his nightshirt scurried out the back window and down to the Hudson River. The next day he boarded ship for England, never to return. Columbia and its presidents have had problems with the city ever since.
>
> George Nash (1973) p. 95

> In that year (1200), after certain students had been killed in a town and gown altercation, King Phillip Augustus issued a formal privilege which punished his prevot and recognized the exemption of the students and their servants from lay jurisdiction, thus creating that special position of students before the courts which has not wholly disappeared from the world's practice, though generally from its law.
>
> Alexandar DeConde (Ed.). (1971). p. 27

> When a new University was founded, it was sometimes taken for granted that these conflicts (between students and townspeople) must arise, and that the townsmen were certain to be in the wrong. Thus, when Duke Rudolf IV founded the University of Vienna in 1365, he provided beforehand for such contingencies by ordaining that an attack on a student leading to the loss of a limb or other member of the body was to be punished by removal of the same member from the body of the assailant, and that for a lesser injury the offender's hand was to be wounded.
>
> Alexandar DeConde (Ed.). (1971). p. 37

## Communities and Universities: Equal Partners?

University and community conflict is not an invention of the 21st Century. Universities and their local communities have battled over land, taxation, student unrest, and housing since the establishment of universities (DeConde, 1971). What have framed

these interactions, thereby leading to particular approaches and outcomes, have been the working assumptions of university and city leadership.

University communities have continually worked to define their political and legal relationships with university staff and students. Today we talk about students being subject to ordinances tailored to alter their behaviors (e.g., noise ordinances and zoning policies), while past generations bestowed social and judicial privileges upon students. Today we talk about universities collaborating with communities to meet the service needs of the people, while university leaders in past generations viewed their communities as only serving the residential and service needs of its students and staff (Clavell, 2001; Hull, 2000; Rodin, 2001; Teather, 1982). Each of these policy decisions have been based on a set of assumptions. First, how does the university view its role in society? At times, when universities have seen their role as being to directly respond to the needs of society, they have tended to engage their local communities more. For one, during these times, the universities have been afforded the federal dollars to pay for these interactions, and two, university priorities have reflected a sense of obligation to reach beyond the campus boundaries (Bringle, R.C., Games R., & Malloy A., 1999). The second assumption is based on the universities' understanding of the community's role. Are communities equal partners to be engaged in a spirit of cooperation? Or, do local communities require university experts to define community needs (primarily with university stakeholders) and implement a set of treatments (often based on generalizable theory, not local data)?

In general, past relationships were framed around university outreach (the university defining the needs of the community and providing the expertise to meet those

needs), but today we talk about collaboration and cooperation as tools for creating a relationship that is based on recognizing the strengths of both parties (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999). Universities and communities that have healthy relations generally acknowledge the assets and resources each brings to the table, as well as their vested interest in meeting the challenges together. In the past it was believed that the university "must lead, not follow, the community that they serve", while today it is generally understood that the university must partner with the community to capitalize on the assets of collaboration – thereby becoming the change they want to see in society (Teather, 1982, p. 213).

## Landmark Events

To provide some historical context for these assumptions, it is important to mention several significant events. In the United States, the establishment of land-grant colleges (authorized by the U.S. Congress in 1862) redefined the relationship between universities and communities (Teather, 1982). The land-grant universities were to assist the rapid expansion of industrial and agricultural development through teaching, research, and outreach. This was the beginning of a movement to locate universities in small towns and rural areas in an effort to more directly link the university with the daily lives of more people (Nichols, 1990; Teather, 1982). In some sense, the community and university were an arranged marriage by the federal government – tasked to create a lifelong partnership of mutual benefit for its family (the people of the country). The call of the federal government, backed by federal money, spurred universities to more directly engage local and regional communities (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1988; Teather, 1982).

As the age of agriculture gave way to the industrial revolution, colleges and universities were again called upon to respond to the needs of society. For example, as World War II came to an end, the G.I. Bill afforded thousands of service men and women with the opportunity to attend college (Adams, 2000). This infusion of people and federal money was accompanied by an expectation that the university should support the needs of the society. Although the societal pressure was to react to the issues of the day (e.g., educating former GIs, and later, responding to the breakthrough of Sputnik), the universities and local communities often did not work together to meet the needs of an expanding college student body. Local communities were not prepared for the exploding student populations, and were unable to provide the infrastructure, public transportation, and property zoning plans to meet the growing needs (Nicholas, 1990). Conflict between universities and communities arose around policies aimed at meeting the needs of this growing population. At the same time as these regional planning and economic issues challenged the relationship between universities and communities, universities were being called upon to assist in reversing the urban decline that characterized many large, urban US cities (Mitchell, 1974). Therefore, universities were often deeply engaged with communities, just not their *local* community (Nash, 1973).

During the late 1960s and the early 1970s public confidence in universities suffered (Teather, 1982). People felt that universities were not meeting the needs of society, while university faculty withdrew even further from local issues over concerns about academic freedom and rewards (Teather, 1982). As the public watched student unrest on campus, and faculty retreated deeper into the university, community relations were strained. In addition to these pressures, this was also a time when universities

experienced large geographic expansion, often bleeding well into the boundaries of local communities (Teather, 1982). This era became defined by these conflicts and missed opportunities.

In the 1980s the federal government again had a major impact on university and community relations. As federal deficits ballooned, university budgets shrank. Universities withdrew off-campus allocations, and higher education was once again a "thing apart" from society (Organisaton For Economic Co-Operation and Development, 1982, p. 10). Although universities were by and large disengaged locally, technology had begun to redefine the concept of community. Personal computing technology allowed faculty research to more easily reach beyond the region of their home university. These technological advancements influenced universities by orientating them toward international, not local goals (Teather, 1982). The lack of institutional support for academic work of the local nature further pushed local opportunities for collaboration aside (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 1988).

Even when university administration and faculty engaged local communities, their practices were based on university-centered approaches. The assumption was that the university was well equipped with a variety of expert tools, and the task was simply to identify the appropriate tool (be it a theory, or generalizable practice) and apply it to the local context (Nash, 1973). As university leadership applied these models, and they often did not work, it became evident that community collaboration was required in order to better define and understand the challenges. As opposed to past assumptions, community representatives had their own level of expertise that was necessary to meet the issues at hand. The dynamics of the relations also unearthed institutional racism and prejudice that

had resulted in unfair and unethical university practices. For example, cleaning and restoring surrounding communities (a laudable goal in itself) often meant removing minority populations. At times, university projects were centered on improving their image at the expense of displacing disadvantaged populations (Nash, 1973).

The 1990s signaled a series of changes that moved university and community relations in a positive direction. University departments, such as social work, education and urban studies led the way (Elliot, J., Francis H., Humphreys R., & Istance D. (Eds.), 1996; Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999). They provided models of interaction with local communities that were based on reciprocity and respect. In turn, local communities, now often armed with professionalized city staff (e.g., career trained city managers, planners, and developers), were better prepared to join in local partnerships. The dynamics of the relations were also moved forward by the insurgence of new voices. Minority populations, while often ignored and unwelcome by universities in the past, were growing on many campuses across the country (Bringle, Games, & Malloy, 1999, p. 9). Their presence provided a more representative perspective that aided in servicing the needs of local communities.

The assumptions that framed university and community relations were shifting. Unilateral university action was declining, powerful linkages were developing, and collaborative constituencies were leading the way. The capacity for cooperation was ready to meet the complexity of current issues. The complexity of issues came in large numbers. That is, more and more students were moving off campus, the price of local housing was shooting up, and local service needs were on the raise (Nichols, 1990). As the 1990s spilled into the 21st century, the difficulty of these issues became clear.

## Looking to the Future

> Even what might appear to be a relatively minor dispute between noisy students in a rented house and next-door neighbors can quickly escalate to involve local police, university officials, parents, and lawyers depending on how the issue is defined and the investment of stakeholders in the outcome.
>
> Warfield (1995) p. 64

Local university communities have become grounds for lifestyle conflicts. I have seen the effects in my work. Students disproportionately hold the late shift, working late, studying into the wee hours, and sometimes noisily partying into the morning. All the while, permanent residents of the community get up early to head into work, and put the kids to bed shortly after the sun goes down. The conflicts are organized within city blocks where the lifestyle choices of students and permanent residents are bumping into one another. The conflicts call for a different kind of approach.

Certainly, the same collaborative, constituent-based approaches are required in order to provide the institutional support and structure necessary to live peacefully. Local police must work with campus police. University leadership must prepare students for the responsibilities of living off campus, while local communities must work to provide adequate housing and services for students. While in the past universities and communities engaged around similar issues (land use, resource sharing, and taxation), the focus of issues has shifted to put the needs of students and local community members at the center (Nichols, 1990). In addition, the practice of tackling these issues now recognizes that communication, planning, and mutual decision-making must be central to the process. Communities can no longer "be viewed as pockets of needs, laboratories for experimentation, or passive recipients of expertise" (Bringle, Games, Malloy, 1999, p. 9).

Instead, the academy has to develop meaningful partnerships with the community. Practitioners of community development have recognized that people, not faceless institutions, hold the potential for success.

Research has also shown that "the intensity of a conflict is heightened or lowered by how parties feel core values are being affected" (Holton, 1995, p. 66). Those core values are shaped by our unique epistemologies in how we have to come to know ourselves, how we interact with others, and where we find meaning in the world (Boulding, 1962). The potential for emotive responses dramatically increases when issues touch upon these core values (Holton, 1995). Therefore, community members' personal experiences with issues such as noise, parking congestion, and poor housing, may manifest themselves in strong feelings of tension, frustration, and hostility (Nichols, 1990).

This research project recognizes the importance of macro approaches to these issues. I believe community ordinances, special task forces, and public forums are necessary to facilitate asset-based approaches to meeting challenges of living together. But, the thesis of this research rests on the macro approach not being sufficient to meet the needs of our university communities.

In summary, the series of events over the past several centuries demonstrates the volatile nature of this work. We kicked things off with violence in the 13$^{th}$ century, later, we ushered in the 1960s with student unrest, and in recent years we have brought in the 21$^{st}$ century with student riots (Burton, 2003; Sand, 2003). A theme throughout all of these conflicts is the strong emotionality of the events and relationships. People seem to have blended their emotions into their times in ways that have manifested themselves into

shared patterns. How can we understand these actions? How can we understand the actions and beliefs of people in the community? This study explores the tension between students and community representatives by applying Jung's principles of depth psychology. We can elicit the life biographies of people in dynamic ways that unearth the symbolic and unconscious expressions of ourselves. It is the intuition and unconscious, energized by the scientific and rigorous, that this study blends in order to better understand ourselves and thereby others (Whitmont, 1969).

# CHAPTER TWO: JUNG'S CONCEPTION OF THE HUMAN PSYCHE

## Theoretical Framework

> It is important to let the unconscious have its say.
> Singer (1994) p. 26

The human psyche is shy and illusive. You pick up your flashlight to uncover its mysteries, yet it slowly slips away into the shadows (Chodorow, 1997). Carl Jung (1958) has found that sense-making processes, particularly depth psychology, can be an effective tool in drawing the psyche out from the shadows. Depth psychology can be an approach (it is more than a method because it incorporates several methodological approaches, including ethnography, and postmodern interviewing) used to understand the connections people have with the past that are not always based in rational, empirical practices (Bateson, 1983; Bennet, 1961; Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980; Rohrbach, 1967; Whitmont, 1969).

Depth psychology, of which I'm blending several perspectives, is based on a number of assumptions (Whitmont, 1969). First, it has parallels to the doctor and patient relationship in that the practice requires a relationship of trust, openness, and honesty between interviewer and subject (Jung, 1963). It calls for honesty from the subject to engage their entire person in the process with a willingness to work at making connections that feel intuitive, but often remain unspoken (Bennet, 1961). In order to form a successful partnership, the interviewer must also be reflective and disciplined in their approach. In this case, I had to be conscious and willing to guard against projection, and serve as a guide and diligent witness. Horowitz (1991) illustrates this mutual engagement as a process of awareness, insight, and new decisions. For example, before

therapy and/or some level of introspection, people often have psychological reactions to situations that they don't understand. They may have a sense of uneasiness, but can't seem to pinpoint a potential cause. The process of psychotherapy is tasked to uncover unconscious feelings and emotions, and thereby making conscious insights into previously untapped parts of the psyche (Chodorow, 1997; Hall, 1986). Horowitz's process of awareness (uncovering and recognizing) and insight (realizing and understanding) frame the process through which I engage the participants of this study. Understanding and applying this process, rooted in psychotherapy, has the potential to unearth and unleash an unconscious wealth of human potential that can be poetic and beautiful - that can facilitate true and meaningful relationships with our students and more importantly, with ourselves (Hall, 1986; Horowitz, 1998).

What does it mean to understand ourselves? Jung (1958) calls this self-knowledge. How do we discover that knowledge? As individuals surrounded by complexity, how do we engage in a process of introspection to tap the poetic beauty of life? I know when I am able to tap that energy of life. I feel it when I coach. I sense it when I teach. I come to know it when I lead. What common threads of my unconscious life coalesce to bring about that happiness? Through therapy, reflection, and deep human interactions, I have to come to identify some of those threads. I have unearthed some of those buried links to my past that connect me so powerfully to those experiences I enjoy.

The goal of this research is to use the theoretical framework of depth psychology to reveal some of the links that color community representatives' understanding of college students. Why do many of them talk about absorbing such energy from living near college students? Why do they sometimes feel disappointed and angry when the

behaviors of college students do not meet their expectations? How do they come to decide what those expectations are?

In approaching these questions, the study echoes the work of people like Parker Palmer (2000) who believes that we must invest in the process of knowing ourselves in order to more deeply connect with those with whom we work. My goal was to guide this engagement, by providing the methodological tools to bring Jung's depth psychology methodology alive for my participants. Like psychotherapy, the power of this research is its ability to explain what is only sensed (anger, disappointment or happiness) (Hall, 1986). One who is skilled in these practices is able to develop a heightened level of awareness of cues that bring about states of feeling and emotion. They are able to develop an ability to recognize repetitive maladaptive cycles in order to alter those inner identity experiences to maximize desired states and open up doors to new possibilities and behaviors (Horowitz, 1998, p. 32-35). Jung (1968) framed this type of personal growth as the process of humans moving toward individuation, that is, realizing their innate individual potential (Hall, 1986; Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980; Schwartz-Salant, 1995). More simply stated, they will learn to understand themselves (Singer, 1994).

## The Links that Run Through My Life

*Although I've since moved from the state in which I grew up, life's irony has followed close behind. Each morning, on my way to my white-collar job at the university, I pass by a General Motors assembly plant. As I drive by, I feel a little guilty...like I should be punching my time card there, rather than continuing my commute to an office*

*job. I also know that even though I might be going in "early," those men and women I pass have been laboring for at least an hour while I was still sleeping. Often, they'll still be there when I drive by on my way home. Although I don't need it, my daily journey provides me with a reminder of who I am.*

*Somehow when I'm at meetings with professors or administrators, I'm an imposter. I have not developed skills to contribute to the proceedings; instead I've honed my ability to look "smart" in the face of people much brighter and well versed than me. It's an elaborate inferiority complex that has landed me only a small step away from a PhD...each day I'm working to be good enough...working to feel deserving of not having to punch a time clock at the assembly plant.*

*My parents didn't want me to work in a plant all my life, and from most of what I knew about it, neither did I. I initially embraced going to college to ensure a different lifestyle from my parents. I wanted to avoid the thankless work, the long hours, the physical labor that beats on the body. Only later have I realized that, although I am thankful for not having to labor on the line for a living, I often still feel more comfortable surrounded by the men and women who do spend their days building, standing, stretching, and lifting.*

It took me several years to recognize and reconcile the emotional buried links that exist between my childhood and my current career path. Through recognizing the inferiority I felt, to understanding its relationship to my life experiences, to finally accepting it as part of who I am, the process has been Jungian in nature (Whitmont, 1969). I have come to know who I am in relation to a specific complex. Although only

one piece of my psyche, it helps me understand who I am in relation to what my parents did for a living. Of course, it does not answer all the questions of my mental being, and it does not fully explain the numerous connections, confusions, frustrations, and joys that are the hallmarks of living. The process of gaining knowledge about oneself through recognizing complexes can be a powerful and liberating process (Jacobi, 1959; Whitmont, 1969). The depth psychological process is convincing in its ability to associate feelings and behaviors with specific conscious and unconscious complexes, thereby identifying and providing opportunities for understanding and reconciliation (Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980).

Similar to my self-study of unearthing an inferiority complex specifically related to growing up in an assembly line laboring family, this study has aimed at understanding how community representatives come to know college students through making relevant connections to personal and social behaviors (Jacobi, 1959). As stated, the goal of this study is to reveal each participants' unique life biography as it relates to their understanding of college students (Bateson, 1983). That is, the study attempts to understand the buried emotional links that influence how participants have come to know what it means to be a college student. The prompts, questions and reflections I offered were an attempt to discover and delineate the ideas and emotions that color community representatives' interactions with students.

## Myth

One way of structuring and understanding these emotionally buried links is through the concept of the myth. Joseph Campbell (1988), author of *The Power of the*

*Myth*, finds myth to be a meaningful concept that holds significance and direction while transcending mundane existence (Tatge, 1988). For Campbell (1988), a myth is explanatory in the way of poetry or metaphor; it captures the imagination of individuals and societies. Myths reflect "truth" as the teller knows it. Myth reflects and shapes a reality for those who are part of the story. In that way, myth is like the narrative of our lives. The narrative does not reflect what actually happened in our lives, but more importantly, reflects how we remember it to be. It attaches meaning to our experiences. The narrative, like the myth, holds its power in its ability to provide structure and order to how we understand the world and ourselves. In that sense, myths are adapted to current needs and realities. As you will see, that is what I see happening in this study. The participants are evoking a student myth. Where the conscious and unconscious bleed together, and where current reality bumps into suppressed memories, the participants have given shape to a student myth.

## What is a Myth?

In preliterate cultures the myth was born as a story that had deep explanatory or symbolic resonance that preserved and cherished the wisdom of elders (Groothuis, 1989). It was carried with creative prose, a touch of creative fiction, and on the tongue of a grand storyteller. Its significance was not measured by its correspondence with truth, but by its symbolic value. Could the audience hear the lesson in the words? Could they grab hold of the wisdom? If so, the myth had power.

The myth is conjured with a mix of experience and imagination. Like the concept of myth in depth psychology, it combines empirical evidence, and narrative, while having

subjective pull and social power that is not solely based in empiricism (Tatge, 1988). The myth reflects both personal content and the influence of timeless, archetypal energies.

## How Depth Psychology Informed the Study

Although researchers have never "discovered" or delineated a student complex or myth, Jung certainly left room for one. Jung (1959) spent several essays describing the mythological elements that groups of people share (e.g., myth of the mother, hero myth, or the God myth). Through the nature of this type of work he was able to demonstrate both the broader power and application of his theory. His studies demonstrated, as have the subsequent work of others, that the principles of complexes and myths are not embedded in specific issues (e.g., inferiority or power), but have applications in understanding various feelings and ideas that are structured by powerful self-concepts that define a particular piece of the psyche (Dyer, 1991; Jacobi, 1959; Stein, 1995; Whitmont, 1969). More simply stated, Jung (1954) believed that our strongest feelings about people, events, and situations are not by happenstance, but are centered in experiences that come together in a recognizable way – in ways he called complexes and myths.

Jung (1954) also believed that each of us has a human potential that is waiting to be discovered. His depth psychological tools are useful in treating the dysfunctional and misunderstood pieces of our psyche that obscure our process of individuation (revealing that human potential and thereby finding happiness in the world) (Schwartz-Salant, 1995). The assumption is that our sense of happiness in the world has to come from

within. While most would agree that our perspective of the world has an undeniable effect on our level of happiness (e.g., the most depressed of us will find fault in most everything), we also appreciate the influence and push of the world around us. While Jungian research looks to the individual for explanation and change, fields such as sociology and anthropology lend credence to environmental pressures.

While social group theories (see Wyer, 1997; Roese & Olson, 1997) do not discard depth psychology as irrelevant, they might argue that communal rights and standards are more important in framing human beliefs and actions. For example, role theory recognizes individual perspectives and the need for self-evaluation, but believes that people come to understand themselves through social bases of judgment (Horowitz, 1988). Humans become who they are not through looking within, but by others placing them in a cultural role. Take Karl Marx (1969), for example. He believed that social class was the defining human characteristic that ordered and gave meaning to who we are. Following that logic, to understand human beings and their interactions, it is most important to know their socioeconomic, cultural, or even religious background. Although, as the argument goes, we exist in an increasingly interconnected world, social and cultural prejudices continue to define who we are as individuals.

From yet another perspective, philosophers have approached the role of self in the context of individual's attempts to clarify moral issues involving rights and duties within a community (Adler, 1994). Broadly speaking, foundational philosophy was "rooted in the individualism of the Utilitarians but sought to show how the individual might find his freedom, self-realization and truest self through morally significant social

responsibilities" (Holland, 1977, p. 123). Similar to depth psychology, the goal is to more deeply understand human nature and its implications for living in the world.

James Hillman (1996), author of *The Soul's Code*, speaks to the ethos of the work in depth psychology in recognizing that the mind needs to be nourished "not only by means of logic and mathematics, but also by addressing its ethical character and imaginative powers" (p. 157). He believes that despite the efforts of philosophers, scientists, sociologists, and the like, human feelings cannot be understood using traditional binary logic. That is, his work struggles with "long-established and comforting habits of thinking in opposites that say: If behavior is not fully genetic inheritance, then what's left over can be accounted for only by environmental influences, and vice versa" (p. 129). He finds his truth in the murky middle, saying, "something else intervenes in human life that cannot be held within the confines of nature or nurture" (p. 129). The crux of academic, religious, and scientific debate comes in identifying and trying to describe what that "something" is. What best describes our being in the world? What offers the most fruitful path to happiness? What personal behaviors best support the values and morals that are the foundation of our society? How do we shape these standards in a way that creates a livable community for all? As we explore ourselves, we begin to understand the web that connects us to others.

# CHAPTER THREE: ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Thinking bring forth only thought,
But feeling is with living fraught.
Goethe (from Reik, 1973, p. 7)

Quality researchers are specific about their intentions, explicit and rigorous regarding their research methodology, and have a clear vision for the structure and implementation of their research. Equally challenging, good storytellers are creative in their approach, accessible to their audience, interesting to read, and passionate about what they write. This study hopes to work at the intersection of those two artistic approaches. That technique is not just appropriate for the theoretical framework (depth psychology), it is necessary. The powers of these theories are their ability to embrace logic and emotion while shedding light on the rational and counterintuitive (Rohrbach, 1976). These theories rely on methodologies that are emotionally laden and intellectually rigorous to reveal pieces of the psyche to the expert and novice alike (Whitmont, 1969).

Coming to understand a sliver of the psyche is similar to making a new friend. The process takes time and patience. Trust and rapport must be established (Jung, 1963). The psyche can also be a bit shy, and require a different context, set of questions, or general approach to feel comfortable to engage. And, like a good friendship, the story is never complete.

This study invites you into the conversations I had with seven people. Each in a different way, these individuals educate students. They are neighbors, administrators, city leaders, and police officers. They have agreed to open their lives to us and bring forth the chapters and stories that provide the context and content of their lives. Through my conversations with them, we find the subtle interconnectedness that is buried in the

psyche. I ask questions and have a dialogue that uncovers these peoples' life experiences that mediate their relationships with college students. These emotionally buried links help us understand how their stories have created the assumptions and expectations that draft the policies they create, the punishments they dole out, and more generally understand the way they interact with students (Bateson, 1983).

## Research Problem and Questions: Using Symbolic Motifs to Understand the Conflict

At the center of this research study is the marriage between theoretical and methodological assumptions. The theoretical grounding, including the problem statement, thesis, and literature all lead to a particular set of methodological decisions and assumptions, specifically a set of research questions and planned interactions.

What is the problem that is the node from which the questions, strategies and overall method arise? Given the problem statement, what particular methods are best suited to support the work at hand? With a clear problem statement, a specific set of research strategies can be developed that guide the nature of the interactions between the participant and the researcher (Becker 1997). Although this process, including the research questions and strategies, remained somewhat fluid to allow refinement and enhancement as the research evolved.

In this research study I am interested in the relationship between college students and members of the East Lansing community. As described in Chapter One (see, University Neighborhood Unrest: The Problem and How We Got Here, pg. 14) the study of university and community relations has been narrowly defined, university centered, and largely unsuccessful in creating positive university community environments.

Overall, the barriers to establishing appropriate personal intimacy and community cohesion have been stymied (Hall, 1986). This research study hopes to offer a new perspective, enlightened by emotional and symbolic motifs that can offer guideposts to strengthening university communities.

## Empirical and Emotional Foundations

The beliefs and values of individuals are a complicated melding and outpouring of experience and observation that impact an active and always-evolving sense-making process (Pietikaninen, 1999). This process, informed by an empirical framework, results in behaviors that are in some way rationally connected to a person's prior experience (Nye, 1992; Whitmont, 1969). While I agree that these powerful forces, based in a positivist perspective of the world, help drive human behavior, I disagree that they are the only sources of influence shaping an individual's sense-making process. The theoretical framework of this research is centered around a sense-making process that incorporates a psychodynamic perspective on culture that understands the beliefs and behaviors of individuals to be informed by more than empirical observations (Hall, 1986; Pietikaninen, 1999; see also Young-Eisendrath & Dawson, 1997). Beyond disciplined experimentation and prediction, powerful unconscious and symbolic forces play an important role in shaping our understanding of the world (in this case, what it means to be a college student) (Stein, 1995; Whitmont, 1969). Therefore, depth psychology methodologies rest on the assertion that "although unconscious phenomena successfully defy causal-scientific explanations, they are none the less amenable to a process of comprehension" (Pietikaninen, 1999, p. 350).

This research seeks to explore if and how inner conflicts filter and distort community representatives' understanding of what it means to be a college student. This assumption lends itself to a base of literature (depth psychology and the sense-making process) that claims the filters and distortions of humans are couched in structured and emotionally charged elements of the psyche that can be identified and discussed using the tools of depth psychology (specifically, symbolism, and Carl Jung's work in areas like active imagination, unconscious interpretation, and individuation) (Chodorow, 1997; see also Jung, 1963/1989; Schwartz-Salant, 1995; Young-Eisendrath & Dawson, 1997). Therefore, depth psychology, with an emphasis on the emotionality of symbolic forms, provides this study with structure, a broad foundation of literature, and a primary lens through which the stated problem can be viewed (Hall, 1986; Whitmont, 1969).

Given the depth psychological theoretical framework, how do community representatives come to know what it means to be a college student? Are there ways in which these individuals' inner conflicts filter their understanding of college students? How does the complexity of their life experiences mediate their understanding and relations with college students? And, are there collective unconscious complexes that reveal themselves across participants?

## Why this Approach?

Although there are a variety of ways one could research the dynamic of these relationships, including reviewing quantitative data (e.g., charting community behavior indicators, such as noise, vandalism, complaints, etc.), researching public policy (e.g., ordinances and laws), or conducting a comparative study (comparing points of data

between on and off campus students, or comparing residential versus nonresidential campuses), these methods do not speak to the needs of this study. The interactions between students and community representatives are not easily bound by the nature of those studies. They interact in very personal ways, whether across lawns, in meetings, or during times of conflict. Their relationships (whether positive or negative) are couched in issues that do not lend themselves well to quantitative or comparative data collection. This study researches how emotional and symbolic motifs have informed community representatives' understanding of college students. There are gaps in the research of how community representatives come to know and interact with students. We research the community policies that impact students (McDonald, 2002; Spitzberg & Thorndike, 1992; Strange, 2001). We have invested ourselves in the study and practice of community standards that offers structure to their experiences living in a residence hall (Magolda & King, 2004), but we haven't come to know the members of the community that work with college students. There is a need for a methodological perspective that invites psychoanalysis as a tool for a depth psychological characterization of the unhealthy relationship between students and community representatives. This research values the sense-making process and works to more deeply understand the people involved, and thereby understand the actions they take. The study is interested in how the individual becomes intimately bound within a social context, and how that broader culture takes on meaning through the personal lens that each participant has created (Adler, 1969).

## Context and Participant Selection

Over the past four years I have worked with a neighborhood Community Development Corporation (CDC) called the Community Relations Coalition (CRC). Following student riots in 1999, members of the East Lansing and Michigan State University (MSU) community formed a MSU Alcohol Action Team to clarify the issues and make a series of recommendations. Recommendation "Five" from the MSU Alcohol Action Team called for the creation of a community relations coalition "to improve relations between the MSU and East Lansing communities, and improve communication between the MSU administration, students, and the City of East Lansing" (CRC Vision Statement, 2003). The Community Relations Coalition was formed to provide a constituent-based community action group that could build positive relations among all members of the East Lansing community. Specifically, the CRC "was formed to create a more integrated residential community in East Lansing in which students and permanent residents could grow and benefit" (CRC Vision Statement, 2003).

Since the creation of the Community Relations Coalition at Michigan State University, I helped supervise the Neighborhood Resource Coordinator program. This project, a key initiative of the CRC, employs MSU student interns who live in East Lansing neighborhoods with a high concentration of both students and permanent residents. These neighborhoods, within walking distance of the university and the city's downtown, have traditionally experienced personal tensions that were the focus of the project's efforts. Students and permanent residents in these neighborhoods were often seen to be at odds about a variety of issues, including noise, trash, and property maintenance. The conflict around these issues reinforced a culture that was filled with tension and a lack of personal relationships. The student interns were paired with

volunteer permanent residents and charged with building community in these areas -- block-by-block, house-by-house, and individual-by-individual.

I mention this project because my interest in this research study has grown out of being a part of and observing interactions around community development issues. In addition to serving as coordinator of the student internship program, I also served as president of the CRC for one term (2002-2003). These two experiences have personally connected me with the East Lansing community in a way that would not have been possible otherwise. Through these experiences, I have worked closely with the "community representatives" I speak of in this research study. I have witnessed their perspectives of students, and have seen their behavior result in tangible impacts on the feelings and actions of students. I have also witnessed the lack of positive, open relationships between student and community representatives that I believe would help thaw the cold, conflict-laden relations that exist.

Given my background, I bring knowledge and personal contacts that aid this study. As I worked to understand how these community representatives interpret the behavior of college students, I was in a position to ask questions that dug a little deeper. I was also able to select individuals who had potential to make for an informative and interesting research study. On the other hand, having worked with the selected participants professionally, it is important I am clear that this research is entirely separate and private from my work in the community -- specific individual identifiers will be kept private, and every effort has been made to accurately represent the feelings of participants. Given these reassurances, the participants offered a diverse and interesting

perspective on how community representatives understand what it means to be a college student.

## Why Community Representatives?

It may interest some readers to know a little more about why I have selected community representatives, rather than professors, student affairs practitioners, or even members of the state and federal government who are involved with postsecondary education. I believe that community representatives offer a unique perspective in a few key ways. First, they are all neighbors to students, interacting with them in a personal and on-going way. Secondly, although each of their roles and jobs involve working with students, their primary goal is not the education and development of students. For example, one of the participants is a senior level administrator in the City of East Lansing. Although many of the policy decisions she helps make directly affect students, she has a broader constituency to which she must appeal. Also, these community representatives have not been trained in the areas of student affairs or higher education administration. They have not become facile with the values and language that characterize these fields of study. In that sense, they do not necessarily feel an obligation (be it genuine or driven by political correctness) to be a student advocate. Their opinions are informed by other experiences that I believe are more relevant to this study. Those include powerful unconscious and symbolic forces that have been unearthed using a depth psychology approach (Adler, 1968; Whitmont, 1969).

Finally, these participants were selected based on my personal and professional relationships with them. That history of interaction, forged through over four years of

working with them in the local community, facilitated a level of trust between the participants and myself that would have otherwise been very difficult to establish. It also resulted in a willingness on their part to commit the time and emotional energy necessary to richly discuss their personal lives. Given the emotional nature of this study, that foundation of trust resulted in intense and emotional conversations.

## Background for Methods of Data Collection

As stated, a semi-structured interview protocol with symbolic and phenomenological approaches provided meaningful qualitative data to uncover the life experiences and individual sense-making processes that relate to community representatives' understanding of college students (Hall, 1986; Whitmont, 1969). I utilized CD-ROM and mini disc recording technology to collect data and present my research (in partnership with transcripts and extensive notes). I believe these forms of technology support my methodological goals to most accurately capture the lives and stories of the participants.

As the facilitator it is my role to provide the prompts, be it questions or reflections that bring participants closer to understanding themselves. Specifically, the research questions of this study are directed at understanding the ways in which community representatives make sense of themselves, the world around them, and thereby understanding how their psyche mediates their relationship with college students. Research in depth psychology, particularly the work of Carl Jung (theoretical framework), demonstrates that the human psyche, and therefore an individual's mental construct of a college student, is informed by multiple sources of data. Broadly, those

sources become present in the psyche through personal (primarily defined by life history, and what Jung (1968) called the shadow) and archetypal (understood by the collective emotionality of the complex) dimensions (Jacobi, 1959; Pietikaninen, 1999).

A depth psychology methodological approach requires a variety of questioning techniques in order to tap into the elements of the personal and collective unconscious. The personal unconscious consists of lost memories, repressed ideas, and subliminal perceptions, while the collective unconscious is comprised of those memories, repressed ideas and subliminal perceptions shared by family, social group, race, etc. (Adler, 1968). Jung's work, and others who have followed, have demonstrated that these unconscious elements are centered upon emotionally charged ideas, myths, memories, and intuitions. These sparks within the human psyche are wrapped together in complex and irrational ways that create a personal lens through which we embrace the world (Whitmont, 1969).

Our human experience bleeds together. Seemingly unrelated psychic experiences have profound effects in subtle ways. Our childhood experiences blend with adult perceptions, while the drive of our personality has roots in adolescence (Adler, 1956, 1958). Jung's (1963) work even shows that an individual's psyche is not bound by time or place. Archetypes can reach through time and space via the collective unconscious to manifest itself in personality defining behavior (Adler, 1968; Jung, 1963/1989; Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980; Whitmont, 1969).

In the end, this study, following the lead of Jung (1954), is looking for the symbolic expressions of these unearthed, unconscious psychic elements. The work is made evident, that is, it is moved beyond intuition, by the organizing principles that Jung (1954) provided, and others (Adler, 1968; Whitmont, 1969) have substantiated.

Research has shown that there are themes and structures that allow us to access and define elements of our personal and collective psyche (Adler, 1968; Hall, 1986; Stein, 1995). The structures include complexes (personal and collective) and archetypes that manifest themselves through the symbolic expression of emotionality (Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980). These organizing psychic structures have been characterized by several classic themes (mother, authority, and inferiority complexes, personality factors, personification, and the shadow, just to name a few) (Adler, 1969; Hall, 1986). Given that, how can I use these literary and experimental theories to unearth the unique unconscious psychic elements of the participants in the study? How can I use depth psychology as a theoretical framework to craft questions and interactions that invite particular unconscious memories and ideas related to each participant's understanding of college students?

Tenants of Depth Psychology (Bennet, 1961; Reik, 1973; Whitmont, 1969)

1. Trust Intuition
2. Embrace Unexpected Psychic Patterns
3. Have Patience and Be Observant
4. Arm Yourself With the Literature
5. Understanding Comes from the Conscious and Unconscious

These principles provide the basic guideposts for designing methodologies that are grounded in depth psychology. They also call for the researcher to cast a wide net looking for the emotionally sensitive areas that are central to the participants' understanding of themselves, their world, and college students. Furthermore, in order to understand an individual's beliefs about a particular area (be it college students, parenting, love, competition, etc.) it is imperative that the researcher understands how the life experiences, personality characteristics, and myths (personal and collective) have

given birth to the lens through which they understand themselves and engage the world (Pietikaninen, 1999). The research questions need to invite stories, myths, and artifacts that reveal the psychic lens that manifests itself in behaviors – behaviors that further reveal their ways of thinking and feeling. In other words, what currently shapes their understanding of college students can only be understood by grasping the stories, myths, and symbols that have shaped their personality, values, and self-image[1] (Bateson, 1983; Pietikaninen, 1999).

Within the depth psychology theoretical framework a series of semi structured, in-depth interviews structure the data collection (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Smith and Manning, 1982). More specifically, within semi structured interviewing typologies, I found an open-ended phenomenological, postmodern interviewing method was most appropriate for my research questions (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1990; Krieger, 1983; Marcus and Fischer, 1986). Also, a "creative interviewing" sociological tool, as described by Jack Douglas (1985), is another phenomenological, semi structured method that is complimentary to the goals of this study. Each of these methods recognizes the inevitable influence of the researcher in interviewing, collecting and analyzing data. But, rather than seeing this influence as inherently counter to the research process, they work to craft studies in such a way that recognizes and attempts to capitalize on the bias of the researcher (Becker, 1997). For example, interviewing individuals about very personal topics is bound to trigger some emotional response from the researcher. Rather than attempting to deny those feelings, or burying them within academic jargon, the methodological approaches I have selected invite those feelings, recognize their

[1] My story, including the roots of my inferiority complex, was provided earlier as an example of this work (see Chapter One).

influence, and offer specific methodological approaches to manage them (i.e., researcher reflection, oralysis, context inventories, observation, and mythological and symbolic approaches) (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Hall, 1986; Pietikaninen, 1999). Most importantly to my study, these methods attempt to unearth and give voice to the bias of the researcher in order to allow those evaluating the research to draw educated opinions about influences the researcher has had on the study. At times, the bias of the researcher is negative, and efforts have been made to neutralize that influence (i.e., postmodern, polyphonic interviewing which utilizes technology to more directly capture the words and meanings of the participant) (Krieger, 1983). On the other hand, the personal stories and background of the researcher can help create an open, empathic, inviting environment that builds the trust and rapport necessary for in-depth conversation (Bateson, 1983; Jung, 1963/1989; Spradley, 1979).

## Data Collection and Analysis

The power of this research is its ability to explain what is only sensed (anger, disappointment or happiness). As stated, one who is skilled in these practices will develop a heightened level of awareness of cues that bring about states of feeling and emotion (Hall, 1986). They will develop an ability to recognize repetitive maladaptive cycles in order to alter those inner identity experiences to maximize desired states and open up doors to new possibilities and behaviors (Horowitz, 1998, p. 32-35). Jung framed this type of personal growth as the process of humans moving toward individuation, that is, realizing their innate individual potential (Hall, 1986; Schwartz-

Salant, 1995). More simply stated, they will learn to understand themselves (Singer, 1994).

How can we reveal and capture these emotional energies that form our beliefs and opinions? Making it even more difficult, these emotive states are often found outside conscious awareness. The final central assumption that provides a framework for this study is that these unconscious emotive states are structured and thereby revealed through what Jung calls complexes (Horowitz's comparable structure is the schema, while Campbell embraces the concept of the myth) (Hall, 1986; Jacobi, 1959).

Complexes and myths are formed around what Edward Whitmont (1969) calls "energy configurations" or "energy fields" or "energic potencies" that become observable through images, symbols and associations (p. 34). June Singer (1994), author and practitioner of Jungian psychology, defined complexes as "constellations of psychic elements (ideas, opinions, convictions, etc.) that are grouped around emotionally sensitive areas" (see also Jacobi, 1959). Jung believed that these complexes are psychic organizing principles that are sparked by highly charged emotional ideas (Jacobi, 1959). Furthermore, these powerful psychic fields are able to surface into an individual's conscious because they attract a number of specific ideas, feelings and behaviors that coalesce to reveal the complex (Singer, 1994, p. 46). For example, they may become recognizable in forms that are more commonly referred to as an "inferiority complex" or a "power complex" (Hall, 1986). In the first, that is the "inferiority complex," individuals would evidence the complex through behaviors and ideas that are very personal and emotional in nature (Adler, 1969; Hall, 1986).

This interpretative research is steeped in Carl Jung's theories of depth psychology. My task as the researcher was to use that foundation of literature and practice to locate the symbolic expression and meaning of each participant's relationship with students. The goal of the interviews and analysis is to use the guideposts of Jung's practices in depth psychology to unearth personal unconscious experiences and collective unconscious myths that shape community representatives' understanding of college students (Pietikaninen, 1999). The goal is to withhold judgment in an effort to understand how community representatives make sense of their action towards students. That is, the goal is to understand the relationship from the perspective of the community representatives.

The tenants of the depth psychology framework allowed me to look across the psyche of a participant to piece together elements that have bubbled up and interacted within the web of their psyche (Whitmont, 1969). During the process of engaging each participant I was in a position to analyze and identify themes and patterns in terms of how community representatives have come to understand college students. In the words of Jung (1954), I was witness to the participants' struggle with the "process of individuation" (Hall, 1986; see also Schwartz-Salant, 1995; Von Franz, 1997). As I engaged them in this process I became self-consciously immersed in the theory and practice of depth psychology. Although not in name, I used the themes and structures from the literature (e.g., idea of complex, persona, shadow, and collective dynamics) to identify the participants' inner conflicts and emotionally charged forces (Adler, 1968; Bennet, 1961; Hall, 1986; Jung, 1963/1989; Sandner & Beebe, 1995). As those surfaced, I utilized the research questions to disentangle relevant connections between their life

history and their mental construct of students (Pietikaninen, 1999). The process of data analysis was ongoing and weaved throughout the interviewing process. As the research questions suggest, the method is constructed in an open fashion to facilitate a process that responds to the individual nature of each participant (Hall, 1986). For example, the lifeline exercise is a tool that allows relevant life history to make itself present (Hall, 1986). But, it does not presuppose what that information will be, or that participants will select the same material to highlight. For example, some participants spent considerable time talking about mentors and work, while others explored their sibling relationships or times of struggle. What they decided to talk about, and the emotional way in which they spoke about them, acted as markers for data analysis. In the end, the method sparked stories, symbols, and myths that manifested themselves into themes and patterns that point to how community representatives understand what it means to be a college student (Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980; Pietikaninen, 1999).

More simply stated, through open, but guided discussion I was able to work with the participants to identify significant life experiences that facilitate the way in they make sense of the world around them. Those experiences were sometimes as basic as family values of honesty and hard work, or as complicated as the experience of drug rehabilitation. Nonetheless, they were offered by participants as key experiences or lenses that frame the way in which they understand and interact with others (including college students). Finally, as the interviewing process matured, the methodology (e.g., questions and prompts) explored potential connections between those life experiences and how they have come to understand college students.

After I completed interviewing all of the participants and drew some general conclusions about each person's understanding of college students, I identified a common profile of college students that emerged from the study. Although not central to the study, it facilitates further analysis as to how they have come to form this mental model. Three themes will be presented that seem to explain some of the origins of their understanding of college students. These themes (family, their own college experience, and their own socio-economic context) are then used to frame the interpretation of the findings. The final chapter of the study presents the interpretations and implications of the findings. The concept of myth is used to structure this presentation. These interpretations are tentative and call for further research to substantiate the findings.

## The Role of Technology in Capturing and Representing the Data

What is the best way to capture and represent the data of this study? The thesis of this research is that images, stories and symbols play a particularly important role in how we make sense of the world (Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980; Whitmont, 1969). Therefore, I use technologies that facilitate my ability to capture the lives and stories of the participants, and allow me to incorporate those images of art and creativity into the final study. I believe these forms of expression (e.g., drawing, photography, and storytelling) are much more powerfully presented via their intended audio or visual format. Therefore, I used a mini disc recorder, personal computer (including software that allows digitally data recording storage and manipulation), and a digital camera.

First, and most importantly, these tools allowed me to directly capture the voice of the participants. Through drawings and audio clips the research comes alive in a way

that carries tone, color, and emotion that is not possible via traditional modes of presentation.

Secondly, the mini disc recording technology enabled me to capture extremely large amounts of information and easily transfer them to my personal computer for organization. For example, early on in my data collection I divided my study by participant, at which time I was able to comb through my data looking to identify and classify themes (further dividing the data by those themes). The integration of these technologies enabled me to have a folder with several different types of participant data, including audio, drawings (not of, but by participants), and digital images (again, not of participants) all categorized by individual participants (offering several categories under each participant). These methods of collecting and analyzing data offered me the appropriate balance and latitude to facilitate emotional and in-depth interactions with my participants.

The research questions and planned interactions in this study offer creative inroads to dig at, expose, and clarify parts of each participant's unique unconscious psyche. Only as we unravel that psychic web that defines who they are can I understand their thoughts and actions in the world related to college students.

## Purpose and Structure of Interactions

I met with participants over approximately an eight-week period. Over that period of time I met with the each community representative at least four times for an average of an hour and a half each time. I allowed them to choose the location of our first interview, at which time I covered the basic procedures of the study (further description of all the interviews to follow shortly). During that discussion I suggested we

meet in a private location where they would feel most comfortable sharing personal information (most suggested their office or home). After concluding each interview, I immediately found a quiet place to reflect and take notes. I used those notes, as well as further review of the digital recordings, to identify themes that I used to structure subsequent conversations with each participant.

Consistent with an open-ended, postmodern approach, the interview protocol (see Appendix A) is not rigid but reveals the themes and streams of questions that will be of focus that day. It also speaks to the variety of creative strategies to be employed. Finally, given the importance of the participant's rights as they relate to human subjects, I have included the specific language that was read to participants regarding the guidelines laid out by the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects. I have also included the form of consent (see Appendix C) that was reviewed by each participant and signed with full understanding and knowledge of their rights.

As I interviewed participants I was looking for themes, and what Denzin (1989) calls "interpretive interactions", those dramatic life experiences that help shape individuals. As I collected those stories, pictures, songs, and artifacts, I looked for what Carl Jung (1963/1989) calls "complexes" (others refer to them as a collective myth) (see also Storr, 1983). As review, Jung characterizes complexes as ideas, opinions, convictions, etc. that are grouped around emotionally sensitive areas (Singer, 1972). In that sense, it was my hope to identify pieces of the participants' life history that were important in how they shaped their understanding of college students (Hall, 1986; Pietikaninen, 1999). June Singer (1994), Jungian analyst and psychologist, wrote that, "a list of complexes could be extensive, for it would cover every type of feeling-toned idea

that tends to create a highly charged atmosphere of thought or behavior" (p. 46). Given the context of the interactions between students and community representatives (riots, tension, and conflict), it was no surprise that I unearthed emotional linkages through symbolic expression that began to explain how community representatives come to know students.

Another challenge of the study that speaks directly to the nature of the interviewing methodology involves my ability to tap the personal and collective unconscious of participants. Singer (1972), in her description and analysis of Jung, described two layers of the unconscious. Personal unconscious, which contains lost memories, repressed ideas, subliminal perceptions and contents that "are not yet ripe for consciousness," and collective unconscious, which is not attached to anything personal and is entirely universal, shared by family, social group, race, and so on (Adler, 1968; Jung, 1954). Collective unconscious concerns the unspoken assumptions and sense-making processes that are pervasive throughout cultures (Adler, 1968). The goal of my methodological approach was to slowly unearth these emotionally buried links. In her Jungian analysis, Singer (1994) said, "It is difficult for me to imagine that there can be those who have failed to recognize that human beings are often moved by strange, mostly inexplicable forces" (p. 105). My hope was not to unravel the entire human psyche, but to take my small, dim flashlight, and shed some light on how community representatives make sense of college students.

## The Role of the Author

I have served to guide, prompt, and observe the process of exploring the psyche. Supported by the theories and practices of depth psychology I shaped the interviews in a way to elicit reflections, stories, and myths that helped me come to know the participants. As the process matured, and I was able to come to understand pieces of how the participants understand the world. I was also able to identify linkages and emotionally charged areas (what I will refer to as myth) that explain their understanding of college students (Hall, 1986). Armed with the organizing constructs of Jung's theories, I offer some explanation as to how these community representatives come to know what it means to be a college student.

It is important to note that although well-read in the field of depth psychology, I do not hold licensure or credentials that qualified me to structure my interactions with participants as clinical counseling. I used the foundation of literature within the field of depth psychology in a scholarly way, not as a diagnostic tool. As I have presented it, I am using depth psychology to interpret and make sense of how community members have come to understand college students. This approach had the potential to touch participants deeply, and in very real, emotional ways. Given that, I was prepared with appropriate counseling referrals, if they became necessary (they did not become necessary).

Another consideration of which I was aware was countertransference (Singer, 1994, p. 30). It was important that I worked hard to be conscious of the feelings and reactions I had to the conversations (hence my immediate journal and reflecting after each interview). What emotions were triggered for me in the conversations? How did I react to the comments presented in the discussion? The more clarity I could have of these

issues, the more likely I was to weed out my personal issues and complexes from those of the participants. In that sense, I was attempting to inform myself to avoid the type of projection (Jung calls it countertransference) of complexes that Jung warns (Singer, 1994, p. 30; see also Hall, 1986; Machtiger, 1995).

One way I attempted to mediate that countertransference bias was by openly telling my story (Hall, 1986; Jung, 1963/1989). My story is also provided as a model for the depth psychological work the study aims to apply. Throughout the text you have noticed the presence of my own stories and reflections. The placement and tone of these stories are meant to serve as guideposts and examples to encourage the reader to think more personally about this research. Furthermore, and most relevant to this discussion about the approach of the research, these personal reflections are examples of the extra-rational stories, myths, images, and psychodynamic complexes which provide a lens through which I come to make sense of the world (Jacobi, 1959; Pietikaninen, 1999; Whitmont, 1969). Although the emotional character of these stories is meant to be transparent, the reflective process of which they were a product has been hidden. The hours and days of struggle with the meaning of these stories, although not obvious, is also at the heart of this research study. It takes work to unearth and understand the unconscious forces that move us. Over the past year and a half I have read more than 100 books and articles, reviewed dozens of websites, and engaged in hours of reflective exercises. Just as students learning a new language start with basic terminology, build up to reading books, and eventually immerse themselves in a culture – I have invited a similar relationship with the work of Jung and depth psychology. I have traveled in the relationship. You meet as strangers, walk together as acquaintances, sit together as friends, and finally walk

away *knowing* each other. And, when one knows a language or friend, that person can act as a translator. You are able to take language and terms molded into thoughts and feelings and translate them for others into a set of recognizable language and terms. I have constructed that bridge and appreciated the opportunity to extend it to my participants. The power of depth psychology is that it is deeply shrouded in research and intuition, and despite a foundation of complexity in thought and terms, it can be rightly embraced by everyone (Hall, 1986).

## Summary

Depth psychology provides a framework for peeling back the layers of the human psyche to make connections between experience, belief and behavior. The research questions of this study are directed at understanding the ways in which community representatives make sense of themselves, the world around them, and thereby understanding how their psyche mediates their relationship with college students. In other words, what currently shapes their understanding of college students can only be understood by grasping the stories, myths, and symbols that have shaped their personality, values, and self-image (Pietikaninen, 1999). The work is made evident, that is, it is moved beyond intuition, by the organizing principles that Jung provided, and others have substantiated (Whitmont, 1969). Those themes and structures from the literature (e.g., the idea of complex, persona, shadow, symbolic motifs, myths, and collective dynamics) provide the map for identifying the participants' inner conflicts and emotionally charged forces (Jung, 1963/1989; Library of Analytical Psychology, 1980).

As data surfaced, I utilized the research questions to disentangle relevant connections between their life history and their mental construct of students (Pietikaninen, 1999).

A semi-structured interview protocol, with phenomenological and symbolic approaches, provides meaningful qualitative data to uncover the life experiences and individual sense-making processes that relate to community representatives' understanding of college students (Whitmont, 1969). I utilized CD-ROM and mini disc recording technology to collect data and present my research (in partnership with transcripts and extensive notes). I believe these forms of technology support my methodological goals to most accurately capture the lives and stories of the participants.

After I completed interviewing all of the participants and drew some general conclusions about each person's understanding of college students, I identified emotional themes (symbolic motifs) that seem to run across the participants. This is presented in the form of the participants' collective frame of reference of what it means to be a college student. Finally, these themes are interpreted as mythological representations that help unearth elements of the unconscious.

# CHAPTER FOUR: PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The seven participants in this study opened their lives to me. They spoke from the heart, and with a passion and commitment to the process that has provided a wealth of stories and reflections. The process of interviewing has been like a funnel, starting with broad questioning and get-to-know-you exercises, and moving deeper and deeper with each session. The process has elicited an essence of each person, and an ethos for the study. These findings are indicative of the method.

## Connecting the Method with the Findings

I have built the study on the foundation of depth psychology. The method is constructivist and interpretive and is an outgrowth of research questions that call for theoretical foundations that equally value feeling and conceptual knowledge. Depth psychology provides a rigorous and purposeful approach that is a powerful conduit to the beliefs, values and assumptions related to understanding the participants. The research question, how do members of the college communities come to know what it means to be a college student, provides a strategy by which I have interacted with the participants of this study. That is, the research questions are both directive and nondirective, but always addressing the desire to understand how the participants have come to know college students. Within that structure, the interview sessions welcomed participants to allow their own words and stories to direct the study. Entering the first session with each participant, I did not know what would be most relevant for them. The method does not assume what frameworks are relevant, yet assumes that they exist. The first session was

a broad exploration of the stories and experiences that shape the participant. As that came into focus, the interview protocol became directive to bring to the surface those stories which were most relevant. During the subsequent three sessions[2] the interview protocol provided different angles and approaches at the central research question. The relevancies of the stories were always framed by the research questions.

The stories provide themes and explanations around the research question. It is my hope that these stories and reflections will be presented to the reader with as much rich description as possible. Of course, decisions had to be made. Over forty hours of digitally recorded data has been captured, as well as over 100 pictures, and seven artistic renderings of participant lifelines. Despite the overwhelming amounts of data, fairly specific themes emerged through the data analysis. That process was aided by the participants' self-identifying central markers.

These central markers were highly emotional areas within their lives. These markers were structured around events, people or experiences. In that sense, they were bound and identifiable. Although each participant structured the stories differently, they were always characterized by emotions (e.g. pounding the table, getting out of their seat, or raising their voice). For example, Elizabeth told very emotional stories about the lessons she learned as a young person that provided a foundation (central marker) for further exploration. In her case, her mother and father framed those stories. They were present in the stories she told about riding horses competitively as a young person, as

[2] Due to time restraints, three of the participants asked me to combine two of the sessions. No qualitative differences were noted between those that had separate sessions and those that combined sessions.

well as the stories she told about her college experience. She would refer to "not wanting to disappoint her mom and dad."

Jackie provides an example where the central marker of her life was an experience – an experience of recovery from alcohol addiction. The process of recovery is how she has come to know herself. She talked repeatedly about what Alcoholic Anonymous has given her, most importantly a "spiritual life." That process of recovery, which emerged in our first session, provided a structure for our subsequent interviews.

These central markers call us (participant and interviewer hand-in-hand) to explore those areas for significance related to how they have come to know college students. Those emotive areas were explored with the depth that is the hallmark of the method, and framed by the specific research questions. The questioning and interactions were not superficial. They were very personal and emotional, and most importantly, fruitful for the study.

## What's to Come

As a point of reference, a summary of each participant will be presented. As the findings are subsequently delineated, the individual cases provide a context for those observations. The primary purpose of presenting the cases is for the reader to get to know the participants. In that light, the purpose is not to present primary data in support of the themes. That evidence will be presented during the presentation of the findings. The cases will allow the reader to more fully understand the participants, and specifically shed light on the differences between participants.

Following those narratives, the essence of the stories and reflections of the participants will be offered in the form of a collective frame of reference. The frame of reference illustrates a cluster of beliefs, assumptions, and values the participants associate with college students. It reflects the kind of lens that the participants use to understand college students. For example, it provides a frame of reference for the participants' judgments of students, as well as what they do or do not expect from students.

Establishing this frame of reference is important because it represents a collective meaning that the participants are attributing to college students. It is *what* they think of college students; it provides the medium through which we understand *how* they have arrived at that frame of reference.

How they have come to that frame of reference is the focus of the study. What are participants' using as the basis of these judgments? What is the lens they are using to come to these conclusions? How do they come to these particular judgments or interpretations of students? In the final three chapters, some answers to these questions will be provided in the form of themes and myths.

In chapter five, several themes will be presented that provide some insight into the sense-making process they are using to assign meaning to the college student experience. Three primary themes will be offered as a way of beginning to understand how community members have come to that frame of reference. These themes will be supported with primary participant data.

Following the presentation of the findings, the final chapter will interpret the data in terms of the emotional dynamics (myths) that have emerged. This analysis will not be

conclusive, but will offer reasonable explanations based on the data and theoretical framework of depth psychology.

## Participant Profiles

This study is based on the stories of people. We come to know these people through the narratives they provide. The narrative is performative, thus representing action and reflection on behalf of the participant. It comes in the artifacts, lifelines, and stories that the participant uses to give coherence and meaning to their experiences. The narrative does not claim to capture history as it was, but reflect upon it as it is thought to have been. In that sense, the narrative is a work of imagination that takes various points of life experience and transforms it in a coherent story (Becker, 1999). Therefore, the importance of the narrative process is that it provides structure and assigns meaning to life's experiences. In this study, the narrative has also been a tool for reflection.

The summaries are structured to present an image of the participant that is representative of a larger whole. Pieces of participants' more complete narrative, including their stories, artifacts, and pictures are selected upon to paint a picture of the participant that is representative and relevant. That is, it is representative of who they were in the context of the study, and relevant to understanding how the participant has come to understand college students.

For each of the participants, the lifeline drawings were used to frame our conversations. In fact, the lifeline drawings were intentionally included early in the protocol just for this purpose. For the exercise, the participants were given about ten minutes to draw their lifeline. Most of the participants simply drew a straight line with

bullet points. At each of the bullet points they would write a sentence or two that described a significant event (e.g., marriage, graduating, tragedy, or something they were proud of). Others were creative in their approach, and actually drew a lifeline that had "ups" and "downs" that related to the highs and lows of their life. Again, these participants used bullet points to denote significant events.

After each participant concluded their drawing I would ask them to "walk me through" what they drew. The lifeline became a tool for them to tell their story. Those stories provided the basis of the narrative I present in each participant profile. To further support that story I used quotes from subsequent interviews (including the session we discussed their pictures).

It is important to note the emotionality that accompanied the participants' stories and overall participation in the research study. For example, they demonstrated the emotional nature of their narratives through expressive and loud laughter, actively pounding the table as they spoke, and by exhibiting facial expressions that led me to believe they were engaged in the dialogue and experiencing emotional reactions to the methodological prompts.

Furthermore, the participants displayed an emotionally engaged state through actions. For example, they took more pictures than necessary for the photo elicitation technique segment, and the sessions nearly always ran over the allotted times (participants were eager to stay engaged in the dialogue).

The participants discussed the topics and questions of the research study with family members and significant others, and often openly dicussed their involvement in

the research project with co-workers and friends. They used these outside conversations to enrich and expound upon our structured interactions.

*Joe*

As Joe would tell it, his story is one of transformation. In his words, "I went from having no goal in life, to being goal driven...I went from having no direction to directing the live of others." His undergraduate experience is just one tale that supports the larger story. Joe describes his undergraduate experience as the first low point in his life.

> I lived on campus in a dorm with my best friend since kindergarten and at the end of my sophomore year at (college) my grade point average was 1.9. I look back on that year in the dorm (and) there was never a day where I had less than 3 drinks...from Fall all the way to June...I mean it was just like a huge party. I mean it was a good year, I mean, I had a blast, but I basically lost a year. I blew off class a lot. I was working as the night manager (at a local fast food restaurant). I'm working 40 hours a week, until 4 in the morning, bring my crew home with me in the dorm, party, and so I didn't make most of my morning classes. Finally, I got the letter from the Dean saying you know you've gotta shape up, (and) you're on academic probation. At that point, I quit. I thought that I was going to be a (fast food restaurant) manager for the rest of my life. It seemed like a good living, and I was having a blast and so that's what the plan was. And I say that was probably one of two low points in my life. I ended up living with my friends from High School who were still in college, and they basically are working hard, thinking about their future, (whereas) I'd come home and party and just sit there. So, that lasted one semester, or term, back then it was terms. I decided I gotta do something with my life - I'm not going to be 60 years old, standing at that bin wrapping cheeseburgers, you know. And so, at that point, out of curiosity, I took a Criminal Justice class over at (the local community college), because (the college I had attended) wouldn't take me. I ended up really liking it and part of the class was to do a police ride-along. So, I'm kinda cynical about that, I think cops drive around hassling people, and sticking people with tickets, and you know, basically causing hate and discontent. But it was such a positive experience. We stopped and helped some lady change her tire; someone was looking for a dog, and we actually went around and found this thing and half the people we stopped (for traffic violations) ended up getting warnings and the other half I truly thought that they deserved a ticket.

Joe decided he wanted to be a police officer. His professional life was getting on the right course, but meanwhile his personal life was hitting a low point. "I was in a marriage where our common thing was alcohol," Joe said, "until I decided I'd had enough and filed for divorce, and that was really a low point in my life." Then, only a couple years later, "out of the blue," Joe says, "I met this girl who actually lived next door to my mom and dad and we've been together ever since." He went from rolling out of bed late, to getting up early. He went from the black list of academic probation to the honor roll. He went from having no direction himself, to directing the lives of others. He went from a marriage drowning in alcohol, to one centered on love. All in all, his life has been a story of development and maturation.

Joe grew up in what he called a "Beaver Cleaver" type family. He had a mother who was a school teacher who quit to raise children. He had siblings who he played with and battled with as kid, only to befriend them and love them as adults. And he had a father who was a hard-nosed police officer.

Joe knew he would go to college, because, as he says "from day one, it was 'when you are in college, son...' and all of my peers and all of my friends were college driven, that's how I ended up there." But, he wasn't ready. As he said, "my parents took a laissez-faire type attitude; they had no idea what I was doing, and I probably could have used an authority figure in my life saying, 'what the hell are you doing?'" Joe found himself at a very large public university that exposed him to more freedom and alcohol than he was ready to handle. As Joe says, "I wasn't equipped to handle any decision regarding alcohol." He partied as much as he could, and drank as much as his body

would allow. He had 103 bottles of liquor at his college house. As he says, "I would have hated to live next door to me."

He wasn't ready for the college experience, and within two years, quit. He was working at a fast food restaurant where he earned enough money to maintain a lifestyle of surviving to party. He continued that way of life for the next couple months. Eventually, and with no specific prompt, he began to ask himself what he was going to do with the rest of his life. This reflection started a steady rise toward a new way of life centered on goals, accomplishment and happiness. Although, it did not all come at once. There were struggles, including continued abuse of alcohol, a failed marriage, and stagnation in his professional career. Out of this he truly turned a new page in his life. He built upon the strong work ethic he learned at the fast food restaurant to graduate from college. At the same time he gained control over his drinking and began to make decisions that would bring him a fulfilling job and a loving family. He became a police officer in the town he attended college. He married and became a husband and father that takes pride in "seeing things with the heart." In the end, the transformation was like a circle. He went from living in a "Beaver Cleaver" family to creating his own version of the perfect family.

This journey is important in understanding how Joe has come to understand college students. Like his life, his understanding of college students has experienced change. This change is directly related to the life experiences that were just described.

As he says, "early on in my career as a police officer I understood and related to college students." He was on the midnight shift and would go to break up parties and recognize the music they were playing. He could understand those students who partied often and attended class occasionally. After a few years, and some lifestyle changes of

his own, he began to tire of the partying behavior of students. It became so that the lens through which he saw students was through the windshield of a police car, including the vomit, noise, and litter. He got sick of it.

As he became more driven professionally, he moved up the ranks in the police department. He eventually took post as a senior level officer in the police department (and currently holds this position). As his professional outlook changed, so did his view of students. He started to form a more complex view of the university experience. Joe summarizes it like this:

> A lot of my views of students had to do with my life and job. Back when I was a patrol officer, that's all you run across, people that are a pain in the ass. And now, as (a senior level administrator) the people I meet with are different. They are probably the best of the best. They are the ones that give a damn.

He is referring to his interactions with university student journalists, student government leaders, and civic-minded young people. These interactions have formed a more multifaceted image of college students. He now sees them "as extremely helpful on one hand, and purposively destructive" on the other. He understands the contradictions exist both within the group and within the individual.

### *Elizabeth*

Elizabeth grew up in a small town where, as she says, "it was community-oriented and everybody knew what you were doing." Another part of the community was a clear expectation that you would go to college. Elizabeth explains that it was the kind of town where,

> It gave you as a kid a sense of responsibility because if you were doing something wrong, you got caught, and your mom and dad were gonna know, your friends were gonna know, and your dad was going to yell at you for embarrassing the family.

As Elizabeth described it, her family was her anchor. Her mother and father provided a clear definition of right and wrong so that it was unmistakable when you were about to cross that line from right to wrong. She was instilled with what she would describe as an ethic of responsibility and respect, as well as a healthy dose of fear. "I never wanted to disappoint my family," Elizabeth said. Even though that sounds like a cliché, there is a depth of truth to it that is central to understanding Elizabeth. The following is an example of how her "family anchor" runs throughout her experience:

> If someone comes from a family, and has a strong sense of family, that no matter where you go, you carry that with you. And hopefully that helps you in your relationships with those around you, whether they're your roommates, or your neighbors; that you recognize that they have family, and you'd want to treat them like you're hoping someone else somewhere is treating your family. And that in the community sense; I mean you're first time away from home (college) of course your experimenting so you don't always stay on that very straight and narrow path; I can't believe anybody does, but hopefully through that experimental phase that college allows you, your family, that knowing where you came and your responsibility to those people gets you back on track, so even though you're not in the same town anymore, not under the same roof, what you do in your new community certainly still reflects on them.

She got good grades in school, in part, because she didn't want to let her parents down. She went out during high school, but she would never consider coming home late because it would disappoint her parents. She partied in college, but was always conscious of never putting herself in a position that might embarrass her parents. That mental construction, never wanting to let her parents down, provided a clear guide by

which she led her life. It is also important in understanding how she has come to understand what it means to be a college student.

Elizabeth works for the city in a university town in a service capacity that requires her to work closely with college students. She helps craft policies that affect students and works with them so that they understand and abide by the regulations. In this role she interacts with a variety of students, from student leaders, to students who have been arrested for rioting. In coming to understand the difference between these types of students, she describes the way in which her life experiences provide the lens through which she has come to understand college students. The following segment provides an example:

> I don't think those students from strong families feel a need to experiment as much. They (come with a) cocoon. You don't need to find yourself as much (because) a portion of yourself is already anchored somewhere. Maybe you don't feel like you have to do what the other guys does to fit in, because that other guy just went two steps too far for you - that you know your mom back home would be going "whoa, I am so disappointed in you!" Not to say, I didn't do tons of stuff my mom would go "whoa!" but you just don't have that same need to go as extreme necessarily.

She also believes that college is generally a time during which students are focused on themselves, and have little appreciation for the community in which they live. In her own words, Elizabeth says, "a lot of times (in college) you are very much 'me' focused once again, kind of like when you were younger." Furthermore, of those students who do not meet the standards of the community (cross the line from right to wrong), she believes they have not been instilled with the same sense of right and wrong that was key to her upbringing. By and large, she has noticed that many of today's

college students do not have the same limits that defined her college experience. She partied, but today's students seem to take it to another level. They seem to drink heavier and more often with little regard for the wake of noise and destruction that results. Although she notes the complexity of causes at hand, we spent some time talking about one in particular: affluence.

Like other participants, Elizabeth sees today's students as having an increased level of affluence. She took note of it in several ways. First, she notices it in the fancy and expensive cars students drive. Second, she notices it in the number of parents who are buying houses for their children to live in while they attend college. Finally, and probably most disturbing to her, she has noticed that students seem to be less affected by monetary penalties. For example, when students come into the city to pay tickets for around $500 it does not seem to affect them.

> The ones that come pay tickets they just say "I'm here to get my ticket – ok." I mean and they're paying $500 to $1000 in fines and don't seem to be batting an eye. I would have been devastated, devastated! I would have been crying. I would have been trying to figure out every which way in the world to get out of this! Because it would have just been a huge amount of money. It doesn't appear to be for these kids - for most - I don't know, they just pay it and go on. I think if you have the resources to pay the money, and they don't all, so you can't stereotype them, but you hear about them even (with) the party tickets and stuff and they just pay them. And I think there's something *wrong*, just wrong if you can just fix everything by just paying them, especially at this young age.

She believes that paying a ticket is indicative of how students react to getting in trouble, and she does not believe they take it seriously enough. Again, she believes that students should feel most upset about the fact they are poorly representing themselves and thereby their family and the community from which they come. She believes

students should come equipped with a sense of right and wrong that is imbedded by their parents and community.

> The worst part of getting in trouble, I gotta believe, to do this day I still believe, wouldn't be the experience of being arrested and being put in jail, it would have been telling my mom and dad. They always wanted me to do the right thing - as much as you can quantify that. If I let them down I would feel horrible! Huge disappointment to them. I never did it again! I didn't want to have them talk about how disappointed they were in me. Spank me, God don't talk to me! (laughter)

She believes the students should feel the same way. She understands that students party in college, she did the same, but she expects their parents and community to equip them with a sense of right and wrong. She expects students to come with a greater sense of respect for one another; instead, students have been given too much, earned very little, and expect the community to fit their needs. Elizabeth summarizes it by saying,

> I think most college students do party and are a little loud. I don't see that as a huge issue. I think that's because of my personal experience partying, but I do worry (because) they don't seem to have the same limits.

*Rene*

Rene[3] would describe herself as grounded by family, faith and friendships. As she says, "I believe that the truly developed individual is one who recognizes the value of interdependence." Her story centers on family and her role as a mother of two sons.

"The family core is absolutely everything to me," she said early on in our interactions. All of the data collected supports that statement. Her lifeline was the story of family, many of her pictures included members of her family, her artifacts were about her family, and the process itself was shared with her family (she often recalled speaking

[3] Rene was not listed as a participant in the proposal. Another participant was approached, but declined participation (due to the necessary time commitment). In the end, she proved to be a valuable member of the participant pool.

with her husband and sons about the interview process). She is an involved mother who takes her parental role very seriously.

Interestingly, she did not grow up with strong positive parental figures. Her father drank a lot when she was growing up and was sick throughout her adolescence, while her mother developed Alzheimer's while Rene was still young. Overall, Rene's childhood was not filled with the kind of energy and joy one might hope for. As she put it, her home "was not very festive."

Much of her adult life has been committed to creating the kind of atmosphere she wishes she would have had as a kid. She makes holidays a big event for her family. She does not dwell on the struggles that touch her family, but brings optimism to her children. She reads their school papers for them. As she says, when they are home from college, she tries to create an atmosphere free of stress. In concluding our session, she offered a poignant connection between her childhood experiences and her current behaviors:

> I think people either block out or have a lot of guilt of how they are when they are growing up...and whether they are kind or that kind of thing...I am one of those people that has a lot of guilt about being selfish and narcissistic, self-advancing, when I was in high school my dad was very sick and my mother had Alzheimer's although we really didn't know it...I wasn't very helpful...I am sure I didn't make his last years very pleasant and that does give me a lot of guilt...that's probably why I have such disdain for that kind of thing. I'm not saying I was a bad person, (but) I was just not very considerate and not very understanding of the whole situation that was going on...except how it effected me...I'll be an orphan, or what will I look like if I don't have a dad...I remember thinking all those things...and not staying home when I should have stayed home...

Rene has not had an easy life. In that sense, it has not always been effortless to be that force of optimism. She has suffered from a series of rather serious illnesses (lupus and debilitating back trouble, to name two) but it did not shape her as an individual. As

she recalls, "my mother was a hypochondriac. I didn't want to do that to our kids. That sense of insecurity – you just don't want to grow up when somebody's sick all the time. I kind of had enough of illness!"

Her mother was the type of person who believed things happened to her. She would say, "that got broke on me, or that got broke on us." She felt like a victim of circumstances. Rene, in the face of her own challenges, has intentionally shaped a life centered on hope and creating opportunities for happiness.

To be fair, Rene's recollections of her childhood were not without positive stories. Rene recalled with pride having grown up the daughter of a coal miner (it was the first thing she mentioned at part of the lifeline exercise). She valued the working class background that her mother and father provided her. She believes that those experiences, in a small, rural, backward town, gave her a heightened ability to appreciate different people. It also gave her a respect and admiration for those who have to work every day (particularly those who work with their hands).

> I've had a really varied background. You know, I'm kind of fortunate in that way...because I can kind of identify with a great number of people. I'm very proud of growing up in that kind of (environment). It's a like a different culture when I go home (for the kids) - a real nice blend for them.
>
> I've always maintained that in order to empathize and understand people you have to be in a position where you've been treated the other way. You know, I was a waitress, and it was amazing how different people treated me when they found out I was in college or whether they thought I was just a waitress.
>
> I'm kind of proud (because) I'm comfortable with different kinds of people. It's important to me that they (her children) know that they should be able to communicate and respect those people who work everyday and you can talk to presidents of colleges. I've always told my kids, never date a person who doesn't treat a waitress well.

Her later work at a community college is an active extension of these values. She enjoyed working with students who did not have privilege and in part identified with their experiences. I can remember her saying, "give me a kid who works, and that has to take care of things and that cares about something." This is who she identifies with and this is with whom she prefers to work.

Yet, her role in the community put her in contact with a variety of college students. She is a rental property owner/manager who, with her husband, manages several rental houses in a university town. She relates to college students both as a mother and as the daughter of a coal miner. She is maternal in her relations with tenants. She gets to know the students (e.g., major, hometown, birthday) and makes an effort to look out for them. For example, on their 21st birthday she sends them a birthday card with best wishes and a friendly reminder to be safe. She believes that college is too much like "throwing somebody over a cliff and hoping that when they hit the water they swim." In her role as a landlord, she is there to help ease that fall. "I do a lot of the relationship building" Rene says, while her husband does most of the property maintenance. She enjoys the job because it gives her an opportunity to have a positive influence on someone else's life, and as she says, "you never know when you touch someone's life. Something that you can do that is so trivial to you it can really make a turn in someone's life." In that sense, it's not necessarily the job, but the general opportunity to help students in a time of need.

She has come in contact with students who are disrespectful and who don't care about the properties that she and her husband rent. She is saddened, hurt, and angered by this behavior. In explaining this conduct she recognizes "that part of it's a stage" or

development that young people go through. But, she also feels the disrespectful behavior is "exacerbated by very, very wealthy kids." She admits to having a "real prejudice against kids," and feels "more and more leery of kids who come from very wealthy families." She finds these young people come with a "sense of entitlement without any merit, without earning it, except by birth" and it really bothers her. As other participants have said, Rene alludes to a presence of affluence among today's college students. She describes this affluence as the "young people being sophisticated, but it is hollow." As an example, she pointed to the number of young people traveling to foreign countries, but not truly seeing the value of the experience.

While holding that in one hand, Rene also expresses true empathy for college students in the other. She believes they are under a lot of pressure.

> They (college students) are under a lot of stress. I think we minimize. I tell both boys (her college aged sons) that probably one of the traumatic experiences that they are going to have is when they move away from home and go to college - a myriad of complexities that they have to adjust and deal with.

She holds this paradox. She believes students are going through a maturation process, and that some transgressions are to be expected. She believes that they are trying on personalities and coming into their own. The following story was prompted by a picture she took of her son sprawled out on a grass knoll – it provides an appropriate summary for the way she understands the life of a college student.

> The picture shows the whimsical, fun-loving, spontaneous. I love that about them (college students), but spontaneous can be impulsive and it sweeps them away - lets events sweep them away as opposed to being in control. It's growing up. There is that inconsistency. They try on their different people that they want to be; act awful in some respects. (They are) trying out their sexuality, try out

> different morals, different ethics, I didn't do that, but I lived with my sister, so I've always been conservative about my behavior. You wonder why so many of them act so strangely or like they don't have accountability. A lot of it is trying on different costumes because they have the time to play.

*Anna*

Anna said very early on that, "my interactions with college students are simply an extension of myself." The findings from our interactions support this claim. That is to say, Anna's understanding of college students is not distinct from her relation with others. Therefore, the rich description of our interactions will center on creating an image of Anna that is representative of the whole.

Anna is a spiritual person. She believes in a higher power that is loving and forgiving. She prays, attends church, and journals to be more in touch with that higher power that she believes is within all of us. She believes that a priest does not mediate her relationship with God, but that it is her responsibility to live a life that is in touch with that love of God and extend it to others. As she said, "we are God, we create our own reality, either consciously, or unconsciously, we still do it with our thoughts, which are incredibly powerful, and our emotions." She wants to model a way of living that reflects her belief in a benevolent God.

Her struggle in life has been to trust that inner voice. As she says, "I have a very difficult time just being." She feels the need to be in control, or as she would explain, "my tendency when I am interacting with somebody is to try and lead." Although complicated, there is some explanation as to why she feels it is necessary for her to have this control. "I was very accustomed to being number one" as a child, Anna said. She grew up in a positive family environment that was lower middle class, with a dad who

was a teacher and a mom who stayed home to take care of the kids. She said, "I made all of my own clothes, but we never lacked for anything." Her dad was an important influence and two things were particularly important to her father: sports and work. As she tells it, "for whatever reason, I cannot play. I can't catch a fly ball to save my life, and I think he (her father) saw that. He actually said very early that sports was not going to be my thing and so he thought he'd steer me into leadership roles and kind of cultivate that." His handy work began to show through quite early. She told a story about when she was in fourth grade and she sent a letter to the superintendent citing Title IX for the reason why young women should have a basketball team at her school. She remembers keeping the fax he sent back.

Anna is an active community organizer around issues of town and gown relations. She lives in an area where students have felt unwanted and disrespected by the community and have acted in turn with riots and couch burnings that eroded the relationship even further. She has been part of an organized effort to bring civility and respect into community relations. She has helped plan block parties to get students and long term residents to interact. She has worked with less than accommodating neighborhood associations and ever-changing student organizations to bridge the gap between the two groups. In the end, she sees this as a potentially powerful way of influencing not only this community, but areas far outside the United States as well. Anna explains:

> For me, part of the excitement of working with college students...is that that was a part of my life that was so pivotal – absolutely - you learn so much more during that period than any other period in your life. So, it's exciting for me to see them...it's interesting, this is in effect is how they will view the world for the rest

> of their lives....that's one reason why I am so passionate (about the community work). I think we are not just changing (the city), we're giving people an example for how they can change whatever community they go to, whatever part of the world they end up...and if at one point somebody on our street had a positive memory of us coming over and introducing ourselves to them and interacting with them (so) that they'll take that to Boise, Idaho or Bangkok, Thailand, and they'll extend the same thing. And that's so exciting to me, I mean that it's just flowered.

She wants to have a positive impact on the world and the university/community work has been the vehicle through which she exercises that influence. It has made her feel like she is responding to the spiritual call within herself, and that she is in tune with the directions of her father. But, if she lived someplace else, she believes she would still be doing work that valued these guiding principles. She says that where she lives is probably the main reason why she interacts with college students and that she would bring a lot of the same thoughts and activity to whatever neighborhood she lived in. She would also bring the same style of interaction.

As Anna says, "control is a huge thing for me." She has a very difficult time letting others take the lead of projects or situations. She has seen the negative ramifications of this behavior in her professional and personal life. Why does she feel such a need to be in control?

Anna experienced the feeling of being bullied as a young person and it has been a recurring theme in her life. She feels that the "universe gives us different themes that we play out over and over again" in our lives until we learn the intended lesson. She recalled several incidences of bullying throughout her life and being surprised and jolted by those experiences. Eventually, but not until adulthood, did she feel that she learned the intended lesson. The lesson, although oversimplified, is to stand up in the face of

someone trying to take advantage of you. The impact of this lesson, as she describes it, is complicated. She is conscious to not let others take advantage of her and she tries to ensure this does not happen by taking control of the situation. On the other hand, she has also found herself taking control of situations that would be better left directed by the group or someone else. She summarizes these ideas nicely when she says, "If I'm not in control of a situation it may be hard for me to stay in the situation, and I might feel like I'm being taken advantage of, whether I really am or not."

Recently, Anna has decided to step away from the planning and organizing of community leadership to write and reflect. Interestingly, the process by which this study asked her to reflect upon the influences of her life experiences was in tune with the practice of her life. She is looking more deeply at the shaping influences of her life and making connections and forming coherency where it wasn't before. She is taking the same drive that put together block parties and neighborhood forums, and applying it to her spiritual and personal growth.

### *Ray*

Ray is the senior member of the participant pool. At 78 years of age he has spent over 50 years in university towns across the country. In addition to university towns, he has also spent time stationed at a variety of United States Army bases. In hearing about those experiences, you begin to hear stories that reveal who he is and how he's come to know college students.

Ray was instilled with a foundation of learning at a young age. Ray remembers his father as an avid reader and his mother and father as being intellectually driven. For

example, his father was a person of science. He was an agriculture agent, a scientist, who disseminated research to farmers and worked with them to identify new areas of research for the university. He also described his mother as a person of science. He described her as, "rational, but not cold about it, and humane but ruthless." Overall, his family established a frame of reference based on reason and academic rigor.

In fact, he recalled that "my mother urged me to finish high school early and go to college at (age) 16" so that he would not get drafted into World War II. "My mother was very rational and a tremendous planner," Ray said as he described the influence of his mother, "and actually the family leader until she died (in her 90s)."

He enrolled in college, but after only one year he enlisted in the Army to, as he says, "keep in control of my options." He was immediately sent to another university town across the country. This began a career in the U.S. Military that would take him to at least 5 different states and a handful of different military bases along the way. Ray has fond memories of his service in the military. Most of the stories he shared were about making friends and their forays into partying and stirring up trouble. His military stories also bring to light Ray's willingness to challenge authority. The following stories are illustrative of the ones he shared in our interactions:

> They sent me into an Army training program at (a large public university in Ohio) where they just put me unabashedly into an engineering program. (The guys I was with) thought we were premed. I applied for the paramedics to get out of that and to get more into what I wanted and it didn't work. So, a couple buddies of mine and I would slip out at night and party (try to get into trouble). That still didn't work. We were actually messing up stuff in the lab, overloading the electrical circuits to make everything blow and that still didn't (work). I finally had to tell a battalion commander 'they really lied to me', and you know, 'the hell with you', and he was a former prosecuting attorney and that did it. I got transferred out of there.

> Another time, for some reason, they put me in charge of teams that were supposed to wash trains, but that didn't make any sense to me so I took this bunch of guys, I expect there were 8 or 10 of them, and we went by the PX and bought a case of beer and then I marched them down to the waterfront. You know this is along Monterey Bay, California, and the rifle ranges shot into sand dunes which were along the water. There were gaps in between them (sand dunes) so we went down behind those on the water and waited until we heard cease-fire and then we split across another one. We were there all day because we knew that no officer would ever come down there looking for us.

Ray's military experiences also demonstrate a continued focus on the sciences. He found himself in an engineering program, although he wanted to be in the pre-medicine program. Even following his military service, he entered a university and majored in zoology and chemistry, with minors in mathematics and psychics. Then, even though he was accepted to medical school, he switched to journalism, because as he says it, "I had a son on the way and I was a good writer."

His interest in journalism eventually helped bring him to his current university town of residence. He said he was attracted to that university's communications program "because it was the best nationally." Although, instead of finishing his graduate degree, he and his wife took an opportunity to move to India for two years. He described the experience as "heavy immersion" and a time during which he and his wife made very good friends (actually becoming the Godparents of two Indian girls).

Upon his arrival back to the states he said that he "got into a snarl with someone trying to take over" where he was working and he was demoted. At the same time, he said he "developed writer's block and never finished his graduate degree (in communications)." This marked a shift in his career. He went to work for the state government, editing and publishing data driven analyses on education in the state. This would be the job from which he would retire.

After Ray described his professional journey, he turned to his feelings about college students and he reflected on living in the same community and house for over 40 years. His home, once surrounded by other long-term residents, is now in a neighborhood that he describes as about 40% rental properties (most of which he believes are occupied by college students).

"The proximity of (the local university) is not an advantage," he said, "because they (students) create more problems than they do benefits." "There's the traffic," he continued, "and the drunkenness at the tailgating." He further elaborated his feelings about college students when he said, "I'm not anti-student per se, like these guys in here (referring to those students studying in the coffee shop in which we were meeting), those are the ones I think of as real students; the other folks are just playing around."

He then spent some time describing the environment and causes of the problems between students and permanent residents. He began by saying, "talking about (community) relations, trying to reach the kid (college student) that's got $500 to spend on a weekend and wants to do it in the bar; that's a really hard person for me to find any time to deal with." He continued, "The best you can get with some of them is a tentative truce. The assumption that you are going to become friendly and have them in your house for apple pie is dreaming."

Both interesting and relevant to the mental framework in which he is placing these judgments in context, he immediately flows into talking about his own experiences as a young man. "When I was in the Army," he said, "we played a lot, but we didn't do destructive things." Although not directly, he is illustrating an expectation that young people relax, or as he calls it, "play." The distinction he is drawing is based on how that

desire manifests itself into behavior. For example, Ray said that, when he was a young man, "when students needed to be serious they could; when they wanted to party, they partied, but not in the way that set anything on fire, or caused any wenches to blaze their brassieres." He is referring to a significant riot/gathering of approximately 10,000 students that occurred in his university town a few years ago.

Even when he describes students who have not fit that unfavorable mold, he does not sound positive or optimistic about students. For example, he said that the students who live next door to his son (who lives in the same university town) seem to be fine neighbors, but he follows that up by saying, "and talk about your fancy automobiles, but so far they (students) have been fine." There seems to be an expectation on his part that these students will eventually fit the mold of students who engage in undesirable behaviors.

When asked to explain why he thinks the behavior of young people is different today, he offers three primary explanations. First, he believes that many of today's college students "have not been taught that there are limits." He continues by saying that, "it has something to do with the values of the families that they come from – they've not been taught to respect other people." Secondly, he feels this behavior is indicative of a culture that is too often distracted by material wealth and technology. He believes that "kids (college students) have grown up with parents who allow too much self-indulgence; they've got too little to do that's productive." That leads into the final factor he sees as resulting in poor student behavior. That is, he attributes much of the poor student behavior to a failure in the system of higher education. In his own words, he believes college "is too easy, so students have got to have something to entertain themselves

with." He says that "professors should insist on excellence and they should be humane but ruthless to the people who don't want to be in that game." That phrase really strikes me because it seems to bring together his narrative. That phrase, "should be humane, but ruthless" was the exact word choice he used in describing his mother, who he described as "being a very important factor" in his life.

Although not to overstate the connection, it seems reasonable to conclude that his way of making sense of student behavior is somewhat rooted in how he relates to underlying issues of respect and learning[4]. As stated, those were issues at the center of his early life development.

*Mark*

As Mark charted his lifeline he placed two identifying marks to signify points of significant influence in his life. The first mark was to recognize the importance of his family and early childhood experiences. "I think I was taught some pretty tough work ethics and I think I was also taught morals, ethics, and the difference between right and wrong," Mark said early on in our discussions. It became clear during our subsequent interactions that these values were key in developing the way Mark relates to the world. Although somewhat abstract on their own, Mark has assigned meaning to these concepts in powerful ways. He speaks of them in ways that are emotional and directive. The value of work, respect and responsibility are guideposts for his day-to-day behavior. For example, Mark has taken those lessons and applied them to his work in the business

[4] There was a gap of at least one week between each of our meetings. Ray also suffered health problems during this time that limited our interactions. These factors, coupled with his longer life history, make Ray the most challenging case. More than the others, it would have been helpful to have had more time with him. Therefore, the findings related to Ray are tentative at best.

world. "I was proud of the professional position I achieved," Mark said, "and I had a great job that a lot of people aspire to that quite frankly never got it." As he would say, he has been successful in attainting desirable leadership positions that are quite selective, and these positions have brought him influence and wealth. Overall, Mark can be described as a professionally driven person. His lifeline and stories reflect that focus in that nearly two-thirds of his lifeline included professional milestones (e.g., first job, professional mentors, and career changes). Furthermore, more than half of the personal references on his lifeline were related to professional lessons. That is to say that his family and personal relationships have been seen as interconnected with his professional life in that they have offered "continued validation of the importance of a strong work ethic, having a strong character, having integrity, having ethics, morals and (making) community service" an important part of his life.

The second mark Mark placed was to signify the importance of his service in the United States Military. As he said, this experience "reinforced those ethics and values" that he learned as a young person. He credits his military experience for helping him mature so that he was ready to take advantage of his opportunities after his service in the military. He believes that was particularly important because, prior to his entrance in the U.S. Army, he had not been successful at the local public university. After his service, he returned to the university and graduated to launch himself on a successful professional journey that would span over 30 years.

Except for his service in the U.S. Army, Mark has always lived in the same town, including having gone to college in that same town. He takes great pride in being a member of the community and expresses that by saying, "I feel very fortunate to have

grown up in this city, and I want to kind of try and get an environment back to where it was." Therefore, he has been heavily engaged in community service for his hometown. From being active on local committees, to being elected to City Council, Mark has served with more than 26 various community groups. He sees this as his way of practicing those values of respect and responsibility that were instilled in him as a young man, and reinforced in his service with the U.S. Military.

Since the days some decades ago that Mark learned those lessons of hard work and respecting others, he has seen society shift away from emphasizing their importance. He said, "I think the environment has changed...I think some of the young people today, with the lifestyle and affluence that we have in the United States, have been given so much that in some ways I think they don't understand that life doesn't owe you anything." He goes on to say that "more and more people are getting away from what I believe is a life fundamental and that is the respect of the other person, (including) the other person's rights, civil rights, (and) property rights." In part, he finds these behaviors occurring as a result of the lifestyle of affluence in Western society. More specifically, he finds the disrespectful and destructive behaviors caused by a small, but growing percentage of young people who do not understand how to be citizens in a community. He believes these young people were not taught the same foundation of values and morals that were so central to his upbringing. He explains, "that was one thing I was taught way back here (pointing to his early childhood on the lifeline he had drawn) – to respect others' opinions and rights." It is very disturbing to him that this small percentage of disruptive and disrespectful college students has allowed some members of the community to foster an image that all college students are bad. Generally, he thinks

most college students are good people, working hard to get ahead. What upsets him is that group of students who were not raised to understand and respect other people.

He believes these young people are the result of several factors. First, he thinks they were probably raised by people who never understood concepts of respect and responsibility either. Secondly, he believes that the Vietnam War had a far more material impact on our society than we may realize. He said, "I think it moved us from a more conservative society to a more liberalized society and that liberalization has the tendency to break down some of the structures of society." Specially, he was referring to the structures in households where there are less rules and more openness and flexibility.

In the end, Mark finds that more of today's students are willing to impede on the rights of others. He recognizes that his generation engaged in activities that negatively affected others, but he believes that more and more of today's students repeat those behaviors and don't learn the necessary lessons which they present. In the context of describing the differences between himself and some of today's students, he told the following story:

> I remember one night, I was probably in my late 20s. I played trumpet in the band and I had a bunch of people over (and) at midnight I get talked into getting my trumpet out and I went out on the back patio. I lived pretty much in a residential (area) and I played revelry at midnight. One time. And felt bad about it...and I recall some of the neighbors said "what was that all about?" But I didn't persist with it, (it was) kind of isolated. But now, this stuff starts at midnight and goes into the wee hours of the morning around here. But I didn't do that because I had respect for privacy. The action is repeated (today) and I don't know if I even got all the way through revelry that night, but I played enough of it...the damage had been done.

*Jackie*

Jackie can tell a story. Animated and engaged, she weaves a good tale. Plus, she has an interesting story to tell. The problem is, where does Jackie's story begin? She was a Red Diaper Baby, that is, she was born to a socialist mother. Her father was an alcoholic who suffered from posttraumatic stress disorder (as a result of his service in Word War II). She grew up in New York City at a time when, as she says, "girls were not allowed to do things." She realized that when she was in fourth grade and it really angered her. She also viewed this revelation as the loss of her identity and in some ways she spent the next few decades searching for a stable one.

Her mother died when she was in high school and in her own words, "things really started to fall apart for me; my grades tumbled, my pot smoking got much heavier and got interspersed with heavier drugs and I start falling." She spent the next decade as an alcoholic and drug user. Blessed with a high intelligence, she managed to get a nursing degree and keep pretty steady work. She was also very involved in social activism, such as protesting, voter registration drives and peace marches.

Although the first half of her life could fill a book, in some ways, this is where the story begins. As Jackie says, "I am a person shaped by recovery." More specifically, she is a person torn down by addiction and revived and reinvented by following the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). She is truly not the same person she was prior to receiving what she calls "the gift." That gift started her on an ascent that takes her where she is today. Jackie explains:

> Most people die of the disease (of alcoholism), but I got what you call 'the gift' and began to recover. It was given to me, but I worked to keep it. I feel blessed,

> and it gives me an awesome responsibility to carry the message. My work for the rest of my life will be to carry the message of recovery and spirituality in everything that I do.

The impact AA has had on her can not be overstated. The majority of her responses to my data protocol took us back to lessons she learned in AA. "That's what AA calls...," or "AA refers to it as...," or she often said, "AA has taught me..." In the end, and most important to understanding who Jackie is today, is to know that AA opened her to a spiritual life. She said that she did not have a spiritual life prior to AA, but Buddhism now defines the way she interacts with the world. Buddhist sayings are on her office wall, she meditates several times a day, she reads from a Buddhist book each morning, and her colleagues at work call her the "Karma Queen." It is who she has become, and joyfully so. She describes her Buddhist lifestyle centered on working to be "awake" and "mindful." "You've got to be willing to hear what you are exposed to," Jackie said, and her life reflects a daily practice of hearing and honoring the voice of her higher power. This routine reflects a desire to live in a way that requires and values higher thinking. She finds that environment in the college town in which she works.

Jackie is a senior level administrator in a city that houses a large, public, Research I university. She designs policies that affect all citizens and represents the city in many of the discussions about student-related issues. She recognizes there are challenging issues in the university community in which she lives and works, but she believes it is a beacon of "paradise." She looks around the community, and in a whole series of measures, sees an absence of poverty. Jackie explains:

> There's affluence of thought, openness of mind, there's material affluence, there's spiritual affluence, there's demographic affluence - we have people from 120 nations living here...we have mosques, churches, temples, and all of them living cheek to jowl. The air is clean. The infrastructure is in great shape. The number of intact families is I'm sure higher than many, many areas of the country. There's affluence of thought, and they (college students) are responsible for much of the non-traditional affluence. Everything that makes this community paradise is the result of students and what they bring.

Jackie also recognizes that with affluence come freedom and choice and new challenges.

> Students realize they are in paradise and they feel this wave of freedom, it is at once overwhelming and frightening and liberating. That's why (problems) happen in this town. Because they are overwhelmed by freedom – by affluence in all of those spheres. My freedom begins to bump against your freedom and you then have the potential for more conflict. We have to be mindful of that.

As a way of maneuvering these freedoms, Jackie relies on the spiritual gifts that AA and Buddhism have brought to her life. She believes that society, and students in particular, would be better equipped to deal with these "higher order conflicts" if they embody the Buddhist concepts of being "awake" and "mindful." She does not believe her calling is to prophesize or enlighten other people, but instead, her calling is to be true to herself and carry the message by modeling its meaning.

## Summary

The protocol guided my journey with the participants. It provided an impetus for the narrative of each participant that was engaging, insightful, and rich. The participant profiles illustrate a participant pool that is eclectic in background (e.g,. employment and college experiences) and diverse in personality (e.g., a "New Yorker" and a child of a

"Beaver Cleaver" family). Despite these differences, the participants generally come together to speak with one voice about how they view college students. That is, they share a frame of reference of what it means to be a college student (Mezirow, 2000). The next chapter presents that frame of reference.

# CHAPTER FIVE: HOW PARTICIPANTS HAVE COME TO KNOW COLLEGE STUDENTS

## Frame of Reference

The process of data collection gathered the assumptions and beliefs that participants hold about college students (their frame of reference). It is important to understand, the primary purpose of the study is not to understand what participants know college students to be, but rather to investigate how they come to hold those beliefs. Accordingly, the following is the frame of reference that participants use in order to relate to college students. This coherent collection of beliefs and assumptions they hold about college students is followed by an explanation of the basis (themes) by which they make those judgments. Having presented those pieces as the foundation of the case, the final chapter offers an interpretation of the data.

Although most of the participants recognize that there are different types of college students, for example, non-traditional life-long learners, older students, and those who attend community college, they each structured their comments and reflections around the more stereotypical college student: a student 18-25 years of age who lives on campus early in their university experience, moves off sometime around their junior year and graduates in four to five years. These students were understood to share a number of common traits.

First of all, they were considered to be "me" oriented. That is, they do not seem to care that their behaviors or lack of action have consequences for others. Rene described some students as having "this one-dimensionality" that is "a sign of immaturity," while others, such as Ray and Mark, framed the "me" orientation as

manifesting itself in a lack of respect for community and others. Finally, Elizabeth spoke to this orientation most directly when she said,

> I think that a lot of times (college students) are very much "me" focused once again, kind of like when you were younger almost; you get back to it's all about me. "The city exists because of me." "If there wasn't the university there wouldn't be a City of East Lansing!" "I pay your salary!" That whole kind of business you go through.

The participants believe these transgressions are the result of a basic struggle with the freedom that being a young adult in college allows. As Rene illustrates the concept, college students are just beginning to understand the impact they have on the larger community, and "some students just have a lack of empathy and respect for others." Jackie, as illustrative of the participant pool, described college students' struggle with freedom in the following way:

> They realize they are in paradise and they feel this wave of freedom, at once overwhelming and frightening and liberating. That's why the things that happen in this town happen in this town. Because they are overwhelmed by the freedom and by the affluence in all of those spheres that they experience, and they just don't know how to handle it or how to draw limits.

Participants offered college students' partying behavior, the second common trait of the frame of reference, as evidence of this lack of respect for other, and of the inability to manage their freedoms. Elizabeth, the participant who works for the city in housing, said,

> A lot of younger people seem less mature and it doesn't bother them - something gets damaged it doesn't bother them – it should bother you – it should bother you a lot. If you are partying and you see a street light get broke, or a car get rolled, it should be a highly uncomfortable situation and a lot of students – a higher percentage it seems there's just an "oh well" response.

Another participant, Mark, echoed this sentiment by saying, "we partied in my day, but we did it with a different respect for surrounding neighborhoods and property

owners than what I see today." Joe, the participant who is a city police officer, put the student partying within a more general complex characterization of students when he said,

> What I think of when I see students – on one hand they have been extremely helpful (for the community)...on the other ...a lot of them are absolute pigs who don't worry about if there's a wastebasket right there, you know, a lot of them are just a pain in the ass and inconsiderate.

The participants attribute this disrespectful behavior to the affluence, the third common trait of the frame of reference, to which college students have grown accustomed. Joe, the participant who works for the city as a police officer, summarized the way participants feel when he said, "a lot of people are spoiled rotten" and have a "sense of entitlement without any merit, without earning it, except by birth." They point to students who don't care about monetary sanctions related to city ordinances. Elizabeth describes the situation by saying, "students will just pass the hat to pay for them (fines), or simply pay $500 to $1,000 and not seem to blink an eye." Participants believe this attitude stems from parents who have given students whatever they want. Mark supports this conclusion when he says, "college students have been given so much that in some ways I think they don't understand that life doesn't owe you anything." Finally, Ray, the elder participant of the group, summarized the participants' feelings of how affluence and intersects with poor student behavior when he said,

> We get overloaded with cars – they are cars most people can't afford at that age, and even at a later age. And why do they need them? The traffic offenses – the speeds goes up. You get cut off more. They are going through so fast, that when it happens (accident) it's going to be awful.

He continues by saying,

> And talking about relations - try to reach the kid that's got $500 to spend on a weekend, and wants to do it in the bar. That's a really hard person for me to find any time to deal with.

Even though they find these behaviors disturbing and inappropriate, they seem to be forgiving of most of this behavior because they recognize that college students are experiencing what Jackie called a "pivotal" part of life where they are experimenting with different values and behaviors "that has the potential to awaken higher thinking and questioning." In other words, the fourth common trait of the frame of reference is that all the participants agree that college is one of the most important times in someone's life. They believe it is important because it is a time where mistakes are made, and hopefully important lessons are learned. As Elizabeth put it, "I mean it's your first time away from home, of course you're experimenting, so you don't always stay on that very straight and narrow path." Even though they don't always maintain behaviors that meet community standards, they are expected to make progress. Participants, as described by Jackie, see college as a time "that people get to experience who they are and who they want to be and to identify their own personal individual gifts" and that by the time they graduate they should be a person who is more community and society focused. Anna further elaborate on this common trait when she said,

> They are at a point where they are forming their adult lives, and they're forming their roles in society, and they're formulating their concepts of how society works, and just think of the power; how powerful this one four year period is in their lives.

Unfortunately, there is a sense that because of the affluence, fewer and fewer students are coming prepared to take advantage of that opportunity. Rene, the participant

who is a committed mother and rental property owner, summarized the theme by saying, "the teenage years are the toddler stages of adulthood, and in some respects that's what college is too - a protective shell (where) you can wallow in idealism and try on personas that they want to be" and hopefully there's development and growth during the experience.

Although participants believe students are affluent and privileged, they hold sympathy for them in the same breath. The final common trait that makes up this frame of reference is that participants feel students are under a lot of pressure and in a high stress environment. They believe, as Joe articulated, "students are more under the gun" than they were, and that there are "a myriad of complexities that they have to adjust to and deal with."

As Rene said, there is a general feeling that "the parents of students are so busy promoting their own (agenda)" that they need other authority figures to keep them in line. Rene continued by describing the college experience as "throwing somebody over a cliff and hoping that when they hit the water they swim." As representative of the other participants, Jackie finds it "sad and tragic" that "most of the young people coming to college go into these huge classes where they just don't get the opportunity to be seen as an individual and to be acknowledged as an individual and to be helped as an individual (through) mentoring."

Finally, the last theme illustrates the complexity of the participants' understandings of college students. That is, on one hand they appreciate and genuinely like students, while on the other hand they express vehement anger and disappointment about student behaviors. Joe further elaborates on this when he says,

> I've read a couple of quotes in the paper about how they are talking about students rioting because they can no longer play beer pong during tailgating...and it's like, you've got thousands of people being killed over in the Middle East and if I can't play beer pong I'm gonna raise hell. It just amazes me. But they're smart. But I don't know.

Jackie, echoing other participants' feelings, brings several themes together when she says,

> There is a war in Iraq going on, but yet in this town, a kind of innocence still lives - to me, that's remarkable to have a community that can hold both concepts simultaneously. That can take the issue of war that's happening on another side of the world so seriously that people are stenciling commentary on the sidewalks – have that thought going on, at the same time as the thought of sorority recruitment – that's an affluent society.

## Summary of the Frame of Reference

As the participants describe students, you can almost picture the student. There they are, stepping out of their new SUV, cell phone to the ear, talking about how stressed they are about an upcoming exam. They have a political bumper sticker on their car, but they didn't vote in the last election. They complain that the city is out to get them, but they attended a house party last night (not realizing that it woke up the young children next door at two in the morning). They are spoiled in that they lack little materialistically, but they are in great need of mentorship. This same person is affluent, apathetic, and self-absorbed, as well as helpful, smart, and engaged. They are shaping their life, while having the time of their life.

## Understanding the Frame of Reference

What has contributed to the formation of this frame of reference? What is the basis from which they are making these judgments? What is the lens they are using? In sum, how have the community representatives of this study come to know what it means to be a college student?

Although it is fairly complicated, three themes emerged from the study. More specifically, those three themes peel a bit deeper to understand more fully the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the participants and how those influence their understandings about college students. The following themes are explanatory in the sense that they provide some insight into how the participant's understanding of themselves influences how they have come to understand college students. The descriptions are not interpretative, but representative of the findings of the study. Following the more full description of the themes, these thematic links will prove important, as in the final chapter I will interpret how these underlying themes relate to unconscious beliefs and assumptions.

All seven participants, in one form or another, spoke about the importance of the following influences in their understanding of college students:

- Family – they spoke passionately and frequently about a moral sense instilled by their family that shape their assumptions and expectations related to college student behavior.
- Their Own College Experience – how they related to students was a reflection of their college experiences partying, studying, and developing.
- Their Own Socio-Economic Context – they feel the level of affluence has increased since their own young adulthood experiences.

These three themes run across the data collected from the participants. They represent a more complicated representation of how they have come to understand college students. It is important to note that the interview protocol was designed to elicit

beliefs and opinions that would explore the participant's own college experience and their early childhood and family experiences. Those were intentional choices and reflect the theory of depth psychology (Singer, 1994; Whitmont, 1969). The final theme, the affluence of today's college students, was a surprise. The interview protocol was not designed to explore that area. I did not anticipate that being a dominant theme. Nonetheless, each participant offered the affluence of college students as central to the way in which they understand them. A more rich description of each theme will be presented.

### *Family*

Native American writer Linda Hogan (1995) said, "Walking, I am listening to a deeper way. Suddenly all my ancestors are behind me. Be still, they say. Watch and listen. You are the result of the love of thousands." That quote beautifully illustrates the kind of impact family has had on the participants in this study. All of the participants described their childhood and adolescent experiences as central to how they've come to relate to college students. They spent considerable amounts of time in their lifeline drawings depicting these times. They brought in artifacts that connected themselves to these times, and they told colorful stories about events that happened 30 or 40 years earlier.

In summary, they pointed to these early experiences as being key in instilling the morals and values (moral sense) that shape the standard by which they judge the behaviors of others. These were broadly captured by a moral sense and illustrated through descriptions of knowing "right from wrong," having a "strong work ethic," and

not wanting to disappoint the family." All of these were indicative of the importance of a moral sense that their family experiences instilled in them.

For example, Elizabeth talked passionately about "not wanting to disappoint" her parents, while Mark said he was "taught some pretty tough work ethics and taught morals, ethics, and the difference between right and wrong." There was general agreement that these ethics were the lens by which they made decisions in college and provide the foundation of their criticism of today's college students. Elizabeth illustrates that when she says,

> I grew up in a very community-oriented place. It was small, so everybody knew what you were doing. I mean I think it gave you as a kid a sense of responsibility because if you were doin' somethin' wrong you got caught. Your mom and dad were gonna know, your friends were gonna know, your dad was gonna yell at you for embarrassing the family.

Furthermore, this "strong sense of family" impacted the participant's behavior in college. Elizabeth explained this as well by saying,

> I don't think students from a strong family feel a need to experiment as much (when they get to college). They come with a cocoon. You don't need to find yourself as much, because there's a portion of you that's already anchored somewhere. Maybe you don't feel like you have to do what the other guy does to fit in, because that other guy just went two steps too far for you, (and) you know that your mom back home would be going "whoa! I am so disappointed in you.

The central element within the family theme was that participants saw their early family experiences as the time in their life that shaped the beliefs and values that are still central to how they relate to others. To be more specific, several of the participants described early life experiences with family as a time during which they were taught the

difference between right and wrong. It was this time during which they were instilled with the sense to know when they were, in the words of Mark and Elizabeth, "crossing the line" from right to wrong. Crossing that line was understood to be times that you did not show respect for others, be it respect for their opinions, rights or property. They understand inappropriate behaviors to be defined by community standards. To be clear, those standards are not derived from law or ordinance; they are a higher standard that one should meet. For example, a person's behavior should never reach such an unsuitable level that requires legal intervention. The line of reasonableness had been crossed much earlier, and if people were raised with the proper morals and values they would never require government regulation to moderate their behaviors. The participants believed that more and more of today's students are pushing and crossing that line. For example, Elizabeth said, and "the kid has a high sense of right and wrong and responsibility and working hard will be the one to treat those in the community with more respect, and I think that generally comes from parents."

Therefore, they generally attribute poor student behavior to poor parenting. For example, Rene said, "you can tell if the students have had good relations with their parents" because they've been "given responsibility and understand how to respect others." Unfortunately, Rene notes that a lot of "parents are so busy promoting their own agenda ...a lot of them are just self-advancing" while the kids are "just impoverished emotionally."

Ironically, even though the worst of the college students are "impoverished emotionally," as Rene says, they also enjoy more affluence than the participants' generation. Although this theme is more fully developed later, Mark elaborates on it

when he says, "I think some of the young people today, with the lifestyle and affluence that we have in the United States, have been given so much that in some ways I think they don't understand that life doesn't owe you anything." Ray echoed this sentiment when he said that "kids (college students) have grown up for whatever reason with parents who allow too much self-indulgence – they've got too much to spend and they've got too little to do that's really productive as they are growing up."

### *Their Own College Experience*

For each of the participants, their own college experience seems to provide a baseline from which they are judging the experiences of today's students. Although there were clear differences in the college experiences of the participants, each of them used the lens of their undergraduate experience to relate and define college students today. The participants' experiences differed from one another in major, university type (two of the participants attended community college prior to attending a four year public university), success (e.g., grades), and level of extracurricular engagement. Although further research is necessary to confirm, these differences between participants seemed to have little impact; a common understanding of college students emerged despite these differences. This claim is based on the similarities of the stories they shared about their own college experience. These stories illustrated a common experience (e.g., parental influence, academics, maturation, friends, and partying) that provided a lens through which they understand today's college student. That lens seems to highlight the following notions: respect, moral sense, a process of change, activism, and a process of

adjustment. Each of one of these will be supported separately, but each under the general theme of the participant's own college experience.

The following quote, given by Mark, is representative of the way in which the participants described their college experience and how it relates to the respect today's college students have for others.

> I grew up in this town. I partied in this town. I partied in some of the same structures that kids are partying in today. But we did it with a different respect for surrounding neighbors and property owners than what I see today.

Elizabeth echoed this sentiment, when she said, "I drank, I partied, I just make the assumption that that was normal, and probably most students were doing the same thing, but today the line's gotten pushed."

Several participants referred to that "line" that they knew when they were crossing. The line was framed as Elizabeth and Mark both described as "knowing the difference between right and wrong" and feeling "a real sense of discomfort when you do something that crosses that line". Generally, the essence of this can be captured by the participants' feeling they had a moral sense that provided a guide for the behaviors during their own college experience. Therefore, even though some of the participants recognized that they crossed this line and behaved in ways that were both destructive to themselves and the community, they justified those experiences in two ways. First, for one group of the participants those damaging behaviors were rare and seen as an isolated mistake. For the others, specifically those who said partying was a large part of their college experience, they presented this behavior as evidence of their maturation and

development. In fact, Joe described his experience as "a story of transformation, from partying and alcohol being central," to deciding "I gotta do something with my life." This participant's change was dramatic, but illustrated another sub-theme (process of change) of the participant's college experiences. Joe went from being on academic probation, to quitting college, to returning to the same university in less than a year and finally graduating with a grade point average over one point higher than when he left. This type of transformation was not indicative of all the participants, but there was general agreement that college is a time where people learn from early mistakes. Rene provides another example, when she said, "college is about the idea of maturation - period of separation to gain a true sense of maturation that recognizes interdependency."

Participants also believe the collegiate experience is a time when issues are debated, political opinions are explored, and action is taken to voice those opinions. This could be described as a general sense of student activism. Several of the participants, like Anna, said that they recalled attending political rallies, writing letters to influence social policy, and discussing politics in their apartment or dorm room. Three of the participants (Jackie, Anna, and Mark) specifically referred to this social and political engagement as central to their defining the beliefs and values that shaped the rest of their lives. Jackie said she remembers as a young person being an active "beatnik - which comes before hippie, phenomenon of 1950s – we were interested in voter registration drives, peace marches, and so on." Later in our interview she illustrates the kind of connection participants are making between their experiences and those of today's college student, when she says,

> We have a community that can hold concepts simultaneously. That can take the issue of war that's happening on another side of the world so seriously that people are stenciling commentary on the sidewalks – have that thought going on, at the same time as the thought of sorority requirement.

Finally, three of the participants (Elizabeth, Rene, and Joe) recalled their own struggles to adjust to university life. That is, most of the participants talked about their own process of adjustment that took place during their early college years. They talked about coming from small, rural towns that were working-class (defined both socio-economically and by attitude) and entering a university environment that was challenging. It was more challenging academically than their high school experience, and it was challenging to make new friends. Anna recalled her first day of classes at the university she was attending as traumatic, because she couldn't find where her class was, ended up in the wrong classroom, and she realized, "your on your own honey." At that point she says "you grab yourself by the gut" and do what you have to do, and eventually, "everything got easier and I knew I could make it. They attributed their eventual success to having what both Rene and Elizabeth described as an "anchor" that gave them the self-confidence and will to graduate. That anchor came from their family instilling that moral sense that was described earlier under the family theme.

### *Their Own Socio-Economic Context*

Participants made the connection between behaviors that do not meet their understanding of the community standards and the increase of affluence in our society. Participants felt that affluence, a general sense of entitlement, is pervasive among many of today's college students. As a group, they defined affluence as more than just

monetary wealth. Without prompt, Jackie offered the following definition of affluence that seemed to capture an agreed upon essence of its meaning:

> Affluence is a notable absence of poverty in a whole series of measures. There's affluence of thought, openness of mind, there's material affluence, there's spiritual affluence, there's demographic affluence...we have people from 120 nations living here...we have mosques, churches, temples...and all of them living cheek to jowl. The air is clean; the infrastructure is in great shape. The number of intact families is I'm sure higher than many, many areas of the country. There's affluence of thought – which is a great tolerance for different kinds of thought.

Overall, participants feel more and more college students come with affluence. That is, today's students have more of what Anna called "creature comforts," be it nicer cars, more sophisticated technology, or an ability to travel all around the world. Rene illustrated this sense when she said, "today's students have a sense of world weariness from traveling, and somehow the experience is hollow." In other words, there was a collective sense that although students were well traveled they were valuing the richness of those cultural experiences.

Participants also depicted college students as having a privileged lifestyle that permits them cell phones, expensive housing, discretionary cash, and fancy bikes. In representing the college student experience participants took pictures of motorized scooters, multiple students engaged on cell phones, expensive off-campus housing, and store windows where students do their shopping. As they described these luxuries, they also described students as having a lack of moral clarity to appreciate and value these. Rene described this as students being "sophisticated but hollow."

Participants find evidence of this affluence in those materialistic elements just mentioned, but they also find it in the attitude of students. They point to how students relate to fines as one example of the impact of that affluence. As Elizabeth said, wealth allows students to pay fines for noise violations or parking tickets "without even blinking a eye."

Interestingly, most of my participants were parents and talked about wanting to do what Joe described as "give their kids everything that would give them an edge". Therefore, in the same breath of being critical of the role of affluence, they would also describe it as something to "be aspired to," as Mark described it. Mark further elaborated when he said that "affluence isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it's all how you deal with it." He points to affluence as providing more options for children in the form of sports, such as soccer, gymnastics, swimming, and dance (those activities not afforded to him as a child). More broadly, there was a sense among participants that affluence affords students the ability to take for granted basic needs, such as shelter and food, and in turn requires them to deal with higher order thinking related to individual growth and becoming a positive member of a community. Jackie illustrated this point when she said,

> We are a relatively affluent community. That is, there is a notable absence of poverty in a whole series of measures - there's affluence of thought, openness of mind, there's material affluence, there's spiritual affluence, there's demographic affluence; we have people from 120 nations living here. We have mosque, churches, temples and all of them living check to jowl. (The) air is clean; the infrastructure is in great shape the number of intact families is I'm sure higher than many, many areas of the country. There's affluence of thought, great tolerance for different kinds of thought it this community.

Therefore, as Jackie continues, "the struggle of today's college student is to get beyond the materialistic phase of development" and develop skills necessary to deal with

the "higher order conflicts" that come with having their basic needs met. Another way of saying this is that today's students have to learn to navigate the venues of freedom that are afforded by affluence. They have to learn how to elicit meaning from freedoms, be it broadly the freedom of opportunity, or more specifically the freedom of thought, travel, or expression.

Participants feel students are doing a poor job of navigating these freedoms. For example, Ray said,

> If I outlive my current doctor I don't want one of these brats taking over for him. Would you want your lawyer to be one of these kids? Or your broker or your CPA or someone you put a lot of trust in? I'm not out to solve society's problems, but I think affluence has brought a weakening influence to the country and obviously young people are the source for the future and that's too bad.

Although most of the participants do not draw that stark of a negative conclusion about students, there is genuine concern about parenting practices. Mark provides another example of the general sense that parents are doing a poor job when he says,

> Having respect for others - It's get to the very beginning over here (pointing to his childhood) – parents - you have to respect others' opinions, others' rights, others' property and as individual within society we don't do that. We don't respect other opinions. (We) should be able to agree to disagree (and we) should be able to work things out for the most part.

Nearly all the participants echoed this sentiment. That is, a moral sense comes from parents and family, but many of today's students do not have the same moral sense that the participants feel they were instilled with at a young age.

Furthermore, they feel students do not appreciate the opportunities affluence is affording them, and instead, are not limiting the expression of their freedoms. They are not respecting the rights of others. They slam the doors of their $50,000 car at three in

the morning. They purchase houses to get around rental restrictions. They buy their way out of violations. They are consuming wealth and being wasteful. As Joe summarized it, "a lot of people are spoiled rotten."

## Limitations

The rich qualitative data provide meaningful data to uncover the life experiences and individual sense-making processes that relate to community representatives' understanding of college students. Although the qualitative nature of the study, particularly the small sample, makes it impossible to generalize these findings, it does provide a deep and complex understanding about how participants have come to know what it means to be a college student that is the hallmark of quality qualitative research (Fey & Fontana, 1998). In considering the findings, it is important to recognize the limitations of the data collection and analysis.

Although in-depth interviewing has been the primary means of data collection, secondary interviews of students were also used to enrich the study. These interviews proved to be validating at times, but more often unfruitful. I believe that is indicative of three factors. First of all, I only spent approximately one hour with each student. That time spent together was not sufficient for unearthing the deeper issues at hand in the study.

Secondly, as I should have suspected, hints of the students' psychological profile bled into our interactions. Although the interview protocol specifically called for reflections regarding the primary participant of the study, the beliefs, values and emotive experiences of the students colored our interactions. Finally, the nature of the interaction

between the students and the primary participants of this study were generally (with only one exception) short-term, rigidly professional, and framed by power (in some case, primary participants currently having considerable positional authority that impeded critical reflection by students).

Similar to the psychic synergy that colored my interaction with students, my role as interviewer affected the data collected. As Jung (1963) would suspect, who I am affected what the participants brought to the table. The inclination of participants was to speak positively about college students. For example, even when they would tell a story that was not positive about students, the participants would be quick to qualify the statement by saying things, such as "but I realize that not all college students are like that." Furthermore, in completing the photo elicitation component, two of the participants recognized the ill behaviors of some college students (e.g., liter, noise, alcohol abuse, etc.) and actively avoided representing those characteristics as a valid rendering of a college student experience in their pictures. So, even though they would recognize that some of their student neighbors were engaging in unlawful and disrespectful acts, and verbally expressed their displeasure of those activities, they consciously refused to include them in their pictures. There are more than a handful of theories and explanations for this behavior, and understanding this could be a study entirely on its own. I will offer just a brief explanation that seems to fit the particular aspects of this study.

There is evidence that the participants identified me as a member of the college student population. In other words, their understanding of college students originated from a mental model that included me as a college student. Indeed, I am a college

student, and have worked with them in somewhat traditional ways in the community (having served with them as a graduate assistant). But, I have never lived near any of them, and their student neighbors do not share my characteristics as a graduate student in his late 20s. Despite that, several participants made remarks that included me in their generalizations of college students. For example, one participant remarked, "I have interacted with a lot of college students like you who want to be active in the community." I believe that given their personal identification with me as the interviewer, it sometimes made it difficult for them to speak negatively about college students. Even given this limitation, overall the length and depth of the interviews were able to transcend this shortcoming. I am confident in saying this because many of the stories captured in the final two sessions were much more graphic and colorful representations of both positive and negative experiences. In addition, the level of psychic depth, evidenced by voice inflections, body movements (e.g., pounding the table, standing up, and unusually active hand gestures), and word choice (e.g., uncharacteristic use of foul language) indicates emotionally powerful areas that reflect deeper held beliefs (Singer, 1994). Although anecdotal, these explanations offer a more full understanding of the data collection. Further research is necessary to understand the impact of the interviewer on studies such as these. As well as others, the method of triangulation would offer a somewhat more full explanation of the impact of interviewer characteristics on subject selectivity of the data provided.

## Summary

The three themes presented in this chapter serve as lenses through which the participants have come to know students. These themes provide a filter for how they understand and judge college students. The overarching theme is the family; it symbolizes the time in their life that taught them a moral sense that provides the basis for how they judge the behaviors of others, including what they do in college and how they manage the freedom and affluence characterized by society today. Consciously they have related these behaviors to how they understand students. Recognizing the stated limitations, the final chapter further explores these themes, and others, to understand the unconscious aspects of how participants form beliefs, assumptions, and judgments about college students. In the end, the final chapter proposes that these unconscious aspects are found in a mythology that is structured and identifiable. The final chapter will define and explore the implications of such a mythology.

# CHAPTER SIX: INTERPRETATIONS

## Arguing for the Presence of the Unconscious

The previous two chapters presented data that linked how the participants have consciously related their own life experiences to how they understand college students. The participants used the three themes of family, their own college experience, and their own socio-economic context to mediate and color how they have come to know college students. To be clear, those themes that emerged from the data provide a lens through which the participant's process of meaning making takes place.

In this final chapter, I will argue for the presence of unconscious elements that reflect (or manifest as) emotive centers of the psyche below awareness that manifest themselves in feelings of tension, conflict, and ambivalence (Jung, 1958; Singer, 1994). Supported by a base of literature (e.g., Jung 1963, Whitmont 1969, and Singer, 1994) these emotive areas will be presented as evidence of the unconscious.

Furthermore, it will be argued that these unconscious elements are evoking a structured set of beliefs and assumptions that come together to form a mythology of the college student. The participants reflect a culture that has repeated the story of the college student, thus bringing forth a collective understanding (myth) (Bennet, 1961). The concern is not whether the myth is true or not, but rather to understand how the myth is structured and why it holds such power.

I will then speculate that the evoked myth in this study can be placed within the larger parent/child myth (Jung, 1954; Singer, 1994). This study points to a largely unconscious process of mythology in which the participant (and community) is parent, while the student is child. In the end, I speculate that their style of "parenting"

(masculine versus feminine) is in conflict as a reflection of our society's struggle with the emerging feminine voice versus the established patriarchal structure (Bondurant, Donat, & White, 2001; Fine and Carney, 2001; Maraecek, 2001; Woollett and Marshall, 2001; Singer, 1994).

Following the presentations of these theoretical implications, I will briefly speak to the practical ways in which the lessons of this study can be put into use.

### *Defining the Unconscious*

Jung (1958) described the unconscious by making a division between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious (Bennet, 1961). This division illustrates repressed psychic elements that have been acquired through personal experience (personal unconscious), and those that are from what Whitmont called the "collective storehouse of mankind" (collective unconscious). (Whitmont, 1969, p. 38).

The common way in which the unconscious is used in today's vernacular seems to reflect the personal unconscious aspects of the definition. The following interpretations will rely more heavily on the collective unconscious. Bennet (1961) speaks to the collective unconscious when he writes,

> As a member of a community the individual is not circumscribed...(but) is a repository of collective attributes. He may look upon these unlearned activities as his private property because he cherishes and uses them with personal satisfaction...nevertheless, those instincts, so personal in manifestation, so essential to life, are part of the constitution of everyone, and cannot be classed as personal acquisitions.

In sum, the collective unconscious is often manifest as sets of beliefs, assumptions, values, and actions that are shared among a group of people. Therefore,

even though they are wrapped in motifs of the individual, they are from what Whitmont calls the "mythological layer of the psyche" (Whitmont, 1969, p. 38). More simply stated, they are the common myths that undergird the story of humanity. They are the hero myth, or the mother myth, or religious myths (Whitmont, 1969). Again, research of this type (depth psychology and the like) is not primarily concerned with the truthfulness of these myths, but focuses on understanding the power they have to influence people.

In the hopes of more deeply understanding the collective unconscious and its mythical essence, a few basic tenants will be reviewed. These tenants are based largely on the work of Singer (1992) and Whitmont (1969). As well as being the theoretical assumptions of the unconscious, these tenants also provide a guide for identifying the unconscious. In other words, they are the clues one finds in the presence of the unconscious (Jung, 1958; Singer, 1994; Whitmont, 1969). Following the brief outline of these tenants, evidence will be provided from the data that demonstrates that these tenants are present in this study. The following are the most basic tenants of the collective unconscious (Whitmont, 1969):

1. The environment evokes or activates the archetypal energies within the unconscious.
2. This activation is manifest in images that reflect highly emotional energy fields.
3. As these energy fields take shape, they form non-rational patterns.
4. These patterns tend to correspond to mythological themes, or timeless stories, and either complement or compensate for the narrow viewpoint of the conscious.

In summary, the collective unconscious has distinguishable characteristics that are descriptive and observable. Manifestation of the unconscious is made evident through behaviors, assumptions, and beliefs that display tension, ambivalence, and paradoxes. These behaviors, assumptions and beliefs more or less coalesce into patterns, such as

myths. These myths blend with conscious elements to inform an individual's process of meaning making. We might regard myths as motifs of meaning making.

Do we find the presence of such myths in the participants of this study? Are we able to point to a myth that reflects a collective understanding of college students? In short, I believe we do see evidence of a collective story that is brought together into a myth of the college student. The following section attempts to provide evidence for that conclusion.

### *Evidence of the Unconscious*

Given those basic tenants of the unconscious, if we are able to find illustrative examples from the participants of each of those tenants, we have some ground from which to claim that unconscious elements are present in these seven participants. In fact, I believe a careful read of what has already been presented in the previous two chapters illustrates such evidence. In this chapter evidence will be presented to correspond to each of the four tenants.

The literature and data from this study have been based on the assumption that there is tension among community representatives and their student neighbors. Broadly, evidence was presented that demonstrates that these tensions are not unique to the university community context in this study. More specifically, and in direct support of the first two tenants of the unconscious (emotive fields of energy and emotions, such as tension), the participants reflected that emotion and tension in a variety of ways. The following are a few quotes from participants that illustrate the level of emotion and tension they feel is present in their university community.

Jackie framed the tension in her university community as citizens' inability to manage expanded levels of freedom. With emotion (while sitting at the edge of her chair using active hand gestures, animated facial expressions, and a raised tone of voice), she described the situation like this,

> As with any freedoms, my freedom bumps against your freedoms and (that's where the conflict occurs). Conflict is inherent in human society, so I wouldn't call it a drawback (of living in a university community), but I would say that the more freedoms you have the more potential for conflict. You have to be mindful of that. Here our conflict has a hundred venues, because of all of the freedoms we have. We have to be mindful to that. We have to be prepared to deal with that. We have to develop within the populace the skills necessary to deal with those higher order conflicts that will inevitably come about when you have this level of freedom.

Mark described his frustration and disappointment with how his university community has managed the level of conflict. He said,

> There is a small percentage, but unfortunately ever increasing percentage, of the college age students that simply don't get it...and I think that they have come from environments or lifestyles, because of the affluence, and I'm not talking rich people, but we have a very affluent society, just candidly...so when you get that number of people who don't get it, (who) don't understand how to be citizens in a community, and (how to) respect the rights of others - they create not only a problem for themselves and a problem for the community, but they foster this image that all college age students are bad, and there in, in my opinion, is the crux of the conflict, the crux of the challenge.

Finally, Ray summarized the nature of the community conflict when he said,

> The best you can get with some of them (college students) is a tentative truce. The assumption that you are going to become friendly and have them in your house for apple pie is dreaming. If the students would just lower their profile, much less knocking on your door and to say "hi, I'm so and so, I'm moving in next door over here." I would be shocked if anybody did that.

These comments are reflective of a participant pool that believes they live in a community environment where tension and conflict are the norm. They not only point to

examples of this conflict (e.g., noise ordinances and riots), but they *feel* the conflict. In telling these stories, they become animated, talk faster, rise out of their chair, and change their voice tones to reflect anger, fear, and apprehension. In that sense, they demonstrate the emotional nature of their feelings. The tension of the community is not outside of them. As the previous quotes illustrate, they feel a part of that conflict and tension. In the language of the literature, those feelings of tension are found in emotionally dynamic fields (Singer, 1994).

One of those fields of emotion is ambivalence. In analyzing the data, I found the participants reflect a paradox of sorts. In one breath they exhibit disappoint and anger toward college students, while later, the same participant, would exhibit empathy and affection for students. In talking about college students, Joe said it most succinctly when he offered this summary,

> On one hand they have been extremely helpful, but on the other a lot of them are absolute pigs who don't worry about if there's a wastebasket right there, you know, a lot of them are just a pain in the ass; inconsiderate.

Joe's comment illustrates a common sense of ambivalence that the participants feel toward students. Sometimes that ambivalence would be framed in one paragraph, while other times it would show through over our extended conversations. I'll offer a few quotes from the participants that illustrate this ambivalence (two of these quotes are part of the photo elicitation exercise).

As Rene was describing what each of her pictures meant she began to talk about what she called the "inconsistency" in the behavior of students. For example, one of her pictures had her son and husband dressed up in costumes for an event they were attending. She said that this picture reflected the "different personalities" that students

try on, like costumes, during their time in college. She went on to show me pictures that attempted to capture the contradictory nature of student behavior. For example, a few of her pictures symbolized the academic nature of the college experience (e.g., students studying), while a few others demonstrated what she called the "excessive" and "risk taking" behavior of students" (e.g., students cheering at a university basketball game). Overall, the pictures reflected her own ambivalence towards college students. During the session we talked about her pictures, she elaborated on her feelings when she said,

> They (college students) try on their different people that they want to be - act awful in some respects, trying out their sexuality, try out different morals, different ethics...You wonder why so many of them act so strangely or like they don't have accountability. A lot of it is trying on different costumes...There is that inconsistency. They often will push their limits, be risk takers and they are excessive. That's why you have the beer cans all over and stuff like that; again, the theme is pushing the limits. But, (it also) shows the whimsical, fun-loving, spontaneous side of them. I love that about them, but spontaneous can be impulsive. It sweeps them away; let events sweep them away as opposed to being in control.

Rene went on to summarize her thoughts by saying, "while excessive, they are also reflective, and there is another side to all these kids that is very touching, (because) they have such a soft spot, (and) are role models to young kids." Rene came full circle, from questioning the morals and ethics of college students, to appreciating and admiring students for being role models to children. Rene's feelings were not unique.

In talking about the photo elicitation exercise (geared toward capturing an image of students), Jackie's decisions reflected a certain ambivalence toward college students. As she pulled out her photos, I asked Jackie to describe how she had decided on certain pictures. Jackie answered by saying,

> My first impulse was to take pictures of Friday and Saturday nights in downtown; drunks puking, people falling down, crowds of kids, people getting carted off in

> paddy wagons. That was my first impulse. Then I had a kind of epiphany, because when I was thinking about doing that I was riding home on my bicycle – I sort of looked up from this linear line that I was on and I was riding past (the park), and it was such an idealistic scene, with people playing volleyball, Frisbee, (and) people laying on the lawn. I suddenly realized, wait a minute! You know, "that first vision that you had is so skewed by your prejudices, so instead of following your prejudices, why don't you just open your eyes and look around you and see what you see." So, what I ended up doing is just taking pictures of what I saw, rather than what I thought, essentially a day in (the city). So instead of following my mind, I followed my senses.

In speaking about her choice of pictures, Anna recalled a similar process. She recounted it by saying,

> I'll tell you one thing I actively avoided (taking) pictures of all the cups in one of our neighbors' yards. And I can imagine that some of the people that I've worked with, some of the permanent residents that I've worked with, might have a photo essay just about the garbage and the parking violations. I think that's a legitimate part of it, but if I'm looking at what it's like to be a student, I also thought I don't notice that very much. I do remember consciously thinking, I'm not including that. I purposely excluded that, so I guess that means it's significant.

Joe, the participant who is a police officer, echoed much the same sentiment about college students. He said,

> I've read a couple of quotes in the paper about how they are talking about students rioting because they can no longer play beer pong during tailgating...and it's like, you've got thousands of people being killed over in the Middle East and if I can't play beer pong I'm gonna raise hell. It just amazes me. But they're smart. But I don't know.

In summary, participants recognize students contribute to the community as role models. They recognize that students are intelligent, loving, and energetic. On the other hand, they find students to be inconsiderate, excessive, and disrespectful. In the end, they seem to hold both opinions in their head. Although I cannot speculate as to when they employ each, more importantly for this research, it lends support to the claim that

unconscious dynamics are contributing to how they make sense of what it means to be a college student.

In the end, it seems reasonable to claim that unconscious elements are at play in how the community representatives are relating to, and understanding, college students. Given the presence of these basic elements of the unconscious (i.e., emotive areas, tension, ambivalence and paradox), it can be argued that the unconscious is manifest. Then, the question becomes, do they speak in one voice? In terms of the participants' process of meaning making as it relates to college students, do these unconscious beliefs and assumptions reflect a kind of structured, shared pattern?

The previous two chapters presented findings that did just that – came together as a shared frame of reference. That frame of reference, delineated in chapter five, presents a coherent collection of beliefs and assumptions that characterize the participants' understanding of college students. Furthermore, supported by the data, that frame of reference was unpacked, so to speak, to reveal three themes that began to explain the emotional and dynamic beliefs and assumptions that undergird that frame of reference.

More simply stated, this study has been an exercise in digging deeper and deeper to find meaning that reflects more than just consciousness. From the protocol to the analysis, the research hopes to locate and embrace the unconscious influences that affect the formulation of how students are understood by community representatives. In service of that goal, I have used language and practices that are rich in theory to describe and embrace the symbolic nature of human understanding. The challenge of this research, particularly in offering interpretations of the data, is to take that theory and research and bring it to the reader in a way that is understandable and compelling. Specifically, the

goal is to explain how these unconscious emotional dynamics have influenced the way the seven participants have come to understand college students.

The findings suggest that the community representatives have a collective image of the college student. In the language of depth psychology, there is a compelling symbolic nature to the way participants understand college students. As reviewed in this chapter, a case can be made for the presence of unconscious emotional dynamics that are influencing the way these participants are relating to, and understanding, college students. Now, in order to understand and interpret these unconscious emotional dynamics, it is helpful to more clearly describe how they come together and correspond to mythological themes. As the participants' reflections come together to form a collective image of the college student, the concept of myth can be used to frame, and thereby understand, this image.

## Evidence of Myth

The community members of this study reflect a powerful myth. The way they understand students to be (their frame of reference) brings together more than just student behavior. There are several pieces of evidence from the findings that support the interpretation that participants have presented a student myth. First, the way people understand college students reflected their own narrative (life history). In other words, who they understand themselves to be reflects how they have come to know students. Their narrative becomes the lens through which they create the student myth.

For example, a number of the participants drew on cultural myths, such as the Protestant work ethic, to develop their narratives. They identified themselves with

socially vague principals, such as character, respect, integrity and right and wrong. These were not nebulous in their minds, instead they held great meaning when placed clearly in the context of their life experiences. For example, Ray said,

> (The poor behavior of students) has something to do with the values of the families that they come from; they've not been taught that there are limits. Not been taught to respect other people; they want all kinds of rights and what have you, but they don't think about...other people's. I just see it as a change (in the character of people). The word character is kind of a squishy word, but there's a change in the way of what they think is okay.

Ray is referring to limits and respect in powerful ways that reflect a narrative that has given them meaning. This becomes important in order to understand why Ray feels the way he feels about students. It places his judgments and understandings of students within a more full context – the context of his life.

Mark provides another personal story that sheds light on the myth of the college student. Mark speaks passionately about work ethic. In his words, he believes that he "was taught some pretty tough work ethics" when he was young. When I asked him to describe what a work ethic was, he said, "it means to improve yourself and put the time and effort in." In the context of conversations, you could sense Mark unpacking the importance of work ethic to mean much more. His experiences provided a baseline understanding of what it means to work for something – what it means to earn something. In that context, the reader can gain much more from his following statement,

> I think some of the young people today, with the lifestyle and affluence that we have in the United States, have been given so much that in some ways I think they don't understand that life doesn't owe you anything. We have to make our own way.

Jackie's story also reflected the importance of a personal lens in creating a student myth to make sense of the world. If presented with the description of a student myth, I believe she would agree that it is a reflection of her current inner-conflicts. In her words, "how I react to someone is almost entirely about my spiritual condition." That statement has power. It says what the other examples only allude to. That is, more than empirical evidence is present as they shape their judgments and beliefs about college students. Their imagined past experiences (i.e., how they have come to understand their life history) are working hand-in-hand with reality (what they are currently faced with) to shape an understanding of the world. In this case, the understanding that has taken shape is a student myth.

The second piece of evidence that supports the claim that the participants have created a student myth is the disproportionate presence of highly emotional stories (e.g., student riot). In other words, the student myth is not meant to be a literal picture of students, but reflects the highly emotional triggers that played an important role in shaping their understanding of reality. The emotional trigger that was most often referred to by participants was a student riot. All of the participants experienced what they referred to as a "student riot" approximately 5 years ago.

More than 10,000 people (a majority of whom were of college age) participated in the riots and engaged in destructive behaviors, such as flipping police cars, breaking storefront windows and burnings couches in the middle of the street. When it was over, there was over $100,000 worth of damage (Burden, 1999). This event seems to have touched an emotional core for the participants. For example, in comparing their own young adult experiences they would use their memories of the riot as the marker for

current student behavior. Ray illustrated this point when he said, "when I was a young man, when students needed to be serious they could; when they wanted to party, they partied, but not in the way that set anything on fire, or caused any wenches to blaze their brassieres." Although not in name, and not prompted, that is a clear reference to the student riot.

Elizabeth demonstrated a similar propensity to use the riot as a marker for today's student behavior when she said,

> There's an awful lot (of students) that don't have that same level of getting uncomfortable it seems like. I mean, for example, the riots we had, it's kind of amazing, even though it was a pretty small percentage of students, but it's still amazing that that many young people with the caliber of education, intelligence, (and) background feel it's ok to be that close to that; they weren't all participating but just to be there. That would be a good example of when I would go, "okay, I could get hurt or in trouble, I'm outta here." It seems like there's just less of that.

Elizabeth even recognized that it was a "pretty small percentage" of students, yet this was what came to mind when asked to explain why she felt things were different today than when she was in college. Finally, Joe, who admittedly struggled with alcohol abuse in college and partied to the point of having to leave school, talked about students in light of the riots. He said,

> I think people get wrapped up in it. Most of those people don't go there (to do something bad). (They) get caught up in it and there you are. I had a lot of contact with those in the 1999 riot and a lot of those students were on the Dean's list who got caught up in it. And I've done stupid things; we all have, you know, so I guess I'm thankful that we have a criminal justice system that is somewhat forgiving. A guy with a bright future and everything, who for whatever reason gets caught up in it; it suddenly becomes a good idea to light the Taco Bell on fire; that's different than a guy who steals cars for a living, does it every night, and has no hope. I think one should be locked and do hard time, the other one, yep a fine, yep probation and all of that, but let this guy get on with his future.

Joe demonstrates a more nuanced understanding of those involved in the riot. Having worked with many of them, he sees the personal stories behind the destructive public outcome. In summary, the riot, understandably, is a strong emotional trigger that is operating just below consciousness but is often called to consciousness by the participants' own mental construct. It seems reasonable to conclude that the riot is a strong symbol used to understand students, but it would be interesting to further explore the emotive impact the riots had on these participants and other members of the community.

The final tenant that supports the concept of a myth to describe the way participants understand students is that despite knowing something, participants still seem to operate from what they feel. This claim is a kind of capstone that incorporates the first two pieces of evidence. It is also the most tentative and in need of further research.

Several of the participants talked about how their instincts were pushing them one way, while their conscious was pulling them another way. Take Anna and Jackie, for example, in talking about the process by which they chose to take pictures that represent students, both of them said it was their instinct to take pictures of partying and drinking. Jackie said it like this, "My first impulse was to take pictures of Friday and Saturday nights in downtown; drunks puking, people falling down, crowds of kids, people getting carted off in paddy wagons. That was my first impulse." Anna articulated something similar, yet each of them purposefully did not take any pictures representing that segment of college student life.

Ray provides a richer, but also more complex example. In talking about students, he had a difficult time bringing together his beliefs and a recent example to the contrary.

I found this in his description of his son's student neighbors. He recalled how the student's parents bought the house for them, "renovated and fixed it up" and "have been good neighbors." But, as he finished describing those events, he paused, and said, "and talk about your fancy automobiles, but so far they have been fine." It has been at least four months since those students have moved in, yet he is still waiting for them to fit into his understanding of college students.

Of course, this is a tentative conclusion, yet it suggests areas of future research that could be fruitful. It also suggests that there are inner-conflicts in operation that impact the beliefs and assumptions of the participants.

## Parent – Child Myth

Carl Jung (1963), as well as subsequent writers, such as June Singer (1994) and Edward Whitmont (1969), have identified and described a number of different myths that capture some essence of human behavior. They have given meaning to our quest for greatness through the hero myth (Jung, 1963). They have written about the myths surrounding religion and the power they hold for people (Jung, 1963; Singer, 1994). They have also helped us more fully understand our relationship with our parents and children by delineating the parent-child myth (Whitmont, 1969). In this study, that final myth has particular relevance. Although it is speculative, the data compel me to interpret the relationship between students and the community representatives as embodying the characteristics of the larger parent-child myth.

*Defining the Parent-Child Myth*

I suggest that the parent –child myth symbolizes aspects of the student – community relationship. Although largely unconscious, I find that the community representatives in this study see themselves as parents to the college students of the community.

The parent-child myth has been described as a way to more fully understand the positive and negative aspects of parent and child relationships (Whitmont, 1969). Furthermore, as it will be used in this case, it has also been used to symbolize the characteristics of other relationships. Clearly stated, the parent-child myth is one that attempts to capture a holistic story – the story for the ages – that brings together experiences of past generations with today to paint an image of the parent-child relationship (Singer, 1994). This image, as described by Singer (1994), is imprinted on the child's psyche and is evoked as a way to understand other paternal relationships. The parent-child relationship can manifest itself in relatively favorable ways, such as parents demonstrating a sense of responsibility, compassion, and affection, and children being agreeable, maturing, and respectful. On the other hand, the parent-child myth can evoke unfavorable circumstances, such as parent figures that are destructive, oppressive, or simply not present, and child figures who are feeble, submissive, immature and perpetually adolescent (Singer, 1994). How might one use this myth to describe and understand the relationship between college students and the community members?

What makes me believe that the parent-child myth is an appropriate metaphor for explaining how community representatives understand college students? First of all, two

of the participants made statements that consciously depicted their relationship with students as parental. For example, as Rene described her relationship with her tenants, she was describing herself in some ways as a surrogate parent. She would get involved in their lives in ways other rental managers did not, she would get to know them, send them birthday cards, and check up on them if she had not heard from them in awhile. This conversation was sparked by her saying how it was often very difficult for her to be hard on the tenants, even when she felt they deserved it. I asked her about this seemingly motherly relationship, and this is how she responded.

> It's very hard (for me) to be hard on the tenants. Some landlords kid me about being too easy and too parental. (It is difficult for me to be hard on them) because we really don't know them, I can't assess them, I don't know what stage they are in and when it's all said and done, and I'm going back to the parental thing, the only hold you have over them, is the respect they have for you.

Elizabeth described a similar dynamic when she was asked to articulate the lens through which she views the world. She responded with, "Parent is the first one (lens). That's the biggest one. I don't know what other lens I see the world through." She went on to give specific examples of where, in her current role in the city, she finds herself acting out as a parent to the college students. She said, "I'll think 'how dangerous that is' when students talk of sitting on a folding chair, drinking, while on the roof."

Although those were specific references to the participant as parent, and student as child, other participants were more suggestive of such a relationship. For example, nearly all of the participants referred to the students as "kids" and talked about them going through a process of maturation. Furthermore, Jackie illustrated the parental role community members engage in when she drew the following analogy,

> (Students are) like a herd of well fed, graving wildebeests and the reality of this earth is that there are lions in the bushes. And they will feed upon the weak and the young. (We must) protect the innocent. The police take their role very seriously. What is perceived as overzealousness, is truly, for the most part, people motivated by the desire to protect (the) vulnerable young people. These officers see themselves as protecting the innocent.
>
> I went to Africa on vacation (and) we were a group of naive tourist who we went out into the Serengeti Plain...our guides hired (people) to sit around the parameter of the campsite all night awake to make sure that we didn't get invaded by lions. We're essentially doing the same thing here. We station our warriors around the edge of the campfire all night to watch over the innocents. That's what they see themselves doing – it may not be perceived that way. And we've got the innocents saying, "Why can't I leave the campsite and go wandering in the dark?" Well, you know, there are lions (out there)!

Jackie's story paints a picture. It puts into words the symbolic nature of the relationship between college students and community representative. You see the college student as a child, who needs to be protected by a parent who is wielding their power to shield the child from dangers outside the family. You also see a child who is rebellious, and wanting to break free from the family. This story is mythological. It captures more than reality. It seems to hold meaning for the storyteller and reflects unconscious aspects of the relationship between student and community representative.

As described, Jackie's story not only supports the claim that there is a parent-child myth at play, it also begins to speak to what kind of parent the community members see themselves as being. From data, I gather that community representatives struggle with how to define their parental style. Are they more patriarchal, using clear boundaries enforced by punishments, or do they embody a feminine approach that is more forgiving and supportive? I think you see both in the participants. As I established earlier (see Evidence of Unconscious), participants feel ambivalent and demonstrate paradoxical behavior toward students. Not only does this point to unconscious psychic influences, it

also hints at repressed contradictions in how they choose to relate to students. I speculate that this is indicative of a cultural conflict present in our society.

### *Rising Feminism Versus the Established Patriarch*

June Singer (1994), as well as many others (Bondurant, Donat, & White, 2001; Fine and Carney, 2001; Maraecek, 2001; Woollett and Marshall, 2001), have described a cultural conflict and reorganization around society's struggle to incorporate the feminine voice within a historically patriarchal society. As society works to redefine and possibly rid themselves of cultural forms, such as masculine and feminine, the psyche reflects this strain. June Singer (1994) writes, "The psyche strives toward wholeness," while taking direction from the collective unconscious aspects of nature as to what is appropriate, expected, and desirable. As we redefine gender roles, we are redefining and reorganizing the collective unconscious elements of the socially constructed ideas of gender. I think it is reasonable to believe that the ambivalent and paradoxical behaviors exhibited by community representatives are evidence of this cultural conflict. Although this conjecture has clear limitations, I do believe it is compelling enough to call for further research to substantiate the claim.

In summary, the findings of this study lead me to believe that there are powerful unconscious aspects of the participants' psyche that are informing their process of sense making as it relates to college students. These unconscious elements are showing themselves through emotional dynamic areas characterized by ambivalence, tension, and paradoxes. Although it is not conclusive, there is compelling evidence that these emotive areas are structured into a myth of the college student. This myth is shared by the

community representatives and reflects elements of the collective unconscious. Furthermore, this myth reflects a broader cultural conflict that is present in society. The established patriarchal organization of society is being challenged by the feminist voice. As the mythological matriarch challenges the patriarch, it impacts the individual psyche. The impact of that conflict is captured in the collective unconscious of individuals. In this study, that conflict seems to impact the manner in which community representatives understand and relate to college students. That is, the community members vacillate between a motherly or fatherly approach as a reflection of the unconscious conflicts related to the cultural reorganization of gender definitions.

## Dropping the Jargon

The implications of this research have the danger of falling into the bucket of jargon. Words like unconscious, mythological, and psyche do not connect with how most people come to understand the world. In this final section, the practical implications of the theories and findings of this study will be briefly presented. The applications will reflect the findings of the study, and deep thought on the issues, but an effort will be made to use language that does not require being well read in depth psychology.

### *Ethic of the Inner Voice: Practical Implications*

More than even when I began this study, I believe in the importance of this work. This research study works to validate the relevancy of more than a method of study in research. It takes a step towards supporting an ethic of the inner voice in our society (Dirkx, 2004). The findings presented in this chapter, and the implications offered in the

final chapter are not conclusive, but they are explanatory and directive. They help provide a foundation of knowledge from which to know what we feel.

What does it mean if we accept that the nature of interpersonal interactions, as well as personal development, is driven by more than rational thought? Based on this study, as well as my reading of depth psychology literature, I believe it calls for society to embrace a new ethic. Eric Neumann (1990), a scholar of depth psychology, describes this as an ethic of the "inner voice." This type of work embraces an approach to living that calls on individuals to expand their conscious awareness to value the unconscious content of our psyche (Dirkx, 2004). Put another way, it requires people to value the whispers in their life – those feelings and thoughts that are just bubbling below the surface that we feel, but do not engage.

Psychotherapy, meditation, and prayer have all been tools used by individuals to become aware of those inner voices. This research embraces those efforts, but also calls for a collective movement to enrich our ways of living together in community. The disruptions we feel in our lives are inherently relational and social. By disruption, I mean all those experiences in life that do not mesh with our inner lives. It could be a sensation of disconnection, or helplessness, or frustration; it is an emotional sense of detachment from who we want to be. Sometimes, we sense these, but ignore them. More often, we are so driven by our superego that we never reflect on these quiet influences. Beyond our own self interest, it is important we do so because those emotions are wrapped in the fabric of the community (Becker, 1997). Therefore, if we are to respond to the conflicts in society (e.g., university and community), we must see the problem in a different way,

and we must take a communal approach to action. Others will carry this research forward to more eloquently establish that path, but I offer just a few ideas.

Gay Becker, author of *Disrupted Lives: How People Create Meaning in a Chaotic*, wrote, "transformation begins with alterations to ways of seeing." This research calls us to be more intentional in our efforts to incorporate the voice of the *other*. In this case, *other* meaning the voices within ourselves that we ignore (personal unconscious), as well as those mythological voices from our context (collective unconscious). If we are to see differently, we must be open to these different voices.

We must recognize that issues, such as "noise," "trash," or even "riots" are evoking deep mythologies. These mythologies have positive and negative energies. More specifically, take the example of the parent-child myth as a way of understanding how community representatives understand college students. The community representative as parent has positive and negative energies associated with it. Parents can provide protection, support, guidance, and love. Or, they can lack judgment, be oppressive, sexist, neglectful, and a poor role model. Seeing the problem differently does not mean repressing those negative attributions. It means providing structures that create dialogical environments where people can give voice to the inner parent-child dynamics. Quality research has been written on how institutions and individuals create these dialogical environments (Adams & Hamm, 1996; Bruffee, 1993; Dirkx, 1997). This study takes its place among those calling for an ethic of the inner voice that can emerge in those environments. By creating opportunities for the symbolic and mythological to become conscious, we are able to hold this tension; we are able to see the contradictions between the positive and negative energies of the parent-child myth. In doing so, we are

better able to allow the positive energies to be manifest, while being consciously aware of the negative energies. Given that, what should we *do* with what we have learned in this study?

The findings of this research claim that subconscious emotional themes are an individual and community artifact that result in complex value and behavior patterns (sometimes referred to as mythologies, complexes or archetypes). These patterns can be unearthed and understood by using the tools of depth psychology. As individuals and communities engage these subconscious emotions they will cultivate an understanding of behaviors that manifest from the value-laden, subconscious emotional patterns. These claims are central to the study and result in recommended actions for individuals and communities (particular university communities).

As an individual we are called upon to be more fully present in our interactions with others. In other words, prior to facilitated group workshops, we need to open ourselves to exploring the emotionality of situations that characterize our personal and professional lives. This recommendation, written about at length in this study, require us to ask reflective questions of ourselves. Although general in nature, the following questions should be tailored to the issues at hand:

- How have we come to believe what we believe?
- Why are we approaching issues in a certain way?
- What issues do we react most emotionally to, and why?
- What issues do we spend less energy on, and why?
- How have our feelings changed about the issue at hand, and why?
- What values are guiding our decisions regarding this issue, and why?

Similar to the individual approach of utilizing reflective questions and prompts to more fully understand our personal motivations and behaviors, university communities can do much the same exercise. In order to identify the subconscious emotional patterns that are shared among community members we need to provide opportunities for facilitated public dialogue. In the same way the methodology of this research was an instrument for deeper understanding, the community conscious should be engaged with the purpose of more fully understanding the values that color our complex community issues. More simply stated, we should use depth psychology to help us make sense of value-laden ideas such as, respect, citizenship, accountability, fun, maturity, friendship, privilege, disturbance, criminal, oppression, and safety (communities should create their own lists). These values are important because they shape how we understand events and our subsequent behaviors in response to those activities. If as a community we are able to place those values within a context (i.e., examine how we have come to hold those values) we are better able to establish more fully informed cultural and legal standards for our communities.

How do we do this? How do we spur an organizational analysis that reflects the principles of depth psychology? Broadly speaking, we need to have a willingness to explore our individual and community judgments and decisions, and we have to be willing to examine the issues from different perspectives. This process should be facilitated and structured (e.g., university and community workshop), with specific intended outcomes tailored to the issue at hand (e.g., better understanding the tension in student and permanent resident neighborhoods). The facilitator should be a trained professional with a demonstrated ability to elicit and make sense of literal meaning and

symbolic content. The facilitator should be able to help the group understand how they make sense of value-laden ideas, and how that process of meaning making influences their judgments and actions. In order to lead these discussions, the facilitator may use the following questions to prompt reflection:

- How have we come to understand the issue?
- Why are we organized the way we are (membership, meeting practices, etc.)?
- What shared assumptions are we working from, and why do we hold those assumptions?
- How do others see the issue at hand?
- Why do we believe certain things are the cause of the problem, and why do we believe certain things will solve the problem?
- How do we define success, and why?
- What mythologies have we formed to make sense of the issue?
- How have we come to those mythologies?
- What are the implications of those mythologies?

These types of reflective, question-oriented exercises can be a tool for encouraging individual and community growth. They can be an instrument of analysis that improves the process by which we make decisions, as well as provide a means to which we can better understand the quiet, reluctant influences in our lives.

### *Personal Reflections*

I come to these interpretations based on what I have seen in conducting this study. I knew all of these participants prior to interviewing them. Some, I knew for over four

years. What surprised me most about this study was how little I really knew them. In talking to them about their inner life, I realized how boxed in they feel. I realized, and have shared with you, how their unconscious is undervalued and under explored. In summary, that reflects the distance we are from our collective and individual inner lives. I ask that others carry this research on. How do we create institutions that value the inner life? What can teachers, parents, and coaches do to embody that way of life? How do we model an ethic of the inner voice for young people?

Having coached middle school students for the past four years, I am sure that I am biased, but I believe that is an absolutely crucial period of life. Those students intellectually understand a variety of issues, but they are just beginning to form values around them. I have seen it when I coach. They look for cues, and suggestive remarks that point them to what is valued. Too often, we point them in the wrong direction. Too often, we do not value their voice. Anyone who has been around middle school students knows that they have an enthusiasm and way of being that just reaches out to others. Young people have an intuition about them that has not been crushed by society. They openly dream, question, and wonder. I see fewer layers between their inner voice, and their outer expression. Education, at its best, does not squelch that inner voice, but enriches it with a diversity of ideas.

## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Overview

The following table presents an overview of the methods and procedures that are being proposed. It is followed by a full delineation of the project protocol, including intended procedures and measures.

| Session # | Purpose(s) of the Session | Method of Collection | Example of Collection Technique(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Session #1 | To introduce the participant to the nature of the interview process (e.g., their rights as a participant, the anticipated time commitment, and how I will collect and use the data)<br><br>To explain the nature of the study, including the purpose, topic, and tone of the method(s) of inquiry<br><br>To collect basic demographic background information, as well as initiate collecting data about their early life experiences<br><br>To prepare the participant for next session - artifact that tells their personal story | Semi-structured interview protocol<br><br>Phenomenological symbolic approach, while modeling Jung's idea of active imagination | Talk about an important childhood experience<br><br>Lifeline exercise – participants will be provided with a standard sheet of paper and a packet of colored pencils and asked to pictorially recount significant points in their life |
| Session #2 | To further explore their lifeline; to unearth their story and its relation to how they have come to know college students<br><br>To explain the photo elicitation technique that will be utilized as a point of discussion for next session | Symbolic and mythological reflection – revealing feelings and emotions through associations evoked via a symbol or artifact, their lifeline, and a story<br><br>Semi-structured interview protocol | What has made you the most proud?<br><br>When you think of a college student reaching their potential, what does that mean to you?<br><br>Do you remember your family or close friends talking about their college experience? If so, what did they say about it?<br><br>How does the artifact you brought describe who you are? |

| Session # | Purpose(s) of the Session | Method of Collection | Example of Collection Technique(s) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Session #3 | To better understand the participant's assumptions, emotions, and experiences regarding college students<br><br>To set up an opportunity for me to observe their interaction(s) with, on behalf, and/or about college students | Photo elicitation Technique<br><br>Semi-structured interview protocol | How does this picture represent what it means to be a college student? |
| Session #4 Option #1 | To observe exchanges between the participant and students, and/or between the participant and others as they talk about a student issue | Behavioral approach<br><br>Observation | Around what topics do they engage students?<br><br>What mannerisms, tone, speech patterns, and personality descriptors do they demonstrate when engaging students and/or student issues? |
| Session #4 Option #2 | If unable to conduct a direct observation of the participant, I will meet with a student with whom they have worked to better understand the participant's interactions with students | Semi-structured interview protocol | Could you talk a little bit about "Joe" (e.g., the participant)?<br><br>When you see Joe, what do you generally talk about? |
| Session #5 | To provide a capstone experience by engaging the participant in observations and conclusions drawn from previous session experiences<br><br>To connect the personal nature of our previous conversations within a socio-cultural context<br><br>To explore Jung's idea of a complex particularly situated around the participant's understanding of college students<br><br>To reiterate their rights as a participant, including explaining my plans to analyze, organize, and submit my research | Semi-structured interview protocol<br><br>Mythological and symbolic reflection using pieces of the work of June Singer and Carl Jung as prompts | It has been said that we wear masks that are oriented toward what we think society expects. Reflecting on your beliefs and actions geared toward students, what do you think society expects of you?<br><br>It has been said, "What we cannot admit in ourselves we often find in others." Thinking about your beliefs and values associated with college students, what does that mean to you?<br><br>If you were to write a biography about specifically about your interactions with college students, what might you title it? |

Protocol

**Session One**

The primary purpose of this interview is to introduce the participants to the nature of the interview process, as well as the specific purpose(s) of the research. Given that these community representatives are not professional members of the university community, it is particularly important that I provide the details and context to frame the importance of their rights as human subjects. I will do this in three ways:

1. Provide the attached form of consent. After allowing time for them to read and understand the document, I will answer any questions and concerns they might have. I will also encourage them to contact Dr. Ashir Kumar, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, if they have any further concerns or questions.
2. I will then verbally reiterate their rights as human subjects, including their right to skip any, and as many, questions as they would like, their ability to stop the interviewing process at any point they feel is necessary, and their right to contact the office of UCRIHS at any point in the process.
3. I will briefly introduce the nature of my topic, explaining its purpose (to understand how community representatives come to know what it means to be a college student), its importance (including its implications for members of the community and students), and the personal reflection it will require.

After addressing any questions or need for clarification, I will more fully review the research topic, my interests, and why I feel their experiences and stories will be important and helpful to the study. As part of that discussion, I will reiterate the personal and reflective nature of the work. I will also express my hope that they find the reflective nature of the exercise to be interesting and possibly helpful in their interactions with, and about, students.

Next, I will discuss the time commitment necessary to be a participant in the study, explaining that I expect each session to be approximately an hour and a half long, with meetings about every week over a period of approximately six weeks. In addition to session time, the study will also require them to do a few exercises between meetings. These will include things such as, preparing artwork, selecting artifacts to bring, and taking approximately 15 pictures.

That discussion offers a smooth transition into an explanation of the way in which I will collect and handle the data. Explaining my desire to most accurately capture their words and feelings, I will introduce the variety of recording devices that I plan to use (those delineated under "Data Collection and Organization"). Following that, I will remind them of my obligations to abide by the human subjects processes in storing and publishing data (data will be stored in a password protected computer). Finally, I will give them an opportunity to voice concerns and questions regarding the data collection and storage techniques I propose.

With their consent, I will begin collecting basic personal information. In collecting this information I will be looking for areas that I may want to visit in a future session.

The following personal information will be collected:

1. Full Name
2. Age
3. Preferred method of contact (e.g., telephone, email, or cell phone)
4. College(s) attended, if any
5. How long they have lived in this area
6. Where they grew up
7. Who raised them
8. Siblings – briefly describing their relationship with each
9. Other significant relatives
10. Important childhood experience
11. Important childhood person

Upon gathering this information, I will ask them to complete the lifeline exercise (Hall, 1986). This exercise asks the participant to offer a pictorial story detailing significant points in their life (please see attached example). I will provide the participants with a standard sheet of paper and a packet of colored pencils to complete the drawings. I will assure them that the demonstration of artistic talent is not the goal of this exercise. The purpose of drawing this picture is to help me get to know the participant, particularly those events that preceded me meeting them (most often these will be events prior to three years ago). In order to make them feel comfortable in the process, I will also complete my own lifeline at this time.

After they have completed the lifeline I will ask them to talk about each event they have represented. Listening carefully, I will ask clarifying questions, and look for areas that I will want to revisit in following sessions. After they have completed their explanations, I will ask them if there are events they thought of as they were speaking that they would like to add, or any further explanation of any particular events they would like to offer. I will also prompt them to speak a little more about their own college experience(s). If appropriate, I will ask them to do a lifeline just of their college years to bring for our next session.

In concluding the session, I will ask them to bring an artifact to our next meeting. This item should be something from earlier in their life that has great importance, and tells a story about them. It could be something they see as a source of daily inspiration, or something that holds the story of their family. An artifact (be it an object, song, video, or antique), that somehow tells their story – who they are, what they strive to be, and where they hope to point future generations (Singer, 1994).

**Session Two**

As I begin the meeting I will ask if they have any questions or concerns that came up following our last meeting. I will then ask them if they had any thoughts that came to mind after the meeting that they wanted to share at this time (noting that they will have time later in this session to specifically speak more about their lifeline). During this introductory conversation I'll also mention that some of my questions and exercises may not always seem relevant or related to how they have come to know college students. I will explain that the nature of the work is to uncover connections that are not usually

made, so we should expect those sorts of feelings during the process. I will encourage them to voice those feelings should they arise.

I would like to spend a significant amount of this session discussing their lifeline (as well as their college lifeline, if relevant). I will ask them to speak about their experiences, while asking open-ended and prompting questions, such as the following:

- What has made you the most proud?
- When have you felt the most disappointed?
- When have you felt the most challenged?
- Could you talk a little about your family life as you were growing up?
- What personality traits of your parents do you see in yourself?
- Were there expectations in your family that you would attend college? Could you talk a little about that?
- How would you currently describe your relationship with those who raised you?

In addition to these questions, I will utilize my notes from the last meeting to generate questions that may have hinted at complexes related to their sense-making processes. The following are a few examples of what those inquiries might look like:

- You mentioned _____ several times last session, could you talk a little more about the impact he/she has had on you?
- Have you met a college student that you could personally identify with? If so, why? What was that person like? If not, what might such a person be like?
- What influence do you think the media has on the way people understand what it means to be a college student? What impact has it had on you? Why is that?

- In your job/civic activism, describe how you work with college students? How often? Around what types of conversations? Describe some of the typical interactions you have with college students.
- When you think of a college student reaching his/her potential, what does that mean to you?
- When you think of lessons that college students must learn, what comes to mind?
- (If they went to college) What lessons did you learn during your time in college?
- Do you remember your family or close friends talking about their college experience? What did they say about it?

At this point, I will ask them to further explore their early childhood and adolescent experiences, particularly regarding their personality development (I will be keeping in mind Jung's model of the complex and its development and adjustments) (Adler, 1956; Jung, 1963/1989). I will use the following story to prompt conversation:

In one of the books I read for this study, they talk about a sailboat being set out to sea, with a relatively novice sailor. At first the sea controls the boat, washing it around as it likes, but as time goes on, the sailor begins to understand the art of sailing and takes some control. She recalls the story of a Rabbi Hillel:

> You learn to take into account the structure of the boat itself, how it is made and how it responds to the water and the wind. The boat is comparable to your personality. You learn about the current in the lake, these correspond to the realities of life in which you are situated and which are somewhat predictable. You learn about the winds, which are invisible and less predictable, and these

correspond to the spiritual forces which seem to give direction to life without ever showing themselves. In learning to sail you do not change the current of the water nor do you have any effect on the wind, but you learn to hoist your sail and turn it this way or that to utilize the greater forces which surround you (Singer, 1994, p. 12-14).

- What does this story bring to mind for you?
- If you were to describe your boat, that is your personality, that helps navigate you through the rough waters, what would say?
- How has that personality developed?
- Who are a couple individuals who have had a profound influence on that development?
- In what way have they influenced you?
- Although it is not in the story, I imagine that sailor had particular strengths and weaknesses, or particular things he/she was proud or ashamed of; what strengths does your personality offer to the world, and offer to your ability to cope with difficult times?
- What would you say are areas of weakness that are a struggle for you?
- Why do you think those areas are a struggle for you?
- Part of the story relates to the world around us -- this story describes that world as having a strong influence on the direction and general enjoyment of our personal journey. Would you agree? Why?

As another way to understand the participant's past, current perspective, and personality, I will ask them to talk about the artifact(s) they brought to the session. In having them explain their importance, I will ask the following questions:

- Psychologists, authors, and poets all have talked about the importance of symbols/artifacts as another way to describe who we are and what it is we feel a part of, or connected to in our past and present – how does what you brought today do that?

Depending on the artifact, I will ask leading questions to connect its importance to the participant's past, as well as its daily influence.

In concluding this session I will explain the photo elicitation technique that will be utilized for our next session. I will give them a digital camera with the task of taking approximately 15 pictures before our next session. These pictures should be seen as a tool to tell the story of college students. In other words, I'm asking them to describe the life of college students pictorially through what they see on a daily basis. Although they are certainly welcome to, there does not have to be a single picture of a college student – it could be those things they have or currently associate with what it means to be a college student. As part of the approximately 15 pictures I am asking them to take, I will ask that at least five of them speak to what it was like for them as an 18-21 year old. To further clarify the exercise I will give them the following example:

If I was asked to describe what it meant to exhibit leadership I may or may not include a picture of someone I see as a leader. Instead, I would include pictures of a

college or university to demonstrate the knowledge it takes. I would capture a parent gently holding their child to express the passion, patience, and love it takes. I might even include a photo of someone about to do something scary, such as skydiving or hang-gliding. Finally, I would include a picture of my parents, expressing appreciation to those who have influenced what I think it means to be a leader.

**Session Three**

As we begin this session I will ask them what they have thought of the process thus far, particularly taking note of thoughts or emotions they have had during and after the sessions. The following questions will be used as prompts:

- How have you felt after our first two meetings?
- Were there particular things that stick out – that you remember thinking about later, or on the way back to your office or home? If so, why?

As I feel this conversation ending, I will transition into how they felt taking pictures this past week (asking them to concentrate on the process of actually picking and taking the photos, rather than the specific photos they selected). I will use the following lines of questioning:

- How did you decide what pictures to take?
- When did you take them?
- As you thought about the exercise were there pictures that you knew you wanted to take? What were those? Why those pictures?
- Were there any pictures that you took and then erased? If so, why?

- Did you have any conversations about this exercise with anyone? If so, could you talk a little about those conversations?
- If I had asked 100 people to do the same exercise, how do you think your choice of pictures would be the same as, and different than the others? Could you talk a little about why that might be?

As this conversation develops, I will begin asking additional probing questions. These questions will be specifically related to the pictures and the participant's feelings about each picture. The following are examples of the types of questions I will be asking:

- Could we take some time to talk about each picture and why you selected it?
- How does this picture represent what it means to be a college student?
- What feelings or emotions does this picture arise in you? Why?

Finally, I will ask them to talk about those pictures that specifically speak to what it was like for them to be a college student. In addition to asking a number of the aforementioned questions, I will use the following as prompts for our discussion:

- How are these pictures meaningful to you?
- How might the pictures you have chosen to take be different if you were a college student today?
- How do the pictures you have taken relate to your expectations of college students today?
- Are there moments/memories that these pictures remind you of?

- What difference do you see in the pictures you took about your college experience, and those you took to describe today's typical college student experience?
- If there's a difference, why might that be?

In closing this session, I will introduce session four, and ask their cooperation in a somewhat different exercise. For our fourth interaction I would like to observe them working with college students. These observations could be during a meeting they have with students, at a neighborhood barbeque they are attending with students, or during a confrontation they have with a student. Understandably, direct observation may not be possible for all of the participants, in that case I'll ask to join the participants at a public or private meeting in which they have to address an issue that will impact students (e.g., city council ordinance recommendation, or a community meeting geared toward a student issue). If neither of those scenarios are possible, I will ask them to refer me to a college student with whom they work. I will explain that I'm interested in understanding how they interact with students, and while first hand observation would be best, talking with college students they work with will offer me a unique opportunity to understand the impressions and beliefs they transmit to students.

**Session Four**

As briefly described above, in the fourth session I would like to explore the actual behaviors associated with a participant's interactions with students. In observing those exchanges between participant and student, or between participant and others as they talk

about a student issue, I will be taking detailed notes, and utilizing the following questions to guide my observations:

- How do they initiate conversations with students? Is it different than they do with others?
- Around what topics do they engage students?
- How do students seem to react to them?
- What mannerisms, tone, speech patterns, and personality descriptors do I notice when they engage students? Are there differences in these characteristics when they engage non-students?
- What views, opinions, and beliefs do they express about students?

In addition to these questions, I will take an ethnographic approach to observation in which I'll take extensive notes trying to capture the seemingly insignificant (Spradley, 1979).

If I am unable to conduct a direct observation of the participant, I will meet with a student with whom they have worked. The interview will last approximately one hour and the following protocol will guide the interaction (using the fictional "Joe" as the primary participant of interest in the study):

- Following the protocol outlined in session one of my participant interview, I will introduce the study, cover their rights as a participant in a research study (including following appropriate UCHRIS guidelines), and remind them of my obligations as a researcher (e.g., confidentiality and secure data storage).
- The following questions will guide the interview:

- Could you talk a little bit about Joe?
- What comes to mind when you think about him?
- How long have you known him?
- When did you first meet him?
- How well would you say you know him?
- When you see Joe interact with students, what do you think?
- When you see Joe, what do you generally talk about?
- Describe what you feel is his personality?
- Are there any stories you can remember Joe telling you that really helped you understand who he was?
- What do you think students feel about Joe?
- If you had to talk about Joe's views and opinions of students, what would you say?

**Session Five**

While some of the particular conversations for the final session will depend upon earlier findings, I have three broad goals for my time with the participant:

1. As a capstone for the experience, I will have prepared some of my own observations and conclusions that I have drawn from the previous interactions and exercises. I will share the themes of these observations (the pieces of a Jungian complex) and ask for their reactions. As a complement to this conversation, I will find an appropriate time to share the following:

a. It has been said that "each one's way of being, ways of thinking and feeling and perceiving and knowing are distinctly that person's...the sum total of the person's experiences, and behaviors patterns that have been shaped by internal and external factors" (Singer, 1994, p. 17). When you think about your ways of thinking and feeling, and how that connects with external and internal forces, what comes to mind? In other words, what are some of the factors that have shaped the way you see the world? Are there specific factors that you think shape the way you see college students?

b. If the participant is unclear or struggling with this line of questioning, I will rephrase the question to read: If someone were to ask you, "How do you look at things, or through what lens do you see the world?" what might you say?

2. To connect our conversations with larger, socio-cultural behaviors, I will share the following pieces of text (primarily from Jung) and ask for them to react:

a. It has been said that we wear masks that are oriented toward what we think society expects. (Bennet, 1961). Reflecting on your beliefs and actions geared toward students, what do you think society expects of you?

b. It has been said, "What we cannot admit in ourselves we often find in others". Thinking about your beliefs and values associated with college students, what does that mean to you?

c. If you had a magic wand and were able to create the ideal college experience for someone you love, be it a nephew, niece, son or daughter, what would that experience be like?

3. Having talked about this some, often indirectly, and more recently with some specificity, what "emotionally sensitive areas" (as Jung defines a complex) do you find are central to your understanding of college students?
    a. What are the central ideas, opinions and convictions that you think impact your beliefs about, and actions toward college students?
    b. Finally, as a way to close our time together, I'll give you a chance to share any thoughts, observations, or questions that are on your mind.
        i. As a way to further prompt these reflections about the study, I may ask the following questions:
            1. What has surprised you about the study?
            2. Have you thought at all about the study after our time together? If so, what has come to your mind?
            3. A piece of this study has really been about telling your story. If you were to write an autobiography, what might you title it?
    c. In closing, I will explain that over the next several months I will be analyzing, organizing and writing up the data. I will encourage them to contact me if anything comes up that they feel would be relevant for my study. I will also express my gratitude for allowing me to share in their life's story.

# APPENDIX B: PILOT INTERVIEW

To more fully prepare to interview my participants I conducted an abbreviated pilot study. The pilot allowed me to practice the interviewing techniques of association and amplification that are at the center of my interview protocol. I utilized the prompts within my protocol to dig deeper into the issues and images the participant presented. I continued to revisit those images and stories with prompts such as, "can you say more about that" or, "what else comes to mind when you think about that?" The data from these interviews do not appear in the research study. This was utilized as a process to inform and improve my methods of data collection.

A resident of East Lansing, whom I have known for a few years, agreed to participate in the pilot study. I chose this person because they had similar characteristics to the members of my study (e.g., East Lansing resident, works with college students, not a product of a Student Affairs background) and they were willing to volunteer their time.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**Primary Participant Consent form for the Research Project: Parent-Child Myth in University and Community Relations**

Study Background

In order to complete my doctoral work in the Higher Adult Learning and Education Department at Michigan State University I am conducting a research study on the relationships between students and permanent residents in university communities. The study seeks to understand the dynamic relationships between students and permanent residents in university communities. Using a depth psychological framework, this dissertation hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of the ways in which community representatives (people like yourself) have come to know what it means to be a college student. In other words, I am interested in knowing how you form beliefs, assumptions, and expectations about college students.

Benefits of the Research

As a participant in the study you would be helping advance the research on community and university relations. Traditionally referred to as "Town and Gown" relations, this area of research has most often focused on the perceptions, benefits, and costs accrued by members of the college or university. This research, and its focus on the beliefs and opinions of community representatives, will begin to fulfill a void in the community and university relations literature.

What the Process Requires of You (Risks of Participating)

You are being asked to participate in an interview process that will ask you to do several things. First of all, you would be asked to meet with me five times for approximately and hour and a half each time we meet. Depending on your schedule availability, I anticipate the study to take approximately 5-6 weeks. The location and time of the interview will be at your convenience.

The questions you would be asked are of a personal nature that would invite you to talk about life experiences and how you have come to make sense of what it means to be a college student. The intent of the research is to understand the emotional and symbolic themes that inform how you understand college students. Given that, the questions you would be asked are of a personal nature and would ask you to talk about your life history, values and beliefs that form the foundation of your personality. The procedures for gathering data are directed at exploring the stories, myths, artifacts and symbolic themes that you use in order to make sense of the world, and in particular, how you have come to know what it means to be a college student.

The kind of emotive and personal information that you would be asked to provide is often found in the more basic personal identifiers, such as gender, martial status, age, sexual orientation, etc. This type of data will be collected and is likely to appear in the dissertation.

Given the personal nature of that information you would be providing it is possible you may experience psychological discomfort in discussing these sensitive

issues. If these risks emerge, they will be mediated by a reminder that you are free to discontinue the interview, skip any question, or immediately withdrawal from the study without any negative consequences to you at any time.

Furthermore, by participating in this study you risk someone identifying you and associating you with the data presented in the presentation of the research findings. For example, if someone were to identify you with your data you could risk professional and/or personal hardship. In this scenario your comments could be of a sensitive and critical nature (e.g. they might elicit criticism from your employer or cooperating university). This could result in strained relations at home and in your work environment.

In order to reduce the risk of accidental disclosure, the data will be de-identified in its presentation. That is, your name will not be used. Furthermore, I will not reference your exact position in the East Lansing community. For example, if you were the deputy police chief of East Lansing, it would be reported in my research that you were a "police officer with leadership capacities in a college town". It is highly likely that I will report your gender, sexual orientation, family situation (e.g. martial status, children, siblings) and other stories that you share in the research findings. Of course, you are free to discontinue the interview, skip the question, ask that I do not include something you share with me in the study, or immediately withdrawal from the study without any negative consequences to you at any time.

The only people, other than myself, to have access to the raw data (taped records and written notes of our interactions) will be my dissertation committee (three MSU faculty members). The data will be stored on a password protected computer in a locked space. Your privacy would be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

This research project has six components. If you decide to take part in the study, you do not have to participate in all six components. Please place a checkmark next to those areas in which you wish to participate. You may withdrawal from a component at any time.

Specific Study Procedures

_____ Interviews – These will include questions of a personal nature to gain a better understanding of how you have come to know what it means to be a college student. All of the interviews would be recorded digitally to capture only the audio portion of our interviews. I will also be taking written notes. The interview data will be stored for five years from the date of the dissertation defense. This data will be destroyed at that time.

_____ Life Line Drawing – You will be asked to draw a lifeline that highlights significant events in your life that you feel have helped define your personality. The primary purpose of these drawings is to better understand you and your perspective on issues such as success, failure, and adventure. You may ask me to destroy them following our conversation that day. With your verbal consent (given that day of the interview), these pictures may appear in the dissertation.

_____ Photography – You will be asked to take approximately 15 photos that tell the story of college students. You would be provided with a digital camera to take these pictures. The exercise would be asking you to describe the life of college students pictorially through what you see on a daily and weekly basis. The purpose of these photos is for discussion purposes. If they contain personal or geographic identifiers they will be kept until the dissertation has been defended and then they will be destroyed. If they do not have personal or geographic identifiers then they may appear in the dissertation. They will be securely stored for five years from the date of the dissertation defense. They will be destroyed at that time.

_____ Artifact – For one session, you will be asked to bring an artifact that helps tell the story of your life, and reveals a central part of your personality. If you agree, I will take a digital picture of the artifact for possible inclusion in the dissertation. The pictures of the artifact will be kept for five years from the date of the defense. The data will be destroyed at that time.

_____ Observation – If possible, you would be asked if I could accompany you as you interact with, or about college students. In other words, if you are going to a meeting dealing with an issue that primarily affects college students, or if you are attending an event where you would be interacting with college students I would ask to attend the event as an observer. The purpose of this technique is to gain a better understand of how you interact with and/or about college students. I would take notes about the interactions. If I use this data in my dissertation it will not include the names of those with whom you interact.

_____ Student Interview - If I were unable to observe you in a "live" setting, I would ask that you provide the name of a student with whom you have worked and allow me the opportunity to interview that person. Of course, like you, they would be protected by the same procedures I have presented for you, and they would also be under no obligation to participate in the study. The primary purpose of this interview would be to gain a better understanding of your interactions with college students.

**Participation in the process is voluntary**; you may chose not to participate at all, or you may refuse to participate in certain pieces of the study, and you may discontinue participating in the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Please note, although we have worked together several times over the past couple years you should feel under no obligation to participate in this study. If you are unable, unwilling, or uninterested in being a participant in the study I am prepared to find another participant.

If you have any questions about this study, please contact the Responsible Primary Investigator, John Dirkx, Ph.D, Department of Higher Adult Learning and Education (HALE) by phone: (517) 353-8927, fax: (517) 353-6393, email: dirkx@msu.edu, or regular mail: 408 Erickson Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact – anonymously if you wish – Peter Vasilenko, Ph.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

I agree to participate in this study and have designated with a checkmark those areas in which I am willing to participate.

_____ _____

Signature Date

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