

## ABSTRACT

**Title of Dissertation: Metaphors We Serve By: Critical and Constructive Play with the Discourses on Scholarship, Self, Service, National Service, and Service-Learning**

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This dissertation presents an argument for the redescription of scholarship, generally, and national service and service-learning, specifically. Its seven chapters constitute a set of interrelated research essays beginning with reflexive constructions of theoretical and personal starting places before moving into critical and constructive investigations of discourses informing service-learning. Conceptual metaphor analysis is the uniting methodological concept throughout. Through close readings of key texts I identify and examine the implicit and explicit metaphors that frame historical and institutional conceptualizations leading up to and currently informing service-learning.

In chapter one I propose a humanistic scholarship informed by the redescriptive metaphor *scholarship is play*. In chapter two I discuss the theoretical issues of scholarly reflexivity and trace my own shifting conceptual metaphors of service. In chapter three I historicize the term service by tracing its etymological story and describing the semantic

shifts that underpin its present polysemy. In chapter four I investigate the manufacture of service meanings by critically examining the conceptual metaphors framing the National Service Movement from 1900 to the present. In chapter five I investigate the contestation of service meanings by critically examining the conceptual metaphors used in the attempt to establish and authorize service-learning. In chapter six I explore the imagination of service meanings by identifying the growing number of explicit and purposeful metaphors being introduced into the academic service-learning literature.

The movement in these chapters from *historization* to *manufacture*, to *contestation*, to *imagination* is from scholarly deconstruction to reconstruction, from critical understandings of social discourses to creative participation in social formation. A call for the generation of new purposeful metaphors is the logical conclusion to my argument. As a service-learning practitioner, and thus a member of my own audience, I end with a first response to this call. My reflections on the metaphor *service is play* constitute a final chapter, an afterword that constitutes less a conclusion than another beginning.