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FOSTERING FLEXIBILITY: EMOTIONS, POWER, AND FRAMING PROCESSES IN A SOCIO-
RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Fostering Flexibility: Emotions, Power Dynamics, and Framing Processes in A Socio-
Religious Movement

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This dissertation examines the role intense emotions and framing processes play in strengthening commitment at recruiting events produced by Reclaiming, a socio-religious movement. Both the religious and activist sides of Reclaiming focus on personal and communal growth and change. The movement's overall goal is to develop a "magical activist" frame for the self using rituals that expose participants to a full spectrum of affect and intense emotion. The research focuses on one recruiting and training tool: the week-long retreats known as "Intensives" because the events use intense, emotionally provocative myths. The research design incorporated multiple methods: full participant observation, in-depth interviews, and surveys. The design has three components: 1) a three year longitudinal study (2004-2006) of two annual Intensive events held in different locations in the Eastern United States, 2) a cross-sectional comparison of data gathered during 2007 at four recruiting and training events in different regions of the United States and Canada, and 3) supplementary data collected at quarterly organizer meetings of one group as well as observations from the

Inter-Reclaiming gatherings in 2008 and 2010. I develop two new concepts, the “emotion shape” and the “emotion chain,” which relate to emotional patterns over time including combinations of emotions evoked by rituals. The qualitative analysis is process-oriented and includes a multifaceted analysis focused on power structures and empowering self-transformations, the interplay of movement-specific and general framing processes, and the interaction between emotional, somatic, and cognitive states. This in turn provides substantive insight into the question of who gets involved with the Intensives and whether this involvement is sustained over time. The findings from the small-N quantitative analyses indicate that men, people with families that engaged in activism and/or politics, and people whose families saw religion as not very important are slightly more likely to return to an Intensive. I conclude by arguing that the Intensive events help socialize participants into thinking, emoting, and perceiving the world in flexible, paradoxical ways and use the metaphor of recycling to develop a model of Reclaiming’s circular, cyclical self-transformation process, which proceeds in a different manner for prototypical activists and magical religious people.

Acknowledgement and Dedication

The dissertation is long, but I am going to keep both the dedication and the acknowledgements brief. This project is dedicated to my mother Paula Williamson and my siblings Emily and Charles Williamson and Alexandra Thompson.

The Spiralheart and DreamRoads communities made this project possible and I am very grateful that they allowed me to participate in the Intensives for several years. Special thanks are due to the Spiralheart organizers who put up with me on a quarterly basis, opened up their homes for the meetings, and/or carpooled with me from New Jersey down to the meetings. In addition, I want to thank the people who organized and attended the Mid-West, California, Free Activist, and British Columbia Witchcamps in 2007 and the Dandelion Gathering in 2008 and 2010. Participating in these events helped me see Reclaiming in a new light and vastly improved my research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: Methods, Data and Triangulation, Synthesizing Collins and Turner for Ritual Analysis

As (Martin Luther) King said, 'The problem today is not the vitriolic words and the evil actions of the bad people. It is the appalling inaction and silence of the good people.' [...] I remember sitting down and having this conversation with a woman far wiser than me and starting to talk about oh, how bad it is for women in America [...] she just looked at me and listened [...] and she said, well I have to tell you Cory, I think it is really bad for men in America [...]and she started talking about how emotionally constipated men are taught to be very early on, how we don't- we haven't learned how to express ourselves in healthy ways [...]but she talked about a spiritual healing that was needed for guys.
- Cory Booker in *Miss Representation* (Newsom and Congdon 2011)

The urgent task, then, is not deciding which is deepest, spirituality or politics, religion, or theater, but learning how to nurture such an attitude of interconnectedness that we are no longer the aliens on the earth. [...] If we ritualize *only* to confirm what we already know, our ritualizing is in a state of decay.
-Ronald Grimes in *Rite Out of Place* (2006: 154, 156).

1) Introduction

As strange as it may sound I think these comments from ritual studies scholar Ronald Grimes and Cory Booker the current mayor of Newark, NJ speak to some of the impulses that lead people to become witches for a week. Other people with these same nagging feelings about their emotional capability, connection to the environment, or the need to speak and act in the service of doing good may do things like seek out Oprah Winfrey or a self-help book, get more involved in mainstream religion, or deepen their involvement in politics or social action. United by a sense of urgency related to personal or social problems, a desire for intense ritual, and a yearning for community some people elect to attend a week-long "Intensive" recruiting and training event, fondly called "Witchcamp" by participants¹. At an Intensive event attendees explore witchcraft and

¹ Throughout the dissertation I use the terms "Intensive" and "Witchcamp" interchangeably.

various forms of activism in the Reclaiming tradition and delve into an emotionally provocative story narrative. I could consider the Intensives to offer metaphorical emotional fiber as a remedy to the emotional constipation Booker mentions, but being a witch for a week encompasses more than becoming emotionally literate and finding one's voice. The self-transformations fostered by the Intensives involve connection to the environment and to community.

Over the course of the dissertation I argue that the gateway to this sense of interconnectedness is the development, over time, of emotional, cognitive, and somatic flexibility, which involves becoming more adaptable along with developing a wider range of feelings, thoughts, and somatic-sensory perceptions. Being a witch for a week at an Intensive event exposes people to ritualizing that is vibrant, reflexive, and aimed at provoking growth and change in all the parties involved. The Intensive events offer complex solutions- flexibility and Reclaiming's blend of progressive religion and activism- to Grimes' "environmental conundrum"² and other twenty-first century dilemmas. The people who keep coming back from year-to-year are those committed to "work"- on the self, in the wider world, and in the ritual circle-, and going through emotional highs and lows in a space and place away from their everyday lives that is a home away from home.

The main question answered within the dissertation is: why do people become witches for a week at Reclaiming's Intensive events? This can be broken down into

² "Few people consider rites an effective means for saving the planet from environmental destruction. [...] Yet, we are witnessing the emergence of groups and individuals who consider it obvious that ritual is one, if not *the*, answer to the environmental conundrum." (Grimes 2006: 132).

three smaller questions: 1) Why witches? 2) Why do they do it for a week in the Intensive format? 3) Which witches come back to multiple events and can this be predicted on the basis of what is known about their backgrounds and of their experiences? Answering the second small question leads me to engage with theories about rituals, emotions, and movement recruitment and commitment. I work to extend ideas about *cognitive liberation* (McAdam 1999), *moral shock* (Jasper 1997), and commitment while also drawing on ideas from Randall Collins' interaction ritual chain theory (2004) about *emotional energy* flows as well as Victor Turner's work on rites of passage and *liminality*, which is a state of being "betwixt and between" during a ritual process (1969). I argue that these two approaches to ritual, temporality, emotions and power that in the end need to be synthesized to some degree, but also enriched with my own ideas based on emotions generating and not just reflecting power.

Jumping back to the first smaller question of "why witches?" I believe there are several possible answers readers should keep in mind while consuming the dissertation. One genre of answer is grounded in common sense and the witch archetype. Self-labeling as a witch or doing "witchy" things such wearing a large pentacle necklace may be an act of rebellion or simply reflect feeling of "outsiderhood" and lack of belonging within the dominant national culture. Common sense tells us that these people want community too, and that they may embrace being a witch or a witch and a social or political activist due to feeling like outsiders, but still wanting social connections and a purpose in life. Being witchy and/or being a social or political activist can fill this need.

Another genre of answer to the “why witches?” question involves sociological theory. The argument can be made that choosing to be a witch, even just of a week, is a response to modernity, and that as societies have shifted from industrial to post-industrial arrangements they have not resolved the issue of re-enchanting modern life (Gibson 2009). Being a witch, particularly a Reclaiming “magical activist” witch enables people to engage in solving social problems associated with modernity such as environmental degradation while also enriching their lives with Earth-based, feminist religion. Another, complementary argument is that communication and information technology have shifted since the 1980s so that people can access information about witchcraft more easily and reach out to non-local people via the internet (Berger and Ezzy 2007; Cowan 2005; Dawson and Cowan 2004). Put simply, it is much easier to find out how to be a witch these days, and people are taking advantage of available technology and doing so.

A third sociological argument focuses on networks and recruitment. The basic idea is that we can understand recruitment into witchcraft or another new religion as happening through pre-existing networks of family, friends, and coworkers, which is often how the process worked prior to the advent of the internet. People did self-recruit using other media such as newspapers and magazines, and some movements would recruit strangers off the street (Barker 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1977; Lofland 1966; Palmer 2004) although this is not a technique Reclaiming ever used. In addition, books such as Starhawk’s *The Spiral Dance* (1999) were an important source of information about Neo-Paganism and other new religions prior to the advent of the internet. It is

difficult, I think, to imagine how information access worked even back in the 1990s, and the larger point I want to get across to readers here is that sociologists are still getting a handle on how recruitment patterns for “strangers” and “friends” work in comparison to the pre-internet period (Dawson and Cowan 2004). Mapping these patterns takes high-quality longitudinal data that are challenging and expensive to collect.

These pre-existing answers and studies of emotions and recruitment (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001) to activism or new religions did not help me make full sense of phenomena I encountered in the field while actually being a witch for a week myself: 1) the desire to “work” and change time and again, 2) the variety of recruits, and 3) the variation both the type and the timing of self-transformations people went through over time. The sheer variety of people and the interests they brought with them into the Intensives are topics I made sense of by making images of inflows and outflows. I also began to think of people as fitting into different, overlapping subgroups such as vendors, musicians, and event organizers. In addition, the connective logic I saw people in Reclaiming using within and outside of the Intensives prompted me to use the term “and logic” to make sense of the cross-cutting movement ties each individual brought to the Reclaiming web. I also continued with my project of theorizing about emotions and emotion dynamics and treated them like building blocks, which were used differently by recruits depending on their backgrounds with religion and activism.

Finally, I realized that the desire for repeated change to the self and the variation in the timing and sequencing were topics that were bound up together. This insight has prompted me to argue that the Intensives are set up to foster customized change

targeted at creating flexibility- mental, emotional, and somatic- that potentially works for a variety of recruits, which supposedly solves the problem of recruiting religious and activist people and getting everyone to the point of embracing Reclaiming-style “magical activism.” Reclaiming as a case may give us a window into a new, valuable skill-set for modern living related to “and logic” and multifaceted flexibility as well as how these skills are cultivated since the Intensives are events in which leaders and average campers both reflexively fine-tune tools that provoke flexibility and cyclical transformations to the self.

The Reclaiming movement values self-awareness and reflection yet the Intensive communities generally seem to have a blind spot regarding why some people are successfully recruited as well as why other people get turned off by the experience. Given my status as an outsider to the movement familiar with the Neo-Pagan subculture and comparative data I collected I believe I am in the position to translate what witches do to a non-witch audience. This includes tackling the issue of why people would want to be witchy for a week even if they never return to an Intensive again.

For those people who do return to the Intensive I present one theoretical explanation³ for making sense of the cognitive/emotional/somatic interactions associated with embracing Reclaiming-style “magical activism” and doing “work” on one’s self and in the world, the recycling model of self-transformation in Chapter Five.

³ In the book manuscript, there will be an additional chapter focused on why leaders return. This chapter will present a second theoretical model of persuasive processes which enables me to analyze the socialization of newcomers and commitment processes among elders in a nuanced way that attends to changes in the mind, emotions, and body without neglecting rationality.

The recycling model helps make sense of commitment among ideal typical activists and religious people, which is one primary distinction we can make between people in Reclaiming.

Within the analytical chapters I also address the idea that people become witches for a week without an explicit awareness that magical activism involves developing multifaceted flexibility, but with an explicit desire for community and/or emotionally intense work. Thus, they are blind to multifaceted flexibility going in even when they enter the Intensive via “friends” rather than strangers and continue to maintain this blindness as veterans who frame their “work” in terms of authenticity, depth, goodness, and realness. I round the analysis out in Chapter Six by considering larger lessons we can learn about sustainable action and how my work helps us move beyond common sense and present sociological explanations for recruitment and commitment as well as flows of emotional energy and empowerment within rituals. The dissertation is organized into the following Chapters: 1) Introduction: Methods, Data and Triangulation, Synthesizing Collins and Turner for Ritual Analysis; 2) Movement History and a Multi-level Examination of Goals; 3) Who attends camp?; 4) What gets done at camp?; 5) When do people return? Why?; 6) Reflections/Conclusion. I turn next to a discussion of how I constructed my study and the data I collected.

2) My approach to data collection

There were two commitments that were of primary importance when I was creating the strategy for collecting the data. First, I wanted to capitalize on my outsider status with Reclaiming and attend the Intensive without much pre-socialization. I wanted to go

into the event as blind as possible. At the time I thought going in blind but with a general knowledge of Neo-Paganism would enable me to have an experience which was similar to someone who self-recruited using the internet. In retrospect, I think that I could have done more online interaction prior to camp using the community's Yahooogroup listserv and my knowledge and expectations would have still been similar to those of other self-recruited campers.

This first commitment to blindness and getting the self-recruit experience during my first Intensive shaped the way I collected the data. My blindness regarding the camp experience meant that I was not savvy about how the Intensive worked, but what I did have working for me was a general knowledge of Neo-Paganism, and this shaped my ideas about which forms of data collection were feasible and reasonable. For example, I figured note-taking during ritual would be obtrusive, and this hunch was confirmed later by the event organizers. I developed a plan for data collection during camp through discussions with Professor Ann Mische, and this plan reflected my second commitment to triangulating⁴ my observations by acquiring data from multiple sources and utilizing different types of research methods.

Triangulation, as I am using the term, has costs and benefits because it makes the data collection effort more complex and possibly costly while allowing the investigator to be more certain that data collected in any given mode are valid. The multi-method data collection plan I developed and presented to the camp organizers confined the actual collection to two time periods: during the event itself, and a post-event period

⁴ The term triangulation implies that at least three sources are the benchmark for multi-sourcing data.

several months after camp. During the event, I planned to collect field observations as a full participant-observer over the course of the whole week. In addition, I planned to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews with both participants and leaders while we were at camp. I also proposed two different surveys. The first was a short two-page document designed to capture information about experiences during the first half of camp. It would be distributed so that it was in the field for a two to three day window of time. The second survey was designed as a mail survey roughly twenty-five pages in length that would be distributed roughly a month after camp, which would leave time for sending a reminder postcard, a second copy of the survey, and another reminder postcard before the winter holiday season started. I followed procedures from Don Dillman's *Mail and Internet Surveys* (2000) when I made the questionnaires, which included a mix of open and closed-ended questions.

The camp organizers agreed that I could do all four pieces of the data collection: the ethnography, the interviews, the during-event short survey, and the post-event survey. Not only did I have to get them to approve the research and allow me to attend the event, I also had to meet the requirement of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Rutgers. Both the event organizers and the IRB had concerns about my project and protecting the event participants.

The event organizers wanted to make sure that I would not disrupt camp and that I would confine acts like notetaking and interviewing to free time. They were also very clear that recording rituals was not an option (see Salomonsen 2002: 117-120 on her experience of recording parts of a Witchcamp ritual without permission and her

experience of “processing” in the community afterwards) because everyone in Reclaiming-style ritual needs to be fully present and have their identity protected. It was before the popular advertising campaign, but their approach was basically “what happens at Witchcamp stays at Witchcamp.” There was a statement about this issue in the *Spiralbound* pre-camp booklet, which was mailed out roughly a month before camp that reads in part: “[...Many campers place great trust in fellow campers to not reveal their full identities to those outside the camp community, or speak about our actions or experiences there without permission to do so.[...] jobs, family ties, and more are at stake. This is an agreement we all make each year [...]” (see Appendix A for full text). All my interactions with the organizers were carried out via email and snail mail, and the group’s website was my main source of information about camp while I was preparing the research design.

The IRB for human subjects was concerned about what I was actually doing during the research including getting informed consent from every research participant, informing the participants that they could opt out of the project at any time, and securing the information I collected. I also had to inform the participants about whether the research kept their information anonymous, meaning there was no link between the data and an individual’s identity, or confidential, meaning links between the data and an individual’s identity were secured by the researcher and not revealed to the public. The IRB had to approve both surveys, a list of interview questions, and I had to present them with templates for consent forms that participants had to read and sign prior to doing an interview or completing a survey.

The more complicated and less standard part of getting my research past the IRB was convincing them that it would be disruptive to get consent from each individual camper for the field observations. I argued that the most efficient thing was to get the organizers' consent on behalf of the camp and then find a way to inform all the participants about my research, that they could opt out at any time, and that I was keeping individual information confidential whereas the name of the camp would be public. I proposed a three-tiered approach that included reading an oral script about the research, confidentiality, and the right to opt out to the entire camp when they were gathered for something everyone attended like a meal. In addition, I planned to make handouts that included the same information that would be available during the whole event in case someone missed the oral script reading. Finally, I decided that scheduling a discussion time regarding the research was a good idea, and would help me make connections with people with a strong interest in the project as well as those who might want to opt out.

This whole account probably sounds pretty standard to academics who are reading this, but I think it is important to point out to everyone reading about the research that I was preparing the project with a theoretical agenda in mind, but little pre-socialization regarding Reclaiming and the Intensive. There was a great deal of uncertainty regarding whether each part of the research methodology would work and result in quality data. On top of these concerns Professor Mische and I discussed how esoteric the group was and the best strategies for discussing it given that I was not using a pseudonym for Reclaiming or the Spiralheart Mid-Atlantic community. We thought at the time that a

conservative IRB member might nitpick at my documents and delay the approval of my research protocol. The main thing I ended up being careful about was referring to the event as something other than a “camp” because were concerned that people who thought witchcraft and/or Wicca were esoteric and unsavory might try to argue that I was researching a liberal terrorist training camp and needed extra precautions in place or anonymous data collection, which would have hampered my ability to track participants’ survey responses over time. Fortunately this situation did not come to pass, and my project was not delayed for over six months the way a fellow student’s research on a BDSM community had been.

Leading up to camp I received the Spiralbound booklet in the mail, and it had a checklist of items to bring to camp. I supplemented this list with a list of all the documents I needed to bring: notebooks for writing field notes, two sets of surveys, information sheets, the oral script that I had to read to the camp, consent forms for interviews, and the interview questions. I also brought along a battery powered tape recorder and cassette tapes because bringing a digital recorder into the wilds of West Virginia seemed like bad plan. They certainly existed back then, but I could not justify the expense of getting one and testing whether it would hold up in the great outdoors for a week. In sum, I took a lot of stuff with me to camp or at least it looked like it when it was all packed into my car.

Theoretically, I had a multi-part agenda. One issue I hoped to work on was the multiple emotions involved in movement recruitment and commitment while building on the ideas of cognitive liberation (McAdam 1999) and moral shock (Jasper and

Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1997) that involved intense cognitions and emotions. In addition, I was interested in Andrew Weigert's work on ambivalence (1991) and wanted to explore whether simultaneous multiple emotions always resulted in what I thought of as "tense" ambivalence⁵. I wanted to explore whether people experienced emotional chaining during the Intensives and see if my concept made sense to people at the Spiralheart event. One other theoretical interest I had early-on that I took with me into my early fieldwork was curiosity regarding whether Reclaiming-style ritual would fit well into Collins' Interaction Ritual (IR) model. Methodologically, I was set up to see what worked. The field observations, interviews, and during-camp survey all seemed like promising ways of seeing what it was like to be a witch for a week and I had built-in flexibility regarding the interviews since they were planned to be "semi-structured" meaning that I could add follow-up questions on the fly if a topic or line of conversation seemed interesting.

My main preparation to do the field observations was a general discussion with Professor Mische a few days before I left for camp. I stopped by her office and we chatted about the possibility of "going native" given that this group did not seem to be high-pressure based on their web presence and my interactions with the event organizers. I reasoned that going native seemed like a risk I was willing to take, and the main precaution I took was to plan to stay with a sociology friend in Charlottesville immediately after camp and then leave for New Jersey a day or two later. The post-

⁵ The other kind of ambivalence I thought might exist was a "calm" or "emotionally neutral" kind that might be associated with meditation or another contemplative state. This neutral sort of state can serve as a mid-point on a continuum of emotional intensity with intense negative and intense positive emotions at either end.

camp visit was with a group of people who knew me relatively well and would call me out if I seemed radically changed by the camp. They also understood that I would be coming out of a solid week of doing research and might be physically and emotionally drained. Professor Mische thought this plan was reasonable, and we turned to discussing managing relationships with participants in the field.

Professor Mische's main piece of advice to me regarding fieldwork was based on her experiences in Brazil. She had done research on youth activists and had been questioned repeatedly about whether she was in the CIA. Professor Mische related how she responded to questions and skepticism about her identity and goals while she was in the field. One answer she often gave was: "the truth is more boring than what you imagine. I really am an academic and am just doing research." I think also told them how to look her up her university affiliation and her advisors since she was not working under an IRB protocol that required consent forms with contact information. Professor Mische advised me that I might get questioned about being in the FBI and that I should consider how I wanted to answer the question and what I would do if they refused to participate on the grounds that I was FBI and the research was a sham.

My thoughts at the time were that the scenario was unlikely, and that I was lucky in a way because people could look me up on the internet when they returned home. I might not be able to build trust over the course of a week, but at least the IRB process and all the paperwork I had to drag around helped legitimate my scholarly intentions. I responded that there was only so much I could do in that situation, and that her answer about the truth being boring seemed to be a great response.

Taking note of times when people expressed skepticism and whether they were trying to protect themselves or the group or both also seemed like something I should in the event that I was challenged like Professor Mische had been. These sorts of notes would be important for assessing whether I could tell that people were systematically avoiding interacting with me and/or completing other parts of the study. I could not force people to participate and make the research representative of the whole group, but I could stay aware of developing blind spots and omissions as the pilot study was being done. As we will see later Professor Mische's advice was prescient, and I was very fortunate to have reflected about answers to challenging questions prior to arriving at camp.

3) My Experience Getting to Camp in 2004 and My Account of a First Evening Ritual

The 2004 camp in context

There are a few topics I should discuss in order to build a foundation for understanding the account of my first evening. My hope is that the account will be less confusing for people unfamiliar Reclaiming tradition activism and witchcraft as well as people unfamiliar with the Spiralheart Mid-Atlantic community. One important topic is the specific story selected for the camp, and the features of a typical Witchcamp story. Secondly, I want to paint a picture of the Spiralheart camp community circa 2004 including the balance between ideal-typical activists and witches. As readers will see in Chapter Three the Spiralheart Intensive, like the other communities, received and sent people to a variety of other movements and groups including but not limited to other Neo-Pagan and Wiccan traditions, Unitarian Universalist congregations, the Men's

Movement (broadly specified), Animal Rights activism for spay/neuter awareness and Marriage Equality activism. Readers should keep in mind that I am classifying people in a manner that is analytically useful, but also not fully inclusive of the diverse, blended religious and activist experiences of the camp participants. Those in depth discussions happen during the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters, which examine socialization of campers and who returns to the Intensive and why.

Features of a typical Witchcamp story and the story of Amaterasu

I felt quite relieved when the *Spiralbound* arrived in the mail (see Appendix B). It made camp seem more tangible, and the booklet looked nicer than anything I had expected. It communicated that the Intensive was serious business and that the community valued aesthetics. I later found out that one of the members of the media cell had paid out-of-pocket for color printing on the front and back of the booklet. Mailing the booklet out to each person kept the location of camp relatively secure, and one major feature of *Spiralbound* was a description of the camp story: Amaterasu.

The concise version of the story is that it covers reunion, conflict, and reconciliation between the Japanese sun goddess Amaterasu and her brother Susanowo the storm god who was plagued by jealousy and anger. The version of the story in *Spiralbound* began with Susanowo approaching Amaterasu and the sister not trusting her brother. The attempt at reunion ends in an argument, and Susanowo acts out in anger and destroys Amaterasu's workplace, the weaving hall. The other spirits, the kami, who had been working in the hall are very frightened by the destruction, but Amaterasu experiences a range of emotions: fear, shame, sadness, and anger. The sun goddess,

driven by the shame Susanowo has brought on their family and an impulse toward self-protection, runs from the weaving hall and retreats into a cave.

Amaterasu's retreat darkens the land, and it becomes colder and the crops wither. The kami spirits are dejected, and eventually figure out that they must find Amaterasu and get her to return. They hunt for her, find the cave, and then hatch a plan to entice Amaterasu from the cave and stun her with her own reflection in a mirror. Another goddess, Amanozume, does bawdy dancing to start off the noisy party and Amaterasu is enticed out of the cave as planned. The kami roll a large rock to block the cave in the moment that Amaterasu sees her reflection. A combination of her own beauty and pleas from the kami convince her to return to the weaving hall ruins. After that Susanowo is punished for his actions by the gods and goddesses and made to return to his rightful place in the underworld while Amaterasu is in her place as the sun goddess once more. In the end, harmony is restored and the kami are relieved.

At this point readers may wonder why the camp organizers and teachers wanted to work with this story and craft rituals that reenacted it. The answer is that the typical story follows what I call an "emotional arc" a concave pattern in which emotions move from being generally positive to generally negative and back. Both the ability to provoke intense emotions as well as the range and sequencing of the emotion are important features of a typical Witchcamp story. The story provides campers with opportunities for identifying with different characters rather than a template for one "right" emotional pattern and a single protagonist to connect to throughout the tale.

Overall the stories offer opportunities for “doing the work” including but not limited to Jungian-style shadow work and stirring up one’s emotional “shit” (see Salomonsen 2002: 123-4 which includes the statement: “Witchcamp always brings up a lot of ‘shit’ in everybody; that is the way it is constructed.”) in the service of deepening one’s religious and activist commitments. The typical story is multifaceted. Camp participants might identify with Amaterasu and her need for self-protection or they might feel more affinity for Susanowo who was tired of feeling second-best and acted out. Another possible connection is with the kami spirits and the land generally. Regardless of which character participants identify with there is a relatively uniform emotional low point in the middle of the story that people can use as a stimulus for emotion work. In addition, there is an ecstatic celebratory piece later in the story which can be an emotional high point in the week. The story takes participants through individual and collective emotional ups and downs.

Typical Witchcamp stories have emotional depth and complexity, and the broader pattern of an emotional arc. They may be drawn from a variety of cultures, and I would remiss if I did not mention that this practice does raise the issue of how to respectfully work with cultural materials as well as whether work by cultural outsiders is ever appropriate. The Reclaiming tradition is not allied with a single culture or region of the world, and their dilemma regarding cultural borrowing is complex since the participants are culturally and ethnically diverse. My sense is that if people feel called to a story at camp and have found one that translates well into a series of evening rituals, they will

do it and use whatever controversy might arise creatively and as a moment for community growth.

The Witchcamp stories shift how participants think, emote, and sense during the course of the week, and serve as crucibles for intense transformative moments. These moments may be planned or might arise spontaneously as the group moves through the emotional arc and specific rituals. In the course of being a witch for a week, the participants get more than a simple catharsis or straightforward awakening from one state to another. They offer themes that are relevant for people with backgrounds in activism or Earth-based religion and encourage a multifaceted flexibility that enables people to deal with paradoxical ideas, emotions, and sensations stemming from modern life as well as Reclaiming's magical-activist worldview. Ideally exposure to the story prompts deep work during the camp itself, and balanced, enriched ways of life once everyone is back at home.

The Spiralheart Mid-Atlantic community in 2004

My first year at Witchcamp was the tenth and final year the founder of the camp, Heather, was present. At this point in time the Spiralheart community included people from points north such as Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York as well as South including North Carolina and Florida. There was also a West Virginia contingent, and a smattering of campers from other parts of the country or other parts of the world who selected the camp because it fit their schedule or they were drawn by the year's story.

Putting regional variations aside, one key distinction at the 2004 camp was between a group of people from the Pagan Cluster⁶ and the other campers. The group describes itself as “a loose gathering of individuals and affinity groups who bring an earth-based spirituality to global justice and peace actions. [...] We practice the art of changing global consciousness by incorporating music, drums, ritual, myth, humor and magic into our actions.” The Pagan Cluster acknowledges that many members have roots in “the Reclaiming tradition of feminist Witchcraft” and connect themselves with the Reclaiming Principles of Unity (see Appendix C) yet the Cluster includes people from beyond Reclaiming. Everyone in the Cluster shares a commitment to nonviolence, direct democracy, and sharing spiritual insights. There is a national listserv and yahoo group for the Pagan Cluster⁷ and local Cluster groups may be nested within a Reclaiming community⁸ as “an optional spoke or aspect of Reclaiming.” The Pagan Cluster is similar to groups such as Gaia Resist in Canada, The Dragon Network and Colour the Grey in Europe and ActElemental in Australia⁹ in that they share a focus on eco-magic and/or global justice issues along with an emphasis on earth-based spirituality. Put together

⁶ See <https://we.riseup.net/pagancluster>, accessed July 8, 2012, for one online resource they use to communicate; the quote in the next sentence is from <http://www.pagancluster.org/about.html>, accessed July 8, 2012. For one example of an action done in 2003 by the Cluster, see http://www.witchvox.com/va/dt_va.html?a=usxx&c=words&id=6224, accessed July 8, 2012. Here is another more recent example from 2012:

http://www.witchvox.com/vn/vn_detail/dt_gno.html?id=17869, accessed July 8, 2012.

⁷ See <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LivRiv/>, accessed July 8, 2012.

⁸ For example Long Island Reclaiming presents the Cluster as “a magical activism opportunity” for local action (see http://www.lireclaiming.org/Pagan_Cluster.html, accessed July 8, 2012.)

⁹ See <http://www.hairyjedi.net/active-pagan.php>, accessed July 8, 2012.

Reclaiming and the Pagan Cluster were and continue to be two key faces of magical activism in the United States¹⁰.

Spiralheart is shaped by the culture of the D.C. Beltway meaning that the campers who go there are generally affluent, used to working within the confines of bureaucracy, and being quiet about their politics due to constraints imposed by their jobs. This is a general gloss on the camp, which seemed to have religious commitments out in the open, and incorporated into the ritual spaces while commitments to activism were submerged. By submerged I mean that people with activist backgrounds and present-day commitments would bring them up in discussions and at times that were deemed appropriate such as during a pre-meal blessing, but activism was not omnipresent to the extent that religion was. For example, there were no altars with mainly activist content-related to causes, ideals, or activist ancestors in either the open-air Pavilion building or the Swisher building where we did evening rituals that year. Basically it seemed like activism and religion were integrated at some points but that the blend was far from seamless and religion was in the foreground more often.

Into this environment stepped a group of around fifteen people whose primary identification was with the Pagan Cluster. Based on comments during camp and later interviews with people who were on the organizing team, my understanding of the

¹⁰ Based limited web research and my own background knowledge, I think Druids, Thelemites, and Asatru could possibly have their own local or national activist contingents that may have opted to stay out of the Pagan Cluster, but these exist I have not seen evidence of them. I should also say that I saw Isaac Bonewits speak at Rutgers University circa 2006 at a Religion and Spirituality Association meeting, and at the Pagan Student Association perhaps as late as 2007. Bonewits seemed to be in favor of social and political activism by Druids, but made no mention of his Druid tradition, *Ar nDraíocht Féin: A Druid Fellowship*, having any organized activist contingents.

situation is that Spiralheart had invited the Cluster people to camp because they wanted to support the group with magical energy, allow them to solicit financial support, and to enable the Cluster to recruit face to face for upcoming actions including the ones at the political conventions. The entire situation set-up an “us versus them” sort of dynamic, which I think was reinforced by the fact that many of the Cluster people tented together at a site that was highly visible. In addition, two members of the group were living out of an airport shuttle bus, which had been painted with murals in the style of the 60s counterculture and modified so that it ran on vegetable oil. The bus and one large flag made of home-dyed blue fabric and flown at the group’s campsite were the main physical symbols of activism at the camp as far as I could tell.

All this is to say that the Cluster was wanted and welcomed in theory by Spiralheart, and that many average members of the group had been involved with activism during the 1960s or with more recent local politics or protests. These were not apolitical people by and large. In practice the camp was marked by tension and conflict between street activists from the Cluster and fellow campers who seemed to give magical religion a higher priority as we will see later on in my accounts of the evening rituals in this chapter. I found the tension gut-wrenching on the one hand and fascinating on the other hand because I had become interested in Reclaiming precisely because the movement tried to blend religion with activism or to give each side of the movement equal time. The 2004 Intensive was a place where everyone struggled to make the ideals of Reclaiming work, and events from camp show how the street activist and religious

contingents struggled to get along like the characters of Amaterasu and Susanowo in the camp story.

These struggles sensitized me even more to important of each person's heritage regarding religion and activism as well as the different blends of religion and activism people would create during and after being a witch for a week. I will return to these issues in Chapters Four and Five and explain the recruitment process of an ideal-typical street activist and ideal-typical magical religious person using recycling as a metaphor. For now readers should keep in mind that the priorities people place on activism and magical religion matter, and that being a witch for a week may look very different for these two ideal types of people and be related to whether they see magical activism as integrated into daily life and the mundane world as well as sacred space such as camp or a protest event.

Putting the Summer of 2004 in Context

My account of the journey to camp includes excerpts drawn from my field notes. Before turning to material from the notes I want to put the fieldwork in historical context and the local context of my summer. I attended my first Witchcamp during August 1st to 8th 2004 and the summer included the lead-up to both the Democratic and Republican national conventions held in Boston, Massachusetts from July 26th to 29th and in New York, New York from August 30th to September 2nd respectively. The Bush versus Kerry contest was the focal point of the election, and it was the first presidential election since 9/11 and Supreme Court ruling on the Bush versus Gore that appointed Bush president in 2000.

In addition, both the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq had been going on since October 2001 and March 2003 respectively. Regarding the rights of Wiccan soldiers to practice freely, several years before in June 1999 then Governor Bush had commented "I don't think witchcraft is a religion. I would hope the military officials would take a second look at the decision they made."¹¹ During this same time period several groups were engaged in petitioning the VA to have the Wiccan pentacle symbol added to the list of approved emblems without success¹². In contrast, the symbols of the Izumo Taishakyo Mission of Hawaii (#34), the Soka Gakkai International - USA (#35), and the Sikh symbol (#36) were approved during the spring and summer of 2004 while applications for the pentacle from the Aquarian Tabernacle Church (started in 1997), the Isis Invicta Military Mission of the Temple and Lyceum of Isis Fortuna (started in 1998), and a Wiccan group based in Maryland called the Nomadic Chantry of the Gramarye (started in 2003) were still pending¹³. I think it is fair to describe the atmosphere during the summer of 2004 as fraught with anticipation of the election, and to include a general note that it seemed tinged with disrespect toward Wiccans and Neo-Pagans.

Meanwhile I had spent the summer teaching my first sole-instructed undergraduate course for six weeks in June and July, and then had taken the remaining time to work on

¹¹ G.W. Bush (R), as Governor of Texas. Interviewed on ABC's Good Morning America, 1999-JUN-24. He disapproved of Wiccan soldiers being given the same religious rights as others in the military. See <http://www.religioustolerance.org/witchcra.htm>, accessed July 8, 2012.

¹² See <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/liberty/veteranpentacle/QuestStorySummary.htm>, accessed July 8, 2012.

¹³ The struggle to get the pentacle approved did not end until 2007. See <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/liberty/veteranpentacle/>, accessed July 8, 2012.

leftover social movement and emotion readings from the spring semester. I also got ready for camp by acquiring equipment such as tent, lantern, and flashlights. Because I knew I was going to take the introductory, “Elements of Magic” Path class I also prepared for camp by reading sections of *The Spiral Dance* (1999). I knew the book was considered a classic work on Neo-Paganism, but found that it did not resonate with me much, meaning that it was clear but not a page-turner that was super-compelling. My reaction to this reading experience was a mix of guilt and sadness since other people clearly found the book compelling and fantastic.

I was also curious to see if any other witchcampers had this ambivalent, blasé reaction and actually discussed it at camp. Were any negative reactions taboo? Was *The Spiral Dance* sacred and untouchable? At this point it was mere weeks until I would find out. I ended the experience with appreciation for the book and the hunch that I now had at least one compelling reason that I had remained an outsider to Reclaiming up to this point.

Arriving at Camp

If I been a perfect fieldworker, I would have planned to arrive at the camp at the earliest possible moment. The *Spiralbound* gave estimated travel times, and I had looked up the directions online as well. The supposedly four-and-half hour drive went smoothly and I was happy to get out of my car and pump gas since New Jersey does not allow it. During what should have been the last couple of hours of the drive some really big thunderstorms kicked up and I was delayed as everyone crept along the highway in

torrential rain. At some point, an inch of water was pooled on the road and everyone rolled through at about ten miles an hour.

The rain eventually ended entirely and I completed the last stage of the drive through a small West Virginia town and up and down country roads with ample views of barbed wire fences, no trespassing signs, and the occasional run-down house or trailer. I was very concerned about whether I was headed in the right direction each time I had to pick a fork in the one lane dirt road, and was wondering if I had missed the sign for the campground when I crested a hill and finally saw it. All this is to say that getting to Spiralheart's camp was an adventure in and of itself with common emotions: frustration, fear, confusion, and wonder. Added to these emotions was the fact that I had a great deal riding on this pilot project. I really wanted it to be viable and was really curious about how the whole event would play out.

My entry into the campground involved going over the hill's crest and emerging from the Appalachian forest into a clearing on a mountainside with a field that was clearly the parking lot. There were three rows of cars with a double row in the center. Looking at the space made it clear that a) I really was late and b) there were more people at the camp than the thirty-or-so I had imagined when filling out my IRB documents. As I have stated, I was going into this blind and had not asked the organizers about how many people were registered for camp.

I parked my car and followed a sign labeled "Registration" placed at the border between the main road and the parking area. It pointed up another hill, which obscured a further view of the campground until I crested it. At that point I was on level ground

on a dirt and gravel road that had a gentle upslope to my right and a sharper downslope to my left. There was a low one-story building ahead on my left with a three or four sunshade-style tents pitched at the end nearest to me and a cluster of people chatting. In addition, there were a couple of smaller outbuildings around the large building, which was later pointed out to me at the dining hall. To my right there was an open grassy field that was mown short enough for people to walk through it and in the distance there were a few tents of various sizes and configurations. A little further along a series of half a dozen one story red cabin-looking buildings dotted the mountainside, and behind them the treeline began and continued up the mountainside. Each cabin had a long set of stairs leading up to it, and these buildings were dwarfed in the landscape by a large structure that was about a hundred yards away. The large building was open-air and built out of large logs with a peaked roof and railing all around the sides. I could not see the entry points into it, but could see evidence of decorations within it and figured that it was the best place to check for registration.

I headed toward the large open-air building that I would later learn was called the Pavilion. Once the road turned a bit I could see that the Pavilion was rectangular and that the long side of the building had a double flight of stairs in the middle. On closer inspection the building had benches built around the inside and once I was inside I met a man named Sky Mist¹⁴ who was staffing the registration table. He was dressed in a

¹⁴ This name is a pseudonym as are all the names I use for individuals associated with the Intensives. I used a magical name generator online to create most of the pseudonyms for people I met in 2004, and after running out of names I started using less common rock and mineral names from the book *Love is in The Earth* (Melody 1995). The exception to this rule regarding confidential identities and pseudonyms is when the

nondescript t-shirt and shorts, but I also noticed that his face and arms were coated with body glitter. The registration set-up was basically a couple of large rectangular folding tables set up in the back half of the Pavilion on the side farther away from the parking lot. Standing in the Pavilion gave me a better view of the land, and as I chatted with Sky Mist I could see that there was another building off to the left that was light colored, as well as a couple of cabin-type buildings with porches that fronted on the left side of the road. I could also see that the trees closed in on the road maybe a hundred more yards past the Pavilion. This was a large piece of land, and I could not tell where the boundaries of the property were other than the entrance.

Sky Mist checked to make sure that I had paid, had me sign a liability waiver with emergency contact information, and then went over the lay of the land with me. This included places where I could pitch my tent, which included the grassy area nearer to the cabins as well as further back in clearing in the woods if I followed the obscured part of the road. I was discouraged from tenting too near to the Pavilion because of noise and people in transit to and from ritual, and was also advised not to get too close to any cabins, any of the roads, or any fellow campers. Some of this seemed to be common sense, but I appreciated the advice and formal statement of what they expected. Sky Mist did not mention when I needed to read the oral script, but did strongly advise me

individual being quoted and discussed has a magical name or mundane identity that can be publicly linked to a fact or comment. In those cases I have opted to use the publicly available name with the public data, which preserves the confidentiality of survey data the person may have contributed with the expectation of confidentiality. In order to protect individual identities further, I have elected to either change the pseudonym for the person or to make the person's identity anonymous. It is my hope that this method preserves confidentiality as much as possible while enabling me to give readers unfamiliar with the camp communities a sense of the people involved.

to go ahead and pitch my tent prior to grabbing dinner otherwise it would be time for evening ritual and then it would be dark.

I went back to the car and grabbed my tent- it was too late to drive on the property, unload the car, and repark it- I felt less confused at this point, but still chagrined that I was late. I settled on a spot in the line of tents that was roughly parallel to the upper road near the treeline cabins. I had a tent neighbor to my right if I looked at the line facing uphill, and clear land off to the left. This was high ground in case it rained and I was still far enough from the Pavilion that I figured noise would not be an issue unless something really loud was happening. I pitched the two-person tent by myself and felt momentary smugness about getting everything anchored and set on my own. I also still felt very new and uncertain as I headed down to the dining hall for dinner having made a couple of trips to my car to bring up supplies.

There were still other people in the dining hall eating and I settled at a row of tables with two other people: a heavyset black woman named Hema and a 20-something white guy of average height and build who had a cane. The man, Zephyrus, did not appear to want to talk, and he was at least a table away from Hema. I did talk a little bit to her, and found out that she had been to camp before. At one point I got up from the table and went to speak to Izar, who I would later learn was “camp ops” an organizing role carried out before and during camp. At the time I just classified her as a “camp leader” and noted that there were women in authority within the group. Izar was also striking. She had a peppy demeanor, was average height and was bald. Like Sky Mist she was covered in body glitter, but was not wearing clothes that stood out as exotic in any

way. She could have walked into a Wal-mart and nobody would have hassled her about her outfit. Izar was being pulled in a lot of different directions, and she was in the midst of talking to another late arrival when I approached. I asked when the meeting for the new campers was taking place and it took her five minutes to get back to me and tell me it was in the dining hall after dinner. I waited in the dining hall after busing my dishes and was briefed for no more than five minutes along with a couple of other latecomers by Izar that bells rang for mealtime and a bell would ring to signal us to go to evening ritual around 8pm. Other than stressing that we should go to evening ritual, the meeting did not relay much new information and I checked with Izar at the end of it about when I would be able to read the oral script. She told me that she would get back to me about it, but it would probably be tomorrow and hurried to deal with something else during the remaining time before evening ritual.

At this point I returned to my tent, pulled out my red folding chair so that I could sit out and write some field notes. I figured it would look like I was writing in a journal, which had been on the supplies list in *Spiralbound*. After I had time to write a summary of my journey to camp so far, including my concerns about not having read the script yet, my tent neighbor, Ardor, came over and introduced himself. He had been playing guitar and wanted to make sure it was not disruptive. We talked a little bit, and I found out that he was also a new camper who had come with a group of Unitarian Universalists from Charlottesville. He was dressed like he was ready to go hiking, and no glitter was in sight. I briefly told him what I was doing at camp and that I had gone to

school in his hometown. He left me to write and when the bell rang for ritual I walked over to the Pavilion on my own.

At each set of stairs-four sets- were pairs of people who greeted everyone and shook fresh bunches of sage at you to clean your energy out before you entered the ritual space. This process was done individually and was a serious and thorough cleansing. This kind of pre-ritual cleansing parallels Native American sage smudging with smoke, but without nearly as much smell. In Reclaiming, people who greet and purify participants pre-ritual are called graces, and once people made it past the graces they were free to sit on the benches around the perimeter of the space. The rafters of the Pavilion had little white lights draped around them and there was a roughly six-by-three foot table-sized altar in each corner of the building. Each altar represented a cardinal direction and had either little colored lights or candles on it in addition to a multitude of objects large and small. For example, the air/east altar was festooned with a pink cloth, an arch of yellow and white balloons, a sword, and a Tibetan singing bowl among other things. The decorations were impressive and more over-the-top than those I had seen at the festivals I had attended. Then again, those groups did not have the luxury of a large indoor-outdoor ritual space.

Even the floor of the Pavilion was nice, and looked to be in better shape than the wood floors in the last apartment I had rented. It was smooth unvarnished wood and had been swept relatively clean. Later on I would find out that dance camps, including groups of cloggers, also rented the campground. They used the Pavilion as a practice space, and the floor made a lot more sense after I learned this.

Once everyone was in the Pavilion it was time for the ritual to begin, and whatever drumming and dancing had been going on quickly settled down. Everyone was asked to stand and form one large circle. At this point I could pick out who most of the ritual leaders were because they were all dressed in robes or other outfits ranging from something one might see at a Renaissance Fair to black leather and lace to vivid tie-dye and batik to sequined evening dresses. Many of them had glitter sticking to their hair and skin.

There was a briefing about what we would accomplish during this part of the ritual: creating a container of magical energy for the whole week. Next, we were led in a grounding and centering meditation that was relatively elaborate and then a woman, Gossamer, stepped forward to cast the circle. She was dressed in a black lacy outfit that made her look dominatrix-esque. This circle was very large and meant to encompass not only the Pavilion, but the entire campground and at this point I believe we also pulled in a “thread” of energy that is sent from Witchcamp to Witchcamp. We were directed to channel magical energy (including the thread energy) to Gossamer as she traced a pentacle in the air while facing each cardinal direction, pushed the energy out to the border, and then continued making the circle by tracing a line of energy until she reached the next cardinal direction. There are four directions: east, south, west, and north as well as above and below, which makes the initial circle into a bubble of energy. The finale to the circle casting is usually the caster or entire group saying something along the lines of: “the circle is cast, we are between the worlds, and what happens between the worlds affects *all* the worlds.”

The ritual then proceeded to elaborate, theatrical invocations of each element and the associated directional energy along with the energy of the center. These invocations were followed by a separate set of invocations of ancestors as well as the deities Amaterasu and Susanowo of the camp's thematic story. The deities were represented by a female and male person from the teaching team, and they both wore elaborate costumes. Nairi's garb was a kimono- I would later learn that it was passed down from the camp founder's mother- and her hair was in a bun. Nairi's comportment oozed deference and modesty, which was consistent with the Amaterasu character. Her counterpart, Moon Watcher, was dressed in dark colors and he embodied the anger and jealousy of the Susanowo character during his invocation. According to my field notes "these invoking were performances spoken clearly and dramatically with the individuals walking around the circle and talking so everyone could hear. Being able to hear across the Pavilion was challenging and could have made the ritual fall flat." I would characterize all of the ritual up to this point as effective and if there were logistical problems, they were not apparent to me.

Once both of the deities had been invoked the ritual had a natural break for the leaders to give more instructions. At this point we were told would all be doing a Spiral Dance together and received very explicit instructions to move slowly and let the energy build. One female leader who was wearing a Spanish-style dress told us multiple times to dance slowly and to keep in mind the community. During this time we also learned a chant for the dance about welcoming the elders. I have terrible after-the-fact recall of chant lyrics, and I have in my notes that the chant was: "Come, come, sacred ones; we

have been waiting for you; we are so glad to see you.” Learning this simple three line chant did not take much time and we learned it in call-and-response style. There was also an intention, printed in the *Spiralbound* that we were reminded about by a different member of the teaching team, Cloud Hunter, who conducted himself “like a leader rather than an equal to other campers” as I put it in my notes. We had to repeat the intention three times right before beginning the Spiral Dance and this reiterated the Amateratsu myth so it was important for people to give it full attention again.

The emotions and Spiral Dance started with all the camp leaders participating in the telling of the first part of the story of Amaterasu, which explained how Amaterasu was a sun goddess and how Susanowo was the darker deity who ruled the underworld. The story was emotionally provocative because they enacted the jealousy of the one sibling and the general conflict between the two of them. After that we all transitioned into holding hands in one big circle and doing the dance. There was music-drumming-guiding us from a group of six or so people in the center and it got off to a slow start.

From my vantage point there were people moving before I was doing anything other than singing and it took a minute or two for everyone to get going since there were roughly ninety-five people participating. In the dance you can do a “grapevine step” or just walk along. This first dance felt random because I ended up holding hands with whoever happened to be next to me in the circle. I was between two people I had never met or talked to. The pacing of the dance was not ideal because there were moments where we paused, but the bright side was that nobody appeared to get stretched out with their arms overextended.

The dance proceeded and eventually I even looked the person directly to my right in the eye because each person makes a sharp turn into the next section of the spiral. So literally everyone sees everyone at camp at least twice. The eye contact did not feel awkward. Everyone had pleasant facial expressions and some people danced along while others just walked. We slowly spiraled inward and the energy built when people looked each other in the eye and then waned as people faced outward as they spiraled. Maybe part of it was the body language and hand holding, but I certainly had a different sense of the circle feeling different during the eye contact phase versus the other.

The dance built into a big crescendo at the end. At that point everyone was tightly clustered around the center and people dropped hands and did energy work by shaping energy any way they saw fit. It looked like people were throwing material into the circle or pulling taffy. I found it hard to tell when the “cone of power” was built up and people hummed or sang a single note while doing the energy work. It seemed to me that the leaders got a sense from each other on when to end it. After releasing the cone of energy we spread out into a large circle again; we had been tightly spiraled together at the center of the Pavilion. We grounded at the end of the ritual and then sat on the floor of the Pavilion. I felt fine and did feel like I was able to ground.

We all sat after the Spiral Dance part of ritual and listened to the descriptions of each Path and then went to meet the leaders. All the leaders were friendly and gave descriptions of the Paths that matched the Spiralbound book. The a group of younger-looking men and women I would later learn were the Prismic Broadz of Chaos were all dressed in black and looked like they were headed for an S&M club. Cloud Hunter and

Sky Song's description of the Sex Path class emphasized that it was for advanced campers with magical skills. It would not be an easy path and did not involve actually having sex although they would have class in the sauna.

I knew I was taking the "Elements of Magic"¹⁵ class so I headed over to Black Swan and Sky Mist's little section of the Pavilion immediately after we were set free to choose. It took a couple of minutes for people to settle into groups. After that, Black Swan welcomed us and gave us a brief explanation of the Path and encouraged us to go to spider time at 1:30pm the next day to help plan the evening rituals. My Path group had all new people and roughly a third of the group was male. Many of the women in the group of roughly fifteen people appeared to be in their 20s including Rhea, Egeria, Frost, and two women who were living out of a tricked out airport shuttle bus. Our brief introduction time ended and then we were told to go to snack in the dining hall.

Rhea, Egeria, and I went down for snacks talking the whole way. We had Frost come to our table and then a leader of the Creativity Path class came up and talked with us about the etiquette of leaving stuff on altars. People were not supposed to touch anything and everyone took back their objects at the end of the week. During snack I met a woman named Ukko who introduced herself but did not snack with us. Ukko was very butch but also pixie-like in her build and demeanor; she had carpooled with Rhea and Egeria.

¹⁵ This class is the introductory course new people are encouraged to take. See Salomonsen 2002: 157-88 for an extended discussion of how the class functions outside of Witchcamp.

After chatting and snacking I headed back to my tent. I was settled in and writing field notes around midnight when it thundered and a car alarm started going off down in the parking lot. The alarm sounded for several minutes and people cheered, whistled, and clapped loud enough that I could hear them from all over when the alarm stopped. This was really a moment of community even though people could not see each other.

I am letting this discussion of my arrival and first night at camp stand on its own as a descriptive account here in the introduction. It provides a good entry-point into what an Intensive is like, and I also want readers to become acquainted with the magical worldview before jumping into any analysis. My account of the first night at camp includes my impressions regarding the first Spiral Dance I attended, and in the next, fourth, section of the introduction I examine an event that happened before my time in the Spiralheart community back in 2000. This camp became something of a “legend” due to numerous campers falling ill, and I examine how both scientific rationality and the magical worldview are used by veteran campers to explain the events at the 2000 Inanna¹⁶ and Ereshkigal¹⁷ themed Intensive.

¹⁶ Here is an explanation of Inanna and her relationship to Ereshkigal: “Inanna is the most important goddess of the Sumerian pantheon in ancient Mesopotamia. She is a goddess of love, fertility, and war. Inanna figures prominently in various myths, such as 'Inanna's descent to the underworld'. In this particular myth she travels to the realm of the dead and claims its ruling. However, her sister Ereshkigal, who rules the place, sentences her to death. With Inanna's death, however, nature died with her and nothing would grow anymore. Through the intervention of the god Enki she could be reborn if another person took her place. She chooses her beloved consort Dumuzi, who would from then on rule the underworld every half year.” From “Inanna.” Encyclopedia Mythica from Encyclopedia Mythica Online. See <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/i/inanna.html>, accessed July 8, 2012.

¹⁷ Here is an explanation of Ereshkigal: “The Sumerian and Akkadian goddess of the underworld, sister of the sky goddess Ishtar. Together with her consort Nergal she rules

4) Understanding the Magical Worldview: Accounts of the 2000 Spiralheart Intensive

In this section of the introduction, I acquaint readers with the magical worldview in practice by examining accounts of a Spiralheart Intensive that happened before my time in 2000. If I had to sum up why this particular camp “is legend” as one person put it, I would say that the camp lives in people’s memories because of the combination of the theme: a descent into hell story of Inanna and her meeting with Ereshkigal, and the difficult-to-explain illnesses people came down with during and after the Witchcamp. To outsiders both the theme and the extreme bouts of illness people went through will probably raise questions about why anyone would ever return to Spiralheart or another Witchcamp after enacting a descent into hell and getting violently ill. In short, one answer is that some campers view the illness as bound together with the magic of camp and doing deep, meaningful work during and after camp even when scientific-rational explanations are mobilized to understand what happened that year. This is the same kind of retention question that should be asked about any Intensive, and is one core question I address in the dissertation for the 2004 Intensive. Moving back to the case of the Spiraheart 2000 Intensive, I think the event and retention challenges provoked by the theme-illness combination are unique to this particular camp. This being said, I also think that the scope of the illness was epic, yet the overall pattern of how people coped

the underworld, also called 'the big land', from which no-one returns.[...] Ereshkigal is dark and violent, befitting her role as goddess of the underworld. As ruler over the shades, Ereshkigal receives the mortuary offerings made to the dead. In the Sumerian cosmogony she was carried off to the underworld after the separation of heaven and earth. She is often praised in hymns. Ereshkigal was probably once a sky-goddess.” From "Ereshkigal." Encyclopedia Mythica from Encyclopedia Mythica Online. See <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/e/ereshkigal.html>, accessed July 8, 2012.

was not all that unusual. I myself have been to Reclaiming events marked by problems with water (California 2007) and illness (Dandelion 2010) that were also subject to this kind of blended magical and scientific-rational explanation.

While I was in the field, it took over a year before I started hearing about the Spiralheart 2000 camp. The story started to come out of the woodwork so to speak only after I had completed fieldwork and a round of surveys in 2004, and had returned for a second and third Intensive in 2005 at DreamRoads and Spiralheart. The sources for the data I present below include interviews conducted in 2005 and 2006 as well as fieldnotes completed during the Intensives and Spiralaheart organizer meetings. In addition, I looked for materials about the Inanna-Ereshkigal theme on the internet because the materials from Spiralheart were not publicly available. What I discovered in the course of this search was that two other camps, Vermont and Tejas Web in Texas, had also done Sumerian mythology and stories related to the goddess Inanna in 2000¹⁸. In addition, I found that New York Witchcamp had done back-to-back Sumerian goddess themes in 2002¹⁹ and 2003²⁰. I think the theme “Inanna and Ereshkigal at the

¹⁸ See <http://www.vermontwitchcamp.net/archives/2000>, accessed July 8, 2012, and http://www.tejasweb.org/TW_camp_history.pdf, accessed July 8, 2012. Tejas Web held their camp in March 2000, and the Vermont camp is generally held in late summer or early fall after Spiralheart.

¹⁹ See <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Pagan-Forum/message/7024>, accessed July 8, 2012 for NY camp held in October 2002.

²⁰ See <http://mysticwicks.com/archive/index.php/t-30225.html>, accessed July 8, 2012, for NY camp held October 2003. The theme was “The Sacred Marriage of Ereshkigal and Nergal.” The camp story reads in part “[...] The story of the sacred marriage of Ereshkigal, Queen of the land of Ancestral Memory, to Nergal, the god of war poses many of the questions we face at this time in our lives. Many of us ask: How do we manifest Love Beyond All Reason when faced with war? This Love story from the

Crossroads” from the 2002 New York Intensive more closely approximates the theme Spiralheart used in 2000. I provide a copy of it here²¹ so that readers can get the scope of what a week’s work with the theme looks like. The three evening rituals discussed by people from the Spiralheart camp include: 1) Inanna’s wedding, 2) Inanna’s descent to meet Ereshkigal in the underworld along with Inanna’s rescue and ascent, and 3) a post-ascent celebratory/redemption ritual many campers missed due to illness. In the next section, I present a composite discussion created using in-depth interview data to give readers a sense of how these rituals worked and when people began getting ill.

Background on the Story of Camp

As I stated earlier, I do not have a comprehensive account of the whole story narrative for the Spiralheart 2000 camp. The stories people would tell me about the camp tended to focus on magical skills and their experiences in three different rituals, which occurred during the middle and end of camp. This was the period during camp when people started to get sick, and I have left some of the comments about illness

birthing place of humanity weaves Time and Passion with the healing we receive and give while creating Peace.”

²¹ “Throughout the week we will work with the ancient Sumerian myth of Inanna the Queen of Heaven and Earth and Ereshkigal the Queen of the Underworld and Mystery. Using Sacred Drama and ritual we will travel to the crossroads and look into the heart of the Inanna and the shadowy face of Ereshkigal. This is a story of beauty, love, sex, friendship, betrayal and redemption. Each evening we will journey further with Inanna as she claims her birthright to be the Queen of Heaven, as she takes a lover, as she discovers the beauty of her sensual body and as she lets go of everything in order to descend into the underworld to meet her sister Ereshkigal. We will follow Ereshkigal as she meets her treasured sister, as she laments the loss of her beauty and those that forget her powers.” See <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Pagan-Forum/message/7024>, accessed July 8, 2012.

interspersed with the accounts of the rituals, which were generally framed as being “powerful,” well-run, and effective.

The second three rituals people discussed with me was a complex, multi-sited ritual that re-enacted Inanna’s descent into the underworld and her eventual return. I am focusing primarily on this ritual in this section due to space constraints. The following description of the “descent ritual” comes from, Li Mya (female, white, 50s in 2000), a long-time camper who I will describe in more depth in Chapter Three. Her description starts close to the beginning of the ritual:

They had us at one point, we could choose. We could either, go into the underworld, and meet with Ereshkigal. We could be one of the Ninsheburs which were waiting for Inanna to come back. Or, we could be one of the, what did they call it? I want to say the Queer Ones, but I think we had a slightly different name for them. They were the ones like the flies.[...] They came and they fed Inanna so that she could come back. And so we each had to choose what we wanted to do. We processed from the Pavilion down to Swisher. Swisher was the underworld. And you know I chose to do that. We all walked in there and took off our clothes and we were naked with Ereshkigal. And outside the Ninsheburs kept chanting, “we will wait, as long as it takes.” And that was really sweet. I don’t know how they kept that up, but they did. And then eventually the Queer Allies came in and fed us. Literally fed us to help us go out, and [...] it was a wonderful ritual, very powerful.

At this point nobody had fallen ill, and this account gives us the perspective of someone who elected to follow in the steps of Inanna in the ritual. Li Mya found the actions of people in the other roles to be “really sweet” and supportive. In contrast to Li Mya’s positive response, another camper Monazite (female, white) told me about how she felt confused at the time:

‘Cause the year I was in the Ereshkigal-Inanna theme, we did this one big ritual where we all went to the underworld and I remember being in the ritual going “I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do.” And then at some point in the ritual I thought “Gee, if I had died and gone to the underworld,

I wouldn't know what to do." It was like the ritual actually mirrored or mimicked what really would happen [...] in the underworld. I didn't know what to do or where to go [...] And then you had to go to Ereshkigal, and you had to offer up something and, but it turned out to be one of the most powerful things, but at the time I was like "gee, this doesn't make any sense."

In hindsight, Monazite links her confusion in the ritual to a powerful experience of really going to the underworld and feeling authentic emotional and cognitive reactions to being in a new place and not knowing the rules. Monazite describes an additional piece of the ritual, offering up something to Ereshkigal, and does not focus on the performance of the priestess enacting/aspecting the goddess in the ritual. Putting Li Mya's and Monazite's accounts together gives us a multi-faceted picture of what this ritual felt like for people who took the Inanna role. This was a long and involved ritual, and one person, Izar (female, white, 50s in 2000), who opted for the role of waiting for Inanna's return commented that she sat chanting "we will wait for you, as long as it takes" for multiple hours while people such as Li Mya and Monazite were in the Swisher building having the underworld experience. This patience-trying and physically taxing waiting period sounded like a rite of passage in its own way to me when he recounted it.

After that evening ritual as Monazite put it, "I got sick." Li Mya provided a lengthier account of people falling ill and how camp functioned:

[The safety witch] She was wonderful.[...] And she ran out of all of her supplies, had to go out and get more. Yeah, because so many of us were sick, there were over a hundred campers and figuring a third of us were sick. So, people that weren't sick would bring water or tea or something like that. And some of the Paths that were still ongoing actually made "get well" cards, brought them around. It was real sweet. And then we returned the favor when other people got sick, yeah. So, we all helped each other out. [...] I was in bed for most the next day, as were a lot of us and was not well enough to go to the culminating ritual that was apparently spectacular, where they had thrones of Inanna and Ereshkigal, all back to back. You could hear it off in the distance.

Li Mya's description includes the third of three rituals at the camp that I listed earlier, and she seemed really disappointed that she missed it. I will delve into more of what the campers had to say regarding their experiences with being sick after describing six of the campers who attended the Spiralheart camp in 2000. Each of these campers continued to attend Intensives for several years after what was arguably a powerful yet unpleasant camp experience. I encountered each person at either Spiralheart or DreamRoads between 2004 and 2006, and by that time these people had all become "veterans" in the eyes of new campers.

Explaining Illness: Magical and Scientific Rational Accounts

The three accounts that I present here illustrate some of the scientific-rational explanations participants used to explain why so many people at camp fell ill. The examples should give readers a sense that the community never pinned down a single source for the problem. In addition, readers will see a focus on the magic of camp in the third account from Monazite, and I think there is some magic or at least serendipity implied in Bear's account. Li Mya's is probably the most exclusively rational, and I will discuss this further after walking reader through what each person had to say.

The Plague of 2000: Li Mya's account

Li Mya's account of the Spiralheart 2000 camp included not only in-depth comments about the evening rituals, but also comments about how water and hand-to-hand contact might have spread a disease among the campers. Her comments are similar to those of other people in the cohort who mentioned that sharing food and drinking out of the same cups in a ritual might have spread a bug around. If so, this probably

happened during the Inanna's wedding ritual during the middle of the week since the illness did not seem isolated to a particular Path class. According to Li Mya the dining hall and the ice-cube scooping system might have been to blame:

I think we ultimately decided that the plague that hit was something that had to do with the water. Like, maybe it had gotten into the ice cubes [in the dining hall] because we used to be able to, we had ice cubes, cubed scoops of stuff [...] Probably hand-to-hand contact [in one or more of the rituals], because I found myself in the middle of the night thinking I really need to get up and go to the bathroom. And so I did and then I laid back down in bed and thought I think I'm going to throw up. I hate to throw up. It's like I'll do anything but it was obvious I wasn't going to be able to not throw up. So, I went and threw up. And as I rinsed my mouth out and started to go back to bed, I heard somebody else throwing up. And hmm, I'm not the only one. And that's, you know it was pretty retched. [...] [The campground] made some changes in the way they handled water and ice after that. [...] But we, I think a lot of us learned to pack differently, too. Like, I always bring Imodium now, just in case.

Li Mya's account gives two possible scientific-rational causes: contaminated ice and hand to hand contact. Her symptoms from "the plague" did not last very long. I have heard other people describe the same symptoms and discuss the "double dipping" of ice cubes by campers out of whatever ice tray/bucket the dining hall used to have. The campground had a beverage machine with an ice dispenser by 2004 when I was there so things had definitely been changed.

Heavy Rain and Vicious Giardia: Bear's account

When I interviewed Bear in 2005, I asked him about the 2000 camp, and his response was, "Oh my god [...] there was a bug that got into the water and it, uh, it actually, It is giardia. It is an intestinal parasite. And its in, actually is in deer scat is how it is transmitted. And we had a hard rain that year. It was a particularly rainy year and the deer scat in the woods and it filtered into the lake, which then everybody was in the

lake.” Bear never specified if people just went swimming during their free time or if going in the lake was part of a ritual. He went on to say that a large percentage of people at camp got sick, and gave a larger estimate than Li Mya. I am still unsure why their counts differ, but I think Bear was involved in the yahoo group listserv run by Spiralheart and might have been counting people who were ill after camp.

Bear then went on to explain what happened to him. He stated,

That was the summer where when I got sick [...] and I just stayed sick. Then I found out that I had cancer. You know, stage three cancer, and it was like because I couldn't figure out [my symptoms and] was like OK, so I had had giardia before. It is endemic in West Virginia. And, um I just stayed sick and a lot of other people did [too]. And they had to take anti-flagellant stuff which absolutely wipes out your system. It wipes out all the flora in your system. It takes out all of it. All the stomach bacteria and everything else. [Giardia and the cure are] vicious, its vicious. But that didn't work for me so, you know, it was kind of like ok, so what else is this? By November I was just sick. That's my story. It saved my life, yeah. That was the Inanna year that turned into the Ereshkigal year.

Bear's account focuses on another scientific-rational explanation: a “vicious” waterborn disease that caused people to get sick and stay sick after camp was over. This also happened to Vellamo, and I think she was one person who had to take the anti-flagellant medication Bear mentioned in his account. The cure is as rough as the disease, but it turned out the Bear had advanced cancer. He discovered it because he was getting actively treated for giardia post-camp, and had to have major medical procedures after Thanksgiving that year. Having the Inanna year turn into the Ereshkigal year as he put it coincided with Bear finding a worse disease. As he put it, the whole chain of events that year “saved [his] life,” and I think it is notable that his phrasing leaves room for serendipity and magic, and does not frame the chain of events as mere

coincidence. Bear points to a different cause than Li Mya, but the giardia sounds as plausible and just as rational as the dining hall ice problem or simple hand-to-hand disease transmission.

Confusion in a Different Light: Monazite's Account

In contrast to the other two explanations for illness at camp, Monazite basically brushed off the illness, and focused on discussing the magic of camp. She stayed focused on her early confusion and how she saw the experience in a different light later. In 2006 Monazite commented,

But I've also learned from past camps that magic ends up being experiential in an object-lesson way and at the time something I think didn't work ends up being exactly the way it was supposed to be.[...] and it [the Inanna descent ritual] turned out to one of the most powerful rituals of my life. It mimicked an underworld experience. [...] You know, and so for me, I've learned not to judge in that moment because later on it may be revealed in a different way.

I think it is important to note that Monazite stayed focused on the magic of camp, and neglected even discussing "the plague" as Li Mya called it even though Monazite did get sick. Her account does not attempt to mobilize either scientific rationality or magical associations such as saying the descent into hell magic provoked the illness, yet Monazite's logic can be extended to the illness experience as well. Illness might have marred camp at the time, but in the end, magically, everything ended up being "the way it was supposed to be." This is, to me, a second instance of a kind of "soft and serendipitous" magical reasoning. I think this style of reasoning was also present in Bear's account of camp "saving [his] life." This kind magical reasoning is subtle, and contrasts with magical explanations that are "harder-edged" and make pretty clear causal statements such as "they did a ritual that really pissed off a deity, and they got

really sick as punishment.” This is just an example of an alternative explanation and is not meant to reflect what was done at the 2000 camp, and I hope readers get my point: magical reasoning has different variants and people in Reclaiming draw on both scientific rationality and magical reasoning to explain events like a wave of illness hitting a camp.

Lessons from This Account and Further Questions

I think the big takeaway from this section is that even a mundane event like illness that could have a clearly scientific-rational explanation may be, but are not always linked to magic by people involved in the Reclaiming tradition. This can be framed sociologically as an instance of selective re-enchantment of modern life with the magical worldview. Like Monazite they may choose to focus on the magical work and largely ignore the illness or they may present a solely rational cause for the problem such as Li Mya’s dining hall ice problem. Bear’s explanation is a bit more blended, and leaves room for soft magical reasoning and serendipity. This mix of styles of explanation leads me to think that further questions should be asked about how Reclaiming witches juggle both “hard” and “soft” magical reasoning with each other and with scientific rationality. There is a bumper sticker that says “Magic Happens,” and I think it is worthwhile to ask questions about what sort of magic is happening as well as how the process of juggling magical reasoning and scientific rationality is linked to mental, emotional, and somatic flexibility. These topics relate to the recycling model of self-transformation I present in Chapter Five.

Now that readers are a little more familiar with magical reasoning and the camp experience, in the next section I finish the introduction by analyzing an ideal-typical Spiral Dance ritual in order to understand the best-case dynamics of how this often-used Reclaiming-style ritual works. I argue that the analysis is best accomplished using a fusion of ideas from anthropology (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) and sociology (Collins 2004) regarding how rituals are structured, the flows of emotional energy in rituals, and allocations of power and authority within rituals. This style of ritual analysis complements the theoretical ideas I develop later in the dissertation including the recycling model of self-transformation in Chapter Five.

5) Making Sense of the Spiral Dance Ritual Using a Theoretical Synthesis

The Spiral Dance is not only the title of Starhawk's classic book first published in 1979, but also a signature ritual in and of itself. In this section I argue that I am better off using a synthesis of two ritual theories drawn from anthropology and sociology to make sense of how social energy of the Spiral Dance ritual works than drawing just on the sociological IR theory (Collins 2004) or on the anthropological work of Victor and Edith Turner, including the concept of *communitas* (Turner 2012; Turner 1969). At first glance these theories appear to operate at different levels of analysis, but I think they can be bridged and integrated into a framework that is sensitive to collective *communitas* and group social energy as well as flows of what Collins calls *emotional energy* that happen within both individuals over time as well as in groups. This kind of analysis helps me uncover the fact that the social energy flows of the Spiral Dance do not precisely map onto the magical energy flows that the witches enact in the ritual.

In this section I provide a brief discussion of bridges I see between the work of Randall Collins on IRs and Edith and Victor Turner's work on rituals, liminality, and *communitas*. This discussion is followed by a summary of the nuts and bolts of how a prototypical Spiral Dance ritual is run as well as a basic analysis of magical and social energy flows within the ritual. I then turn to presenting a micro-level assessment of the prototypical Spiral Dance ritual using a blend of Collins' and Turner's ideas. Due to space constraints I have limited the assessment to a single section, which focuses on social energy flows perceived by people in three different roles in the Spiral Dance: the lead, a musician, and an average participant. The puzzling findings from this assessment are 1) the ritual is ecstatic, yet suboptimal if losing one's individuality via *communitas* makes for an optimal ritual and 2) individually and collectively participants let go of the emotional energy raised in the Spiral Dance in multiple ways: sending off a "cone of power" and "grounding and centering" remaining energy. This second finding seems to run contrary to what IR theory posits should happen in rituals (Collins 2004). Cutting off the analysis the way I do here in Chapter One leaves open the issues of how concepts such as charisma and collective effervescence fit into a ritual analysis as well as how rituals such as the Spiral Dance both set up and include bridges between experiences of high emotional energy and *communitas*. This is unfortunate, but I think the section on rituals does demonstrate that: 1) the theories can be bridged to some extent, a theoretical synthesis is a worthwhile goal, and a blend of the theories is useful for analyzing Reclaiming-style ritual, and 2) the Spiral Dance is a ritual process worth investigating further in and of itself.

Bridges Between the Ritual Theories of Collins and the Turners: Steps Toward a Synthesis

In this section I present an initial effort at finding common ground and bridges between IR theory and Turnerian ritual process theory. The discussion is organized around four different points, and my ideas are summarized in Figure 1.3, which focuses on how the synthesis can be applied to Reclaiming-style rituals. I certainly think this work is relevant for analyzing rituals done by other groups and movements, and do not want to leave readers with the impression that the blend of IR and ritual process theory I begin to develop here is applicable just to Reclaiming or other Neo-pagan groups. The synthesis should help us understand shifts in emotional energy, power relationships, experiences of liminality, and immersion in group energy such as *communitas* and collective effervescence in ritualized activities performed by a wide variety of social groups.

Point 1: When it comes to theorizing rituals Collins' IR theory is "holistic" because it looks at rituals as a whole and his work on collective effervescence of groups and emotional energy interactions seems to match this level of analysis. Turner's process theory is "specific and piece-focused" because it focuses on specific sections of a ritual and mentions individual energy levels within each segment. One point for readers to take away here is that the levels of analysis of the ritual theories seem to match the levels (group versus individual) of analysis of the social energy theories. Collins theorizes entire rituals and looks for the presence of key ingredients which are necessary for collective effervescence to occur and a ritual's intended outcome to be achieved. Turner theorizes ritual as a process composed of segments which each get examined in depth

along with the experience of transitioning from segment to segment. This contrast between the theories is illustrated by two checklists I produced for analyzing rituals (see Figures 1.1 and 1.2 below). These are the basic checklists, and I have done other work to modify them not shown here due to space constraints. This additional work did influence the ideas presented in Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.1: Checklist for IR components (see Collins 2004: 48)

Ritual Ingredients
Group Assembly (bodily co-presence)
Barrier to Outsiders
Mutual Focus of Attention
Shared Mood
<i>Collective Effervescence</i>
Ritual Outcomes
Group Solidarity
EE in Individual
Symbols of Social Relationship (sacred objects)
Standards of morality

Using the original IR checklist we can assess the build-up of ingredients and the presence of collective effervescence at each step in the ritual, and then assess ritual outcomes as they develop over the course of the ritual. This approach treats each step in the ritual as a mini-IR that produces outcomes, which then potentially feed the next step of the ritual process. In this analysis I would treat the mini-IR as an ideal type that produces the most effective/desirable outcome from the standpoint of ritual organizers and regular participants. I might also assume that the ritual organizers/leaders have some experience with executing this style of ritual, but that they have not necessarily acted in leadership roles before. Another core assumption of IR theory is that the

general goal/outcome of interaction is a ritual assessed as “energetic” rather than “flat” with work that was effective and meaningful rather than ineffective or trivial.

Figure 1.2: Checklist for Turner Ritual Process

Ritual Transitions/passages
Has passage from ordinary/everyday space; crosses threshold into ritual
Has passage from ordinary/everyday time; crosses threshold into ritual
Has passage back to ordinary/everyday space; crosses threshold out of ritual
Has passage back to ordinary/everyday time; crosses threshold out of ritual
<i>Communitas</i>
Individual feels the social cohesiveness of communitas state
Communitas state is meaningful, memorable
Communitas state is linked to non-ordinary hierarchy
Communitas state is linked to breaking taboos of ordinary life
Moments of Action/Rites
Individual's ordinary status/role dropped, individual blends with group
Individual's ordinary status/role dropped, individual takes opposite status/role from ordinary (order-giver to order-taker or vice versa)
Individual is challenged/tested in the rite
Individual is prepared for new status/role via receiving abilities
Individual receives meaningful explanation of rite
Individual receives meaningful explanation of new status/role

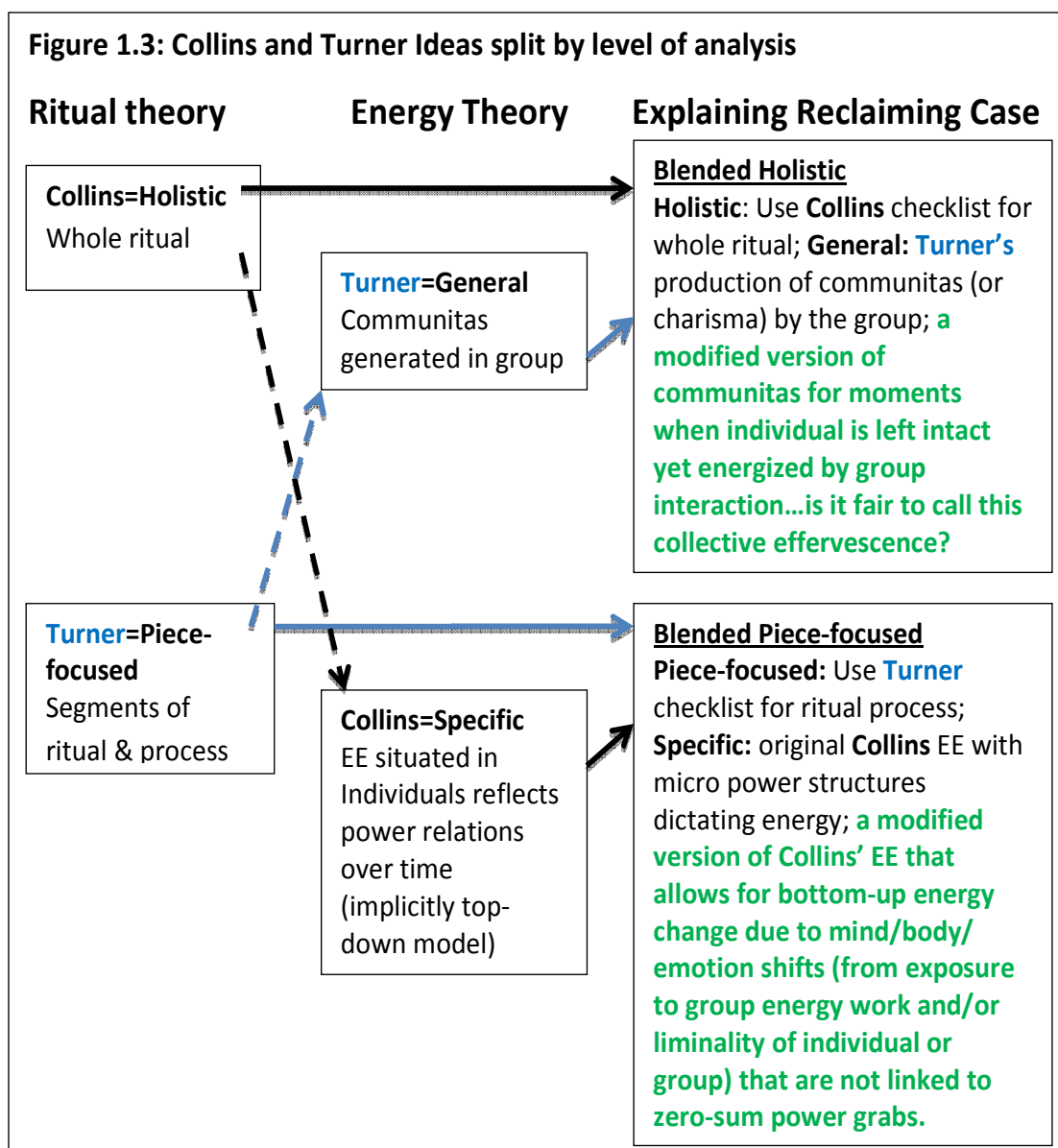
Due to generality of the IR approach, one can argue that analysts might need more precision in the checklist regarding ritual ingredients as well as the outcomes in order to understand the dynamics of rituals (in my case Reclaiming-style rituals). One way to gain precision is to consider a different approach to analyzing ritual, and I draw on Victor and Edith Turner's body of work, which complements Collins' emphasis on structures, collective energy fluctuations over time, conflict, and power with a process-oriented approach that attends to the timing and experience of individual passages through spaces, places, social roles and temporalities linked to ritual. A checklist based on Turner (see above) focuses on individual movement through the collective experience of ritual

and breaking down the whole experience into moments of action (rites) and necessary transitions (passages) into and out of activities.

Point 2: Collins and Turner both theorize about how energy is generated in rituals, but (contrary to the picture generated in Point 1 above) the levels of analysis for the conceptual work related to their energy theories are actually the opposite of their ritual theories. These are connected with dashed lines in Figure 1.3 (see below). Turner presents the idea of *communitas*, a “general, group-level” concept, which is generated only by the full immersion of all individuals into a group so that they are undifferentiated, merged, and energized from being a mass. Collins presents *emotional energy* (EE), a “specific, individual-level” concept which is shaped by power relations of IR chains; individuals seek to maximize their EE and failing that try to hold their EE steady as chains play out (2004). Another option is to vest the EE in symbols, including people, and to use these symbols to recharge EE as wanes.

Point 3: To fully understand rituals and energy flows at Reclaiming Intensives I think both piece-focused, specific and holistic, general analysis are necessary, and propose new ideas shown in green in Figure 1.3. To get a multi-level analysis done, ideas from Collins and Turner have to be brought together, which is shown in Figure 1.3. I explain how the holistic and piece-focused analysis that can be done with a blend of Collins and Turner’s ideas in a bit more detail below before turning to a separate, fourth point about bridging the “specific” and “general” analysis and teasing apart moments of working on “specific” individual energy and “general” collective energy which I argue

are compatible with both the holistic “general” ritual analysis of IR theory and the piece-focused “specific” ritual analysis of Turnerian ritual process theory.



In the blended “piece-level” analysis²² the ritual process is assessed in-depth for features that contribute to shifts in space and place over time associated with ritual

²² I think it makes sense to discuss the blended analysis in terms of approach to ritual it takes and am splitting the forms of blended analysis into a specific, lower-level “piece-focused” type grounded in Turnerian process theory and a general, higher-level

transitions and passages, moments of action including roles being dropped or assumed and individuals being tested and prepared for new post-ritual roles, power relations that contribute to waxing and waning social energy and social cohesiveness, and flows of emotional energy (EE) associated with micro-interactions such as teacher-student exchanges in rituals that help teachers maximize their EE by using the higher teacher status to get power over the student and authority to shape ritual content. This kind of analysis draws on the Turner checklist I presented earlier, but omits the section on *communitas* while blending in a focus on emotional energy flows and their relationships to shifts in micro-level power relationships between individual participants which impact social and emotional energy.

Point 4: Finally, I am devoting a separate point to some possible bridges (I discuss four here) between the “piece-focused, specific” and “holistic, general” forms of ritual analysis discussed in Figure 1.3. Readers should keep in mind that a “holistic, general” analysis in my terms means an analysis of entire rituals and group energy whereas a “piece-focused, specific” analysis focuses on segments of rituals and individual experiences of social and emotional energy. *Communitas* is Turner’s concept, and it operates at the “general” level for entire groups. One possible general-specific level bridge is that exposure to *communitas* also provokes the individual mind/body/emotion shifts that I link to the modified version of EE and bottom-up change. A second possible general-specific bridge is that exposure to the modified state I am calling “*communitas/collective effervescence*” (discussed in green) seen in a “holistic” ritual

“holistic” type grounded in IR theory. In this section I only discuss how the former would work here in point 3 due to space constraints.

analysis provokes the individual mind/body/emotion shifts that I link to the modified version of EE and bottom-up change seen in a “piece-focused” ritual analysis.

A third possible specific-general bridge is that emotional energy (EE) works the way Collins theorizes and both high status and lower status individuals experience a temporary loss or gain of EE respectively by experiencing liminality at camp during a status modification activity such as the pirates poking fun at the teachers at lunch or new campers mocking seasoned campers in the talent show. These interactions, seen in a “piece-focused” analysis of ritual produce collective effervescence among actors and audience and in the end allow all the successful actors to draw on the whole group’s energy and exit the interaction with more EE and more charisma compared to the audience. The power arrangements that foster unequal EE levels also can foster group-level dynamics such as unequal attributions of charisma or other forms of appeal, and these would be analyzed in a “holistic” analysis of the rituals and group interactions. Going further, it seems reasonable that people with high EE compared to other group members could consolidate the high EE into relatively high charisma during the course of a ritual that exposes participants to all their fellow participants. This ritual would lack either a section that effectively produces egalitarian communitas or another event that equitably distributes group energy into shared symbols or intentionally dissipates the group energy rather than leaving it high, free-floating, and up for grabs by attention-getters with high status, high EE, or both.

A fourth possible specific-general bridge is that EE levels can flow from changes to each individual self that are mental, emotional, or somatic or a combination. These

changes might enable novel individual behavior in ritual which is effective and leads to a change in one's individual EE level. This micro-level, "specific" change would be followed by one's participation in "general" group-level collective effervescence, and eventually shifts in one's status in the social group and the allocation of the group's energy to the individual during moments when the energy/charisma is not shared equally by the whole group. I am arguing here that novel behavior from individuals, when deemed effective and worthwhile within the group doing a ritual, can provoke shifts in individual status and EE over time. This process constitutes one instance of the "bottom-up" change I refer to in Figure 1.3.

Having grappled with two bodies of ritual theory that are useful on their own, I hope to have begun convincing readers that people interested in understanding how rituals work will profit from synthesizing IR theory (Collins 2004) and the Turners' work on ritual processes (Turner 2012; Turner 1969). A blend of these two approaches helps us consider group-level "holistic and general" states such as *communitas* and the ingredients and outcomes that produce effective rituals in a particular context. In addition, blending the two ritual theories can set analysts up to perform a rich "piece-focused and specific" analysis of segments of specific rituals and how individual and group emotional energy shifts over time in response to changes in space, place, and hierarchical positions. Overall I seek to understand not only the structure of specific rituals, but also how emotions and power relations shift over time and their relationship to self-transformations. In the rest of this section of Chapter One, I build the foundation

for a blended “piece-focused” analysis²³ of an ideal-typical version of a Reclaiming-style ritual performed at most Intensive events, the Spiral Dance.

Prototypical Spiral Dance description and step-by step analysis

The prototypical Spiral Dance also has twelve steps and is embedded into the larger twelve-step ritual structure, which involves purification, energy rebalancing (grounding and centering), the creation of magical space, and inviting elements and deities into the ritual space (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.4: Steps of a Typical (Evening) Ritual

- 1: Assembly at or near ritual site, pre-ritual music/dancing; purify
- 2: Ground/center
- 3: Cast the circle
- 4: Call directions
- 5: Invoking deity
- 6: Magical working (meat/tofu)
 - *raise energy
 - **direct energy
 - ***ground/center excess and/or share food/drink
- 7: Devoking deity
- 8: Thank directions
- 9: Open circle
- 10: Ground/center
- 11: Depart to dining hall or other venue
- 12: Share food/drink [evening snack/dessert]

The Spiral Dance (see Figure 1.5) happens during the sixth step of the larger ideal-typical Intensive evening ritual: the magical working (see Figure 1.4). After this working

²³ I am going to reiterate the point made in the previous footnote that a blended analysis could also be grounded in the Collins checklist, and that I would label it “blended and holistic” in comparison to the “blended and piece-focused” analysis grounded in the Turner checklist I have been discussing. Both are valuable, and it made sense due to space constraints to explore the lower-level approach first and convince readers it is workable and can be nested within or otherwise connected to the “blended and holistic” form of higher-level analysis.

the larger ritual proceeds to wind down as the deities and elements are thanked and dismissed, the magical circle is opened, and everyone rebalances their energy again.

Figure 1.5: 12 steps of a typical Spiral Dance

- 1) Song/ritual instructions: learn/practice song, brief discussion of purpose, go slow.
- 2) Assemble in circle (or middle if not mobile), hold hands, facing inside.
- 3) Next Priestess/lead in South to start, breaks hands w/ person to left, begin music and singing.
- 4) Spiral goes clockwise inside of the original circle through West (W) to North (N) to East (E) to South (S)* again.
- 5) Priestess/lead makes first turn (inward to left) in S after which eye contact begins, Priestess/lead continues and passes through E, N, W, and gets to S.
- 6) At S again Priestess/lead passes the tail. Eye contact stops for Priestess/lead as spiral continues through ¾ of circle through E to N to W. This gives everyone in the circle a break in eye contact for a roughly a full revolution of the circle.
- 7) Priestess/lead makes second turn (inward to left) in W after which eye contact begins again and movement returns to being clockwise, passes through N, E, S, and as progresses near to W again and at this the priestess/lead watches for the loop at turn 2; meanwhile the tail/end person is near the E position.
- 8) At West Priestess/lead ends eye contact, keeps fading in toward the core of the circle, and "tucks in" by moving inside the loop of people doing turn 2. The Priestess/lead continues spiraling inward and moving clockwise until everyone is clustered tightly. Once clustered tightly everyone drops hands, usually at Priestess/lead's signal.
- 9) The center of circle is the focus of attention and the whole group focuses on building** and directing energy (using gestures, movement, vocalizations) generally in a cone shape, singing or chanting may turn to vocalizing as intensity builds, music continues.
- 10) Cone is called and vocalizing, music drop off, pause and quiet while energy is being directed.
- 11) After the moment of direction, excess energy gets grounded, shaken off during an afterglow sort of period. This is generally silent, but people may noisily flop themselves onto the ground, others may quietly sink to the ground, or stand and appear to meditate.
- 12) Talking resumes. Group is directed from milling around into next step of ritual, usually assembles in larger circle again rather than sticking together in the center of the ritual space.

*From here to the end of the document a capital letter indicates the cardinal direction.

**The building process may involve just one build-up or a series of peaks and valleys; the format varies based on the level of experience within the circle, timing of the Spiral Dance within the week, mood, and other factors such as whether the leader and musicians are new or seasoned.

The Spiral Dance (see Figure 1.5; for another pattern see Starkhawk/Simos 1999: 258-9) is a circle dance that uses movement, eye contact, and usually music to build up a "cone of power" which is what people in Reclaiming call the magical energy generated in the ritual. The energy is concentrated in a swirling mass in the center of the circle and

eventually is released or otherwise directed by a priestess when she assesses that the energy has peaked and is ready to go. The send-off is followed by everyone rebalancing their magical energy via grounding and centering techniques. The ritual then segues into a moment of reorganization, which is the final step of the Spiral Dance and the transition point into the seventh step of the ideal-typical Intensive (evening) ritual shown in Figure 1.4.

The above summary of a prototypical Spiral Dance and the extended summary in Figure 1.5 emphasize the Reclaiming participants' perspective on how magical energy works in the ritual, which can also be viewed sociologically as ritual that generates different forms of social energy. I want to remind readers that both Collins' (2004) IR theory, the Turners' theories (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) and the Reclaiming magical-activist worldview discuss energy, but they do so using different metaphors and logics about energy flow and supply (see Starkhawk/Simos 1999: 139-40; 159; 161-2). In the analysis I use *magical energy* to refer to the multi-modal energy using the Reclaiming magical-activist worldview whereas the broad term *social energy* and other specific sociological terms refer to the mental, emotional, and embodied energy raised in rituals from a secular, social scientific standpoint. Thus, the same energy is viewed through two different lenses, which then influence explanations for the sources and mechanics of the energy.

The basic ritual analysis I perform (completed in the next subsection) accounts for three perspectives: the priestess/lead, a musician who drums in the middle of the circle, and an average participant. For simplicity's sake I will refer to these individuals as the

“lead”, “drummer”, and “average dancer.” This discussion and analysis will be based on a best possible execution of the ritual and a simple energy-building scenario involving one “cone of power” or main magical energy peak in the ritual.

Basic Analysis of the Prototypical Spiral Dance

This analysis is “basic” in that it provides a step-by-step narrative of how the ritual works. It should make readers familiar with the ritual’s structure and how magical energy works within the ritual. Before the Spiral Dance starts participants have already prepared themselves by rebalancing their magical energy and creating the sacred space “between the worlds.” The activity takes place within a container of magical energy that can be imagined as a protective bubble both over the top of the circle and underneath it in the ground. At the beginning after the group gets into a single large circle, someone will teach a song that will be sung during most of the ritual (see Figure 1.4 Step 1). This person is not necessarily the one who will serve as the “lead” although the lead is often the person who gives a reminder/information speech that describes how the Spiral Dance works and everyone needs to proceed slowly and watch out for anyone getting “stretched” meaning there is too much space between dancers and the person is having trouble keeping hold of the hands of the people alongside her. After checking to see if anyone is confused the lead will move into a spot in the circle and direct everyone to hold hands if they are not already. This is also the time for a last call for anyone unable to dance to go into the center so that they can get the full effect of the energy and not be sidelined (see Figure 1.4 Step 2).

At this point the action begins as the musicians start playing and all the participants start singing. The leader picks the moment to drop the hand of the person to his left and to start the dance (see Figure 1.4 Step 3). The leader might wait for the singing to proceed through a whole round of the song before starting, and this would take less than a minute for a simple song with two verses. I refer to the leader's starting position as South (S) here and in Figure 1.4, but the Spiral Dance is not dependent on turns being made at particular cardinal directions. The important, must-have action is that the activity is done clockwise and that the leader doesn't somehow end up dropping the wrong hand in the heat of the moment. The ritual is still fixable if this happens, but the flow of the ritual that is already building by this point will be interrupted because the leader has to move to the opposite end of the circle and redirect the movement. Essentially the leader has to move and put the whole circle in reverse motion. Once the circle is in proper clockwise motion, the movement continues with everyone facing inward as the leader makes a full transit inside the original circle and passes where she started. By this point the whole circle is moving, and everyone else in the circle can see the people at the end who have been singing yet stationary finally start to move too. This is a moment when excitement builds, and people may get tempted to sing faster or increase the pace of their movement, which might lead to people getting bunched up and waiting to move while others get stretched. The musicians play an important role in keeping things on pace by keeping the beat of the music measured, but not slow. Every singer in the circle, not just the leader, has the same responsibility to keep the singing measured and to try to slow their neighbors if they start going too fast.

When the leader reaches the South (S) having gone full circle, it is time for the first turn (see Figure 1.4 Steps 4-5). The leader sets the turn by pivoting 180 degrees so that she is facing the person who was just on her right. This turn puts the lead facing out and allows eye contact with each person he passes who has not made the turn yet. Each person after the leader also does the turn in the same spot (South). The “turned” dancers pass closer to the dancers who have not turned yet, which adds physical proximity to the steady flow of eye contact from person to person. While facing out the dancers cannot see the musicians in the center, but they can still hear the music.

The lead continues from the turning point (South) around the circle going counterclockwise during this portion of the dance, and moves counterclockwise through the East, North, and West, which puts her back in South at the original turning point. After passing this point the lead’s first round of eye contact ends (see Figure 1.4 Step 6) and the outward facing dance continues through North to the second turn in West (see Figure 1.4 Step 7). The lead sets the turn by pivoting 180 degrees so that she is facing the person who was just on her right. This turn puts the lead facing in toward the circle’s center. It again allows eye contact with each person he passes who has not made the second turn yet. Each person after the leader also does the second turn in the same spot in the West. The clockwise rotation of the circle resumes after the second turn, and the leader moves around the whole circle until she reaches the people doing the second turn. When close to the people making the turn, the leader is careful to move inside and “tuck in” so that the spiral continues inward, and once the lead passes the people still making the second turn, the lead’s second round of eye contact ends.

The lead continues leading the spiral around and around in a clockwise direction, and everyone in the circle ends up facing inward and able to see how tightly clustered the group is becoming. When there is little room to move inward the leader drops hands with the person to her right, which signals everyone that the spiraling phase is done (see Figure 1.4 Step 8). The group then focuses on building and directing the magical energy by singing, gestures, and other movement (see Figure 1.4 Step 9). The musicians and singers can now speed up the pace of the singing and instrumental music to fit the group's energy level. Everyone's attention is focused on the "cone of power" building in the center of the circle and the singing/chanting may turn to single words or just vocalizing as the intensity builds. Often people stay stationary and shut their eyes as they work to build the energy.

The lead stays near the center of the circle and helps direct the build-up of the cone of power until she assesses that the energy is near peak and she signals with a change in vocalizing and shift in movement and perhaps eye contact that she is directing the energy and sending it away. At the point of the send-off or right after it, everyone gets quiet and still prompted by the music dropping off as well as their own general sense of the peak in the energy. The time the send-off takes varies from mere seconds to maybe half a minute, and once the lead is done, everyone grounds any excess energy in his or her own way. This may be very quiet and done while standing, but some people dramatically flop to the floor to get as much of themselves as close to the earth as possible. Either way grounding is done without vocalizing, and this point in the ritual is relatively quiet (see Figure 1.4 Step 11). After people are done grounding they get up,

have their eyes open, and may talk briefly and unobtrusively in small groups about how things went (see Figure 1.4 Step 12). People mill around the ritual circle for a few minutes and are free to go get water if a water station is set up at the border of the circle. The final step in the Spiral Dance is a relatively short pause in the overall flow of the larger ritual for people to regroup and get ready for further ritualizing. Depending on the size of the group doing the Spiral Dance and the intensity of the energy raised, the ritual generally takes at least half an hour.

Micro-analysis of the Prototypical Spiral Dance

Having familiarized readers with how the Spiral Dance works, I now turn to performing a “micro-analysis” of flows of emotional energy and the presence/absence of the *communitas* state. Turner’s (1969) framework for ritual analysis attunes us to dynamics of particular steps in the process of the Spiral Dance, and I argue that it is appropriate to couple Collins’ terms for discussing individual, embodied energy flows with this processual, ground-level form of ritual analysis. Combining these analytical tools allows me to 1) explore how EE works for individuals and specific segments of the ritual including moments when it is not maximized; 2) explore whether moments of true *communitas* are achieved in the ritual and how those moments fit into the overall ritual process of the Spiral Dance; 3) explore whether other types of social energy such as charisma and collective effervescence are achieved in the ritual and discuss how these states fit into the ritual process; 4) discuss energy flows and social structures within the ritual in order to understand the micro-dynamics of raising emotional energy and *communitas* as well as how rituals set up bridges between the states.

The Spiral Dance ritual combines moments of hierarchy with moments of collective unity and “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi 1997) and these features are crucial for understanding how the ritual generates both emotional energy and *communitas*. I focus on tracing emotional energy among three groups in the ritual: the lead, musicians, and average dancers. During the beginning of the Spiral Dance, the lead is differentiated from the musicians and average dancers while she gives instructions and begins the dance. The lead is in a tricky position regarding social energy because he moves from modulating his individual EE while reminding people to go slow²⁴ into demonstrating reserves of EE while responding to the music and singing/chanting to kick off the dance. The division of labor between the lead and the musicians leaves them free to start the music having not moderated their EE beforehand; their EE state is closer to the average dancers’ at this point. Both groups can draw on reserves of EE generated in practicing the singing early in the ritual and these individual reserves get pooled into a group energy state as everyone begins not only singing but also moving in the pattern of the dance (see Figure 1.4 Steps 3-4).

I turn next to the middle phases of the Spiral Dance. For the musicians their individual EE and the group energy state continues to slowly build as the dancers proceed to spiral inward during the dance by making the first and second turns (see Figure 1.4 Steps 5-7). For the lead and average dancers the EE and group energy patterns build and declines due to the structure of the dance after the first turn in Step 5 (see Figure 1.4). The eye contact and increased physical proximity after the first turn is made increases EE and

²⁴ I think this assertion is fair and that the lead tends to *deep* rather than *surface* act in service of the ritual if I put things in Arlie Hochschild’s terms (2003).

the group energy, which then drops off to some extent as the spiral continues without eye contact and the greater physical closeness until the second turn is made and eye contact along with close contact of dancers from different places in the spiral resumes for a period. This sort of ritual structure also offers two opportunities for increased synchronization of singing and movement when dancers in the spiral are having face-to-face contact with those from other sections of the line. Overall this is an alternating process that supplements the contact each average dancer has with the dancers on his left and right via the handholding, listening to those people sing, sensing their movement, and generally responding to the group's energy.

In the final phase of the ritual in Steps 8-12 (see Figure 1.4), everyone has completed the second turn and the second eye contact phase, and spatially, the center of the ritual space becomes the focal point again as it was at the beginning phase. This spatial and physical shift in the ritual leaves the center of the ritual space and the proximity of the leader to the musicians in the center as one facet of the ritual that subtly indicates that the individual EE and group energy should build up. Everyone's placement within the space continues to change and foster group energy until the moment when everyone drops hands, and becomes focused on moving and building magical energy up to a peak in the very middle of the circle. The magical energy is perceived as being channeled through individuals and sent off at the peak by the lead, and the social energy dynamic during the segment of the ritual is similar for the average dancers and musicians who attend to the group energy at the expense of their own EE. This collective energy experience is managed by the lead and musicians as the peak is called by the lead and

the decision is supported by the musicians who cease playing. At this point in the ritual, extra social energy is sent away via the grounding and centering process, which brings down the lead, average dancers and musicians alike. During the grounding and centering phase the emphasis is back on the individual as each person brings his own EE back to a balanced state as any excess group energy is let go rather than vested in a person or other symbol. Each individual assesses how much, if any, grounding is needed and one's own body and self require attention during this segment. Everyone in the ritual has leeway regarding when they proceed to the final step of the ritual and mill around the circle or stay in place until the whole group is ready for the next step of the ritual, which is beyond the scope of this analysis. The final milling segment redistributes people within the ritual space, and individuals enact their autonomy by drifting or staying put according to their own preference. This movement breaks up the group's focus, which helps reinforce the sense that both the energy from the cone of power and any residual group energy have dissipated. Individually and collectively the group ends just about where they started in terms of social energy.

This combination of ritual steps looks sub-optimal if we are sticking with Collins' (2004) idea of people seeking to maximize their EE throughout every interaction. The leader initially sacrifices EE on behalf of the group, embodies subdued EE during the instruction segment, and advocates for a slow build-up of energy by everybody involved. Arguably the lead gets compensated for this sacrifice later in the ritual because she gains more EE by directing the cone of power and being a focal point for and in charge of the group energy raised to support the ritual intention. Yet later in the third phase

the lead grounds and centers out the energy just like all the other participants, which negates any individual gains in EE. Certainly the Spiral Dance does not have to be this way. The turns could be timed differently to sequence the eye contact segments back-to-back, which would build the EE and group energy more efficiently within individuals and the group as a whole. Also, the group energy could be invested in the lead, musicians, or back into the group itself yet rather than investing the social energy left over after the cone of power is sent, the Spiral Dance sends it away. People walk away from the ritual having worked collectively and having used a hierarchy with the lead and musicians to get to the work done and energy invested by sending the “cone of power.”

I turn next to examining the tone of the group energy raised in the Spiral Dance as well as the extent to which Turnerian *communitas* (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) occurs in the Spiral Dance ritual, which is particularly important given the curious pattern of emotional energy flows within the ritual. What we have seen so far is a ritual with three phases which build up to a segment in the third phase in which a lead participant directs and becomes the momentary center of the group’s collective energy as it is sent out from the group to achieve an intention. The lead does not walk away at the end of the ritual having hung on to energy from the collective, and does not reap the EE benefits Collins would lead us to expect (2004: 121-125). Neither do the musicians or the average dancers. Rather than hanging on to energy from the peak, everyone in the Spiral Dance purposively releases it and returns to a balanced state. The groups does not ride out the group energy together or hang onto it individually as best they can as I think IR theory would predict.

Having discussed the three phases of the ritual in depth in the previous paragraphs, I am going jump right in to discussing the extent to which the state of *communitas* happens during the prototypical Spiral Dance. Following the work of both Turners, I set a high bar for true, full *communitas*, which is undifferentiated, spontaneous, wholly collective state also characterized by individual feelings of freedom and high energy. As we have seen the Spiral Dance utilizes a leader, which might preclude the achievement of true *communitas* for everyone in the ritual. The ritual reaches an ecstatic peak in Step 10 (see Figure 1.4) yet the some of the moments of the ritual that come the closest to achieving *communitas* happen in Steps 5 and 7 (see Figure 1.4). I believe the prototypical Spiral Dance achieves this state in the time after each turn when the leader is free like everyone else to just keep moving and singing while looking each and every person in the ritual circle in the eye and connecting with the music. This immersive moment happens twice within the ritual, and each round has a distinct tone because the first is punctuated by surprise and novelty of how intense that much eye contact is and the second by an appreciation of the flow and energy build-up that comes out of the eye contact being cut off for a while during Step 6 (see Figure 1.4).

In sum, the times when true *communitas* happens in the Spiral Dance are confined to the second phase of the ritual, which is fascinating because the ritual's energetic, ecstatic peak is nested within the third phase. The raising and send-off of the cone of power is a moment of hierarchical leadership and energy mobilization in the prototypical Spiral Dance that is not a moment of true *communitas* for all the participants. The process of the Spiral Dance ritual is punctuated by *communitas* in the

middle, which bonds the entire group prior to the more hierarchical third phase. In the last phase they break apart to an extent by focusing on the center and shifting into raising ecstatic energy that is directed to achieve the intention by the lead. These actions are followed by grounding and centering, which I think yield a state that blends the freedom and unity of *communitas* with a balanced state of group energy and a sense of one's individuality via the body. There are similarities between flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1997), *communitas* (Turner 2012; Turner 1969), and the state produced by grounding and centering (see Simos 1999: 74; 239), but the balanced state grounding and centering produces is distinct from true *communitas*. Perhaps this simply makes the Spiral Dance sub-optimal from a Turnerian perspective, but I would rather think that the complexity built into the Spiral Dance as well as the group energy states the ritual provokes merit further unpacking in the future using a synthesis of Collins' IR theory and work on *communitas* from Edith and Victor Turner.

Discussion and Section Summary

This section started with a discussion of two different ritual theories, one from Randall Collins and the other from Edith and Victor Turner. I argued for a synthesis of the theories so that I could produce an analysis of rituals that included both group states such as *communitas* and liminality from Turnerian theory as well as individual experiences of collective effervescence and emotional energy, which can be linked to IR chain theory and enriched with an examination of individual-level liminality. Both theories incorporate temporality, and I presented an initial synthesis of the theories that outlines how they cross between levels of analysis focused on social

energy among individuals on the one hand and groups that may subsume the individual on the other hand.

While I let my own experiences in 2004 stand on their own earlier in Chapter One, in this fifth section I moved from presenting theoretical work on energy flows among individuals and groups during whole rituals and “micro-level” segments of rituals to summarizing how a prototypical “best case” Spiral Dance ritual would run. I then went on to analyze social energy flows within the prototypical ritual, and the micro-level analysis of the prototypical Spiral Dance acted as a test run for a blended version of ritual process theories from Collins and the Turners. I worked with key concepts such as emotional energy and *communitas* in this analysis, and uncovered some puzzling findings related to people letting go of social energy both as a group, and later individually toward the end of the prototypical Spiral Dance ritual. If people are supposed to maximize their energy or try to vest it in symbols or leaders such as a ritual’s priestess, the fact that all the Spiral Dance participants let both magical energy and what I would call social energy go is especially puzzling. I will return to this puzzle in the last few chapters of the dissertation, and I turn next to wrapping up the introductory chapter.

6) Conclusion

In earlier sections of the introduction I have discussed topics that are essential for understanding what people go through during the Intensive. These include the fact that the camps are annual, people return multiple times and shift in and out of organizer and teacher roles, and the idea that there are some regional variations in Intensive culture. I

also went over the methods I used to collect data, and discussed why I placed a high priority on gathering data from multiple sources using multiple research methods. Having presented readers with an account of my entry into camp in 2004, I went on to discuss the opening night ritual, which included a Spiral Dance. In the fifth section of Chapter One I returned to analyzing a prototypical Spiral Dance as a ritual in and of itself. I drew on a blend of Randall Collins' IR theory and Victor and Edith Turner's work on rites of passage and other rituals that produce a state called *communitas* to understand the ritual and social energetic processes present during the prototypical Spiral Dance. I believe this kind of analysis would also be useful for understanding the Intensive as a whole, and should not be limited to just the Spiral Dance or the thematic evening rituals at the Intensives.

I will have more to say within the analysis chapters about how Reclaiming-style rituals function, the particular emotions and emotion patterns evoked during the Intensives, the importance of attending to mind-emotion-body interactions when explaining recruitment and training during the Intensives, and how three types of persuasive processes help me understand leader-follower dynamics along with individual and collective empowerment associated with the Intensives. My overall goals are to understand forms of commitment such as who returns to camp and identifies as a "magical activist" as well as how self-transformations proceed for people during and after the Intensives. I create a multi-faceted explanation of what happens to people when they become witches for a week at an Intensive. The explanation is produced by

attending to the mental, emotional, and somatic aspects of socialization into Reclaiming's worldview.

So far, readers have encountered a discussion of the core questions driving my research project and an overview of the methods I used to collect data and the multiple forms of data I analyze in this study. I went into the research "blind" and with a commitment to using multiple research methods and multi-sourcing data when possible. People unfamiliar with Reclaiming and/or Neo-Paganism should now feel more familiar with the Reclaiming movement, and the week-long Intensive events, fondly known as "Witchcamps" by participants. Chapter Two covers more of the Reclaiming's history and structure and places Reclaiming within the wider web of Neo-Pagan groups and traditions.

The introduction has also acquainted readers with what the Intensives are like both through my own narrative about my first night at camp in 2004, and my analysis of how people who were veteran campers in 2004 responded to "the plague" that hit the Spiraheart Intensive in 2000. While I use the analysis of the 2000 Intensive to illustrate how magical reasoning works, I think it also serves the function of showing how a sequence of evening rituals at an Intensive can work, and the deep responses people may have to stories such as Inanna's descent into the underworld to meet her sister Ereshkigal. The final section of the Introduction serves the same dual function because I analyze the Spiral Dance ritual, and readers get a second opportunity to digest how the ritual works (my earlier narrative of the Spiral Dance we did my first night at camp in 2004 was the first). Thus, readers get exposed to what the "best case" of this specific,

widely-used ritual looks like as they see how a Reclaiming-style ritual can be unpacked and more fully understood using a blend of IR theory and Turnerian ritual process theory.

This is a lot to absorb because the rituals themselves are rich, I make contributions to multiple forms of social theory, and the movement itself uses a connective sort of logic that draws in a variety of participants and generates a complex web of cross-movement ties. My hope is that people wading through this dissertation will not be bored, and will walk away convinced that emotions and embodiment matter for understanding power structures and personal and collective empowerment since so much of social science still privileges cognition and equates it with rational action.

The rest of the dissertation is organized into the following chapters. A second chapter that presents a brief history of Reclaiming and the East Coast communities I studied. Chapter Two also outlines the goals of the movement, the communities that create Intensive events, and ideal-typical individuals such as vendors and supportive spouses. A third chapter focused on answering the question of who wants to be a witch for a week as well as the “and logic” used within Reclaiming. The third chapter also sketches out the flows of individuals into and out of the Intensives, which illustrates the variety of backgrounds people bring to the table at camp. Chapter Four is focused on answering the questions of how the Intensive format works on the ground and why the Intensive format is used by Reclaiming to (re)socialize people into “magical activism.” The fifth chapter is focused on understanding the dynamics of who returns to the Intensives and various explanations for why. Chapter Five focuses on patterns of staying among

dichotomous groups: men versus women and ideal typical activists versus religious people. I develop my own model of self-recycling to help explain self-transformation processes and outcomes for ideal typical activists and religious people. I argue that the model helps achieve my agenda of incorporating mind-body-emotion interactions into explanations of movement outcomes specifically and social life generally. The sixth chapter is focused on conclusion and reflections. In Chapter Six I return to the central questions raised here in Chapter One and answer each piece of the sub-questions first before shifting to a wider perspective and discussing why my research matters.

Chapter 2: Movement History and a Multi-level Examination of Goals

1) Introduction

This chapter is about a variety of goals and projects related to Reclaiming, the regional groups, subgroups of individuals and individuals themselves. To understand the goals and projects we have to grasp Reclaiming's logic: in Boolean terms they are doing "and" rather than "or" logic when they socialize individuals into affiliating with the group and adopting a "magical activist" identity. I present the goals and projects in a nested way building down from the "macro" movement level down to the "micro" level of ideal-typical individuals. This chapter includes reflections about the complementary/contradictory nature of the goals/projects and connects them to sociological ideas about recruitment and commitment. In the larger dissertation project I innovate by discussing the timing of self transformations and set up part of that analysis in this chapter by highlights goals/projects that can be cyclical and involve small revisions to self and tweaking of how capital from one's background gets used. I think it is analytically fruitful to connect my ideas about cyclical transformations to anthropologist Tanya Lurhmann's work (1989) on *interpretive drift* and recruitment into magic and British Traditional Witchcraft.

In this chapter, I also explore the history of the Reclaiming movement, which started in the San Francisco Bay area in the late 1970s. There is no definitive history of the movement to date so I rely on documents produced within Reclaiming as well as material from other academic research about the group such the Jone Salomonsen's *The Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco* (2002). One important aspect of this historical

overview is that I give a summary of how Reclaiming compares to other groups that practice Wicca and witchcraft in the U.S. The modern witchcraft revival started in the 1950s in the U.K., and spread to the U.S. roughly a decade later (see Bonewits 2006: 66-83; O’Gaea 2006: 179-182). There are a number of fruitful comparisons that can be made between Reclaiming and other groups and movements, and I keep the discussion narrow so that it familiarizes readers with the Wiccan and witchcraft milieu and puts the utopian side of Reclaiming in context. Apocalyptic visions and utopian ideals go hand-in-hand in this context, and my observations of Reclaiming show that both kinds of discourses were present at the Witchcamps during my research. I present some observations about the use of utopian and apocalyptic views in the next section, and round the historical overview out by providing information about the regional camp communities: Spiralheart in the Mid-Atlantic and DreamRoads in the Carolinas. In the next section, readers will learn about how Reclaiming and the Intensives came to be, how Reclaiming fits into Wicca and witchcraft in the U.S., times when utopian and apocalyptic visions of the future crop up during the Intensives, and about the specific East Coast regional communities that produced the Intensives I observed for the research.

2) The History of Reclaiming and the Spiralheart and DreamRoads Communities

Reclaiming’s History and Placement in a Wider Neo-Pagan Web

To understand how the Witchcamps came to be, we need a rudimentary overview of Reclaiming’s history. The Reclaiming movement is better understood when it is placed within a wider web of groups that practice Paganism, Wicca, or witchcraft, and I draw

on Isaac Bonewits' (2006) classificatory schemes to explain how all the groups fit together. This kind of historical placement could also be done for a web of social and political activist groups, but space constraints prevent me from doing it here. I do, however, offer some historically and empirically grounded comments in this section about Reclaiming's utopian ideals and apocalyptic visions because these ideas may draw people to the Intensives or be mobilized by movement members during the socialization process.

Reclaiming and the Wider Web of Wicca and Witchcraft

In the course of looking at materials for this section, I came across a general comment about Starhawk and her contributions to Neo-Pagan Witchcraft: "Starhawk was the first writer to discuss the political and social implications of Goddess worship in general and magic in particular. Unfortunately, she backed off from her radicalism as she began to sell to the New Age market" (Bonewits 2006: 164). I leave it to the readers to decide whether Bonewits' point regarding Starhawk's radicalism is fair, and find it troubling given that the Reclaiming tradition still has something of a monopoly on combining political and social activism and magical religion. Regardless of how radical Starhawk and Reclaiming as a whole are, the movement is best classified as one of the "Neo-Pagan" religions created since 1960 "that have attempted to blend what their founder[s] perceived as the best aspects of Paleopaganism with modern "Aquarian Age" ideals, while striving to eliminate as much as possible of the traditional Western monotheism and dualism" (Bonewits 2006: 5). Neo-Pagan religions are analytically distinct from "Paleopagan" religions that are "the original tribal faiths of Europe, Africa,

Asia, the Americas, Oceania, and Australia, when they were (or in some cases, still are) practiced as intact belief systems” (Bonewits 2006: 4). Neo-Pagan religions are also distinct from “Mesopagan [...] religions founded as attempts to re-create, revive, or continue what their founders *thought of* as the “traditional” Paleopagan ways of their ancestors, but that were heavily influenced by the monotheistic and dualistic worldviews of Judaism, Christianity and/or Islam” respectively (Bonewits 2006: 5). One important point readers should take away from this discussion is that how people with interests in magic, witchcraft, and/or paganism²⁵ identify themselves is a matter that can get quite contentious and complex. Both the complexity of how people self-identify as well as the contentiousness associated with denials of certain labels leads Isaac Bonewits to remind people that “Wiccans are Neopagans, whether all of them are willing to admit it or not” (2006: 105). In sum, this leaves me with the knowledge that people in Reclaiming are properly classified as “Neo-Pagans” in Bonewits’ framework along with the point that Reclaiming fits under the umbrella of Wicca, but is not a British Tradition or Feminist Separatist Tradition. I could discuss how witchcraft and Wicca differ here, but am skipping this discussion due to space constraints.

One way to make sense of Reclaiming in the wider web of Neo-Paganism is to place the group on a continuum that ranges from “conservative or orthodox” traditions at one

²⁵ Throughout the dissertation I am capitalizing terms such as “Pagan” and “Witch” when they denote a religious or spiritual identity label. Likewise terms such as Wicca and (Neo)-Paganism are capitalized when they refer to religion, but not when they refer to a magical or other practice. Far more could and has been said by other scholars regarding these distinctions, and I hope my brief discussion serves to clarify simply why both capitalized and lower case versions of the same terms are being used and what each version denotes.

end to “liberal or heterodox” traditions on the other end. Bonewits points out that Gardnerian, Alexandrian, and other groups that label themselves as “British Traditionalists” should be placed on the conservative/orthodox end while groups such as the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn (NROOGD), “the gay and/or bisexual and/or straight groups who call themselves “Elvish” or “Fairy/Faery” Traditions” (Bonewits 2006: 80-1), and “various Feminist Witchcraft groups” belong at the liberal/heterodox end. Given its roots in the Andersen Feri tradition and Eco-feminist Witchcraft, Reclaiming is pretty clearly “liberal/heterodox,” which has a couple of key implications for 1) how rituals are done, and 2) the speed with which new material is incorporated into the tradition. Bonewits’ take on what he terms “Starhawkian Wicca” is that many core elements of Wiccan ritual including “circle casting, Quarter Point Invocations, exorcism/blessing of the circle and people, and so on” may be done to varying levels of completeness and in varying order or all at once “depending on the consensus and/or whims of the participants” (2006: 121-2). In contrast, conservative/orthodox Wiccans focus on “keeping the mid-twentieth century rituals intact and performing them for all newcomers to the Craft” (Bonewits 2006: 117). Regarding the speed issue, he makes the point that all Wiccans including the “father” of Wicca Gerald Gardner, are “eclectic” in that they all borrow material from other sources, which is eventually set in stone as a lasting part of the Tradition/denomination; conservative/orthodox “Traditionalists” take the most time to accomplish this whereas liberal/heterodox “Eclectics” such as Reclaiming take the least (Bonewits 2006: 81). My hope is that this discussion gives readers something of a foundation to stand on

regarding where Reclaiming fits into the wider web of Neo-Pagan traditions. The important thing for readers unfamiliar with Neo-Paganism to take away from this discussion is that there is an array of available identity labels for someone involved with Reclaiming including but not limited to: Reclaiming, Wiccan, witch, Neo-Pagan, and Reclaiming magical activist.

Reclaiming's History 1978-2012

"It is impossible for any one person to tell the entire complex and fluid story of Reclaiming – which after all is still unfolding [...]" Vibra Willow (1999).²⁶ These words from Vibra Willow, a member of the Reclaiming Collective from 1985 until its dissolution in 1997, still are true today. Reclaiming's history ought to be told by many voices, and the movement remains complex and fluid. My goal in this history section is to build a foundation of background information about how Reclaiming and the Witchcamps developed, which will give readers a sense of where Reclaiming has been, what the movement is doing presently, and how the Witchcamps have fit into the Reclaiming agenda over time.

I have often been asked, "What *are* they reclaiming Elizabeth?" This is a reasonable question. Reclaiming is the name of the movement after all, but the logic underlying the question is somewhat at odds with the inclusivity of the movement and its focus on multiple issues. There plenty of different things being reclaimed, including but not limited to the divine feminine, the earth as sacred, individual and collective forms of

²⁶ See <http://www.reclaiming.org/about/origins/history-vibra.html>, accessed July 31, 2012.

consciousness²⁷, sustainable ways of living, equitable power structures, and individual authority and power. Recently, I found a blog entry that helps sum up the underlying logic of the group: “All that we reject, parts of ourselves that we push into the unconscious, whether anger, sexuality, vulnerability, creativity, whatever we have disowned, has power we need to reclaim.”²⁸ Reclaiming is engaged in a project of fostering personal and collective empowerment and they are out to reclaim rejected, disowned, ignored, and neglected parts of themselves and the dominant culture. This project has remained consistent across the decades from the time the group started among a small number of people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Historical accounts of the Reclaiming movement can be confusing because what is now an international movement started with local covens in the San Francisco Bay area in California. The account I present here is heavy on information about how national and international structures shifted over time and how some regional communities developed along with the Witchcamps. Reclaiming has moved through three phases from 1) being centered around the Reclaiming Collective to 2) a multi-cell structure centered on the Northern California communities and a Witchcamp Council that coordinated a teacher and student teacher selection process at the (inter)national level

²⁷ These forms of consciousness may include an individual or collective unconscious. I am being deliberately vague here since magic and practicing witchcraft are often defined by people inside and outside Reclaiming as involving Doreen Valiente’s phrase “the art of changing consciousness at will,” (see Greenwood 2005: 155) which emphasizes shifts and purposeful change in states of consciousness rather than a single endpoint. This shifting involves movement between being fully conscious and states that enable one to tap into the subconscious and unconscious.

²⁸ See http://www.huffingtonpost.com/grove-harris/imbolc-2012-embracing-the-shadow_b_1249894.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

between 1997 and 2004 (see Appendix D) to 3) a new post-2005 variation on the cellular structure that was due to a shift in the decision-making authority vested in the WCC in 2005²⁹ that made each Intensive autonomous in its organization, format, content, and teacher selection process. In addition, starting in 2004 there was the development of a new decision-making body: the Broader Intra-Reclaiming Council Hub (BIRCH). The BIRCH meets biannually during even numbered years along with the Dandelion Gathering, which is a three to four day inter-Reclaiming social event that includes activities, lectures, and rituals.

Currently, the Reclaiming tradition, which I also refer to as the Reclaiming movement, consists of people who practice the religion alone as “solitaries”, local groups that

²⁹ There is variation in the available information about exactly what happened to the Witchcamp Council (WCC) in 2005. At Spiralheart organizer meetings in 2005-6 I heard that the WCC voted to dissolve itself yet there is no information on Reclaiming’s www.witchcamp.org, accessed July 31, 2012, web site to that effect. I think the best characterization of what happened is to assume that the WCC dissolved itself as the primary coordinating and decision-making body regarding Witchcamp creation and teacher selection in 2005, but that the WCC was repurposed in November 2005 so that it provides and maintains a database of teacher bios, skills and experience for WitchCamp organizers and/or selection committees and provides the following services shown at <http://www.witchcamp.org/index.php?id=47§ion=spokescouncil>, accessed July 31, 2012. The WCC tasks and services include: Coordinating WCC meetings: Scheduling in advance of online and face to face meetings, Communications between all members of the WCC; Orientation to WCC: Distribution of Newcomer package, Orientation for all at the beginning of each meeting; Identity: Holding our spiritual identity as Reclaiming Witch camps as we grow and change, On-going examination what is a Reclaiming camp...; Finances: Developing systems of tithing, Developing and maintaining accountable WCC structures, Coordination of the sharing resources; advertising and other information; Maintaining a bird's eye view of the whole of the Witch camp web - Camp Reports; Addressing camp concerns: Problem solving, Making recommendations, Other; Sharing knowledge and resources: Teacher database, Referrals, Optional offerings on skills for camps, Maintaining Cornucopia; Current Policy Development Subcommittees: Accountability and Accessibility; Maintaining a long view of who we are and where we want to go. This information was sourced from the above-listed web site, and it was last updated 11-29-11.

practice together and sponsor core classes, regional groups that create Intensives and/or offer core classes, and a number of regional and national cells coordinated by the BIRCH that work with each other as desired and needed. During BIRCH 2008 the working groups/cells were: 1) identity, 2) healthy Reclaiming body, 3) communications, 4) supporting local communities, 5) outreach/fostering/welcoming, 6) strengthening wider community, and 7) history and lore keeping³⁰. These cells were left intact during BIRCH 2010 as the identity cell started the process of revisiting the language in the Principles of Unity (PoU) and examining whether the language is sufficiently inclusive of queer witches and activists. The plan in 2010 was to circulate information within the web and to run a consensus process meeting during BIRCH 2012 in August in Portland, Oregon. This potential change to the PoU is arguably as major as the shift in the WCC in 2005 that empowered local intensives to select their teachers and student teachers.

Another major national cell in the Reclaiming web is the *Reclaiming Quarterly (RQ)* magazine, which still has a production cell today. *RQ* has transitioned from print to online distribution³¹ over the past few years, and is still produced in the Bay Area. An archive³² of all one hundred issues of the magazine is in production, and these data will be an invaluable resource when and if a history of Reclaiming is produced. I have subscribed to archive, but have not received a copy of the first ten-issue disk (as of July 15th 2012) to date.

Utopian Ideals and Apocalyptic Visions in Reclaiming

³⁰ See <http://www.reclaiming.org/birch/>, accessed July 31, 2012.

³¹ See <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/>, accessed July 31, 2012.

³² See <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/archives/archives-1.html>, accessed July 31, 2012.

On the one hand Reclaiming fits with utopian groups that advocate engagement with the world yet on the other hand the Intensive events are a temporary withdrawal from the world that is somewhat similar to utopian separatist groups. The important thing to sort out here is whether what this vision calls for is withdrawal or action. Reclaiming is set up to capitalize on either sort of utopian narrative and could potentially focus on withdrawal and pilgrimage to a temporary utopian community or on action in the world that brings about a utopia for everyone.

Delving into Reclaiming's history shows us that one of the movement's main authors and an original member of the Reclaiming Collective (1978-1997), Starhawk (Miriam Simos) did not publish her utopian novel *The 5th Sacred Thing* until 1993. The book is set in 2048 during an ecological collapse. It describes how residents of an independent ecotopian region with cooperative, earth-centered values defend themselves and their water from invasion by the Stewards, whose values are corporate-driven and whose governing style is hideously authoritarian. *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993) portrays how challenging nonviolence can be and provides a declaration of the relationship between sacred things and values:

The Earth is a living, conscious being. In company with cultures of many different times and places, we name these things as sacred: air, fire, water, and earth. [...] To call these things sacred is to say that they have a value beyond their usefulness for human ends, that they themselves become the standard by which our acts, our economics, our laws, and our purposes must be judged.[...] All people, all living things, are part of the earth life, and so are sacred. [...] Only justice can assure balance; only ecological balance can sustain freedom. Only in freedom can that fifth sacred thing we call spirit flourish in its full diversity. To honor the sacred is to create conditions in which nourishment, sustenance, habitat, knowledge, freedom, and beauty can thrive. To honor the sacred is to make love possible. [...]

-Starhawk³³

These values are clearly important in the Intensives yet *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is rarely mentioned in comparison to some other texts. Reclaiming went roughly fifteen years without Starhawk's vision of what the future could be- both good and bad- and it is her early, classic book *The Spiral Dance* (1999) that is used as a socialization tool in the traditional version of the Elements of Magic core class. Elements of Magic is taught at most Intensives every year and there is at least one version of the class that does not utilize *The Spiral Dance* or a more recent book, *The Twelve Wild Swans* (2000) as a resource. All this is to say that the people in Reclaiming that I encountered do discuss the vision from *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, but that the vision has not become a focal point of socialization during Witchcamp or the Elements of Magic core course. This situation may change in the future once the book version of *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is developed into a movie, and the team (Starhawk, Paradox Pollack, and Mouse) raised funds using a site called Kickstarter³⁴ prior to preparing materials for investors and talent circa February 2012. The team started seeking investors starting mid-June 2012.

Alongside the utopian vision that gets defended in *The Fifth Sacred Thing*³⁵ is an apocalyptic vision of a "Great Turning" that has emerged in some Reclaiming communities within the past eight years or so. When I started my project Professor Ann

³³ From <http://www.starhawk.org/writings/fifth-sacred-thing.html>, accessed July 31, 2012.

³⁴ See <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/fifthsacredthing/the-fifth-sacred-thing?ref=live>, accessed July 31, 2012. The campaign closed 8/24/2011, but when I checked Facebook on 6/21/2012 they were still taking donations. The campaign had 1,431 Backers, \$76,327 raised, and 14,880 likes.

³⁵ See <http://www.starhawk.org/writings/fifth-sacred-thing.html> accessed July 31, 2012. which offers a summary of the book and a link to an excerpts page.

Mische and I discussed how Joanna Macy's *despair work* was one type of pioneering movement technique- what I would now call a technology- for shifting emotions. I looked at Macy's book *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* (1983), and realized that I needed to be on the lookout for connections to the anger-despair-hope shifts used by the Buddhist anti-nuclear activist during my time at the Intensive. I was surprised in 2004 when I did not hear any discussions of Macy's work, and did not see her work included on a list of helpful books we made during Path class that year.

It was several years before I encountered people who were actively using Macy's work, and in the meantime what I observed starting in 2004 were people with deep-seated concerns about sustainable resource use, climate change, and humanity destroying itself. These folks were adept at moving into anger and despair and concerned about being emotionally and physically burned out by street activism. They seemed to me to sincerely believe that humans would bring about an epic disaster and were engaged in learning coping skills and tools for sustainable living.

When I did encounter people in Reclaiming who knew about Macy's work and were using it, they were working with more recent material on "The Great Turning." Macy's web site states: "The Great Turning is a name for the essential adventure of our time: the shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization"³⁶ and to me it offers a positive, optimistic framing of concerns I heard people expressing regarding changes in the political economy, social and ecological crises, and the uncertain atmosphere we live in right now. The takes on "The Great Turning" I have seen within

³⁶ See <http://www.joannamacy.net/thegreatturning.html>, accessed July 31. 2012.

Reclaiming are darker in tone in that they expect suffering and pain to accompany any changes to the system. For example the Free Cascadia Witchcamp theme for 2011 was “Feasting with Ghosts: The Dance of Is, Was, and Becoming” and a paragraph-long description of the theme reads, in part:

Moving through regret, homelessness, hopelessness, isolation and our yearning for belonging, we face the hungry ghosts that whisper to us in our dreams and waking life, the ghosts of our choices and our inaction, the ghosts of our addictions and lost dreams, and we listen to the words of the Ancestors. We learn to dance with the ghosts, to decipher the teachings within the depths of their shadows. [...] Together, we will reawaken what it means to be alive at this time of turning tides and reclaimed wisdom.³⁷

The image of the “hungry ghosts”³⁸ and the community’s emotions of regret, isolation, and yearning are striking and dark in tone. I think the tone is similar to an earlier discussion of one of the five points of the “pentacle of the great turning” from issue #100 of RQ magazine. The pentacle is made up of desire, surrender, transformation, solidarity, and manifestation and the article, by Riyana Moon³⁹, discusses why we need to pentacle and the process of moving from point to point. The emphasis is on the present being “a time of great change” with “mother earth becoming less and less able to support life, species going extinct by the thousands, the whole world being torn asunder by greed, ignorance, and lethargy.” During this time we need

³⁷ From <http://fawc.wikidot.com/outreach-letter-2011>, accessed July 31, 2012.

³⁸ The “hungry ghost” is a term used in some Eastern religious traditions. See http://www.go2taiwan.net/monthly_selection.php?sqno=14, accessed July 31, 2012, Waters, Dan 2004. “The Hungry Ghosts Festival in Aberdeen Street, Hong Kong,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch*, Vol. 44 pp. 41–55, and http://www.chinaculture.org/gb/en_chinaway/2004-03/17/content_46337.htm, accessed July 31, 2012.

³⁹ See <http://reclaimingquarterly.org/100/RQ100-16-PentTurn.pdf>, accessed July 31, 2012.

to understand “the sheer enormity of what we have done and what we must learn to do in order to survive and ensure the survival of our brother and sister beings” without being overwhelmed by the task and retreating into “the much smaller and more manageable details of our private lives.” The pentacle process begins with desire because “it is through deepening our connection with [...] our love for life that we can viscerally understand the extent of the destruction facing our planet, and the intensity of the coming storms if we do not find another way of living.” There is an emphasis on crisis and uncertainty- “we may not know if there’s anything we can do to the destruction in time, but we choose to try to do something about it rather than let our worry of personal failure hold us back” - in visions associated with The Great Turning whereas the vision in *The Fifth Sacred Thing* is clear, associated with positive emotions, and not haunted by past and present failures.

While the tones associated with the visions vary, what I think unites the visions Reclaiming works with is the impulse toward engagement in the world. Rather than advocating retreat and prepping bunkers or other bug-out locations, the models of *The Fifth Sacred Thing* as well as Macy’s recent work show activity that supports or defends the ecotopia in-the-making or responds constructively to events surrounding the apocalyptic “Great Turning” and present-day uncertainty. People go to the Intensives and temporarily opt out of their everyday lives and become witches for week. This experience is not guided by a separatist utopian vision and withdrawal into a community that will survive a coming apocalypse. Instead, Reclaiming loosely works with both a dark, apocalyptic image of large-scale change as well as a light but tough image of a

nonviolent ecotopia that manages to convert hostile attackers to their way of life. These visions may complement particular thematic stories used at the Intensives, but they rarely serve as the focal point for a camp theme in and of themselves.

Working with both a utopian and apocalyptic vision enables Reclaiming to offer validation to people concerned with uncertainty and crisis as well as a concrete vision of what they could strive to create for the future. Basically the movement can work with both pessimistic and optimistic audiences, both activists and religious people, and find methods for getting each group to entertain the other's perspective. Ideally this strategy should help a movement avoid the pitfalls of focusing just on the coming apocalypse or on bringing a single utopian vision to life including the emotional and cognitive stagnation that might flow from constantly being in crisis mode or rigidly focusing one ideal future. A combination of apocalyptic and utopian visions may generate conflict within an Intensive over the format of rituals and other activities. We will see in the analysis in Chapter 4 that resolving these conflicts may involve compromises that create new ritual forms yet leave the original visions intact and some ritual participants dissatisfied in the short term. Creative compromise may not bridge the divide between apocalypse and utopia even as it nominally dissolves tensions between ideal-typical activist and religious campers. I will return to this issue in the analysis Chapter 5 because I think it is an important piece of unpacking how success is assessed both within a particular ritual and for an Intensive as a whole.

Previous Studies of Reclaiming

In this section I discuss three academic studies of Reclaiming communities and one journalistic-style report presented in the book, *The Roots of Desire* (2005), which offer different perspectives on Reclaiming-style ritual. Three of these works are written by women who are further “inside” Reclaiming than I am while the author of *The Roots of Desire*, Marion Roach was an outsider to Reclaiming and Neo-Paganism. While I share a general Neo-Pagan worldview with my research participants, the Reclaiming “insider” authors are either initiated⁴⁰ or self-identify as Reclaiming Witches.

Some people pick the Intensive they attend based on the theme/story of camp, and may travel across the country or to another part of the world in order to get a Witchcamp experience related to a theme that is especially appealing. To the best of my knowledge participants are not screened by the organizers prior to camp, and this lack of vetting keeps the camps open to people who self-recruit and have nobody to vouch for the sincerity of their interest. Thus, Roach was able to attend Vermont Witchcamp and selected the Isis and Osiris themed Intensive after reading several camp websites. She claims that having the opportunity to experience something “both current and ancient” helped lure her to the camp (Roach 2005: 17).

In addition, Roach went into the Intensive seeking an answer to whether “red hair was still a component in rituals of black magic” (Roach 2005: 10) along with an

⁴⁰ An initiation is an optional rite of passage in Reclaiming. The process involves the initiate asking at least three different people to act as initiators. The initiators must know the initiate well, and already be initiated. During the initiation process each initiator challenges the initiate, and once the challenges are completed, the initiate goes through a final ceremony where knowledge is passed on and s/he is welcomed into the circle of Witches (see Salomonsen 2002: 248-281). This process may take a year and a day, but can last longer if the initiate requests someone to act as an initiator and the person initially refuses (see Salomonsen 2002: 58-9).

understanding of why witches are part of what we think about when we think about red hair. After arriving at camp Roach and her friend Mary Elizabeth had strong reactions to the fashions at the camp, people's choice of magic names, and the various Egyptian deities in the Egyptian pantheon aside from the husband-wife pair of Osiris and Isis. The fashion seemed best described as "granola" and Roach hit analytical paydirt when she noticed that many women at camp had adopted the name Lilith, "the oldest name in the book of evil" (Roach 2005: 20-1). Lilith is a redhead who is "unique in the pantheon of human fright," "a harlot and a vampire," and "for the women in the circle [at camp ...] she is a symbol of women's unity, freedom of choice, and sexuality" (Roach 2005: 22-6). In this week-long world of granola-looking people with adopted names, amid the tie-dye, Birkenstocks, and hooded robes, Roach found that modern witches do not teach black magic or "practical magic," which, along with the Lilith mythology, partly answered her original question (2005: 63-4).

Roach also found that the Isis and Osiris themed rituals at camp helped to answer her questions about witchcraft and redheads, and I think the best way to give readers a picture of Roach's reaction to Reclaiming-style ritual is to quote her reaction to an evening ritual at length:

Every night the witches at camp process up the hill for what is known as Ritual. Beginning after sundown, and going late into the night, the teachers among us take turns invoking various gods and goddesses, peeling incantations aloft into the wind that funnels down the craggy Vermont valley as the witches ring and spiral around a massive bonfire.[...]The night is cold. A witch steps out and screams the name of Set [...] "Set!" the witch cries again as I grab Mary Elizabeth's forearm, knowing that the witches are calling for the red-headed devil himself (Roach 2005: 35-6). The bonfire crowd surges toward the heat while invoking the name of Set. I lunge backward, [...] refusing to be part of a circle of people calling for the devil himself. Not a bit torn between reporting and participating, I am ready to bolt. There, [...] with

two hundred witches, [...] most chanting, screaming, and dancing around a massive bonfire, all I can picture are the gentle good folk of Vermont grabbing [...] pitchforks and making for our hardscrabble hill to alter the evil of our ways. And that looks pretty good to me. Maybe we can hitch a ride out, I think. More terrifying is when I remember how very deep into the woods we had driven to get here [...] Now, all I can feel is fear (Roach 2005: 48).

From what I can tell Marion Roach and her friend Mary Elizabeth left Witchcamp early due to the fear provoked by the evening ritual. I estimate that they left on the second full day of camp since Roach's book includes details about a single evening ritual and a morning "Elements of Magic" Path class devoted to air. Considering the Egyptian deities incorporated into the Witchcamp story clued Roach into the male side of the redhead-witchcraft connection, and at this point her analysis of Witchcamp ends, presumably because she left camp early. Clearly she found the ritual emotionally provocative, and her reaction is representative of a certain segment of curious seekers who find the emotional work of Witchcamp and the stories that facilitate it off-putting.

What I find fascinating about the account in *The Roots of Desire* is that the activist side of Reclaiming seems nonexistent. Perhaps Roach did not attend to this dimension of Reclaiming because there was no obvious link to red hair for her to explore. The storyline Roach presents is pretty clear: she went to a very cold mountain in Vermont and to her chagrin found campers making real connections to redheaded devil archetypes, but no black magic.

I find Roach's reaction to Witchcamp to be typical of someone who pictures herself as curious and religiously tolerant, after all Roach had worn a pentacle when she was fourteen to be rebellious (2005: 62-3), but whose bodily reactions to the camp experience are intense, and far from tolerant. I think it is fair to picture Roach as having

a reactionary resurgence of her presumably Judeo-Christian roots in response to the stimulus of Witchcamp, and the evening ritual's Set invocation in particular. In contrast to Roach, some Intensive attendees are deeply uncomfortable with their religions of origin, and have the same sort of visceral reactions when Judeo-Christian elements are incorporated into a camp story or a particular activity. For example, a free-time discussion of connections between the Virgin Mary and goddesses from different pantheons might make some rebellious ex-Catholics at camp cringe and pique the interest of a third group of campers who are comfortable with religious syncretism that includes their own Judeo-Christian religious heritage.

This last group of open-minded syncretists is featured prominently in Jone Salomonsen's work about the San Francisco Reclaiming community (2002). Salomonsen is academically based in religious studies and her book *The Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco* (2002) includes data on local rituals and life in the Reclaiming Collective's various communal households. Focusing on gender, identity, and Reclaiming as a feminist religious tradition, Salomonsen situates the movement as a response to late modernity and characterizes it as "a subcultural branch of the Jewish and Christian traditions" (2002: 297) rather than a new religion. The interview data she presents on the dual identities of Reclaiming witches as either Jewish or Catholic give a valid picture of how some people within Reclaiming relate to their religious heritage, but I think the reality on the ground within each regional community is more complex. For instance, out of the nine camps I attended in six different communities and the two Dandelion Gatherings I went to in 2008 and 2010, I saw only one Seder held on a Friday night, but I

also met people who were members of liberal Protestant and Muslim communities. In sum, I can understand why Salomonsen's conclusions were controversial within the Bay Area Reclaiming community, and I personally think it is a stretch to conclude that Reclaiming is a branch of Judeo-Christian traditions rather than a new religious and activist movement in its own right.

Both Salomonsen's work and a more recent dissertation by Pamela Detrixhe (2005) about the shifting self-perceptions of individuals and an East-coast Reclaiming community over time share a focus on identity work done by people in Reclaiming. Detrixhe's work is grounded in a religious studies perspective, and it treats the ways that people in Reclaiming shape-shift their identities and notions of community as topics worthy of study in and of themselves (2005). Taking the stance of a movement insider who then decided to complete a research project, she uses archival and ethnographic data from the "Mud Pie Labyrinth"⁴¹ community collected between 1997 and 2004 (Detrixhe 2005). The particular Reclaiming group in Detrixhe's study was in the process of applying to the IRS for non-profit 501c(3) status, and the community's interactions with the federal government gave Detrixhe the opportunity to examine how individual members and the Mud Pie Labyrinth community as a whole shifted their identities during the application process and after they received the status in 2000 (Detrixhe 2005).

⁴¹ Detrixhe's research methods are almost the mirror image of my approach. She entered the community prior to conducting any research, and has kept the community's identity protected with a pseudonym while naming individual research participants. In contrast, I entered the communities as a researcher from the very beginning and have named the communities in my study while keeping individual names protected with pseudonyms.

Both Salomonsen and Detrixhe's work provide in-depth historical information about the Reclaiming communities they studied. Their analyses offer valuable examples of conversion narratives, Reclaiming-style ritual, and how people in Reclaiming frame pieces of their life as magical including a portrait of the Reclaiming initiation process. I see their work as a source of data about rituals and emotions as well as insights about the various ways people in the Reclaiming movement work on and shift their identities.

Complementing these studies is Grove Harris' research on healing rituals (2004), which focuses on a variety of different ills from physical ailments to low self-esteem to abuse-related trauma. The goal for this kind of healing is becoming whole, healthy and in balance. Harris groups Reclaiming-style healing techniques into three genres: bodywork such as massage, spells, and energetic healing. Spells include activities with cognitive, emotional, and somatic aspects such as dancing, trance work, chanting, and herbal charms while energetic healing happens due to connections with others and the earth's forces (Harris 2004: 253). Healing is one point of bridging between the activist and religious sides of Reclaiming and the Intensives offer a space for skill-sharing between members of Reclaiming who primarily have a religious focus and those who are involved in street activism and direct action. Both giving and receiving healing may draw people further into Reclaiming (see Salomonsen 2002: 257-9 for a description of a healing experience that prompted a woman to seek initiation), and healing at the Intensives is not confined to single time or space.

Development of Two East Coast Groups: Spiralheart and DreamRoads

I think it is fair to characterize both of the groups I studied as present-focused because they focused on surviving, producing the Intensives, and doing the work to change themselves and the wider world. During the Intensive itself, campers could find out historical details about the camps by talking to veterans informally at meal times or during other free time and there were brief materials available on the internet during the time that I was attending the camps. The “Elements of Magic” Path class that I attended in 2004 also went light on regional community history and the history of Reclaiming as a whole. I think the Path co-teachers have the leeway to include more history if they know it, but the Path course I took focused on socializing us into a magical religious worldview and provoking us to consider how the personal is political.

The Mid-Atlantic Spiralheart community is the older of the two groups, and for several years the members of DreamRoads were nested within Spiralheart. I draw on materials from each group’s websites, field notes I took on informal discussions at camp, and data from in-depth interviews and surveys participants completed between 2004 and 2006. The historical material I present scratches the surface of how each community developed, and is not intended to be comprehensive. I use real names for people when I know that they are publically available on websites or other organizational documents such as tax forms. Naming real names in this section makes it possible to use pseudonyms for camp organizers’ data in later analytical sections that are not linked to identifying information about how each community developed. My goal in this section is to present readers with a rough image of how each camp community came to be as well as how each community was structured both in terms of

outreach and financial and logistical arrangements. Presenting a public face to the world, managing money, and securing people, food, and a site are the core pieces of making a Witchcamp a reality, and this section will show that Spiralheart and DreamRoads had very different arrangements in 2005 and 2006 even though the groups were interwoven when my study began in 2004.

The seeds of the Mid-Atlantic Reclaiming were planted in the mid-1990s when Heather Sutherland formed the intention to develop a spiritual earth-based community within the geographical area of Washington DC, in the U.S. The current Spiralheart web site dates the founding to 1993⁴².

In 1993, a woman decided to bring Witch Camp to the mid-Atlantic region. This event, held every year in the mid-Atlantic region since, spawned an interest in continuing the Camp experience. The people who volunteered to help put on Camp each year began organizing local workshops, core classes that teach Reclaiming Tradition principles, and community-building events. The group of people who volunteered their time in these efforts eventually became "SpiralHeart", and SpiralHeart officially became a 501(c) (3) non-profit educational institution in 1998⁴³.

The web site used to have direct links to the "founding legend" of Spiralheart⁴⁴ which was produced September 6, 2001. This founding legend has dates that are a bit confusing because the legend states that "Lynn G. and Heather searched for camps sites for a 100-person, secluded camp in the Yellow Pages and found Buffalo Gap in West Virginia. A visit to the dance camp and a casual inspection of the grounds, one windy fall

⁴² See <http://www.spiralheart.org/>, accessed July 31, 2012, in the "About Us" section. The previous version of the web site is:

<http://www.spiralheart.org/organization/index.html>, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁴³ From <http://www.spiralheart.org/>, accessed July 31, 2012, in the "About Us" section.

⁴⁴ See http://www.spiralheart.org/organization/heather_history.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

day, gave the vision a location and Heather plunked down \$2000 to hold the week of Aug. 13 to 23, 1994.” The legend also states:

Starhawk came to the Smithsonian to give a lecture to a standing room only audience in early October, 1994, stayed a week with Heather and mapped out the daily activities, kinds of path work, high play, and ritual experience of a week at camp. All of these practices enhanced the spiritual expectations Heather longed for in her life and that she wished to offer others⁴⁵.

This timeline would mean that Heather and the other co-founders received advice from Starhawk two months after executing the first camp. This does not make sense, and I think this account has a typo, and that the first Mid-Atlantic/Spiralheart camp is properly dated to August 13th to 23rd 1994. This revised timeline would leave time for Heather to develop the vision in 1993, find likeminded people and make the site visit to the campground in fall 1993 to reserve Buffalo Gap camp for August 1994. In order to plan camp, Heather would then have met with Starhawk in October 1993 to do advance planning for the camp, which would leave time to acquire a teaching team, plan all the activities, and advertise the event so that plenty of people would register.

The “legend” of camp explains that the community did not acquire the Spiralheart name until four years after the original camp. It also briefly chronicles how the organizing team developed: “Having never been to a Reclaiming Camp, Heather and Lynn started to find people who might be interested in organizing a camp. They held meetings and meetings with many people but only five people remained to finally assist in actually giving the camp wings. The story for the first camp was “Vasilisa and the Baba Yaga,” which is a story from Russia. The final organizing tasks were accomplished by

⁴⁵ From http://www.spiralheart.org/organization/heather_history.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

Heather, Lynn and Ron G.” The finances for the first camp were “shaky” and although ninety-four campers “with bold vision and fiery intention” attended camp, they had to hold a special collection and auction, run by Sharon and Pomegranate, to raise money to pay the teaching team. The rest of the camp’s deficit was covered by Ron G. who stepped forward with money from his mother’s estate so that the camp was “bailed out”⁴⁶.

Lynn took over the planning for the second year because Heather left for a four month contract in Russia with the Peace Corps after the first camp. The online “legend” recounts how people at the first camp serenaded her with the song “Round and Round” to send her off⁴⁷. Jumping forward in time, Spiralheart is currently a non-profit educational organization with a 501c3 status that it acquired in 1998. This status makes donations to the organization tax-deductible while the organization is required to file tax reports each year. In addition to filing paperwork with the federal government, Spiralheart must maintain a board of directors including a treasurer to do the taxes and hold an annual meeting. Spiralheart has been holding quarterly organizer meetings for several years. The September meeting is officially counted as the annual meeting and in my experience from roughly 2005 to 2008 the September meetings drew the largest number of people due to its timing and people’s desire for more community right after they had attended camp.

⁴⁶ See http://www.spiralheart.org/organization/heather_history.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁴⁷ See http://www.spiralheart.org/organization/heather_history.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

Organizer meetings have been an important facet of Spiralheart's culture for a number of years, and the meetings are open to organizers, former campers, and people who have yet to attend a camp. Each organizer meeting lasts for two days and is held at an organizer's home. The meetings usually take place in northern Virginia or in Maryland, but they have been held as far south as North Carolina and as far west as West Virginia. Starting at roughly 10am each day and ending around 5pm, the organizer meetings involve a mix of business and magic. Each meeting takes place in a magical circle with the directions and deities invoked. In addition, meetings often involve a magical working with the story for camp that year such as a guided meditation or tarot card reading. Organizer meetings also involve more mundane concerns such as selecting officers, creating consensus about the organization's budget, and discussions about recruiting and outreach.

The main purpose of the Spiralheart organization during 2004-2005 was the production of the Summer Intensive every year in August. In addition to this event, the organization listed other sponsored events including a Dark Moon Book Group that met at a private residence right before each new moon. All the sponsored events were produced by smaller groups of individuals involved in Spiralheart, and were not subject to the quarterly organizer meetings of the board of directors and other volunteer organizers. In the past Spiralheart had been involved in producing and funding Reclaiming core classes that are similar to the morning Path classes taught at the Summer Intensive.

DreamRoads the camp grew out of an online community of women and men who attended Spiralheart camp, and were geographically spread across the Eastern seaboard and into the mid-western U.S. This is not to say that the subgroups that made up DreamRoads came together at Spiralheart camp; to the best of my knowledge there were some old friendships and shared interests in feminist and queer spirituality along with glitter, trash-glamour, porch-sitting, and improvised ritual that led the group to coalesce. One online source I have looked at states that the first DreamRoads gathering coincided with the holiday Mabon on September 21, 1994⁴⁸. Communicating and coordinating ritual online worked for DreamRoads, which developed several off-shoots (GlitterWhores⁴⁹, Wicca'ed Witches⁵⁰, and others⁵¹) that had their own separate web pages circa 2005. This organic fusion of subgroups into the DreamRoads community is consistent with Reclaiming's anarchist political sympathies and the larger movement's cellular structure. The two main subgroups that stood out within Spiralheart were the GlitterWhores⁵² and a younger group in their 20s and 30s called the Prismic Broadz of Chaos. Several people from these groups were teachers and organizers at Spiralheart in 2004, and these people gave DreamRoads a solid foundation to build on when they executed their own camp in the Southeast in 2005.

⁴⁸ See <http://thegreenmuse.com/?p=272>, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁴⁹ See <http://www.mindwidth.com/GlitterWhores/index.php?ID=5&cat=2>, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁵⁰ See <http://www.wiccadwitches.com/>, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁵¹ See this listing for an event from 2010 event which lists the groups Mother Mind and Saga's Circle associated with one of the DreamRoads co-founders: http://www.wearewalkinginbeauty.org/Walking_in_Beauty/Blog/Entries/2010/3/8_Pagan_Compassion.html, accessed July 31, 2012.

⁵² The GlitterWhores were co-mothered into existence. I discuss this group in more detail in Chapter Three.

The founding story of DreamRoads was never put up on a web site, and I think this kind of identity work was not done because the Spiralheart-DreamRoads split was amicable yet tense. For example, the camps were scheduled back-to-back both summers, which forced the vast majority of campers to pick just one. Some people within Spiralheart saw the split as unnecessary, but their reasons varied. One contingent did not “get” that the two women who founded DreamRoads camp wanted to live in a camp culture that made space for children as well intense emotion work. This first contingent did not think that sort of camp would work or was very clear that the plan might work, but that they did not want to attend camp with anyone under eighteen years of age. A second contingent thought a kids camp was a fine idea, but did not understand why the DreamRoads people wanted to autonomously run their all-ages camp rather than push for several more years to get Spiralheart to fund and support it. This second group of people might not have understood the desire of some of the parents involved with DreamRoads to get their kids to an East Coast all-ages camp while they were still kids rather than teens. Considering that the DreamRoads people felt misunderstood and as though the value of an all-ages camp was underestimated and the Spiralheart people felt like they were seeing their friends take the hard rather than easy road toward creating a new camp, I think the transition was handled in a constructive fashion.

The DreamRoads camp was held in 2005 and 2006, and after that point the all-ages Intensive went defunct. Putting together this camp was a major logistical and financial undertaking, and the trajectory of DreamRoads was similar to Spiralheart’s: a small core

of founders who put up a significant amount of their own money up front to make the camp happen. Other than putting on the camps and maintaining a yahoo group listserv the DreamRoads community functioned pretty much the same way it did before the camp transition. People could get into the founders' community by expressing that they felt affinity for the GlitterWhores or Prismic Broadz, and then continuing to interact online with the group after the Intensive was over. In addition, there were local Reclaiming activities in the North Carolina area that people could attend, and these groups included people who did not strongly identify with any of the founders' subgroups (such as GlitterWhores, Prismic Broadz, and Wicca'ed Witches) but who did go to DreamRoads camp and support the project.

Mapping these fluid affiliations is challenging. I think the most concise way to describe the structure is that the DreamRoads founders were GlitterWhores, but they had a broader community that supported the all-ages project for two years. This community did not coalesce to the point of being able to support the camp for a third year after the founders stepped back from organizing, but the Intensive going defunct did not mean that any local Reclaiming group or the founders' own subgroups also stopped operating. The two-year lifespan of DreamRoads camp begs the question of whether the Intensive was a "success" and in the next section I discuss the logic that guides Reclaiming and their web-building project. While some people might define success narrowly in terms of the number of recruits or a camp's longevity and see DreamRoads as a failure, I argue that evaluating any Intensive's success is a more

complex, nuanced matter because Reclaiming plays the recruitment game by different, more flexible rules.

3) Playing By Their Own Rules: The “And” Logic of Recruitment and Commitment

One crucial thing to understand about Neo-Pagans, Witches, Druids, and Heathens is that they do not travel around, knocking on doors, looking for recruits. Recruitment is tricky because these groups want to bring desirable, productive people into their communities and traditions yet they are limited if they rely on either existing social networks or the self-recruitment of complete strangers. On the one hand they pride themselves on not proselytizing to members of other faith groups yet on the other hand each of these groups does reach out to people who are religious seekers as well as members of other Pagan, Witch, Druid, or Heathen traditions and communities. This is not to say that Neo-Pagans make major efforts into poaching members of other traditions rather than proselytizing widely but rather that these groups make materials and gateway training available for people who self-recruit along with engaging seekers within the wider Earth-based religious community.

I think it is fair to characterize the Earth-based religious groups this way although there may be exceptions, especially if a particular local group or branch of a tradition operates in a selective, invitation-only manner. In those cases recruits might still come from different sources, but the religious group has a firmer boundary around it that presents a challenge to recruits. Basically these groups are using a version of the “strict churches are strong” logic outlined by Lawrence Iannaccone (1994) in which demanding groups with clear boundaries remain competitive in a pluralistic religious

marketplace because they require heavy, continued investments from participants. These investments may begin during the recruitment phase with a recruit having to struggle and prove his or her worthiness to get an invitation into the group's recruitment process and basic training. Festivals (see Pike 2001 on Neopagan festivals) may also use this logic in order to get a mix of core organizers and groups along with interesting, vetted outsiders with weak ties to those on the inside⁵³. Like making it past a doorman at a night club, a recruit may feel smug and desired after gaining admission into recruitment and training processes with up-front filters.

Reclaiming operates by a different logic, and fits into a genre of movements that do not demand exclusive commitments from adherents or use extensive filtering prior to recruitment. I say that Reclaiming operates with "and" logic because both the religious and activist sides of the organization do not demand the exclusive allegiance of participants. People are free to make Reclaiming and "magical activism" their primary commitment and to identify as solely Reclaiming witches and activists, but they are also free to have multiple commitments and to identify as "Reclaiming and ..." another group. This "and" logic is compatible with building a web of people with commitments to magical activism and pursuing multiple goals since it allows members of Reclaiming to

⁵³ Another advantage of the invitation-only strategy is that organizers can strictly limit the size of an event. I have personally seen this strategy used for a festival called May Moon Madness, which was an open event when I attended it in the late 1990s. I went back in the mid-2000s, but had to get an invitation from a friend who came up for work weekends at the property. I was cautioned that "only 300" people would be allowed on the property this time around and that the event was "exclusive" so I could not bring extra people. The whole experience left me with the impression that considering the size of the land and number of organizers the limit was reasonable, but that the by-product of the invitations- the feeling of exclusivity and high status- was even more important.

have deep, lasting affiliations with other like-minded religious and activist groups. These people potentially serve as conduits of information between groups, and may be able to foster cross-group recruitment that benefits Reclaiming and other groups.

If Reclaiming operated with what I call “or” logic and demanded an exclusive commitment from participants (i.e. be Reclaiming or... something else), the movement would be more likely to focus on a narrow set of goals and the “Reclaiming magical activist” identity. This focus would come at the expense of networks with like-minded outsiders that happen due to Reclaiming’s “and” logic, which bear some similarity to the *abeyance structures* that sustain movements during off-peak periods when major organizations break up and activism wanes. Research on abeyance structures in the women’s movement shows that connective “and” logic rather than competitive “or” logic helped feminists who had been members of groups that demanded an exclusive commitment to come together and support the broad cause during a quiet period without losing their previous identities and the associated labels (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; Taylor 1989).

I argue that Reclaiming’s use of “and” logic requires a nuanced discussion of what success means for the movement. If the movement is focusing on sharing ideas and core members with like-minded groups rather than building a core membership that is exclusively theirs and executing solo projects, then successful outcomes look different, collaborative, and possibly like the failures of groups operating with “or” logic. Reclaiming is not a single-issue movement with clear-cut objectives for specific political or social changes. It is not looking to pass a particular piece of legislation, the adoption

of one specific identity, or for bottom-up change of a specific practice or moral stance. Instead, as the next sections on goals will make apparent, Reclaiming is focused on survival, creativity, and web-building both within and outside of the movement, which makes simple, instrumental success/failure assessments frustrating at best and inappropriate at worst even though these assessments are pretty much the default mode for evaluating social and political movements. I turn next to explaining movement-wide goals, and follow this discussion with separate sections about the regional groups I studied and the goals of specific genres of ideal-typical individuals.

4) Goals of the Reclaiming Movement

This section, along with the next two sections of Chapter 2, serves as an inventory of movement goals that I will draw on in the analyses within subsequent chapters. All three sections include reflections about the complementary and contradictory nature of movement-level goals versus those of regional groups and individual actors. I present the goals and projects in a nested way building from the “macro” movement level down to the “micro” level of ideal-typical individuals. Each of the goal sections includes discussions of some connections to sociological ideas about recruitment and commitment that help flesh out whether each goal is typical of social and religious movements or somewhat idiosyncratic and specific to Reclaiming or other Earth-based or Neo-Pagan groups. I highlight goals related to cyclical changes to the self that involve a series of small revisions to beliefs and behaviors over time including how capital/resources from one’s background are used, turned aside, or explicitly purged. These changes may happen during an Intensive and be provoked by a specific activity

such as an evening ritual or they may be a by-product of being a witch for a week that happens after the event is over.

At the movement level, as an international organization centered in the U.S, Reclaiming has three main goals that are likely to remain pertinent for the group across time. The first is maintaining core values, the second is sharing resources and innovations with other progressive groups, and the third is survival over time. The second goal is grounded in the “and” logic I discussed earlier, and the third goal is typical of a wide variety of organizations. Maintaining core values gives Reclaiming ideological coherence developed using consensus process yet this coherence is rooted in a flexible set of principles whose meanings are debated by both leaders and rank-and-file members of the movement. I examine each of these goals in turn and discuss the compatibility of the movement-level goals as I go along.

Keeping Up Core Values: The Principles of Unity (PoU)

Reclaiming has one statement of core values, the Principles of Unity (PoU), which were developed in November 1997 as the Reclaiming Collective dissolved itself. The PoU statement is seven paragraphs long (see Appendix B) and they are the only document to date that has been created using consensus process to represent the entire movement at the national and international level. Basically, they are the only thing everyone who identifies as being “Reclaiming” is supposed to embrace, and one of the goals at the movement level is keeping the PoU up-to-date and making sure that people who are exposed to Reclaiming are aware of the PoU. Both the Elements of Magic core class,

which is taught at almost every Intensive event and in a weekend workshop format, and the movement's web site are important venues for disseminating the PoU.

The BIRCH meeting is the current structure in place for revising the PoU, and a discussion of whether the gender language in PoU should be revised is scheduled for August 2012. This discussion is evidence that Reclaiming is not letting the PoU stagnate, and the movement has structures in place to deal with concerns about core values. I was present at Dandelion and BIRCH 2010 for the initial discussions about the PoU's gender language, and the discussions were fraught with emotions. Some queer-identified people expressed that they felt invisible and left out of the movement due to the language while some feminist witches advocated for keeping the reference to "the Goddess" in the first paragraph. The debate will continue and Reclaiming is self-exemplifying the PoU values by using consensus process rather than top-down decision-making to discuss revisions to the PoU.

Cooperative Web Spinning: Sharing Resources with Like-Minded Groups

Reclaiming has several statements about power-sharing and individual autonomy in the PoU, and these values form the foundation of the cooperative "and" logic associated with the movement. Rather than following a charismatic leader or leadership cadre, individuals in Reclaiming are urged to act as empowered individuals with creative and spiritual freedom. In practice, this means the movement ends up dealing with the costs and benefits of sharing both people and ideas with other like-minded groups. For example, there are people in the Free Activist Witchcamp community who are involved with Earthfirst! and others who identify as Radical Faeries and go to events at their

sanctuaries in addition to Reclaiming events. These cross-affiliations may give people additional opportunities for activism or exposure to communities that have tools Reclaiming might be able to use in ritual or resources such as land and buildings that might be shared if the communities build relationships. Reclaiming's goal seems to be to strike a tone of mutual respect and coexistence with other groups, which opens the door to resource-sharing with religious congregations, communes, and political and social movement groups and organizations. This stance also raises the issue of the movement being able to offer advanced training so that experienced people have the option of staying in the movement and deepening their magical activism rather than drifting away to other like-minded groups with clear training, initiation, and teaching tracks.

If we think about the movement at the national level, much of the burden of web-spinning appears to be placed on regional and local Reclaiming communities. The movement operates with a cellular structure (see Appendix D for the structure that was in place from 1997-2004) that makes information-sharing related to teaching and community mentoring available. In addition, RQ magazine is a national-level venue for sharing information such as the Pentacle of the Great Turning and highlighting cases of people who are "Reclaiming and..." and make the situation work.

In It for the Long Haul: Survival

The flip side of achieving the previous goal of information and resource sharing is that the Reclaiming movement risks losing not only people it has invested in, but also its distinct identity if too many tools get shared or too many people drift away and invest

more in other like-minded groups. Survival over time means not only having the numbers to keep the community going, but also having a distinctive movement culture. Reclaiming has managed to have the best of both worlds as far as religion is concerned because the group offers an optional initiation process for people looking to deepen their magical activism (see Salomonsen 2002: 248-9). In addition, there are several core classes that have been developed⁵⁴, and any Reclaiming community could develop a course of its own although word-of-mouth within the movement is likely to lead to the course being adopted by other communities within the web.

Currently Reclaiming has not only the Witchcamp as a relatively distinct socialization tool, it also has produced music⁵⁵ and books that are influential and identified with the movement to some extent. One of these books, *Circle Round* (Starhawk, Baker, and Hill 1998), is a parenting book, which brings me to the issue of movement survival and recruiting new members versus retaining children raised within the movement.

Reclaiming does not have a policy regarding children like some new religious movements such as the Shakers and Heaven's Gate (see Campion 1976; Francis 2001 on

⁵⁴ These include: Elements of Magic, Rites of Passage, Pentacle of Iron, Pentacle of Pearl and a new course in the works on healthy and sustainable community, which will be discussed at Dandelion 2012 (see <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/67/RQ67-06-IronPentacle.pdf>, accessed July 31, 2012, on the Iron Pentacle; see <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/103/RQ103-Pearl-feature.pdf>, accessed July 31, 2012, on the Pearl Pentacle; and see <http://www.reclaiming.org/classevents/core.html>, accessed July 31, 2012, for links to information about the four core classes focused on Bay Area Reclaiming).

⁵⁵ See <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/music/music1.html>, accessed July 31, 2012, for information on recordings and <http://www.reclaimingquarterly.org/web/chants04/>, accessed July 31, 2012, for a chant book created in 1996 as well as other chants created up to 2008. While not explicitly linked to Reclaiming, Anne Hill's Serpentine Music (see <http://serpentinemusic.com/>, accessed July 31, 2012) also publishes music and books related to the movement including a children's music album.

the Shakers; see Balch and Taylor 2003; 1977; Lalich 2004 on Heaven's Gate) who prohibited members from having children. People in Reclaiming have the freedom to choose whether they want to have children, how many they might have, and whether they want the children engaged with the movement or not. There are family-friendly and child-centered Witchcamps in the U.S., and parents are also free to seek out other religious traditions that offer systematic training for kids.

Reclaiming has survived for over thirty years, and there is a second generation at this point meaning that children raised in the movement have reached either full adulthood or a point in their teen years when they can make the decision to convert (or be initiated) or leave. The movement is at a sociologically interesting point that all new religions face if they survive long enough, and faces the challenge expanding the movement beyond the initial generation of founders. The Shakers' strategy was to recruit adults and adopt orphans whereas Heaven's Gate focused only on adults. These strategies contrast with groups such as the Bruderhof and The Farm, which encourage large families as part of their survival strategy. At the movement level, Reclaiming is making a place for children and seems equally concerned about developing movement "Elders" who can mentor a second generation of leaders. There seems to be awareness that people from the Baby Boom generation cannot keep leading things forever and a growing consensus that getting to the third generation requires socializing children along with developing a multi-generational leadership structure that develops adult recruits and helps people move into and out of particular leadership roles. This is a tall order, and the closest model for the movement may be the tribal structures of American

Indians/First Nations although borrowing from these cultures raises issues of authenticity and exploitation.

It is possible that Reclaiming's numbers may shrink in the future, but it seems likely that *The Spiral Dance* the book and the actual Spiral Dance itself are some pieces of Reclaiming culture that fellow Neo-Pagans will use for decades to come. In addition, the term *magical activism* and the general idea that Earth-based, Neo-Pagan religion brings sustainable practices to the wider milieu of social movement is a unique contribution of Reclaiming. These ideas have been picked up by the Pagan Cluster, and it remains to be seen whether the Cluster and Reclaiming will diverge from each other or will continue to have a close relationship and highly overlapping membership. Regardless of which scenario happens, Reclaiming has invested energy in both people and material and non-material culture, and this multi-faceted strategy combined with the movement's "and" logic makes it likely that Reclaiming-inspired *magical activism* along with the music and books will make it to the third generation and beyond even if the movement itself shrinks or becomes completely defunct.

5) Goals of the Regional Organizations (Spiralheart and DreamRoads)

Having just discussed survival as a movement-level goal, I am going to begin this section on the regional organizations' goals by considering the same issue from their perspective. I focus on regional communities that produce Intensive events, and draw many of the examples from the longitudinal research I did between 2004 and 2007 at two communities on the East Coast: Spiralheart and DreamRoads. This section focuses on four topics: year-to-year community survival, community-level growth and

transformations associated with shadow work, the pros and cons of different community models and ways of running an Intensive, and the reflexive development of “ritual technology” within a single Intensive community over time. By “ritual technology” I mean strategies and tools for provoking emotions or commitment such as a week-long retreat or a particular story or an emotional pattern linked to commitment such as the joy-crisis cycle used by the Bruderhof movement (see Zablocki 1971 on the Bruderhof).

Community Survival

Running an Intensive event from year-to-year is a big hurdle for a community to get over, and I was fortunate to be able to see communities of different ages and with different structures over the course of my research. Any community faces financial hurdles, and these are magnified when the community is putting on a week-long event rather than specific rituals or weekend workshops. For newer communities part of the financial challenge is figuring out where the money is coming from, and building a reserve of funds for the future. As we saw in the account of how Spiralheart started, people have to be willing to commit thousands of dollars in deposit money to secure a campground, kitchen staff, and pay travel expenses for the event’s teaching team. Depending on how the community is organized, the financial burden is generally placed on a core set of organizers or the board of directors of a 501c3 organization. Regardless of who is on the hook for funding the Intensive, getting a camp to the financial break-even point is stressful every year, particularly if organizers have to make a decision

about whether to run camp and incur some debt on behalf of the community or to not hold camp because the group simply cannot afford it.

The problematic thing about the decision to hold camp is that camp may be the main indicator of a group's survival from year-to-year, particularly for younger communities that have not built up to running a week-long event over time. If the other main point of contact for a community is a Yahoo group listserv, then being financially risk-averse may mean that the community does not "survive" by achieving the primary goal of holding an annual Witchcamp, and people interested in actual face-to-face interactions move on to another regional community. Basically I am describing a process whereby people are going to coalesce into communities capable of getting a camp to happen, and for the younger communities missing one year of camp, even if it is the financially sound thing to do, is more likely than not the signal of the community's demise. For example, there was a New York Witchcamp in 2004, but camp was not held in 2005, and by 2006 people from that community had been folded into other regional communities including Vermont, Spiralheart, DreamRoads, and MidWest as well as local Reclaiming groups that do not produce Witchcamps such as Long Island Reclaiming.

Another challenge is transparency about how the money is managed although this point may be moot if the camp is being run on a for-profit basis by an individual or small group who assume the risk, and, arguably, the right to not be transparent about their business dealings. Most Intensives are run on a non-profit basis and groups with 501c3 status have some built-in accountability structures because they have to have a board of directors and file tax forms, which are then publicly available. Communities with less

formal organizational structures tend to face more challenges about communication regarding money because the people who are actually making the financial commitments may not feel obligated to disclose exactly who contributed the money and exactly how the money was spent. The money may be coming from and spent by a small group of organizers who have to work out their priorities regarding taking action to make camp happen along with the amount and style of communication within the community as a whole regarding any and all financial decisions. There also can be very few organizers to keep track of registration and make sure that everyone who arrives at the event has paid in full, and organizers being stretched thin often leads to ideals for transparent communication getting comprised as the process of making camp happen unfolds. If the Intensive runs smoothly, the larger community may not ask questions about communication styles and how the money is being handled, but if someone writes a bad check to the camp and has to be sanctioned or if the camp runs short of funds to pay the teaching team there may be a flurry of questions within the community and people may leave if they do not like the answers.

Reclaiming is not unique among movements in experiencing tension related to money-management and communication surrounding money specifically and organizing decisions generally. Any organization with egalitarian values may end up facing similar issues and having to sort out whether survival and achieving key goals are more important than behaving in ways that are consistent with the group's values. Groups with charismatic leaders do not have the built-in expectations about transparency and power-sharing which add this extra dimension to dealing with money in egalitarian

groups. Even if the community's finances are sound the survival of an egalitarian group may be put in jeopardy if people do not like how the money is being managed or how the people responsible for the money communicate with the community as a whole.

One other core issue that impacts an Intensive community's year-to-year survival is the sheer number of people willing to commit to organizing and/or attending the Intensive that year. More than once some Spiralheart organizers brought up the saying "If you are making a bacon and egg breakfast, the hen is involved and the pig is committed" as a humorous way of illustrating the need for precise language for differing levels of responsibility within the community. When the organizers would use the saying it was generally to gently point out that people should not overestimate their contributions, i.e. one should not say she is "committed" when she is actually "involved" in contributions that are less costly than others. My point in bringing up the saying is to draw attention to the multiple goals "hens" and "pigs" are trying to achieve. The "breakfast" does not happen without both the bacon and eggs, and a certain number of both heavily committed "pigs" and lightly involved "hens" are needed to get an Intensive to happen. The pigs may get the limelight within the community, but the hens are also critical to the event's survival even though they pay a smaller price. Then there are the people contribute even less to the community than the "hens". Survival for the regional communities is partly about getting the right number of bodies to camp, and in order to achieve the goal people in Reclaiming may bring in new recruits with only a marginal interest in the movement. On the one hand this strategy exposes a variety of people to Reclaiming even if they never return, but on the other hand it exploits these

newcomers in the service of making camp happen for people who are moderately or highly invested. This is one example of individual and group goals not necessarily being in sync since the group's goal may be attained by individual behavior that is logical yet at odds with the group's values. This sort of scenario is a matter of group and individual ethics and interpretations of the Principles of Unity. Some people in Reclaiming may be very uncomfortable with persuading people who do seem like good prospects to come to camp while other may have no qualms about it whatsoever. I think it is fair to say that if the movement had a charismatic leader and proselytized widely this kind of dilemma would not exist.

Community Growth and Transformation Accomplished with Shadow Work

Communities that produce Intensives are looking to grow and change over time as they do "the work" collectively. Put another way, working through transformative stories does not just happen to individuals or small sub-groups of people at camp. Each community is reflexive and ideally makes a genuine attempt to confront whatever shadows exist. There are two important catalysts for these group processes: the story of camp and comments from teachers who are community outsiders. I discuss each of these topics in turn within this section.

There is another layer to the story selection process for the Intensives that I have not discussed so far. Regardless of the exact logistics of the story selection process one general feature of some stories is that they include both overt and latent lessons about the ups and downs of community life that people may want to work with during the course of the week. When they are picking a story, organizers and teachers consider

precisely how each potential story is multivalent and the several different lines of work people might be able to do. They may have a goal for community work in mind, but a rich story may provoke a different, spontaneously generated response that requires improvisation away from the original plan for community work.

A particular story may be a good fit for a community one year, and be inappropriate the next. Story selection teams try to account both for where a community has been and the past stories they have worked with as well as where the community wants to go in the future. I have referred to the camp story as a catalyst for both individual and collective transformative work at camp, and another concern each community has is whether a particular story has been “done” recently within the Reclaiming web. Using the same story as another camp reduces the likelihood that an Intensive will draw campers from other regional communities, which does not help the camp reach the financial break-even point and does not add diversity to the Intensive that particular year. Thus, each group of camp organizers pays attention to what other camps in the web are doing, and the annual Witchcamp Council gathering is one opportunity for each community to get “advance” information about story selection well before the information is put up on a group’s web site. It is in every community’s interest to coordinate story selection yet there is also competition to the extent that groups want to do novel stories and hold a quality camp that accomplishes deep work every year.

There have been some innovations in teacher selection at a few of the Intensives within the web since I started my research project in 2004. These include the use of a few non-Reclaiming trained teachers at Free Activist Camp, the shift in how the

Witchcamp Council works so that camps make autonomous choices about teachers, and Spiralheart's development of a new teacher selection process and division of labor for Path class teaching and ritual arc planning. These changes have redistributed authority related to teacher and story selection from the movement's California core out into each camp community, but Witchcamp teachers have remained some of the most highly networked and visible people in the movement. Their opinions of camp community's matter, and they play a role in shaping and assessing a community's growth and transformation over time.

Reclaiming has gradually transitioned from having camps in the U.S. and Canada that "imported" teachers from California to having an international group of seasoned teachers. In the 1980s and 1990s, importing California teachers was a necessity, and these teachers were mixed on a team with local student teachers in order to build up a local teaching base over time. Eventually student teachers would be tapped to teach outside their local Intensive, and over time they would transition to full teacher status. Non-local teachers brought not only expertise, but also a supposedly neutral outsider's viewpoint on the community into the mix of each camp, which became less neutral if the outsider returned from year-to-year. Part of a teaching team's responsibility is to hold a reflection and feedback meeting post-camp, and to provide feedback to the organizers about the "growing edges" of the community. In practice, this information gets transmitted through informal channels by the teachers, and contributes to each camp community's reputation in the wider Reclaiming web. Communities are left free to respectfully ignore the feedback and opinions from particular teachers or whole

teaching teams, but the decision can create tension and possibly conflicts between factions of people that cross between regional communities. The norm within Reclaiming is to cultivate change, and to confront shadows rather than sweeping them under the rug. Communities that ignore teacher feedback risk the decision being framed as a major norm violation to the wider web even if the community itself feels that it is doing quality work at each Intensive that digs beyond what I like to think of as the “normal drama” of common community problems associated with putting on camp and self-exemplifying the movement’s values. These deeper issues may include, but are not limited to the tensions that arise between women and men, people of differing sexual orientations, different age groups, and differing approaches to working activism and religion into one’s life as part of a personal practice and the work of camp.

Community Culture-Building

Another deeper issue for community shadow work is the broad issue of accessibility and the type of culture a community intends to build during the Intensive. A regional group may decide to run an Intensive as an adults-only event open to people ages eighteen and older. This is the model of camp Spiralheart started with in the mid-1990s as well as the model used by the original Witchcamp in California held in the Mendocino woodlands. The adults-only model creates a camp culture that frees adults to tend to their own work and go into dark emotional places without day-to-day childcare responsibilities to distract from the work. An adults-only camp culture can also foster frank and open work with sacred sexuality that can move outside the bounds of a particular Path class, sexuality temple, or workshop in a spontaneous way.

The people who started DreamRoads camp decided that they wanted something different and were uncomfortable with the “shadow” of adults-only camps that were engaged in building a community culture for a week in sacred space that did not include children and families. The gist of the argument is that a “tribal” family-friendly Intensive event culture is a more authentic and pragmatic exercise in changing oneself and the wider world. Put another way, the “shadow” of an adults-only camp is that it is inherently exclusive and will never provide a model for a sustainable day-to-day community that whole families could live in 24/7.

DreamRoads camp was run so that the children had their own morning Path class and the evening rituals started with children present and a participatory segment for them, which then ended with the children leaving with the kid-care team so that an adults-only section of the ritual could happen. Parents with babes-in-arms could bring them to Path class, but this practice did not seem to be encouraged during the evening ritual. Families could be together during most of the rest of the day including meal times, and afternoon free time, and a parent could always opt out of an adults-only activity to go take care of a child. This kind of model for running camp still has adults-only time for deep emotion work that is the hallmark of an Intensive event, but at the two DreamRoads camps I attended the very fact that people who were actively parenting were in the community seemed to shift the level of focus. Often it was not as deep as a typical adults-only camp, but there were certain evening rituals that had remarkable intensity and focus on par with or greater than those of the adults-only camps I attended. This dynamic seems to me to be similar to the “tribal” environment of the

biannual Dandelion Gathering, which is family-friendly with time carved out for adults-only rituals and workshops.

Overall, the regional groups in Reclaiming are free to build community cultures focused on adults-only Intensives, child or teen-centered Intensives (such as Witchlets in the Woods in California), the tribal family-friendly model, or some combination of these kinds of camps. There is no central movement authority that dictates which sorts of Intensives each community should hold. The evolution of camps over time appears to be organic and driven by bottom-up demands expressed within each community. One important social force for understanding the choices communities make about what kind of Intensives they run is the idea of *institutional isomorphism* (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). This idea describes how, over time, various organizations in a field become increasingly similar in form due to constraints imposed by the environment and the spread of information about desirable innovations via informal social networks and people who formally move between one organization and another. The past decade has been an interesting time for the Intensives, and several communities are in a state of flux regarding both their culture-building goals and the structures they use to attain them. Drawing on the idea of institutional isomorphism I can hypothesize that collectively, the field of regional communities is likely to exhibit more unity regarding their culture-building goals and how they structure the Intensives in spite of the increases in regional community autonomy that have happened since the Reclaiming Collective disbanded in 1997. This hypothesis may be surprising to the members of the communities themselves partly because of Reclaiming's anarchist roots and partly

because many of the communities pride themselves on innovating compared to others in the web.

Reflection and Innovations in Ritual Technology

“I really believe we are evolving into a separate Spiralheart tradition of Witchcraft. We have something unique here” (Nu (Male, White, Middle) 2006 interview). Over the course of attending three Spiralheart Witchcamps and several years of organizer meetings I heard one organizer make statements to this effect quite a few times. I spent a lot of time puzzling over how other organizers and campers reacted to Nu’s obvious pride in the regional community and the issue of how unique the Spiralheart community actually was compared to other communities in the web. On the one hand few people responded enthusiastically to the idea, but on the other hand they seemed legitimately convinced that they stood out among other camps as innovators. I will have more to say regarding this topic in Chapter Five. I have brought up the statement here because I think both the pride communities take in what they do as well as the reflectiveness that is built into Reclaiming witchcraft and activism are important factors that shape how ritual technologies get developed within specific camp communities over time.

Each regional community is free to develop its own particular traditions, and the land where camp is held along with the campground facilities definitely influence the types of innovations developed by particular communities. For example, a community cannot do a ritual that venerates a 350-plus-year-old tree every year if camp takes place in a landscape without accessible large old trees. My point here is that there are definitely constraints on each Intensive, but that each site where a camp is held also offers

opportunities for creativity. In addition, innovative behavior is grounded in the idea that Reclaiming style ritual follows the E-I-E-I-O acronym for ecstatic, improvisational, ensemble, inspired, and organic⁵⁶.

Assuming that an Intensive is held at the same site from year-to-year, there are a number of main elements of a camp that are subject to innovation. These include the focus of camp (adults-only, child-centered, family-friendly); the type of story; the emotional or narrative arc traced by the story; the level of work done with the story (individual and small group versus community); the teaching team size and composition; and the topics of the Path classes. Additional main elements include the timing of the three main pieces of camp: Path class, affinity group, and all-camp ritual that is usually placed in the evening; the use of Reclaiming's distinctive Spiral Dance ritual; the format of the Spiral Dance ritual; holding an all-camp healing ritual, talent show, auction, and/or silent auction; the way affinity groups are assigned; using all-camp ritual time for affinity group and Path class rituals; the development of a costume cabin or other space for borrowing ritual clothing; the requirement that every camper pitch in by signing up for a shift of chores; and the presence of groups such as pirates or mud-people who destabilize the social order of camp. This list is not fully exhaustive, but it comes close and provides readers who have never attended an Intensive some sort of picture of the wide latitude for variation between camps aside from the regional culture of each community, the campground where the event is held, and the seasonal timing of the

⁵⁶For an explanation of E-I-E-I-O see <http://www.reclaiming.org/about/directions/definition.html>, accessed July 31, 2012, in "A Working Definition of Reclaiming" by Starhawk.

camp. Given all these options, I argue throughout the dissertation that any and every camp community innovates in substantial ways whenever they hold an Intensive.

Change and growth are built into the norms of Reclaiming activism and witchcraft, and a regional community would be particularly exceptional if it rigidly stuck to a model for holding camp and doing ritual or if it dropped the reflexive components of an Intensive such as affinity group or ritual feedback sessions.

This viewpoint is contrary to the way people in the Spiralheart community, including Nu who I quoted earlier in this section, framed their community while I was doing fieldwork (2004-8). Their self-image as a community played up their innovations in story choice, community-level work, and teaching team selection and composition as the major innovations happening in the Reclaiming web. Their framing downplayed innovations such as holding a Witchcamp during the winter and the fact that Free Activist Witchcamp placed a heavy emphasis on activism and funded itself through donations⁵⁷ rather than by charging registration fees. What I find interesting about the way people in Spiralheart valued their reputations as innovators is that they were priding themselves on a distinction that is actually characteristic of all the communities in the Reclaiming web. Furthermore they focused on innovations that were visible to insiders who knew how story work and teacher selection functioned rather than differences that would be clear to outsiders perusing the camps on websites like Marion Roach did when she was selecting a camp.

⁵⁷ There is an acronym for this funding model called NOTAFLOF (pronounced not-a fluff) which stands for “no one turned away for lack of funds.” This is a step beyond the sliding scale payment structure used at some Reclaiming events or the scholarships and work-share models used by some Intensives.

To understand innovation as a regional community goal it is necessary to shift between considering the innovations that the communities themselves highlight when they reflect about the process and innovations that are present within all Witchcamps such as taking time after a ritual is over to reflect about how things went. This time for reflection is open to all participants who want to check in about how things went, and people who played specific roles in the ritual such as priestesses and musicians may have their own time for reflection that is held separately. These reflection meetings are held with the intention of continuous incremental improvement to Reclaiming-style ritual and the community's rituals in particular, and they are pragmatic in tone. There is separate affinity group time for individuals to discuss their reactions to camp as a whole in a non-judgmental small-group atmosphere.

Overall I think it is fair to characterize the Intensives as informal ritual labs for the community that foster certain forms of innovation to various features of the story work, format, and duration of specific rituals. Organizer meetings such as the quarterly ones held by Spiralheart and online discussion boards are also sites where innovations are created and debated. The stories communities tell about their innovations inform us about how they are prioritizing their goals, but these accounts may neglect "normal" innovations that are built into the fabric of Reclaiming or innovations by other communities to other facets of being a witch for a week. Assessing innovations includes looking at how the regional communities capitalize on the norms of the larger movement regarding ritual content as well as moments when specific groups of campers contribute new ideas.

Individual campers bring their own religious and activist backgrounds and present-day networks with them to an Intensive and the diversity they bring is also a valuable well-spring of innovation. Tools such as the affinity group and post-ritual assessment meetings help ensure that individual voices and reactions are heard even when the speaker is not an “involved hen” or a “committed pig” who is strongly embedded in Reclaiming. The reflexive processes the movement employs are far from perfect, but they do help to distribute decision-making power and to allow fresh perspectives on the pros and cons of ritual technology to be heard.

6) Goals of Ideal-Typical Individuals

There are a number of goals that prototypical individuals may make a priority during their time at an Intensive. The five goals I discuss in this section, 1) healing past wounds and traumas, 2) deepening involvement with magical religion, 3) deepening involvement with activism, 4) learning to flexibly use relevant skills and resources from other settings, and 5) role-based goals for archetypical vendors, professional teachers, supportive spouses, vacationers, and energy-focused campers are not meant to be an exhaustive list, but they do represent goals that may pull an individual in different directions during the camp experience. These individual-level goals can complement the goals of the regional community, for example an individual may come to camp with healing as a goal and find that the Intensive has a specific healing ritual that creates moments for individual and collective healing. Other goals may cause conflict between an individual and a community or the movement as a whole such as vendors who come to an Intensive with a profit motive and find that Reclaiming values and a community's

culture strongly suggest that they leave cash boxes or expensive merchandise out in the open as a sign of trust in the community. The tensions that arise due to conflicting goals are just as interesting as the synergy and reinforcement that happens when the goals are complementary.

The discussion of goals in this section provides readers with an overview of these different kinds of goals, and a preview of some of my ideas about the tensions and synergies present at an Intensive from the point of view of these prototypical individuals. In addition to these issues, this section should give readers a sense of some of the different sorts of people who attend an Intensive and become witches for a week. Not everyone shows up at the event prepared to do “the work” while other people who attend camp are in the midst of a cyclical process of goal-attainment and change regarding their religious and activist commitments. Not everyone cycles together, and this section includes a basic overview of how individual-level goals are connected to cyclical self transformations that I discuss in depth in Chapter Five.

Healing as an Individual Goal

The Reclaiming PoU statement includes the ideas that community rituals raise energy “for personal, collective and earth healing” and that the movement works “to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, which can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples” (see Appendix B). Healing is integral for Reclaiming and if we view the week-long Intensive itself as a ritual technology that produces healing by exposing people to story work, then it is reasonable to posit that individuals looking for healing can look at the pre-camp information about story themes

and make an effort to pick both a story and a specific morning Path class that seem likely to facilitate the healing process. This assumes that individuals have the resources to pick whatever camp they want and that a veteran camper might be willing to attend an Intensive outside of her regional “home” community. My point here is that individuals seeking healing have to sort out the best format for achieving their goals, and answer the question of whether it is feasible and desirable to heal away from their “home” camp during any particular year. In these situations, it may be in a regional community’s interest to get the camper to stay “home” and heal, and this may conflict with the individual’s needs such as doing a camp with a theme that really resonates.

One puzzling finding from my research in 2007 when I attended four Intensives outside the East Coast of the U.S. is that some of the other communities I visited include a specific healing ritual lasting several hours as a regular part of their Intensives. The California adult camp, DreamWeaving/Mid-West camp, and Free Activist Camp all had what amounted to be a ritual institution for healing built into their camp while Spiralheart, DreamRoads, and BCWC did not. People who know the healing ritual exists may hold off on individually seeking healing until this ritual is in progress, and individuals in the rituals I have seen have the option of giving healing, receiving it, or playing a support role by staying in the outer circle of people surrounding the ritual space. The high level of energy raised within this large group setting may be attractive for some individuals, but it also might put people off. Individuals who want healing such as body work or Reiki may opt to receive it during another time, and the healer may

provide it as a community service for free or may practice healing as a vendor and charge money or barter with clients.

In sum there are different domains in which healing is conducted, and people at the Intensives whose goal is to heal do not rely just on the story work done during the all-camp rituals or on the expertise of the teaching team to help them. The PoU statement mentions that Reclaiming rituals aim to heal individuals, communities, and the Earth, and these three forms of healing may happen simultaneously or be split apart and attended to separately using different segments of a ritual or entirely different rituals or other activities. Individuals bring different healing goals to the table at an Intensive, and the community may find balancing these needs to be challenging if, for example, they have street activists in need of healing individual protest-related trauma on the one hand, and other individuals seeking healing at a global level due to concern about natural disasters or the environment. This kind of balancing act can be tricky and result in schisms within a camp community even when everyone approaches the situation with the best of intentions. I leave open the question of whether an institution such as the all-camp healing ritual used by some camps and the for-profit vending used at others can help communities avoid conflicts related to individuals' healing goals, and will discuss healing further in Chapter Three.

Deepening Involvement with Magical Religion as an Individual Goal

There are a number of different religion-related goals that individuals may have when they decide to attend an Intensive. Marion Roach attended an event with the general intention of learning about the connections between red hair and witchcraft, and I think

her curiosity about what modern witches actually do is typical of people who come to camp without much of a background with magical religion. This kind of recruit may be looking to learn about witchcraft and Reclaiming-style ritual, but may be unprepared for the intense emotion work done using the story/theme of camp during the all-camp evening rituals. Attending the Intensive may kickstart an interest in developing two different sorts of religious involvement: 1) an everyday personal practice such as meditation or devotional work with a deity and 2) sporadic activities with a local or regional Reclaiming community and/or another faith tradition.

Of course a person may also remain scared or skeptical about the religious side of Reclaiming, and decide that deepening their involvement with magical religion is no longer a goal. These people may leave camp early like Roach and her friend did or they may focus on the Earth-centered, spiritual aspects of what Reclaiming has to offer and keep up their involvement with Reclaiming and the Intensive events in spite of their current feelings regarding magical religion. These people may identify as agnostic or generally spiritual when it comes to religion, and may have little interest in the faith tradition they were raised in, if any, when they were growing up.

A third sort of camper brings an active interest in magical religion with him to camp, and his goals may include enriching one or both of the two different sorts of religious involvement I mentioned earlier: an everyday personal practice and sporadic community activities such as a book group, social meet-up, celebrating seasonal holidays, or holding full or dark moon rituals. This kind of prototypical camper may have experience doing group ritual, but the intensity of the magical energy raised in

Reclaiming-style ritual among people who have committed to not using alcohol and drugs for the duration of camp may make a lasting impression that the Intensives offer a distinct and desirable space for doing deep magical work. The spontaneity of Reclaiming-style ritual may also make this kind of impression on campers who have experience in Wiccan traditions with strict guidelines for conducting correct and effective rituals. People from these traditions may come to an Intensive looking for a break from their home tradition's rules as well as enriching their practice via long-term involvement with Reclaiming. Other people from strict, traditional Wiccan groups may be ordered by a high priestess to attend an Intensive in order to see how "the other half lives" so to speak and be aware of how improvised, egalitarian rituals work. These Wiccans contribute to the diversity of camp, and are exactly the kind of participants that can achieve their individual goals and help a camp reach its financial break-even point without any intentions of sustained involvement with Reclaiming. In a similar vein, spiritual seekers may have the same sort of one-shot participation at an Intensive, bring new ideas to the table, and then move on to the next guru or group as their search continues.

There are a number of studies that outline the dynamics of recruitment within new religious movements including Lofland and Stark's classic article on the phases recruits went through as they became affiliated with a group referred to as the "Divine Precepts" (1965). The steps included the formation of affective ties with members of the group and the dissolution or diminution of ties to people outside the group. Lofland and Stark's (1965) study focuses on a movement with a charismatic leader and an

organization that operates with what I call “or logic,” which forces people into making an exclusive commitment to the group and imposes goals on individuals (Lofland 1966). Making this kind of exclusive commitment may have been an individual’s goal if she was looking for a guru or leader or it may be an unexpected outcome of the recruitment process. Reclaiming offers recruits a different sort of surprise in that the movement leaves room for individual goal attainment and operates with an “and logic” that leaves room for commitments to other religious and activist groups.

Deepening Involvement with Activism as an Individual Goal

The goals that individuals have that involve activism can be classified so that they are split along two different domains: those related to social activism versus those related to political activism and those related to incorporating activism into everyday life versus participating in special events that are one-offs or occur sporadically. As they do with magical religion, participants in an Intensive bring a variety of backgrounds with activism to the table, and these backgrounds help to shape their response to the Intensive as well as the particular goals they bring to the event in the first place. Reclaiming leaves room for participants to sort out what “magical activism” means to them, and what deeper involvement with each side of worldview will look like for them after the Intensive is over. I explain the goals that three different sorts of prototypical campers may have regarding pursuing activism in this section and then draw on Tanya Lurhmann’s (1989) concept of *interpretive drift* to better understand the timing, social context, and self-consciousness of self-transformations. She developed the concept to explain the gradual adoption of magical beliefs by people involved with British

Traditional Witchcraft, but I think the idea is just as useful for making sense of the cognitive, emotional, and somatic dispositions people with backgrounds in activism may bring with them to camp and seek to fine-tune over the course of an Intensive. My emphasis here is on incremental change and sustainability, but the drift process certainly overlaps with the healing goals I discussed earlier.

Some participants at the Intensive bring little to no background in either social or political activism with them to camp. These prototypical activism novices are likely to set basic goals regarding learning about activism when they come to camp for the first time, and they may be both intrigued and intimidated by fellow campers with visible and strong ties, such as specific clothing and gear, to activist subcultures who discuss their experiences with direct action or street protests. These discussions may take place informally during meals or arise during Path classes as people share information about their backgrounds and reactions to specific activities. In addition, experienced activists may schedule “processing” discussions that allow campers to share their standpoint regarding a particular topic, changes they want to see in social or political systems, and steps they have taken to create change. These discussions follow a rough consensus-process style in that they focus on the goals of expression and listening rather than simple utilitarian decision-making while using tools such as a “stack” for speaking and a go-around style of discussion to elicit comments from everyone present. For example, a processing discussion might be held regarding the use of gender pronouns both during camp and in everyday life. This kind of discussion might expose novices to neutral pronouns along with the experiences people who identify as queer or transgender and

their change-making efforts within schools, workplaces, or other settings. The processing discussions may provide the novices with role models, connect them to activist communities that function year-round, and draw them into identifying as activists and setting goals they want to achieve after camp. Processing discussions may serve as turning points, but they can also last hours and turn off novices who go into them unaware of how emotionally intense and intellectually challenging the discussions can be.

A prototypical camper with a background in political activism may find the processing discussions to be an unexpected element of the camp experience if he lacks experiences with consciousness-raising discussions and consensus process decision-making. This kind of camper brings knowledge about specific issues, tactics that engage politicians and the public with the cause, and negotiating the legislative process with her to the Intensive. This sort of person may come to camp with the goal of networking with fellow campers interested in the same cause and finding ways to bridge working on a specific campaign with doing activism in daily life or finding ways to make local issues such as mountaintop removal mining a national concern. These politically engaged campers may be very focused on electoral politics, and may find that the ways they engage in activism seem instrumental rather than expressive in comparison to fellow campers with other backgrounds. This insight may lead the prototypical political activist who is used to cognitively and emotionally mobilizing for activism to pay more attention to somatic-sensory experiences and rethink how the body fits into the forms of activism he was already doing pre-camp. In contrast, a prototypical social activist may be used to

focusing on emotions, the body, and identity and shifting civil society to create awareness of an issue or tolerance of a lifestyle or group. The Intensive may encourage this person to consider connections between their current efforts at social change and how they might lend support to activism targeted at political change related to the same broad issue.

A third sort of activist may bring a focus on living out his or her values in everyday life to the Intensive, and set goals related to meeting likeminded people and sharing specific, concrete actions that fit into his or her lifestyle. This everyday activist comes in two general varieties: an “all-in everyday” activist whose life centers around carrying out direct action such as tree-sitting or living in a communal or co-operative household with shared activist values and a “cross-over everyday” activist whose life blends daily practices that are construed as activism such as composting, being vegan, or working for a non-profit organization with actions that have no activist content currently attached to them such as how the person commutes to work , raises their children, or the kind of household she lives in. The cross-over activist may aspire to be an all-in everyday activist, and have the transition to being “all-in everyday” as a longer-term goal. Talking with all-in everyday activists may also redirect the cross-over activist’s goals if the all-in activists are burned out or having other problems. The cross-over activist may leave the Intensive having seen that their form of everyday activism, while less romantic and exciting, is a better option for long term engagement in magical activism generally and with Reclaiming specifically.

This same sort of dynamic can happen between people who do sporadic activism with differing levels of risk for violence, arrest, or other sanctions. People may set goals for getting involved in higher-risk activities in the future, and then dial back their goals after having pragmatic discussions with role models during camp. Exposure to a variety of people who are in the midst of deepening their commitments and picking up new resources at the Intensive makes this dialing back process easier than it would be at home. The Intensive makes alternative ideas and role models immediately available to people who are casting around for options, and the week-long event provides time for participants to test-run new affiliations and practices in a safe, supportive environment.

One way of understanding changes to the self and goal-setting is the idea that rather than a sudden epiphany and immediate change to one's beliefs, identity, and practices, people may adopt an identity and new practices and then experience a slower, less intentional slippage into a new worldview captured by Tanya Lurhmann's concept of *interpretive drift* (1989). Interpretive drift is "the slow, often unacknowledged shift in someone's manner of interpreting events as they become involved with a particular activity," and it "involves a shift in what one wants to call belief- at least a shift in the types of assertions about the world which a practitioner will defend, and the assertions the observer might infer from practice and conversation" (Lurhmann 1989: 312). Lurhmann intended for the drift concept to capture the accidental, unintended, and often private transformation from becoming a magician and practicing magic to believing in magic due to shifts in interpretation, experience, and rationalization that "propel change from one manner of understanding to another" (Lurhmann 1989: 312).

She maintains that “intellectual and experiential changes shift in tandem, a ragged co-evolution of intellectual habits and phenomenological involvement” (Lurhmann 1989: 315). I share Lurhmann’s agenda in that I too want to understand how connecting to magic transforms people’s lives and in this subsection of Chapter Two I argue that interpretive drift is useful for understanding the blend of public exposure and private consideration of both the magical religious and the political and social activism sides of Reclaiming-style magical activism.

Sticking to Lurhmann’s original concept helps me make sense of how being a witch for a week fits into the process of self-transformation that can, but does not always, follow a drift model. In this model an individual could move from “becoming” and “practicing” magic or political and social activism to “believing” and “defending” a worldview that runs contrary to scientific rationality and/or the dominant national culture in some key respects. For example, a person in Reclaiming might participate in a practice such as parenting shaped by Eco-feminist and/or magical religious values and be labeled by others as doing everyday activism even though s/he is in the process of drifting toward “becoming” that kind of activist in the sense that s/he both labels the action as activism, practices it, and has a deep belief that parenting constitutes activism that fits into his/her own personal magical activist worldview and Reclaiming as a whole.

Lurhmann’s drift concept is useful for mapping private transitions related to magical activism that fit a process of adopting identities and practices early-on and having a slow co-evolution of mental, emotional, somatic experiences that suddenly, unpredictably

results in a final moment of settling and becoming keyed⁵⁸ into an entire worldview.

This moment may happen during an Intensive as a result of someone mulling over or unconsciously struggling with the issue of how to deepen their practice pre-camp or during the event itself, or it may gradually develop during the other fifty-one weeks of the year as the events during the Intensive are processed and integrated- both deliberately and accidentally- by individuals back at home. In Reclaiming terms one “fakes it” until one “makes it” by practicing and labeling until one hits the moment of “making it” into state that feels like a deepened or fully fleshed out version of the worldview.

The interesting thing about Reclaiming is that this process can happen multiple times, and I will discuss how people cycle through deepening their involvements and beliefs related to magical activism in Chapter Five. For now I want readers to be sensitized to a couple of core ideas from Lurhmann. The first point is that the timing of conversions and self-transformations varies. I think the drift process may be slow enough to not fit the slower “stair-step” version of an awakening model (DeGloma 2009), and will discuss this further in Chapter Five. The second point is that these transformations can involve a mix of deliberate and unintended actions/elements. I would add that the actions/elements include cognitions, emotions, and somatic-sensory experiences that may be planned by the individual or event organizers or spontaneously, sometimes accidentally arise either

⁵⁸ I am not sure I like the word choice here because as a person grows into the worldview s/he becomes both “keyed” into it as well as “locked” into it. I think Lurhmann’s drift concept helps sensitize us to how conversion processes may involve both a growth phase and a settling phase. It seems to me that people become both keyed into beliefs and settle into defending them as part of the drift process, and that Lurhmann is right to distinguish this understanding/believing/settling phase from an earlier, arguably shallower embrace of identity labels and performance of actions.

during the week of the Intensive or while people are back home during the other fifty-one weeks of the year. I like to think of the Intensive using the Reclaiming idea of a “container,” and think Lurhmann’s work helps people see that not every action in the container needs to be deliberate and pre-planned in order to have a lasting impact on people. This point also holds true for the other fifty-one weeks of the year when the regional Intensive-producing community and individual event attendees are back at home trying to do “the work” of magical religion and activism. I now turn to examining individuals’ goals and how these are shaped by specific roles people play while being witches for a week.

Roles within the Intensive and Individual Goals

There are a number of roles that both novice and veteran participants at an Intensive can take on during the event, and these roles influence the set of goals participants create as well as the priority given to any particular goal. The roles I discuss in this section include vendors, professional teachers, supportive spouses, vacationers, and energy-focused campers. I examine goals related to each specific role in turn, and I comment on how people in specific roles may prioritize their goals differently compared to an average camper who is not carrying out the role at that camp. Within the discussion I also consider potential conflicts that may occur between movement and regional-level goals and the goals connected to specific roles. This discussion of goals will help readers begin to understand people might stay in the Intensive community, take a hiatus for several years, or leave permanently, and I examine patterns of staying and leaving in more depth in Chapter Five.

Vendors and Goals

Many of the Intensives allow vending and have systems set up to allow people to vend both objects such as clothing, shoes, CDs, and art as well as services such as massage, Reiki, and divination. Vendors are responsible for setting up their wares or workspace in a designated area, and they are given leeway about when and how the table or workspace is staffed. In communities with auctions, vendors are often expected to donate items along with paying an upfront fee for the vending space, and the required donation may help publicize the objects or the service that is for sale especially if there is a bidding war for an item. Vending makes life at camp more complex and adds an additional layer to social interactions vendors have with their fellow campers. Fellow campers become potential customers to be cultivated, which may lead to unexpected friendships or lasting antagonism if a transaction goes poorly.

Vendors have profit and smooth social interactions as goals, and these goals shift in priority as camp proceeds. Making the decision to vend in the first place means compromising one's ability to participate in afternoon free time activities as well as the post-dinner period when people get ready for ritual. Vendors may end up being preoccupied about the security of their items and have concerns about debt collection if someone has run a tab with them that will be paid at the very end of camp. These concerns related to profits could compromise an individual's ability to get the most out of a Path Class, affinity group, or evening ritual, and they may become increasingly important toward the end of camp if a lot of merchandise remains or there are debts to be paid. Compounding these concerns is the goal of smooth interaction between the

vendor and other campers, which is likely to get higher priority than the goal of speaking one's truth and having authentic interactions with all campers. Vendors may tone down their opinions and act diplomatically or avoid speaking their mind so that conflicts with customers are avoided altogether or postponed until another time. This sort of compromise may complement the regional community's goals in that it keeps camp going, but it also arguably pulls the vendor away from achieving the values of freedom and the questioning attitude from the PoU during camp itself.

I think it is fair to say that a third goal is getting fair recognition for their skills within the camp community. The camp auction is an event focused on community fundraising, but it also serves the latent function of focusing the whole community on a vendor's work. Respect and appreciation may be expressed by people who vouch for a person's work as a healer or chime in about how an item is produced in magical space and that the vendor has built spirituality into his work process. This is not to say that all vendors get "love-bombed" (see Singer and Lalich 1995 for a discussion of this term) by the community at an auction. The praise is definitely stratified and attached to genuine appraisals of skills and the quality of a person's work, and the positive comments may continue after an auction is over and become incorporated into the vendor's identity. For example, a man might become known for vending striking textiles with marbled patterns that look like they come from fairyland or a woman might become known for making lanterns out of tin cans with a blowtorch. The man's vending implicitly supports his work with Feri Wicca and Reclaiming while the woman's supports a general identity as a risk-taker and free spirit.

Professional Teachers and Goals

Professional teachers⁵⁹ are looking for profit and profit-generating relationships during the Intensive and their goals include keeping up their reputations as talented, upstanding members of the Reclaiming community. Professional teachers also share the goal of having smooth social interactions with the vendors, but unlike the vendors the teachers may be put in the position of telling students/clients things they do not want to hear and helping students/clients during shadow work as the student sorts through her “emotional shit.” The professional teacher may have his own individual goals for personal shit-stirring during an Intensive, and these may get placed on the backburner as the teacher/mentor role gets prioritized over the camper role and personal work. Complicating matters further, a professional teacher may carry out additional roles during an Intensive and serve as a member of the camp’s teaching team or as an organizer responsible for the day-to-day operations of camp. These roles carry responsibilities that may distract from both the personal work a professional teacher may plan for camp as well as the one-on-one relationships she is cultivating with students/clients. My point here is that professional teachers have to be especially careful about goal-setting prior to camp and over-committing themselves during the week-long event. Being a witch for a week at camp is prime time for attracting new

⁵⁹ When I refer to people as “professional teachers” I mean for the term to refer to a subset of people in Reclaiming who perform activities such as priestessing rituals, mentoring Reclaiming communities and individuals, playing music, life-coaching, performing divination, or doing body work such as Reiki as part-time or full-time jobs all year round. Like vendors, professional teachers are the people most likely to hand out business cards during camp, and they have some goals that are similar to the vendors.

students/clients, but taking on too much may lead to none of the roles being executed effectively and damage to a professional teacher's reputation.

Supportive Spouses and Goals

Having just discussed the danger of over-commitment, I now turn to considering a role that is arguably less demanding, and driven by the goal of information-gathering: the supportive spouse/partner. Sociological studies of recruitment networks have documented that members of movements (see Ayella 1998; Mithers 1994) and groups such as direct selling organizations (Biggart 1989; Pratt 2000) try to reach out to both family and friends once they become excited about a group, and Reclaiming is no exception to this social dynamic. Ethnographies of other new religious movements such as Lofland's book on the Divine Precepts, *Doomsday Cult* (1966), provide examples of spousal recruitment gone awry and the social pressure faced by a couple when one partner embraces a movement that utilizes "or logic" and the other wants little to no part of it.

Supportive spouses and partners come in three different varieties although they all frame themselves as wanting to be a witch for a week because it is important to their partner. The first is *sympathetic* to magical religion or activism or both and wants to gain more training and knowledge from being a witch for a week. This kind of spouse might be the one who "held down the fort" at home so to speak while her partner went to the event alone in the past. A second kind of supportive spouse is ambivalent about both magical religion and activism but curious about both the people and activities her partner has encountered while being a witch for a week. This *ambivalent*

spouse/partner frames herself as supportive even though fact-finding and checking out the libidinal economy of camp are the priority goals for this person. The goal is see what the spouse/partner is **really** doing at camp as well as to see whether the spouse/partner has competition from fellow campers for the spouse/partner's affection. These goals may shift once the ambivalent partner is at camp actually being a witch for a week and has shadow work emerge spontaneously in evening ritual or as part of work done in a Path class.

The final kind of spouse/partner tends to come as a "package deal" with the partner who thought attending the Intensive was a good idea. I refer to this third type as supportive spouse/partner as *skeptical/hostile* due to the attitude the person brings toward magical activism generally and Reclaiming specifically. This kind of spouse/partner might practice a strict and traditional form of Wicca and not want any Reclaiming influence on his practice at all or she might be deeply skeptical due to strong atheism or the conviction that religion and politics should not be mixed together. This spouse/partner's goal is to allow the interested spouse/partner to get Reclaiming "out of his system" by being a witch for a week at one Intensive and then moving on to events that are mutually interesting or shifting back to the life they had prior to camp. This kind of spouse/partner may not make waves at the Intensive by keeping to himself and not actively participating by questioning various aspects of the Intensive that seem unreasonable to him or the person may be very outspoken to the point that fellow campers are alienated from the couple.

Basically the skeptical/hostile spouse/partner tries to achieve the goal of never returning to the Intensive by acting either passive or aggressive during the event even if this embarrasses or alienates the interested spouse/partner. From the movement's perspective one way to neutralize this kind of behavior and support the interested member of the couple is to assign them to different affinity groups by relying on random assignment or specific sorting criteria. The affinity group may be the only space at camp when the members of the couple are on their own, and this time may be crucial for fostering each person's independent feelings about the Intensive and Reclaiming as a whole.

Vacationers and Goals

Moving to a mellower type of camper, Vacationers are a subgroup of people who truly come to the Intensive seeking a vacation, which includes the elements of 1) a break from the activities of daily life, and/or 2) some sort of indulgent behavior (see Stein 2012 for a more thorough discussion of what constitutes a vacation). In thinking through examples of people who fit into the vacationer subgroup, it became apparent that these people do not necessarily self-identify as vacationers. In addition, the goals of different subtypes of vacations seem varied, and related to the elements of a vacation that they experience during the Intensive.

One type of vacationer seeks an escape or break from everyday commitments and social relationships. Achieving this goal may involve attending the Intensive alone so that one is freed from obligations to family and/or one's friends. For example, there was a couple present at Spiralheart in 2004, and both of them were married to people who

had never attended camp. To the best of my knowledge neither one of them identified as polyamorous, but they may have been quiet about participating in that subculture. In any case, the couple was taking a vacation in the sense that they experienced a break from domestic life including their spouses and marital commitment. One could argue that coming to an Intensive with one's lover when one is married is also an indulgence that fits the other element of a vacation, but because I am uncertain about the arrangements the couple had with their spouses it does not seem fair to draw a conclusion about the case.

Another example of a vacationer that is less complicated is someone taking a celebratory break from everyday life at the end of a major project such as writing a book, finishing some form of education, retiring, or completing treatment or rehabilitation related to a major illness. This person's goal is part celebration and part rest, and attending the Intensive may involve plenty of socializing and (re)connecting with the camp community rather than intense work in the Path classes and evening rituals. Depending on the theme of a particular camp, this vacationer may feel at odds with the deep work being done by some fellow campers, and this type of camper is more likely to opt out of attending both the evening rituals and Path classes or to participate in the "Rites of Passage" core class to work through the transition. The exception to this trend would be if the intention of a particular evening ritual is obviously aiming for joy and festivity, and I think celebratory vacationers are likely to opt into the positive ecstatic evening rituals that generally happen toward the end of camp. This kind of vacationer has the goal of being "held" and supported by the

community while both resting and celebrating, and the rest aspect of this kind of vacation may also constitute an indulgence. In addition, eating well, not having to cook, and having the freedom to dress as one likes are aspects of camp that may be seen as indulgences by both average campers and people who fit into the vacationer subgroup. This being said, the key to people being in this subgroup is that major work in both the evening rituals and Path classes is not a goal whereas breaking from the everyday and/or experiencing something indulgent are some the person's main goals.

Energy-focused Campers and Goals

There are two types of energy-focused campers that I will discuss in turn. The first are *energy vampires* whose goal at camp is to take advantage of opportunities to siphon off magical energy from individuals or groups when the opportunities present themselves. In non-magical terms energy vampires are people who may suck the psycho-somatic energy out of a room on a consistent basis. The second type of energy-focused camper is the *energy slut* whose goal at camp is to bask in large group energy or high energy created by a focused group. They are generally open to doing ritual with a variety of people, and this openness is why "slut" is incorporated into the term. Energy sluts are drawn to rituals that are high on positively valent energy, and one big draw of camp for them is the Spiral Dance. Both of these subtypes of energy-focused campers may have an interest in helping to make large-group rituals run smoothly and generate as much magical energy as possible, and this interest is shared with groups such as the teachers, organizers, and other ritual priestesses who want each ritual to run smoothly and achieve the desired intention be it intense, dark work or a joyful, ecstatic tone. Due to

space constraints I am limiting this section to one additional paragraph for each type of energy-focused camper.

The term “energy vampire” is taken from Neo-Pagan terminology/slang/lingo to describe someone who siphons magical energy off of other people and rituals. This kind of person may come to an Intensive with the goal of siphoning energy off of ecstatic rituals as well as from the dramatic ups and downs of shadow work, which often raises intensely negative group energy such as deep despair. An energy vampire, consciously or not, will take advantage of vulnerable targets, and the emotionally open environment of an Intensive may turn people who are usually guarded into suitable targets. In addition, an energy vampire may try to stir up energy, and render people vulnerable to having energy drawn away by stirring up conflict or otherwise destabilizing a Path class or affinity group. In sum, energy vampires may seriously damage individuals or specific activities at camp if they have to resort to stirring up energy by any means necessary and their actions are generally not condoned within Reclaiming and are subject to sanctions including being asked to leave camp early.

Energy sluts’ behavior may run counter to general ritual etiquette and best practices such as grounding and centering after ritual, but these energy-focused campers only work with intense energy in a consensual manner. In IR theory terms, the energy slut knows that face-to-face groups are optimal for maximizing emotional and other forms of energy, and this knowledge leads them to return to the Intensive from year-to-year even if the theme for camp is not attractive. Energy sluts get their name from their openness to raising intense positive energy with whoever is game, and achieving their

goal of basking in high positive energy at every opportunity leads energy sluts to be more likely to move outside of cliques in the community, and to interact with new campers. Energy sluts tend to be popular figures in the camp community whose contributions are easily identified, but who also take time to themselves in order to hold on to the high from a Spiral Dance or other ritual ecstatic ritual. This combination of behavior may seem puzzling, particularly to new campers and people who come to camp with socializing as a major goal.

7) Conclusion

This chapter has presented historical information about Reclaiming, and because there is no definitive history of the movement to date I have relied heavily on Jone Salomonsen's book, *The Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco* (2002). In the historical overview I also give a summary of how Reclaiming compares to other Wiccan and Neo-Pagan groups so that readers have a sense of how Reclaiming fits into the wider web of Neo-Pagan groups and traditions. One important point made in this overview is that Reclaiming is distinct from British Traditional Wicca and from Feminist Separatist Wicca and witchcraft. These distinctions do not prevent people in Reclaiming from labeling themselves as Wiccans or Feminist Witches, and people in the movement use a variety of identity labels related to magical religion including Neo-Pagan, Pagan, and Magical Activist. In addition, the history section of Chapter Two includes a discussion of the utopian ideals and apocalyptic visions that co-exist within the movement including the connection between Reclaiming and Joanna Macy's work on Buddhism and "The Great

Turning”⁶⁰. Examining these two views regarding the future helps me give readers a sense of Reclaiming’s values and how they have shifted over time as well as how connections get forged between Reclaiming and other like-minded groups. I also review previous studies of Reclaiming including work by Marion Roach, Pam Detrixhe, and Grove Harris. Chapter Two also familiarizes readers with two East Coast Reclaiming communities that produced Intensive events: Spiralheart and DreamRoads. I began my research with Spiralheart in 2004, and was fortunate to be allowed to attend the DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 and 2006. The information about Spiralheart has more depth because the community presents itself to the public whereas the DreamRoads Intensive did not engage in the same sort of self-presentation.

After the history section, I turned to making readers familiar with what I call “and logic” related to recruitment and commitment. This kind of logic is connective and cooperative, and contrasts with “or logic” which forces people to eventually chose between one primary movement affiliation and another. In this section of Chapter Two I created the foundation for examining how “and logic” is associated with the emotional, cognitive, and somatic flexibility Reclaiming and the Intensives cultivate in participants. I argued that movements like Reclaiming that do not demand exclusive commitments from people benefit from “and logic” because it opens the door to flows of information about tools and tactics from other groups and movements. I also argued that Reclaiming’s use of “and logic” means that the movement’s success and specific goals

⁶⁰ See <http://www.joannamacy.net/thegreatturning.html>, accessed July 31, 2012.

have to be evaluated in a nuanced manner since the movement's objectives may not be clear-cut or may look like the failures of a movement using "or logic."

Chapter Two then transitioned into sections that focus on goals: first for the Reclaiming movement, second for the Spiralheart and DreamRoads regional organizations, and third for ideal-typical individuals including specific roles such as vendors and professional teachers. These goals, including survival for the movement and regional organizations and healing past wounds and traumas for ideal-typical individuals and profit for vendors, may either complement each other or put an individual or community at odds with the movement as a whole. These kinds of tensions are not unique to Reclaiming, and I discussed them in depth so that readers could see instances of the goals being similar to those of any other religious or social movement organization as well as instances of goals related to magical religion or magical activism. I hope that having made through Chapter Two readers unfamiliar with magical reasoning will feel more comfortable with beliefs and practices related to the idea that magical energy is an important, natural force in the world. In addition, I hope my short discussion of Tanya Lurhmann's (1989) work on interpretive drift has made it clear that people at the Intensives embrace magical reasoning and activism both consciously and unconsciously, and that the pacing and sequence of their conversion experiences vary. I will return to these issues in Chapter Five, and in Chapter Three I focus on answering the question "Who attends camp?" In the course of answering this question I explore the diverse backgrounds people in Reclaiming bring to the "table" at the Intensive events. This diversity, both in the people who stay in movement and in the commitments

Reclaiming fosters in people using tools like the Intensives, was part of what made the movement so interesting to me as a sociologist.

Chapter Three: Who attends camp?

1) Introduction

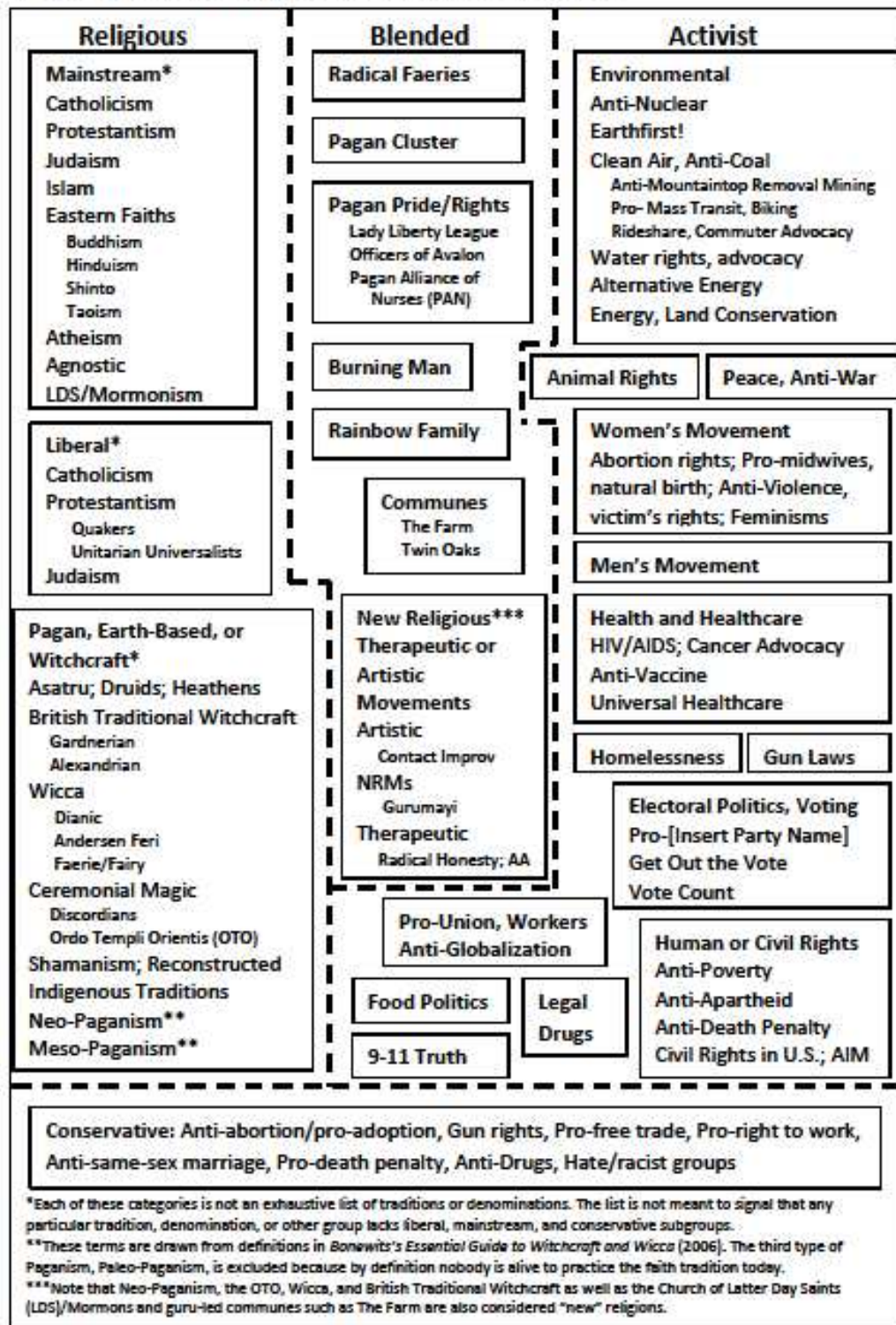
This chapter is focused on answering the question of “who wants to be a witch for a week?” as well as focused on sketching out the flows of individuals into the Intensives. This inflow discussion looks at ideal types as well as concrete data on individuals. It complements a trimmed-down discussion of outflows that will be placed in a separate chapter when I turn the dissertation into a book. Including the outflow description here makes it possible for me to point out patterns and contrasts between who comes in and where they go later on. I focus on inflows and outflows from movements and organizations and discuss reasons why the inflow patterns looked the way they did in 2004 as well as the costs and benefits of “and” logic used by the movement. If the point of “and” logic is to allow Reclaiming to cross-pollinate ideas with other groups, the question is what sort of resources campers are bringing to the Intensive due to their connections to other groups and movements. Reclaiming may benefit more from the resources developed by dissimilar groups, but campers with these backgrounds may be hard to come by.

The next section of Chapter Three focuses on introducing different subgroups present within the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive including the GlitterWhores and DreamRoads Collective, the Pagan Cluster, and the Crones affinity group. This section focuses on developing thicker descriptions of each group so that readers have a sense of how many people participated and the demographic characteristics of people-both typical and unusual- in these groups. I also sketch out how each group contributed to the Intensive

community during camp, and connect the subgroups to movements and groups shown in the “Broader Universe of Movements and Groups” diagram (see Figure 3.1). In some cases the subgroup has little uniformity regarding ties to other movements and groups whereas the Pagan Cluster participants have a clear connection to their national-level organization.

Having discussed the subgroups, I turn to individual cases and introduce the 2004 Path cohort in the third section of this chapter. The 2004 Path class cohort was made up of first-time campers although there were some first-timers who elected to take other Path classes instead of “The Elements of Magic.” None of the members of the class were taking it so that they would be eligible for student-teaching the course at a subsequent camp or in their home communities, but this does sometimes happen, and, when it does, it creates a different dynamic in the class. Someone who has taken Elements before can participate as a semi-expert in the socialization of new campers without having the full responsibility and authority of a teacher. Our class in 2004 did not have this kind of dynamic although certain campers did claim expertise in activism and magical religion as the week went by and we got to know each other. In addition to the 2004 cohort, I round out my profiles of individuals by presenting five cases of people who were veterans by 2004 who attended the Inanna-Ereshkigal camp in 2000. Some of these people were long-time attendees as of 2000 while others were new campers, and I refer to this group as the “2000 veterans” since they share the experience of that camp rather than the same entry year.

Figure 3.1: Broad Universe of Groups/Movements Diagram



Chapter Three concludes with a discussion of healing and illness during and after camp. I demonstrate that experiences of healing and illness involve “layers” of experience related to scientific rationality and “mundane” causes as well as magical reasoning and “magical” causes such as intense work with magical energy in ritual. I also argue that people at the Intensive may, but do not always “layer” their explanations for health and disease by combining mundane and magical causes. In addition, I question why participation in healing groups and movements is not prominently featured in the descriptions people give of how they first learned about Reclaiming presented in the inflows section of Chapter Three.

Healing is important within Reclaiming as a whole and is mentioned twice in the Principles of Unity document (see Appendix B) and I think the small number of reports for healing-related movement and group connections are notable. Although Reclaiming operates with “and logic,” specific groups and individual participants may not capitalize on every possible opportunity for cross-movement and group connections all the time. The data I present in Chapter Three indicate that although people who attend the Intensives may have backgrounds with healing movements or involvement in healing professions they do not link these activities into discussions of how they found Reclaiming or what activism currently means to them. One way to make sense of these trends in the data is to argue that some resources people bring to the Intensive either stay dormant or are segregated into specific arenas of camp life such as spaces where bodywork and other healing get exchanged or vended. I end the discussion of healing in

Chapter Three with this point, and return to discussing healing and illness in Chapter Four.

2) Mapping Points of Origin and Destinations

Where do these people come from? This is a natural question regarding the origins of people who produce and attend the Intensive events. In this section, I develop answers to this question that focus on groups and other movements as locations that may be points of origin for the campers or destinations that they travel to after being witches for a week at a secluded campground. Due to space constraints I develop a lengthier discussion of the points of origin and provide a rudimentary overview of outflow patterns⁶¹. I use a visualization rather than a list to present a larger “universe” of movements and groups that could plausibly include people from Reclaiming. Next, I present a visualization for a narrower set of data concerning inflows to the Spiralheart Mid-Atlantic Intensive in 2004. These data include survey responses, in-depth interviews, and field notes. Finally, I present a visualization for a set of data concerning outflows from the Spiralheart Mid-Atlantic Intensive in 2004. I end by comparing the inflow and outflow patterns shown in the visualizations, and discuss strong connections and gaps in the web of affiliations between Reclaiming and other groups and the implications of these patterns for goal attainment by the movement as a whole, smaller subgroups, and individuals.

The Larger Universe of Movements and Groups

⁶¹ In a truly book-length manuscript each of these topics will get equal weight within separate chapters. Outflows are important because they indicate whether people followed through on their plans after the Intensive as well as patterns of drifting away or being pulled away from the Reclaiming movement generally.

There are a number of movements and groups that could “send” and “receive” people to/from the Intensive events. These movements and groups do not necessarily operate with “and logic” and may make more demands on individuals leading up to a forced choice between the “or logic” group and other commitments. Still other groups, and I think British Traditional Witchcraft covens might be good examples, may operate with a more complicated logic that requires a high level of commitment to the group, but also allows for strategic dabbling in events such as the Reclaiming Intensive so that people acquire new skills or just get their horizons broadened prior to returning to their “home” movement or group. The “encouraged dabbling” I am describing occurs both within and between movements and groups, and allows movements that operate with “or logic” to decrease local-level isolation and consider ideas and practices used outside a local context.

Within the first visualization the main divisions are between groups that focus mainly on religion, those that focus mainly on activism (broadly defined to include social and political causes and issues), and those that have a dual focus on religion and activism (see Figure 3.1). I have added a fourth category for conservative groups and movements at the bottom of the diagram because some people in Reclaiming have made radical shifts from conservative religion or activism over to liberals groups including Reclaiming. For example, one man reported transitioning from being a staunch Catholic and anti-abortion activist in the 1980s to involvement with pro-suicide activities, and magical religion, anti-globalization, and anti-war activism with Reclaiming and the Pagan Cluster. Another person went through a transition from affiliation with mainstream Islam and

the male gender to involvement with goddess worship and checking out Reclaiming, a mystical and liberal form of Islam, activism with Code Pink, and the female gender.

These transitions illustrate that people do not just drift into Reclaiming and the Intensive from like-minded groups after a period of seeking. It is important to have conservative groups in the mix because people may participate in an Intensive shortly after having an “awakening” experience (DeGloma 2010), which shifts their values from conservative to liberal. I have developed the visualization to be inclusive of a wide variety of different groups including some, like the 9-11 Truth movement and those related to “Gun Laws”, which I never heard about during the course of my study.

The visualization has major groupings with a common heritage clustered together and marked off with boxes. For example, the religious groups have three major groupings: Mainstream, Liberal, and Pagan, Earth-based, or Witchcraft and the activist groupings are based around broad movements such as environmental, women’s, men’s, and peace/anti-war. The activism section also includes particular causes such as food politics that would include specific organizations like Food Not Bombs as well as more specific issues like anti-GMO activism or groups such as food cooperatives or community gardens. Space considerations have prevented me from adding this level of detail for each particular cause. It seems important to point out here that the inclusion/exclusion of detail was shaped by the diversity of groups that fit under the umbrella rather than other criteria such as popularity among people in Reclaiming or a specific regional community. Hopefully the visualization demonstrates that there were a wide variety of options regarding both religion and activism that were available to people at the time

that I did my study (2004 to 2007). I think it is fair to assert that Reclaiming does draw participants from all three general types of groups and movements: religious, blended, and activist.

Before turning to the inflow visualization I am going to discuss the groups I included in the “blended” category so that readers are clear about what I mean when I refer to the movements and groups as blending religion and activism. Some of these groups strike a relatively equal balance (close to a 50/50 split) while others clearly have a blend but do have a stronger religious or activist component (close to a 35/65 split). The blended category includes the Pagan Cluster and a box for groups involved with Pagan Pride events, voluntary organizations for nurses, police officers, and other law enforcement agencies, or Pagan rights including civil liberties and prison chaplain access. These groups have a close religious connection to Reclaiming whereas a group such as the Radical Faeries, Burning Man, and the Rainbow Family bear some similarity with regard to religion or activism (see Hennen 2008 on the Radical Faeries; Doherty 2004 and Gilmore 2010 on Burning Man; Niman 2011 and Sentelle 2002 on the Rainbow Family). Both Burning Man and the Rainbow Family put on annual gatherings, and emphasize eclectic spirituality and an “and logic” when it comes to blending politics, art, spirituality, and one’s everyday lifestyle. In contrast, the Radical Faeries are politically radical and embrace queer religion, but have a separatist bent and maintain “sanctuary” spaces for events and full-time living. Thus, the Radical Faeries bear some similarity to

the groups in the “Communes” box⁶² in that they both bear the costs and benefits of keeping up brick-and-mortar facilities which are kept open year-round. Both of the communal or cooperative groups listed in the diagram, The Farm in Summertown, TN and Twin Oaks in Louisa, VA, are politically liberal and were nationally known and actively operating between 2004 and 2007. There are certainly other communes and cooperatives with shorter life spans, which may have been influential in the research participants’ lives, but I am keeping the discussion narrow in this version of the manuscript. Finally, there is the box for New Religious movements, Therapeutic movements, and what I am called “Artistic” movements. In assigning particular groups to this box, I want to avoid including those that eschew politics altogether while including those with a therapeutic or artistic focus that encourage religion and spirituality such as Alcoholics Anonymous or are compatible with religion and spirituality such as Radical Honesty and Contact improvisation.

Inflows to Spiralheart 2004

Having examined the general universe of religious and activist movements and groups that might “send” or “receive” participants to/from the intensives, I now turn to looking at data regarding the “inflow” of people from groups into the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive. There were ninety-five people who attended the event excluding myself, and I have developed the inflow diagram using data from the thirty-one respondents who

⁶² This box really covers both communal and cooperative groups, but I listed the box as “Communes” in the diagram for brevity’s sake. The Farm is technically a cooperative (since 1983) that pools some resources and charges fees to members (see Fike 1998) while Twin Oaks is a true commune with fully shared assets (see <http://www.twinoakscommunity.org/about-income-sharing.html>, accessed July, 16 2012).

answered the post-event survey⁶³ or did an in-depth interview in 2004 (N=4) along with comments from respondents about their biographies gathered during the Intensive itself in my fieldnotes. These data can be combined with information I gathered during other Intensives and from in-depth interviews in the future for a more comprehensive analysis of change over time or a comparison between Spiralheart, DreamRoads, and the non-East Coast Intensives, some of which draw contingents of people from Earthfirst! and Burning Man.

The inflow visualization in Diagram B is organized so that religious groups generally appear on the left side and activist groups appear on the right side. I have set up a box with a dotted line around it at the bottom of the image to indicate conservative groups, readers should note that members of conservative political parties such as Republicans are grouped into the “Electoral politics, Voting” box and not the “Conservative” box. This style of organization is consistent with the organization of the visualization in Figure 3.1.

Given what we already know about the 2004 Intensive such as the fact that a contingent of people from the Pagan Cluster attended the event, some of the groups and movements that appear on the inflow diagram (see Figure 3.2) are not surprising. The women’s movement, environmental activism, electoral politics/voting, peace/anti-

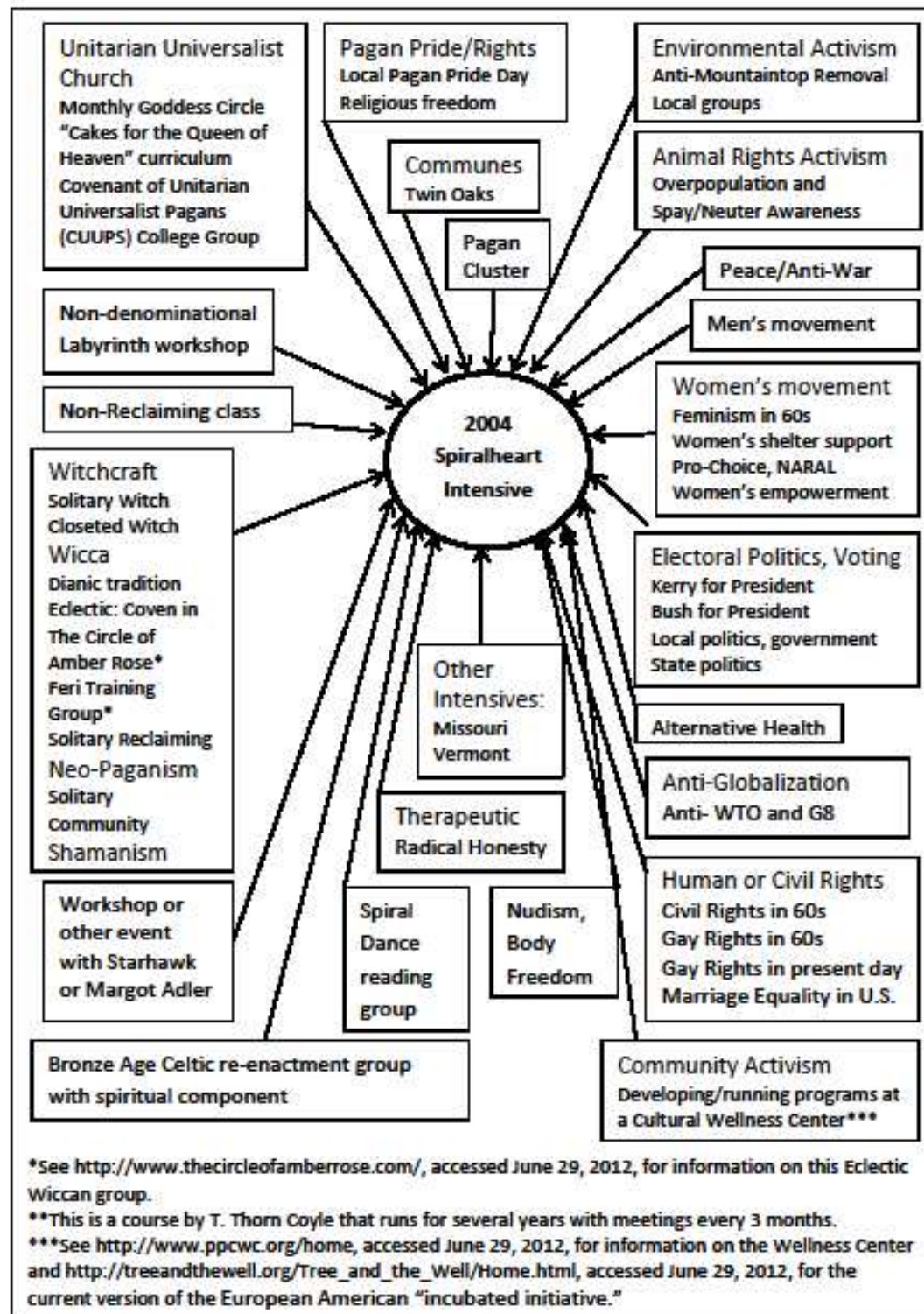
⁶³ The data come from open-ended responses to the following questions: 1) At the time you heard about Reclaiming, were you already interested in Earth-based spirituality, Wicca, or Paganism in general? 2) Please describe how you found out about Reclaiming tradition witchcraft. 3) Please describe what the term activism means to you. These questions were not specifically designed to elicit information about organizations, but they are a good source of information regarding ties to groups and events as well as person-to-person social networks and recruitment via the media, which I do not discuss here, but am saving for a later analysis.

war activism, and human or civil rights movements were all mentioned by the survey respondents as forms of activism and politics that they were involved with prior to coming to the Intensive in 2004. Three of the thirty-one respondents gave longer activist histories that included activism during the 1960s, and I have included these responses in the inflow diagram so that readers will have some sense of the variety of activism people did during this earlier time period. In addition, I have included boxes for some groups and events not shown in the visualization of the “Broad Universe of Movements/Groups” (see Figure 3.1) including the Bronze Age Celtic re-enactment group, the cause of body freedom and pro-nudism, and several workshops, reading groups, and other Intensive events. I was surprised by how specific some of the answers were and that one respondent very clearly identified as a Bush supporter and interpreted defending the country from terrorism as “activism” in line with Reclaiming’s Principles of Unity (see Appendix B). This interpretation of the PoU was atypical, but still tolerated within the camp community partly because the person with the views was discreet and not confrontational about them.

Regarding activism most of the contributing movements and groups did not fit into my “blended” category, and the Twin Oaks commune, support/activism for religious freedom in the Pagan Pride/Rights box, and the Therapeutic group for Radical Honesty stands out as exceptions to this trend. If we think about religious and activist affiliations as providing raw material for the Intensive to transform into “magical activism” then I think the data show that the Spiralheart Intensive in 2004 had some prime opportunities. Some interests cross over pretty readily such as goddess worship and

Dianic Wicca with women's rights and the women's movement or peace/anti-war activism. Likewise people who practice Wicca, Neo-Paganism or Shamanism may favor activism targeted at the environment, animal rights, or pagan pride and religious freedom. The men's movement might be one of the more challenging movements to connect to magical activism, but it does foster a general appreciation of ritual that is compatible with Reclaiming generally and the Intensive specifically.

Figure 3.2: Inflow to Spiralheart 2004 Diagram



Looking at the inflow diagram (see Figure 3.2) we can see that Unitarian Universalism has several subgroups that feed into Reclaiming including a college group, a national-level curriculum related to goddess worship, and a local-level “monthly Goddess Circle.” The whole religious side of the inflow diagram shows that the groups are actually rather limited in that they can be split into either liberal Christianity or Wicca, Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft groups. The inflow diagram illustrates that Reclaiming “feeds itself” meaning that a person may attend a shorter workshop or book group with a direct relationship to the movement prior to coming to a more costly Intensive event or a person may attend one Intensive and then move to one in another region of the country. This finding begs the question of whether flows of people between the various Intensives balance out over time or whether specific communities tend to lose certain types of people to other camps. I plan to examine this issue in subsequent analyses, and am going to end this discussion by pointing that the inflows are geographically “close” rather than “far” and that the advent of DreamRoads and demise of New York camp in 2005⁶⁴ gave people different options for settling in a “home camp.”

Overall I think the inflow data are useful, but should be interpreted cautiously since I am working with data from only a third of people who attended the event and rounding out those data with field observations. The same cautions apply to the outflow data, which come from the same sources. I think the big takeaway from the inflow data, aside from the evidence that Reclaiming “feeds itself” through workshops and book groups, is

⁶⁴ This camp ran for roughly four years according to information from multiple interviews. I say roughly because I have not confirmed this fact by looking at *Reclaiming Quarterly* and the camp left little-to-no information behind.

that the 2004 Intensive did not have inflow from a wide, diverse pool of movements and groups. The event tended to draw participants with previous interests in Wicca, Neo-Paganism, Shamanism, or other Earth-based religions that either genuinely lacked or omitted ties to other new religious movements as well as any mainstream or conservative religions. In addition the participants reported experience in groups with similar liberal values such as the Unitarian Universalists and movements such as peace/anti-war, the women's movement, and human or civil rights groups. Even the men's movement has a good deal of common ground with Reclaiming in that it values ritual and emotional expression. Thus, the available data generate a picture of people flowing into the 2004 Intensive with skills and resources from other magical religious groups, but not necessarily with experiences in large, ecstatic rituals with magical content. Regarding activism we can see that the campers brought experiences from both the 1960s and the present day with them to camp related primarily to forms of liberal political and social activism including community activity at a local Wellness Center.

Outflows from Spiralheart 2004

For every group and movement there is a different balance between what Reclaiming and the Intensives provide versus what the other movement or group provides to adherents. I discuss examples of this balancing act after presenting the visualization of outflows from the Intensive to other groups in 2004. When examining the inflow and outflow visualizations it is important to stay mindful of the fact that 2004 was an election year, and that this particular election felt especially momentous to many of the

camp participants. For example, one well-traveled camper, Egeria, who had been in parts of Africa and to France in 2003-4 commented, “They are all watching the election very closely and we get one mistake, but if we make another there will be problems.” One member of the Pagan Cluster, Sea Raven, was worried about the election outcome and 1) witchcraft becoming illegal and 2) the perception that all the activists had been to a “terrorist training camp.”⁶⁵ She was very concerned that my research might be seized using the Patriot Act, and refused to be surveyed. Black Swan the Path teacher raised the issue of Bush’s re-election leading to “communist attacks” similar to the 1950s or a new Burning Times when actual witches would be hunted. My point here is that the concerns about Bush’s policies and the up-coming election were fear-laden for the most part and diffused throughout the camp community. The fear of persecution and for the country in general was not limited to the Pagan Cluster. Thus, people may have had both more opportunities for activism post-camp and more incentives to capitalize on them compared to years without a presidential election or less contentious presidential election years.

Turning to the Outflow diagram (see Figure 3.3), there are some different patterns for the religious and activist groups people reported being involved with after the 2004 Intensive. Looking at the religious groups, there are still affiliations with Unitarian

⁶⁵ These concerns actually echo some of the concerns I had regarding the IRB and framing my research that I discussed in Chapter 1. There was clear non-response to the surveys due to these concerns, but none of the concerned individuals opted out of my research entirely. I ran into one of these individuals in 2008 at the Dandelion Gathering and he actually apologized for not participating in 2004 and reiterated that they could not be sure about my background at the time and had erred on the side of caution. I discuss the non-response issues in more depth in the second section of Chapter 2 in the subsection on the Pagan Cluster subgroup at camp.

Universalist groups, and an additional group, the Anglican Church has been added. This church was described as “avant-garde” by the person attending it, and I listed it without making a judgment about whether avant-garde is synonymous with “liberal.” There are changes within Witchcraft/Wicca/Neo-Paganism/Shamanism box that reflect increased involvement with local Reclaiming groups as well as regional groups in the Delaware Valley and Research Triangle area in North Carolina. Another notable trend is increased involvement in music via both drum circles and drumming lessons. Another respondent reported doing a three-week Goddess pilgrimage to Crete, and likened the environment on the trip the Intensive. This box is evidence that some campers can afford to splurge on not only attending an Intensive, but also taking other major trips that are more of a one-time thing. Another new addition to the outflow is involvement with Reiki energy healing and this response is one example of a healing affiliation that may have been present but not seemed salient prior to the Intensive. Another possibility is that the person decided to receive an attunement⁶⁶ at camp and subsequently decided to begin

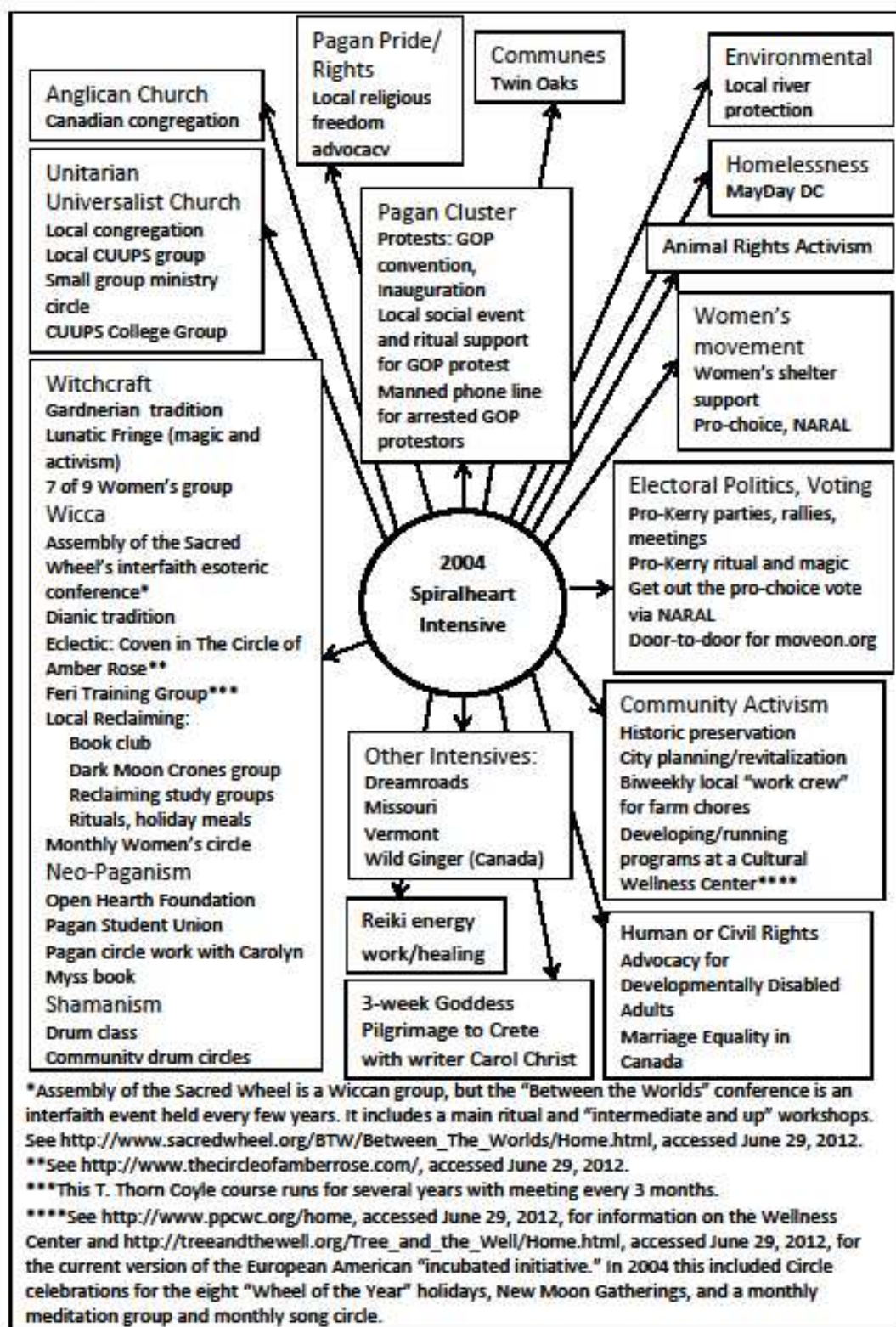
⁶⁶ “Reiki is [...] transferred to the student by the Reiki Master during an attunement process. This process opens the crown, heart, and palm chakras and creates a special link between the student and the Reiki source. The Reiki attunement is a powerful spiritual experience. The attunement energies are channeled into the student through the Reiki Master. [...] Once you have received a Reiki attunement, you will have Reiki for the remainder of your life. It does not wear off and you can never lose it. While one attunement is all you need for each level to be attuned to that level, additional attunements bring benefit s” (<http://www.reiki.org/faq/learningreiki.html>, accessed July 16, 2012).

Regarding the healing crisis, the author of the blog *It's a Reiki Thing* wrote in 2008, “[...] After a treatment or attunement [the person] will feel rejuvenated and glowing, a feeling of peace and serenity will fill their body and mind; however sometimes after a few hours or even a few days they may feel fatigued or flu-like. This is a natural progression. In alternative medical circles, it is referred to as a healing crisis.” See <http://reikithing.blogspot.com/2008/02/healing-crisis-following-reiki.html>, accessed July

active work with Reiki again. The respondent did not clarify this issue on the survey. One other notable change between the inflow and outflow diagrams is the addition of two more camps, DreamRoads and Wild Ginger, to the list of “other Intensives” that give/receive campers. This change reflects interest in the new DreamRoads camp planned for 2005 and one camper’s move to Canada.

16, 2012. Regarding the attunement and healing crisis also see <http://www.livestrong.com/article/527322-what-to-expect-in-reiki-attunement/>, accessed July 16, 2012.

Figure 3.3: Outflow from Spiralheart 2004



Turning to the “blended” and activist movements and groups shown in the outflow visualization, there are some new additions as well as carryovers from the inflow visualization. Generally, the outflow diagram shows that the Spiralheart Intensive both received and sent people to groups such as the Pagan Cluster, the Pagan Pride/Rights movement, Twin Oaks commune, and activities in the women’s movement, animal rights, and human or civil rights movements. While there is continuity between the inflow and outflow between the Intensive and the environmental movement, the outflow visualization shows fewer commitments, and this pattern is the opposite of the inflow and outflow between Spiralheart camp and the Community Activism box, which indicates more outflow than inflow. Put simply the outflow diagram indicates that people left the Intensive in 2004 and went on to reduced involvement in environmentalism and increased involvement with community activism as well as new commitments to activism related to homelessness. Connections to the peace/anti-war movement, the men’s movement, alternative health and nudism/body freedom activism, and the anti-globalization movement are absent from the outflow visualization.

I think it is fair to say that the data indicate a post-camp narrowing of focus to movements and groups related to the election and Reclaiming as well as to local-level religion and activism. Whether these patterns persisted is an open question since the data I have presented here cover a single span of time: several months after camp was held in August 2004. Again, the data on outflows should be interpreted cautiously since they are from a sample of campers and in-depth interviews rather than all ninety-five

people who attended the Intensive. The inflow and outflow data are from the same people, and the outflow data are based on questions about religious and activist activities done in the last two months since camp ended. These answers were supplemented by checking other questions for information about post-camp activities since some activities might not have been self-defined as religious or activist in nature⁶⁷.

Putting the 2004 Inflows and Outflows in Context

I am going to end this section by describing some strong connections and gaps I see in the web of connections between Spiralheart specifically and Reclaiming generally based on the assumption that the web is represented by the inflow and outflow data. I also discuss some plausible reasons for why the inflow and outflow patterns for the 2004 Intensive have some variation and the costs and benefits of using “and logic” to connect with other groups and movements. Finally, I consider whether the inflows and outflows for Spiralheart 2004 are helping the regional organization and Reclaiming as a movement to attain some of their goals including having the ability to cross-pollinate ideas with other groups. One core issue is the sorts of resources campers are bringing the Intensive due to their connections to other groups and movements. Reclaiming may benefit more from the resources developed by dissimilar groups, but campers with these backgrounds may be challenging to recruit and retain when they do attend a camp.

⁶⁷ For example, the respondent who went on the three-week Goddess pilgrimage did not define the trip as religious and listed in her response about what her transition home had been like after camp.

I think the complexity of both the inflow and outflow diagrams substantiates my argument that Reclaiming is part of a complex web of mostly like-minded groups and movements. One strong connection for both inflow and outflow for the Mid-Atlantic community is the Unitarian Universalist Church in general and the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPs) more specifically (see Adler 1986: 435). Maintaining connections to liberal Christian congregations that may support what some people referred to as “goddess spirituality” gives people access to brick and mortar facilities, seminaries, and resources such as youth programs that Reclaiming or other Neo-Pagan groups are far less likely to be able to provide (see Streib 2008, "Pagans Find a Sometimes Uneasy Home Among Quakers" at http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=blog_view&var1=ViewInd&var2=1&var3=322&var4=main&var5=Home, accessed August 4, 2012, on Quaker Pagans; on Christian Witchcraft see Bonewits 2006: 144-5; see Adler 1986: 419-21 on institutionalization in the late 1980s and this more recent blog entry by Star Foster (2011) <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/pantheon/2011/09/going-mainstream/>, accessed July 16, 2012); an exception to this point about institutions and access via liberal Christianity is Circle Sanctuary (<http://www.circlesanctuary.org/index.html>, accessed July 16, 2012) in Wisconsin). College groups are in an interesting structural position in that they can also access brick and mortar resources, and they may serve as a focal point for local Neo-Pagan adults. The Spiralheart organizers were definitely aware of college groups as potential recruiting grounds, but people varied as to whether they thought recruiting students was worthwhile. On the one hand students would add

diversity to camp since they were likely to be young and have a primary interest in magical religion, but on the other hand students were less likely to be able to fully pay their own way compared to certain other types of recruits.

Three other key sources of inflow and outflow are the Pagan Cluster, Feri Wicca, and Wiccan groups (Dianic, Eclectic, and British Traditional). Maintaining a primary commitment to any of these groups is compatible with attending an annual Intensive event to pick up skills, get exposed to the energy of large groups, and broaden one's social network both locally and regionally. People may also flow into an Intensive as a one-time thing from each of these groups, and find that the Intensive affirms their sense that they are truly "at home" in the Pagan Cluster, Feri Wicca, or another Wiccan group. Regarding outflows, one interesting pattern is that people in 2004 seemed to flow out into work related to community activism and to local Reclaiming groups which were not as present in the inflow diagram. These trends are compatible with the idea that people flow into an Intensive looking for more local community to either enrich the ties they already have, form ties to compliment a solitary practice, or as a replacement for a solitary practice. Put another way, what is absent in the inflow and outflow diagrams is a strong connection to Reclaiming at a national level such the Dandelion Gathering in 2004 and *Reclaiming Quarterly* magazine. People may come to the Intensive looking for something they are not getting from another movement or group, and both their religious and activist commitments seem to become more localized after participation at an Intensive.

Turning back to the issue of the broader universe of movements and groups that could feed Reclaiming, I want to highlight the fact that the inflow and outflow patterns for the 2004 Intensive have some variation in the first place. All three types of movements and groups (religious, activist, and blended) contribute to the inflow and receive outflow, which shows that Reclaiming is not simply bringing activism or magical religion to the table for new recruits or sending people out into just one genre of group or movement. There are a number of inflow and outflow patterns that are unique to the 2004 data, and I am not going to delve into those patterns here due to both space constraints. What I do want to point out before moving on to other topics is that the data hold some general lessons about the operation of “and logic”: 1) people do not necessarily come into an Intensive from other blended groups that might prime them for “and logic” or solely from groups that lack “and logic” and 2) participants at an Intensive do not uniformly flow out to groups/movements with major differences from Reclaiming, groups that are more demanding of participants’ time, or other groups that blend religion and activism such as the Radical Faeries, Pagan Cluster, and Pagan Pride/Rights. Overall these data show that the 2004 Intensive and Reclaiming as whole tend to draw participants from groups that are like-minded and one benefit of “and logic” is that Reclaiming does not force these people into a single form of activism such as environmentalism or into a choice between affiliating with Reclaiming and other blended groups such as the Pagan Cluster or religious groups such as the Unitarian Universalists, Wicca, or Ceremonial Magic. Both the Intensives and the Reclaiming movement as a whole are set up to cast a wide net, yet Spiralheart circa 2004 appears

to be less successful at attracting recruits from a diverse array of movements and groups than they are at sending people out to a diverse array of movements and groups. I believe it is fair to extend this generalization beyond Spiralheart to Reclaiming as a whole although the specific movements and groups available for local forms of activism and religion do vary.

Given the patterns I have just discussed, it seems reasonable to step back and briefly evaluate where Spiralheart in 2004 and Reclaiming generally are regarding goal attainment. If healing and cross-pollinating with therapeutic movements or networks of people who know specific healing techniques are goals, then the Spiralheart data provide evidence of some success at pulling in and sending out people to groups outside the Neo-Pagan milieu. These groups, such as radical honesty and Reiki practitioners, do not demand exclusive commitments and provide tools such as training in specific healing techniques that Reclaiming does not teach itself.

In addition, the data provide pretty clear evidence that Reclaiming is successful at pulling in and sending out people to groups such as the Pagan Cluster and Feri Wicca that closely replicate Reclaiming's activist and religious sides respectively. These people do not necessarily bring in new tools and techniques to the movement as a whole or a specific Intensive event, but they do create access to expertise regarding activism or magical religion within local communities that would require a heavy investment at the local and national level if Reclaiming was solely responsible for expert-level training in either magical religion or social and political activism. In my opinion Reclaiming retains these experts because it offers people of any gender the opportunity for sustained

connections to both magical religion and varied forms of social and political activism that are not possible in other groups and movements in the “blended” category. Reclaiming’s “and logic” allows both local groups and the national organization to open up additional opportunities for living out a “radical analysis of power” via an individualized picking and choosing of cross-affiliations with other movements and groups.

3) Profiles of Subgroups Present at the 2004 Intensive

The Pagan Cluster

As I discussed in Chapter 1, the Pagan Cluster had a special presence at the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive, and the group was invited by the Spiralheart organizing team to the best of my knowledge. Spiralheart had invited activists to camp in the past, but they were focused on specific causes such as aid and friendship to El Salvador, and were not in the midst of gearing up for a major protest action. Leading up to August 2004, people in the Pagan Cluster had protested at events including, but not limited to the 2002 meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in New York City⁶⁸, the Martin Luther King Weekend Peace Actions⁶⁹ in Washington, D.C. in January 2003, the Fifth Ministerial of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Cancún, Mexico in from August 26th to

⁶⁸ See <http://www.starhawk.org/activism/activism-writings/paganclusters.html>, accessed July 16, 2012, for the call to form a Pagan Cluster for actions from 1/31/2002 to 2/4/2002.

⁶⁹ See <http://www.starhawk.org/activism/activism-writings/mlkweekend03.html>, accessed July 16, 2012, for an account of the actions including the Pagan Cluster’s activities.

September 15th, 2003⁷⁰, the Miami Mobilization⁷¹ against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Miami, Florida in November 2003, and the G8 summit in Brunswick and Savannah, Georgia⁷² in June 2004. The Republican National Convention was scheduled for August 30th to September 2nd in New York City, and the group that arrived at camp was only a couple of weeks away from attending or doing support activities for the protest such as manning phone lines so that arrested protestors could get legal help.

The Pagan Cluster has a national-level communication structure that includes a listserv called “The Living River” and a riseup.net site. Decisions are made by consensus or by individual affinity groups that might attend a protest. This cellular structure kept people from cities such as Chicago, Baltimore, Ithaca, NY, Harrisburg, PA, and from as far south as North Carolina in communication about the Intensive and the upcoming protests while allowing them to make individual decisions about which events they were attending. I should also note that the Pagan Cluster has shifted its public communication structures over time, and circa 2004-5 they were excited about producing a “phone blog” of audio recordings made live from the streets. After successfully producing a phone blog from the Republican National Convention protests in 2004, the Pagan Cluster took down the audio files, which had been available on the “phone blog” section of their web site: www.paganclutser.org, accessed July 16, 2012. The age range of

⁷⁰ See http://www.starhawk.org/activism/activism-writings/cancun_journals.html, accessed July 16, 2012, for journals entries and photos of this protest.

⁷¹ See <http://www.veggieboards.com/t/9887/miami-protests-against-ftaa-report-from-starhawk>, accessed July 16, 2012, for an account of this protest.

⁷² For an account of the protests see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/30th_G8_summit#Protests, accessed July 16, 2012.

people in the Cluster at the Intensive was from early 20s to the 60s, and there was a mix of men and women in the group, which numbered around fifteen people. The group had a mix of straight and LGBTQ people, and there were several couples in the group as well as single people. There were three people from Spiralheart who were strongly linked to the group.

There were two main ways for unaffiliated campers to learn more about the Pagan Cluster. The first was to join their affinity group, which ended being split into two groups that came together for the affinity group evening ritual during the Intensive in 2004. This ritual ended up including a couple of curious people not already affiliated with the Cluster, which illustrates that Cluster did act in inclusive ways in spite of being guarded and suspicious of infiltration by government agents. The second was to attend an information meeting they held Thursday afternoon. This meeting ended up being split into two segments because it became a contentious discussion of the Cluster's need for support in the evening rituals that eventually included members of the ritual planning team. The inflow and outflow diagrams in the previous section of this chapter show that the Cluster did garner support for the protest, and it was able to convince people to send magical energy and do consciousness-raising about the protest in their home communities. To the best of my knowledge nobody from Spiralheart joined the Cluster at the convention protest after being recruited at camp.

The GlitterWhores, Prismic Broadz of Chaos, and the DreamRoads Collective

This subgroup designation lumps together three groups with overlapping membership: the DreamRoads Collective online community, the GlitterWhores, and the

Prismic Broadz of Chaos. I treat these three groups as a single subgroup partly because they share many members and partly due to the relatively small amount of background information available to outsiders. I guess the best way to start this discussion to explain that men are not excluded from being GlitterWhores, and that both gay and straight men were included in the subgroup. Members of the GlitterWhores⁷³ are interested in reclaiming the word *whore* and making space for sacred sexuality in their spirituality and religious practice. In addition, the “glitter” part of their name reflects a commitment to incorporating glamour⁷⁴-both high and low- into ritual and thinking about the “drag” as something people wear on a daily basis. These interests have a high degree of overlap with how the Radical Faeries approach being in community and doing ritual (see Hennen 2008).

Both the GlitterWhores and another group of young people called The Prismic Broadz of Chaos were present at the Intensive, and several people from these subgroups were members of the teaching team in 2004. The Prismic Broadz in particular worked on integrating more queer divinity and truly improvised moments into the evening rituals. These changes received a mixed reception from the teaching team according to one of the Prismic Broadz, and I myself did not hear that the campers themselves found the changes “threatening” in the same way some of the teachers supposedly did. Debates

⁷³ See <http://www.mindwidth.com/GlitterWhores/index.php?cat=1>, accessed July 16, 2012, for the homepage which includes the “pentacle of the whore.”

⁷⁴ See the page <http://www.mindwidth.com/GlitterWhores/index.php?ID=5&cat=2>, accessed July 16, 2012, which explains the acronym GLITTER: Glamorous, Licentious, Intuitive, Twats, Teaching, Ecstatic, Rebellion.

within the teaching team were not openly aired in ritual debriefing meetings or in other settings and the teachers had their own affinity group for venting.

The GlitterWhores had their own cabin every year, and Cabin 18 was the place to go if you wanted to find people who were generally involved in the DreamRoads Collective. DreamRoads Collective members were spread around the country (in North Carolina, Florida, Minnesota, Indiana, and the Beltway area around Washington D.C.) and had a substantial online presence circa 2004. Members of DreamRoads included a mother and daughter, couples, single people, and some married individuals whose spouses had no interest in the Intensive. There were roughly fifteen people in the DreamRoads Collective at camp in 2004, and roughly five of them comprised the core of the Prismic Broadz of Chaos. The age range of the people in DreamRoads was from early 20s to the 60s, and the group was known to porch-sit and gossip at Cabin 18 in the afternoons so that they could speak freely in their own space. Both the DreamRoads Collective and the GlitterWhores are groups that were “co-mothered” into existence, and to the best of my knowledge they both were started in 1994 in association⁷⁵ with the first Spiralheart Intensive.

The Crones Affinity Group (and beyond)

The third and final subgroup that had a major presence at the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive is the Crones group, which started as an affinity group well before I started my research with Spiralheart in 2004. The group’s name comes from the “maiden, mother,

⁷⁵ I say “association” because it is unclear whether both groups emerged during the Intensive itself, in discussions after the event, or even beforehand if people recognized their affinity and started co-creating one or both groups due to being involved in pre-camp planning.

and crone” life stages, and a crone is usually a woman going through or already past menopause. Women can get a rite of passage known as a “croning” that marks the transition to this stage, and the Crones affinity group was definitely running croning rituals during the 2004 Intensive.

The Crones affinity group was open to anyone willing to listen to “women’s issues,” and I know of at least one man who participated in it because he felt the need to be around “crone energy” during a particular camp. Young women were also allowed to participate as long as they were clear about the energy of the group and did not sidetrack the group from focusing on relevant issues such as women’s health and a crone’s place in American culture and the Intensive event. Not all women of crone age elected to be in the crones group in any given year, and I estimate that over a dozen, but less than two dozen women were involved in 2004. Several of these women played a major role in enacting the Amanozume role in the Amaterasu story, and they collectively did the bawdy dancing that helped entice Amaterasu out of the cave.

One woman in my Elements class characterized the Crone as “wild” after attending one of their rituals during free time one afternoon. This assessment reflects how the Crones may play around with stereotypes of old women or play against type as they did when representing Amanozume in the evening ritual. A number of long-time campers who were a part of Spiralheart when it started have been a part of Crones group, and some of these women are in women’s circles or crone groups in their home communities as well. The number of women in Crones group grew between 2004 and 2006, and by 2006 they were the majority of people at Spiralheart.

4) Individual Cases: The Elements of Magic Class and an Assortment of Veterans

The Path Class of 2004 cohort

There were seventeen people counting me, the teacher Black Swan, and the student-teacher Sky Mist in the Path class when it started on Monday. An eighteenth person, Chantrea, moved to a different class after the first day, and I have not included a profile of her in the profiles for the Path class cohort. This section introduces each member of the Path class excluding the teachers and I with a paragraph-length description based on background information gathered during camp in 2004 as well as data from in-depth interviews and surveys completed in 2004. This information is not meant to be an exhaustive portrait of the cohort, but it does build a solid foundation of information in a systematic way that should enable readers to refresh their memories about each camper as the analysis proceeds. I concentrate on presenting demographic information⁷⁶, social network ties within the camp community, as well as the person's background with religion and activism with an emphasis on current affiliations and activities. I start each paragraph with the participant's pseudonym, and have listed the campers in no particular order. Each camper's general demographics (race, sex, age) are listed in parentheses after their pseudonym with the age category broken into

⁷⁶ Readers should note that I am dialing back the level of detail in the portraits in order to obscure each individual's identity to people outside the camp community. I think campers who were present in 2004, particularly people actually in the cohort, will, more often than not, be able to identify each camper described in this section. I promised respondents confidentiality, in which links between their names and any identifying information would be kept confidential rather than truly anonymous. I believe the pseudonyms and lack of precise demographic data obscure the identities to movement outsiders and provide plausible deniability to movement insiders, which preserves confidentiality while allowing me to present data that are true and relatively nuanced.

“youngers” (late teens, 20s, and 30s), “middles” (40s and 50s), and “elders” (60s and older).

Juniper

Juniper (White, Female, Younger) was a white female in her late thirties with school-age children. In 2004 she was in a long-term relationship with a man who had no involvement with Spiralheart or Reclaiming. There are two interesting facts I want to share regarding Juniper. The first is that she inadvertently caused upset among the Pagan Cluster at camp in 2004 when someone saw a bumper sticker in the parking lot saying “the last time we mixed politics and religion, people got burned”. The sticker is a reference to witch burnings or “the Burning Times” and communicates that religion and politics should not be blended in modern America. People in the Cluster found the sticker upsetting and discussed how they wanted to see things mixed during their information meeting. Second, Juniper started getting a reputation for having a bawdy sense of humor that contrasted with her relatively quiet and serious self-presentation. Juniper worked in the medical field, but did not offer healing during optional offering time or talk about her educational background and work life very much even though she had completed college and some professional education. Juniper was raised in the South, and she exemplified Southern culture in that she had one face that she presented to close friends and a cooler side that she presented to strangers and people she just did not like. Juniper came with two friends and fellow Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Ardor and Chan, to camp in 2004. All three of them were new campers that year, and decided

to attend camp due to contact with Bebhinn, a Reclaiming-trained teacher who lived in their area and “talked up” the camp experience.

Ardor

Ardor (White, Male, Younger), a man in his late-twenties in 2004, originally learned about the Intensive from Bebhinn and her male partner Flidais who were both active in Reclaiming. Ardor helped facilitate a CUUPS group and wanted to fine-tune his mentoring and leadership skills at camp and to “bring things back home” along with Chan and Juniper. During camp Ardor stated that activism was what made him like Reclaiming because the religion is tied to activism "and whenever you hear about a march, Starhawk or a Reclaiming group has gone to it." He mentioned environmental activism specifically and how he could not understand why other Pagans and witches did not do the same thing. Ardor identified as heterosexual and male, was single, and did not have any children in 2004. His appearance could be characterized as mainstream- short haircut, outdoorsy and functional clothes, no visible tattoos or piercings- when camp began. Ardor was internet-savvy, had completed college, but did not tend to talk about his job very much in comparison to the Unitarian Universalist group and his other interests which included playing the guitar and getting out into nature.

Frost

Frost (White, Female, Younger) had a warm yet very Zen temperament and way of interacting with people, and like several other new campers her appearance did not mark her as an activist or member of another subgroup. She was a white woman in her

late-twenties and worked at a corporate job that she did not enjoy. Frost had completed college and seemed used to a social science perspective. She thought the clothes and jewelry people wore at camp, the tattoos people sported, and the implicit understanding that pictures should not be taken without permission were all fascinating topics someone could research. Frost adopted a magical name during the course of camp, and the name seemed to mark a new openness to both magical religion and activism in Frost's life. At the time she was single and did not have children, but was a homeowner who currently lived in the South. During the 2004 camp Frost intentionally started to sort out how to keep things she valued in her life such as practicing martial arts and dissolve her ties to "out of line" groups and activities including the greedy corporation.

Egeria

Egeria (White, Female, Younger) was "another younger white woman" as I put it in my field notes, and she found the Intensive using the web site when she was out of the country. Early on during the camp I noted that she was quite "mainstream" looking too meaning that she did not have dreadlocks, large visible tattoos, and was not dressed up in costumes, glitter, or the worn message t-shirts some of the Pagan Cluster people were wearing. She was average height and average build, and was in her 20s during the camp. Egeria had recently been in the Peace Corps, and had not found a job during the time when she was at camp. She talked about how so many towns in Ohio are small and jobs depend on one factory in the course of discussing her own job hunt. Egeria wanted camp to be low key and at one point specified that she would not feel comfortable

being overly told “be an activist about this topic.” Regarding religion, Egeria did not reveal as much information about her background other than the fact that she had an aunt who was killed several years before, and mainstream religion had not helped her grieving process. Egeria’s discomfort with nudity came up in a pre-bonfire snack discussion one evening. It was really pushing her boundaries to see nudity in ritual and at events like the bonfire even though she was able to intellectually connect it to freedom, expression, and positive body image.

Rhea

Rhea (White, Female, Younger) was a petite woman in her twenties with “really short hair in kind of pixie-style haircut” as I put it in my field notes. She worked a countercultural sort of job in an urban small business, and her overall appearance was middle class bohemian rather than outdoorsy and/or mainstream. I also want to note that unlike many other people in the cohort Rhea made a comment about growing up poor, which gives at least a little information about her class background. Rhea learned about Spiralheart through a march on Washington D.C. during the fall of 2003. Spiralheart led a closing ritual with “the women's march people” as Rhea called them. The ritual made an impression and prompted Rhea to seek out the Intensive and to attend it alone without other friends or family. Rhea was single with no kids at the time and was in the midst of pursuing a college degree. She had been involved with magical religion and commiserated with Ardor about how challenging it was to deal with Gardnarians in a group because they had one “right” way to do ritual. Regarding activism, Rhea thought that the organizers should not tell people what to do, but that

they could make even more space for advocacy about topics such as feminism and the environment. Rhea identified as “queer, complex” and it seemed to me that the Prismic Broadz subgroup offered her a chance to get involved in a community of younger queer-identified people.

Siran

Siran (White, Male, Middle), a man in his mid-fifties, and his wife Taima came to together to the Intensive in 2004. Siran did not have experience with magical religion prior to coming to camp and he also did not have much of a family background with religion. Siran did not have a background with activism either, and did not recount any 1960s or 1970s-era activities. He did seem open to hearing about various forms of activism. Siran, an affable jokester, had a serious reason for coming to camp: Taima had been involved in Paganism for several years, but had only recently let him in on her secret. The couple’s next step was to do something witchy together by exploring the Reclaiming tradition at the Intensive. Siran and Taima seemed to have a warm relationship and had children who were high-school age or older in 2004. Siran worked full-time in a trade and he and Taima currently lived in the South.

Taima

Taima (White, Female, Middle), even more than Siran, confused everyone in the Path cohort because they both appeared younger than they actually looked. We were shocked to learn that Taima was also on the edge of her fifties, and her clothing choices did not give away her age. It may sound strange, but Taima’s style of dress made it seem to me like she was familiar with Neo-Pagan culture, but was conservative in that she

never showed much skin and did not favor glitter, other sparkly fabric, or really bold colors. She came across as a quiet, sweet, and determined person with interests in magical religion and everyday forms of activism related to environmentalism. Taima had a Southern accent, currently lived in the South, and had been a stay-at-home parent to her and Siran's children. Over the next several years Taima started bringing knitting to camp, and was proficient at making cute striped socks by 2006. Knitting is one craft activity that became more popular within Spiralheart during the course of my research, and by 2006 it became trendy to bring knitting to organizer meetings and camp itself.

Anala

Anala (White, Female, Younger) was a white woman of average height and build who had straight dark hair that gave her a vaguely Native American air. Anala was one half of a lesbian couple from the Pagan Cluster who lived in an old airport shuttle bus for the week after they traveled up to camp from the Deep South. The bus had been converted to run on vegetable oil rather than gasoline. Neither Anala nor her partner Barika had much of a religious background, and they came to the Intensive to grow spiritually in ways that would complement their activism. They were also looking to get support for the Pagan Cluster's protest at the Republican National Convention and to inform people about specific practices they used in everyday life such as vermicomposting and opting out of municipal sewer and septic systems. At one point in Path class they both recommended the *Humanure Handbook*⁷⁷ (Jenkins 1999) to all of us and informed us about permaculture, which focuses on developing agriculture and ecosystems that are

⁷⁷ See <http://humanurehandbook.com/>, accessed August 4, 2012. The book came out in 1995 and a second edition (1999) was available in 2004.

permanently sustainable and self-sufficient. Anala seemed to be in her mid-to-late twenties or even early thirties and had a Southern accent. She did not specify many details about her background, but seemed to have grown up in the Deep South with a working class background while her partner seemed more middle class. What I can say for sure is that Anala carried herself and spoke in ways that stood out to me compared to the other people in the Pagan Cluster even though they dressed in a similar manner and did not dress up much for ritual.

Barika

Barika (White, Female, Younger) was a white woman in her mid-twenties with a thin build and dark hair that she wore short. She was more well-spoken than her partner Anala, which gave Barika an advantage in debates and processing discussions. Barika seemed to favor dressing up on occasion and bid for an evening dress in the auction, won it, and wore it to ritual one night. By turns, Barika was more social than her partner and in a lunch discussion about recent protests and abuse at the hands of the police Barika commented that she wondered if there even were any Pagan police. Multiple other people at the table told her that yes, there are, and she looked very surprised. I explained that they have an organization called the Officers of Avalon listed on the networking site www.witchvox.com, accessed July 16, 2012. I found out years later that gossip within the Cluster was that Barika's partner Anala had been abused by the police and suffered brain damage, which helps to put Barika's reaction and Anala's general disposition in context. Anala and Barika both refused to participate in my study other than informal conversations because they wanted any data they contributed to be safe

from subpoena and seizure under the Patriot Act. Put another way, confidentiality was not enough to make them feel safe as individuals or as members of the Pagan Cluster. Both of the women were really worried about their activism being tracked and wanted complete assurance of confidentiality prior to completing any surveys or interviews.

Yew

Yew (White, Male, Middle) was a white man in his mid-fifties and his wife, Disa, got him into Paganism. They both belonged to an Eclectic Wiccan coven that had a big main branch and several smaller offshoots. Yew and Disa went to several gatherings in addition to coven activities including a Beltane gathering in Maryland and Freespirit Gathering in mid-June. There was cold weather at the first Beltane event they ever went to, and their shampoo froze⁷⁸. This story made the cold weather at Spiralheart in 2004 look tame. Yew had a background with activism and had been a war protestor in D.C. in 1970. He recounted how they shut down traffic in DC with a twelve spoke strategy that assigned one movement to each spoke. Yew also told me how he had an FBI file as wide as his arm span. His demeanor was enthusiastic, but also low-key, not bragging and egoistic, but just enjoying having someone actually listen. There were two women with him in the movement for peace and justice who had some sort of government job. Yew ended up having his picture snapped by FBI agents behind trees while Yew was handing

⁷⁸ You may be wondering what the freezing point for shampoo is. I was. According to http://uk.ask.com/what-is/what_is_the_freezing_point_of_shampoo, accessed August 4, 2012, "The freezing points of shampoo vary depending entirely on the suspending agents used. Shampoo that has polyethylene glycol has a freezing point of 42.1° C, whereas ethylene glycol distearate has a freezing point of 59.8° C." I think these temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit, not Celsius, and the proper Celsius temperatures are 5.61° C and 15.4° C respectively.

out leaflets since the agents were tracking these women and anyone who happened to be in the movement with them. We also talked about the importance of political donations and activity, this was the second time I had heard Yew say “I have a bad hip and can’t go into the streets anymore, but I am political.” Yew was not raised in a religious tradition, and his family was “not into politics” as he put it.

Tamesis

Tamesis (White, Male, Middle) was a white man in his early to mid-forties. He was married and both he and his wife were in a Wiccan coven. They did not have any kids as of 2004. His wife, Lur, was also at camp, but did not take the Elements Path class. Tamesis had a short haircut and was average height with an average build. He was in the “Pond Scum” affinity group, who held meetings in the lake and he had a major sunburn during the middle camp. Based on some small-group work we did in Path, Tamesis seemed to like physics and seemed to enjoy knowing more and speaking authoritatively about how light travelled and how magnetic pole reversals worked. The closest Tamesis seemed to get to activism was an interest in ecology and concern about climate change, which was also evident during our small-group discussion. He did not bring up politics or express any opinions regarding the upcoming election. Tamesis and Lur really dressed up for a couple of the evening rituals and their style looked like it would fit in at a Renaissance Fair. For those unfamiliar with Renaissance Fairs the clothes look typical of the characters in fairy tales and run the gamut from peasant-inspired to clothes fit for a royal court. The historical periods and source cultures that inspire this kind of garb vary, and groups such as the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) focus on authentic

reproductions while other people “dress in what they like” as I would put it. I never picked up on which attitude Tamesis and Lur had toward garb (historical sticklers vs. “dress in what you like”), but their clothes were not peasant-style and looked like investment pieces⁷⁹.

Cascade

Cascade (White, Male, Middle) said his daughter Columbine and wife Rana got him into Paganism three years ago and that he had been a “dyed-in-the-wool tree-hugging hippy” in the 1960s and had never really stopped holding those values. He was in his mid-fifties in 2004, and identified as male and heterosexual. One fun fact about Cascade is that he does not like lotteries and called them “a tax on the mathematically challenged.” Cascade and his family were proud West Virginians and owned a family farm, which made it challenging for all three of them to attend the Intensive together. Cascade had worked in a job that crossed between education and information technology, and his job had been dismantled due to privatization by the Bush administration. By 2004 he had finally lost hope that the job would come back under a private company. In terms of his religious background Cascade had been raised as a Methodist and a Presbyterian and he stated, “I found the religious tradition I was raised in to be shallow and hypocritical [...] Christianity has spoiled religion for me. Spiritually I honor Mother Earth.” Regarding activism Cascade had a history of environmental work

⁷⁹ By “investment pieces” I mean that they were not the kind of garb someone dabbling in Renaissance Fair, SCA, or Neo-Pagan subculture would have unless they had money to burn. Tamesis and Lur seemed middle class, and the clothes seemed to me to be the kind of thing they would plan to get after becoming more serious about whatever subculture(s) they were participating in that presented an appropriate context for wearing the outfits.

at the local and state level that involved lobbying for specific legislation, speaking at public hearings, and networking between like-minded citizen's groups. He was proud of this background, and exhibited openness to the Pagan Cluster and their work.

Desta

Desta (White, Female, Middle) is the person I would picture if I was trying to imagine a low-key kitchen witch from Appalachia who might live in the suburbs or in the backwoods. She was a white woman who was taller than average and would wear her hair in pigtails. Desta's demeanor was generally quiet, but she did not come across as shy. In terms of her religious background Desta had been raised in a strongly Methodist family. Desta thought her background made it "easy to act in loving ways" even though her family was very conservative and she was the opposite. Desta found Reclaiming because her "husband was consulting a Tarot reader who stated she was a Witch. [Desta] checked her out and found [she]'d known her years ago and neither of us confided in the other about our beliefs. She introduced me to Reclaiming and told me about Witchcamp." Desta had grown up in the South, and was in her mid-fifties in 2004. Desta did not provide much information about her history with activism, and in 2004 she defined activism as "working for positive change in areas affecting well-being of the community."

Cove

Cove (White, Female, Middle) was a petite white woman in her early fifties, and she had been recruited to attend the 2004 Intensive by a man who was new the year before. Their relationship was interesting because they made it clear that they were

lovers, but were each married to other people who were not present at camp. Cove had a quiet and shy demeanor, and appeared tired during the first few days of camp. Early on her dark hair looked a bit bedraggled which added to my perception that she looked fatigued. Cove mentioned that she had joined the Army in the South in the late 60s or early 70s and described herself as “naïve then and [as] a naïve optimist now.” Back then she was scared of hippies and the peace movement, but did not say much about her current interests. One other important thing about Cove is that she stated that she really did not like the Catholic Church, and there was venom in her voice when she said it, but she did not elaborate further other than to say that Kerry was “the lesser of two evils” but that his Catholicism bothered her.

Overall roughly a third of the 2004 Path cohort were men, which made the group feel far more balanced with regard to gender than camp as whole did. Several pairs of people who knew each other: Juniper and Ardor, Anala and Barika, and Siran and Taima. There were also several younger women who came to event alone as strangers to Reclaiming: Egeria, Rhea, Frost, and myself. Finally, this particular cohort had a number of married, middle-aged men: Siran, Yew, Tamesis, and Cascade. The cohort was diverse with regard to backgrounds with magical religion and social and political activism, and might stand out because it did not include any younger LGBTQ men or older LGTBQ women. The people in the cohort who were recruited by people already in their social networks include Juniper, Ardor, Yew, Tamesis, Cascade, Desta, and Cove. The recruitment channels are complex and include both organizations such as CUUPs and the Wiccan covens as well as the individual relationships new recruits had to people

who had already been to an Intensive. In the next section, I illustrate that this complexity is not a unique quirk of the 2004 Path cohort by examining the trajectories of some people who attended the 2000 Spiralheart Intensive and were veteran campers in 2004.

Veteran campers who were present at the 2000 Spiralheart camp

In Chapter One I discussed the 2000 Spiralheart Intensive, and focused on the reactions of several different campers to the camp's story and a wave of illness that came through the campground and affected many of the campers⁸⁰. In this section of Chapter Three I revisit five cases of individuals who were present at the 2000 camp. Tracing the trajectories of these five campers between 2000 and 2004 allows me to demonstrate what sustained involvement with an Intensive community can look like as well as the cross-connections different campers can, but do not always, create between Reclaiming and other movements and groups. The cases in this section should help readers imagine real-world scenarios of inflows and outflows from an Intensive, but readers should be careful to keep in mind that all the data are shaped by the Mid-Atlantic regional context. This context includes the presence of other camps in the region (New York and Vermont), the close proximity to sites in Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington D.C. on 9-11-2001, and the presence of local Reclaiming communities in Baltimore, MD, Long Island, NY, the DreamRoads Collective online community, and

⁸⁰ The estimates made by people about how many campers got sick varied. Li Mya thought about a third of the camp was ill whereas Bear gave a higher estimate.

the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill “Research Triangle” area in North Carolina⁸¹. I start each description with the participant’s pseudonym, and have listed the campers in no particular order. Each camper’s general demographics (race, sex, age) are listed in parentheses after their pseudonym with the age category broken into “youngers” (late teens, 20s, and 30s), “middles” (40s and 50s), and “elders” (60s and older).

Vellamo

Living in a small town made Vellamo (White, Female, Middle) extra-concerned about being publicly outed as a Witch or Pagan, and she was careful to make it clear to fellow campers that she valued her privacy. Vellamo was not necessarily in the GlitterWhore subgroup, but she was not averse to helping them out with an invocation or other piece of a ritual by dressing up in a prom dress or brandishing a sword while dressed in male drag. Vellamo’s timeline for finding Reclaiming does not match in that she said she found out about it from “a friend who went to the first Mid-Atlantic camp” but listed 1988 as the year she found Reclaiming. During the 2000-4 period Vellamo was involved in camp organizing for Spiralheart and listed organizing and taking private Reiki clients as religious activities she did in 2004. Vellamo labeled herself as “Pagan” and identified as an activist in her everyday life. She stated in 2004 that activism was “being open in my community about my political views, social beliefs and to a certain extent my

⁸¹ The “Research Triangle group is known as “Dragon’s Caldron” and they have had materials up on the internet dating from March 2003. See <http://dragonscauldron-nc.org/>, accessed July 16, 2012. I believe the group started before the Celebration of the Green Dragon event in March 2003, but did not get extensive information about the group in the course of doing interviews at Spiralheart and DreamRoads. The important point here is that Dragon’s Cauldron antedates the 2004 Intensive, and that the group is distinct from DreamRoads although people did affiliate with both groups.

spiritual beliefs. Raising a liberal child in a very conservative county who is willing to say she worships Goddess is a radical activist step for me.” I did not see Vellamo at the Pagan Cluster meeting at camp in 2004, and she did not list supporting them as one of her post-camp activities that year.

Bear

Bear (White, Male, Middle) was a camp organizer during the 2000-4 period after attending his first Witchcamp in 1999. He had begun learning Reiki energy work several years before coming to camp and kept up a “solitary practice” that he characterized as “very different than Reclaiming. [...] a combination of shamanic and [tape dropped off; other traditions including Buddhism].” Bear was involved in a local Reclaiming group⁸² back when the group was invitation-only circa 2003-4, and was disappointed when the group was opened up to anyone because he no longer had group he trusted to do advanced magic and activism with on a semi-regular basis. In an interview, Bear explained why a traditional Wiccan coven was not a good alternative for an advanced magical practice for him:

I know other people that are in covens and stuff like that. And I’ve been approached to join those, but my experience with covens is not good. I don’t do the Alexandrian or the Gardnarian mainly because I [...] find them to be kind of sterile, [...] devoid of magic. It’s like any magic that they have is purely coincidental. [...] They’re just so, they’re so earthbound. [...] They’re all about power and power over and all that kind of stuff. And it’s like it’s got no place for me.

⁸² I have decided not to use the name of the East Coast local group in an effort to protect this person’s identity.

Bear identified more closely with shamanism than Wicca and expressed that he no interest in being initiated into Reclaiming because his life had been enough of an initiation. In 2005 he explained,

It's kind of like, initiation? It's like, You know what? [laughs] Nobody could come up with an initiation like this [surviving a supposedly terminal illness]. It's like alright, so can you guys do a better one than that [his experience of dying during a medical procedure and being brought back]? Can you even match it? [...] The initiation process, there's people I know that started it, [and] they were assholes before, they went through initiation, and they're still assholes. Pardon my french, but it's like, what did they really gain out of it? [...] It's like when you can light a candle at twenty paces with your finger, then you're magical. [...] Get all the initiation stuff you want.

Bear's comments express a deep skepticism of the results related to the "shamanic death" that he thought initiates went through in Reclaiming initiation. He had developed his own standards for being expert at magic and these seemed to include not behaving like an "asshole" in everyday life as well as magical skills such as candle-lighting. Bear took a means-ends approach to initiation, and evaluated the process in terms of what he might get out of it. A new identity label was not a sufficient inducement to go through the process given that his mettle had been tested by the terminal illness, death, and revival experience. Bear did identify as an activist in everyday life and did interact with the Pagan Cluster during the 2004 camp.

In 2006 Bear commented that the power dynamics of Spiralheart organizing had driven him to leave after 2004 "because it drives you nuts, and that's why people burn out. That's why you have burnouts. It's too many people wanting to have a say-so in something, but nobody wants to do the work." In order to clarify whether he had truly intended to give up camp organizing, I asked, "So you didn't exactly burn out, you just immediately transferred [to DreamRoads]?" Bear replied,

No, I got burnt out. No, I wasn't going to come here. The only reason I came here is because of my friendship for [the organizers]. And it's, like, well, okay let's do it. And then they got kind of burnt out on it last year [2005]. And I'm willing to give it a try, but. And I might not do it next year simply because of the big financial— it took a lot of my assets and everything to set it up, and spend all the hours, and do the research all for nothing. It doesn't put any money into my pocket. And for what? It's like I can go study the world tree on my own. [...] But yeah, this is kind of a labor of love and not anything else. It's, like, yeah, I'll try it. But you know, there's a lot of people that just don't — they're not going to play. They're just not going to play. Yeah, I'm giving it a shot. That's pretty much the way I see it. It's fun. It's kind of goofy. You know, I'm not — I've backed off on a lot of things that I used to, really give my all to.

In his comments above, Bear construes organizing as a “labor of love” and uses financial costs as a justification for not doing any more organizing or attending more Witchcamps in the future. This being said, the root of Bear’s burnout “problem” does not seem to be financial costs and attaining the goal of making a profit at camp or at least breaking even. Instead, Bear is burned out from interacting with other organizers who “just don’t [...] play” yet exercise decision-making power within the context of organizing. Earlier in the interview in 2006 Bear elaborated regarding what made him “nuts,”

Well, it gets to the point where, look, I'm not going to do the work unless I have control over what happens. I don't need total control, but there's no way you guys are going to do nothing and have all the say-so about what happens. [...] It's like consensus process. The West Coast consensus process doesn't let anybody who wants to raise their hand drive the train. It's just, like, yeah, you can come to the meeting but you don't have a vote. And I'm watching it at Spiralheart, and to a certain extent, DreamRoads, [...] it's where anybody who wants to derail the train can.

Bear stayed in the movement due to strong friendship ties, at least up until DreamRoads camp dissolved circa 2006. He seemed to think Reclaiming operated in a diluted, less authentic form on the East Coast, and ran both consensus process and the Witchcamps better out West. Bear’s framing of organizing as a “labor of love”

compliments his use of a profit-motive and financial concerns to justify his general state of dissatisfaction circa 2006 with the “work” of organizing and the East Coast Reclaiming community, although he questioned whether such an entity even really existed. What Bear seemed to remain interested in was the “work” of the story arc of camp, and in the 2006 interview when he explained to me how an ideal-typical first night of Witchcamp should work⁸³ by breaking down social barriers between people with a round of introductions and a Spiral Dance.

Izar

I think the worst thing someone ever said to me regarding Izar (White, Female, Middle) was in 2007 when a fellow organizer said that to really understand her, you have to understand that Izar has served as a camp organizer for years and has done major work to run camp, but she **still** refuses to identify as Reclaiming. The fellow organizer seemed to see Izar’s self-labeling as a character flaw and an instance of her “not walking her talk.” Although the anecdote is well past the time frame of 2000-4 time period that I cover in this section, I think the story is important because it shows that Izar stood her ground regarding her identity and that there was a place for her in

⁸³ He stated, “Everybody’s making happy, and if you’re an old camper you know that that’s part of the social process, as false as it may be. Okay, so you smile at everybody because you’re trying to make it. And even if you’re not part of the organizing or teaching team, as a return camper you are kind of responsible. It’s expected that, so it’s a social responsibility thing. It kind of is – not only is it to your benefit, but it’s also kind of your responsibility to take that new person in tow and make them feel welcome because, you know, we’re all there. It’s, like, yeah, it’s weird enough coming – you had the courage and fortitude to come to a Witchcamp not knowing anybody. You know, it behooves us all and it actually improves the whole week if we all do get to know each other, especially if the person is cool. And if they’re not cool then that’s good to know too.”

Reclaiming. On the survey I gave out in 2004 she identified as Wiccan, and did not list any religious involvements post-camp even though she took a “Goddess Pilgrimage” trip to Crete. This event was listed as a “major life event post-camp” by Izar on the survey, but I have coded it as a religious event. Izar found out about Reclaiming in 1992 through “an ad in a pagan newsletter, and a promotion list of pagan activities at a pagan store.” She defined activism as “becoming involved with a cause you are personal[ly] connected to and making that cause be seen and heard by many” and did not label herself as an activist in daily life. Izar had some involvement with the GlitterWhores in the 2000-4 period, and describe Reclaiming as “wild, ecstatic, and very accepting” in 2004.

Sanura

Sanura (White, Female, Middle) is a core member of the Crones group who has attended many Spiralheart camps. She was not involved in organizing camp in between 2000 and 2004, but was present for all the camps held during that time period. Sanura found Reclaiming in 1988 by reading the *Spiral Dance* after she had taken the “Cakes for the Queen of Heaven” course with people in her Unitarian Universalist congregation. In 2004 Sanura was part of a “Pagan Circle-working with Caroline Myss' book *Sacred Contract*” and a member of the same Unitarian Universalist congregation where she participated in services and a small-group ministry program. In addition, Sanura had started taking what were then called Feri training courses⁸⁴ from T. Thorn Coyle, and one of these courses took roughly two years to complete. In 2004 Sanura identified as a

⁸⁴ The collection of courses is now a part of T. Thorn Coyle's Morningstar Mystery School. See <http://www.thorncoyle.com/mystery-school/weekend-workshop-descriptions/>, accessed July 16, 2012.

“Unitarian Universalist” and “Reclaiming Initiate.” She did not identify as an activist in everyday life and defined activism as “demonstrating, signing or circulating petitions or working for a candidate or party.” She further stated, “I am glad other people choose to do it because it has some peripheral impact. I do not personally participate because the cost/benefit ratio does not justify participation for me.”

Li Mya

Another veteran of many Spiralheart camps, Li Mya (White, Female, Middle) was present for all the camps between 2000 and 2004. She found Reclaiming in 1994 the year of the first Spiralheart camp, and commented: “I'd been a pagan for about 3 years when Starhawk in April of 1994 came to my area to do a weekend-long workshop [...]. I realized now it was like a "mini" Witchcamp. Rituals and activities started Friday night and ended Sunday noon. I loved it.” In 2004 Li Mya identified just as a “Reclaiming Witch” on one part of the 2004 survey and said she did not practice in other religious traditions. On another portion of the survey she identified as “Wiccan,” which illustrates one framing of a solely Reclaiming identity. When asked to describe activism Li Mya wrote, “I think of activists as being regularly involved in some type of cause- they could be writing letters to legislators, doing other forms of lobbying, organizing protests, gathering signatures on petitions, creating web sites for a cause. The distinction for me is in the regular involvement, plus dedication to the cause of the long haul.” She did not identify as an activist in her daily life in 2004. During this period of time Li Mya was involved in a local women’s circle and healing ritual as well as a local Reclaiming group that admitted anyone who had taken the “Elements of Magic” core class. This group,

Dragon's Cauldron, started in March 2003, and has been active since then. In October 2004 they held a public ritual in the name of Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Hillsborough, NC. The ritual's intention was "to join energies so that the waves of mercy, compassion and healing would cleanse and flow, to create still pools of reflection and truth" and it was timed to precede the upcoming presidential election.⁸⁵

This group of veteran profiles helps illustrate the connections people in Spiralheart had to groups such as the Unitarian Universalists, Feri Wicca, and local Reclaiming groups including the organizing team for Spiralheart camp. None of these veterans worked directly with the Pagan Cluster although some other veterans at camp in 2004 did. Their definitions of activism vary, and if readers expected veterans to have universally adopted a Reclaiming identity, they may be surprised that many veterans stay with Reclaiming and even help organize the Intensive, but do not self-label even as "Reclaiming and...". Some people see this as a flaw while others are more like Izar and frame the movement as "very accepting."

5) Healing Backgrounds and Interests

How Healing Works Both Inside and Outside of Camp

Healing- mentally, physically, and emotionally- is both a motivation for people attending camp as well as a meaningful, spontaneous part of the Intensive experience for some people as I discussed in Chapter Two in the section on individual goals. For example, effective healing along with financial profit are goals for some vendors who

⁸⁵ See <http://dragonscauldron-nc.org/2004/10/01/kuan-yin/>, accessed July 16, 2012.

sell bodywork or Reiki energy work yet these very vendors may also seek healing using the story/theme of camp during activities such as Path class and the evening rituals. My point here is that people have multiple motivations and are likely to shift between acting as “the healers” and “the healed” while they are witches for a week at the Intensive just as they shift between attaining pre-planned goals and being open to spontaneous events. Individual and role-based goals may get blended together as the Intensive proceeds, and ideally (from the movement’s point of view) this blending draws an individual further into the Intensive community.

I do not think I am overgeneralizing when I say that witches like bumper stickers, and one popular stick says “Witches Heal.” This phrase is a great entry point into the issue of who gives and receives healing at the Intensives. There are both lay and professional healers present at the average Intensive, and Spiralheart in 2004 included people who did bodywork as vendors for pay, people who did massage and Reiki healing for free, and the camp’s “safety witch” who served as the on-site medic responsible for sick and injured campers. The safety witch that year had medical training because he was a volunteer fire-fighter and his role was technically an organizer/operations position.

One important thing for readers to grasp is the layered nature of illness and healing at an Intensive. Campers may be subjected to extreme weather, bugs, and other physical ills along with whatever mundane physical or mental illness they may bring with them to camp. The extra layer is that illness- mental or physical- may also occur as a byproduct of working with magical energy, and require healing of a different sort. Ritual at camp may be healing- mentally, physically, and emotionally, but the cure may also be

worse than the disease. I discuss three examples of healing and illness among Witchcampers in order to illustrate how magical reasoning about health and illness works. These examples show instances of magical work causing health issues along with health issues being cured magically.

The first case is Ajoite an average camper who was in her fifties when I interviewed her at Spiralheart camp in 2005. I asked Ajoite “One thing that I’m interested in is health and healing practices that people do including stuff like Reiki, massage [...] Have you participated, are you participating? Are you trained in anything?” She responded,

No. I’m not trained in anything, would like to. Actually, I had a Reiki experience while I was here, not too long ago. And [Vellamo] was going to work on me again because of the breast cancer and the removal of the breast, I have chronic pain in my shoulder and up here from where they twist everything. You know my shoulder wants to go this way because there’s nothing. I mean I have a fake breast I have with me today. But it weighs and helps keep you a little bit balanced. Not the same as having a muscle supporting something. And so she did some Reiki and completely took one of the extreme pains here away. I mean it’s completely gone [...] And I’ve been working on another area and its better. The pain was moving but it’s not completely gone. She’s going to work on it again and try to see if we can remove that. So, which you could actually, it’s so cool because when she was doing it [...] she felt a pulsing and I felt it too, when the pain went away. And it was really, really cool.

Ajoite went on to contrast the Reiki “energy work” she had received with other Reiki, and explained, “I had someone else do Reiki on me, [...] minor Reiki massage. And while it relaxed, it didn’t last very long. It wasn’t real like Reiki energy work.” These comments illustrate that Ajoite has sought out healing for mundane aches and pains in her body stemming from having a mastectomy due to breast cancer. The magical healing came via “real” Reiki energy work as well as Reiki massage, which was “minor” and had a relaxing effect in the short term. Both treatments worked for Ajoite, but Vellamo’s Reiki energy work was “cool” in that not only was the pain removed, but there was also

mutually recognized current of energy that was “pulsing” as the work was being completed. Vellamo’s work got perceptible results for Ajoite, and is an example of healing being vended on a for-profit basis outside of the evening rituals or a specific ritual dedicated just to healing.

After the Reiki discussion, I then asked Ajoite a follow-up question about whether doing magic generally and participating in the evening rituals specifically had any negative effects on her health either mental or physical. She commented,

So, I honestly, personally have not had any negative magic effects as long as I’m following what I’ve been taught which is to ground properly and to eat afterwards and things like that. [...] Now, sometimes I have trouble like last night. I had a lot of trouble coming down after the ritual because it was so high energy. And so I woke up off-and-on and [...] I have a leg condition and I haven’t been taking my medicine while I was here. I mean it’s an over-the-counter thing, but I have restless leg syndrome. And so I kept waking up with my legs just going to town. And I think it was just a release of the energy that I hadn’t released [from the ritual] but, I should have. I did come down to eat, but evidently, I didn’t ground out enough afterwards.[...] And so, you know that’s the only type of negative effects I’ve had. And it’s not anything chronic it’s something that’s short term [...] So, you know but that’s the only thing [negative] that [happened], and there’s no one that I practice closely with that I know of that’s had any other impact other than just what I said. You don’t do something that you know you should do or maybe you try to rush things because suddenly you’ve become aware of mundane time and you try to rush things and [when] you do not do things properly and bring yourself back down you may have issues [afterward].

Overall Ajoite’s answer illustrates how there can be negative physical health consequences, both magical and mundane to doing magic both for her, as well as the local people she practices with outside of the Intensive. The way Ajoite frames the specific symptoms, wakefulness and her “legs just going to town” after a high-energy evening ritual at camp in 2005, shows a mundane cause for the problems: not taking the over-the-counter medication Ajoite usually takes at home as well as a magical cause:

not grounding out the magical energy out enough after ritual which then was released by the restless leg episode. The solutions to Ajoite's issues are generally to "do things properly" in both the magical and mundane sides of life including taking medication regularly, and doing things "you know you should do" after ritual and not trying to rush the end of ritual or the grounding of magical energy. These solutions place heavy emphasis on personal responsibility both within and outside of ritual, and this theme of responsibility for one's magical and mundane health also is present in comments from a teacher/organizer Cloud Hunter.

In an interview in 2005 I asked Cloud Hunter, a male in his fifties, "What is your perception about being involved in this kind of work and what it does for one's physical and mental health, and what it can do to one's physical and mental health both positively and negatively?" He responded thoughtfully, but with pauses to carefully pick his words and focused on his experience as a teacher/facilitator:

I have noticed that when people don't take care of themselves, like stay in shape, they have extreme physical and emotional damage. It used to be that a team after teaching a camp everyone would get sick within days, maybe even before it was over. Because they just kept doing it, and, um, oh, god, this is such a delicate topic. Folks that weren't keeping in shape, [...] so they do this huge big magic and they get sick. But yet they are trying to model an Earth-centered life and they pay a big, they pay a big price for it. [...] The key thing with being a priestess and doing any of this work is staying in shape and I hate to be preachy about it, but, you know, [...] whatever your level is, but just keep your body in as good a condition as you can is essential. And emotionally, you know, [...] I really expect us to actively work on our own emotional health and spiritual health, really actively, and um, its tough because I know I have a high standard. [...]

Cloud Hunter was speaking frankly, and linked doing "huge big magic" at the Intensive to getting sick even in the midst of the event itself. He discussed physical, emotional, and spiritual health as well as "damage" in his response, and framed the

damage as a “big price” teachers may pay for “trying to model an Earth-centered life” without taking care of themselves and “staying in shape.” Cloud Hunter’s response illustrates that camp generally and playing the priestess role specifically may make people sick, but he also recounted how magic by people in Reclaiming healed him personally from a serious chronic health issue:

that’s what almost killed me- symptoms from different infections related to having no immune system. So, [...] on the other hand, they did- I was dying- and they did this incredible prayer spell for me, and I was up and on my feet within a month. It was like fuckin’ spooky. [...] And then they did another big prayer spell bit and so my health was stabilized until this whole new set of drugs came out and its just been, [chuckles], well its been spooky, and so the power is there, I mean, [...] that magic, I think its really true, our prayers for each other, and healing are much more powerful than prayers for ourselves.

Thus, many of those priestesses who damaged themselves doing “big magic” at camp managed to magically heal Cloud Hunter’s mundane serious chronic health issue that included “symptoms from different infections related to having no immune system.” This is an example of effective, non-profit healing outside of camp done by members of the camp community who, paradoxically, do not stay in good shape and damage themselves doing “work” at camp that is “huge big magic” but not necessarily healing work during the Intensive itself. Without exhausting themselves at camp these priestesses might not have had the skills to heal Cloud Hunter in his time of need, yet he went to make it clear that taking care of the self- mind, body, and spirit- is what enables long-term magical work:

From simple observation, I have noticed those folks who keep in better physical condition do better at this work in the long run. It is just more sustainable. Eating, I’m not a health food fanatic, but eating a good diet, a decent diet, you know.[...] Well, its like [Bear] was saying today, balance is everything. [...] [laughs] Its important, its important. You notice I do drink delicious sodas. [...] I used to be able to have it really

easy [...] I could smoke one cigarette a month, and it never bothered me. But then [...] I got really, really, into it [last year]. And I'm going, this won't do, [...] So I just quit. So even smoking, I can see where you could, if you can manage it, having a cigarette occasionally, but really it is just keeping yourself in the best shape that you can to do the work.

These comments make it clear that Cloud Hunter may have “high standards” within Reclaiming or his particular local community, but that his definitions of “balance” and “better physical condition” are actually not particularly strict since they can encompass occasional smoking and drinking sugary soda. I think this final set of comments about balance is important because they put Cloud Hunter in context: when someone who says monthly smoking can fit into a healthy, sustainable, Earth-centered lifestyle calls a person out for not being “in shape” to do “the work” of magic, it carries even more weight than comments from someone with a strict lifestyle that might include veganism, yoga, martial arts, or some other regularly practiced physical/mental discipline. Put another way, if someone like Cloud Hunter is not willing to cut you slack about your lifestyle, you are probably really damaging yourself in either your mundane life, magical work, or both even if you have the skills and altruistic disposition to heal someone from a life-threatening illness.

The case of Cloud Hunter provides an example of what some people call “chronic magic,” that is magic-related illness related to doing intense rituals. Cloud Hunter himself had a mundane illness that was healed by magical rituals, which kept it at bay until mundane medicine produced new drug treatments whereas some of the very priestesses who performed healing for Cloud Hunter suffered illness during and after camp due to a combination of their physical, mental, and emotional condition and

intense “big magic” during camp. Another example of this “big magic” making people ill and in need of healing happened at DreamRoads camp in 2005, and I think it is worth recounting here using a mix of my own field observations and comments from a respondent, Bear, who has been profiled earlier in this chapter.

The theme for the 2005 DreamRoads camp was the story of Aradia, the avatar of the witches, but the particular ritual Bear recounts can be understood without an explanation of the entire cycle of rituals or even how the entire ritual went that evening. The important thing to know at the outset are that a portion of one evening’s ritual involved a segment designed so that campers could interact with the energy of “bottomless sorrow” associated with “dead mothers,” which was followed by singing and the tearing down of a “tower”/fortress of oppression PVC frame building with paper sides. Then we transitioned into a Spiral Dance in another location. This sorrowful energy was embodied in the ritual by seven campers who were selected to do *aspecting*, which is portrayed within Reclaiming as either a sacred sort of Method-style acting of a role or as spirit possession done within ritual, and tended by one experienced priestess, Moon Watcher. In 2005, Bear described how the ritual had provoked his most emotional moment and stated, “My most emotional moment was in Path this morning basically explaining about the archetype of sorrow. I’ve been in combat zones, I’ve seen people that have had their families wiped out or killed themselves. And I’ve experienced that myself and it’s sad. And my partner had trouble with *aspecting* and it was difficult bringing her back and she should’ve never done it.” I asked Bear if he tended his partner during ritual, and he responded:

I was afterwards. Through most of the night and [...] doing energy work on her what came out of her was a death rattle. For like 45 minutes, which is really hard to just hold on to your lover and just like hear a death rattle on their chest. And it- made me bitter. [...] We had some people that should have never been aspecting what they were aspecting. Given their personal histories, given their mental histories, and its like, they didn't come back. Or they had a really hard time coming back. And she's one of those, and that's harsh.[...] You just look at the people who kind of promulgated it, and they're friends too. And you go: you know she shouldn't have been doing this, and its like, and you're my friend too. And so you're torn between like being a little bit pissed off. Its like, OK you just cost me a whole lot of grief and hours of work and worry. You know, and its hard, its hard. You know because [in Path] I could feel myself kind of, kind of- not exactly tear up but become like emotional about it. [...] And I had the whole post-traumatic stress thing a long time ago, and it brings all that mess back. And its just sad. See that's the thing- its sad. And what they were aspecting was just sorrow. Like a bottomless sorrow [...]Its just, you know, there's just no way you can get around that. Its like, there's nothing that is going to make that better. There's just nothing. Nothing. Nothing you can say, nothing you can do. Nothing is going to restore the wholeness. [...] There's just going to be a void when its all done. And that's what happened last night with the tower. When the tower came down there were at least two individuals- the revenge of tearing the Tower down- all it did was it meant that that which they were railing against and pushing against no longer existed. And they were facing the abyss. And it is an unfillable abyss. Its just like there is no sorrow in the archetype of joy, there's no joy in the archetype of sorrow. Its just sorrow. You know and as humans we want to say, "oh well, you know if you do this, and this, and this, it will make it better," but when you are dealing with archetypes, that's it. Green, is green, is green. There is no red in it.

Bear's comments show the emotional depth reached in the ritual, and the negative consequences the aspecting had for his partner as well as other people who "should never have been aspecting" according to Bear. His partner experienced physical symptoms such as the "death rattle" on her chest, and Bear stayed up much of the night trying to heal her using energy work. This experience provoked memories of post-traumatic stress in Bear himself, and left the healer arguably needing to be healed, and feeling like he needed to discuss the archetype of sorrow in Path class the next morning. This discussion was emotionally provocative, but not necessarily healing since Bear's

point as I understand it was that experiencing bottomless sorrow is not something that can be healed. As he put it in Path class, “there are some things that do not make you stronger, they just kick the crap out of you” and these are things you move on from “because nothing is going to restore that wholeness.” Bear identified as a healer, but recognized that some experiences could not be healed, and faulted the ritual planners for letting people with fragile mental and/or physical health aspect death/sorrow.

I interviewed Bear a year later in 2006, and he began discussing the events at DreamRoads with the same intensity as the year before. Bear prefaced his comments about the long-term consequences of the aspecting with some ideas about the consequences of recreational versus ritualized shamanic drug use:

And it’s really a traditional thing. [...] There are just ways to do it. If you just take it recreationally, it’ll drive you mad. You know, but if you do it ritually and do it, and they develop these ways of doing it [...] And it’s like [some people] just go, oh, well you know [the traditional ritual method] doesn’t count. Let’s do it differently, it’s like, [in my opinion] you’re screwing yourself. And that’s what I see in a lot of the magical stuff. It’s like what are you thinking? [...] When we had all those people aspecting death, and I talked to Moon Watcher about that. [...] And it was like what are you doing having seven people who’ve never aspected before two of which have mental illness and you’re allowing them to aspect death? I mean it’s not, you’re not aspecting what’s fun in here. You’re aspecting death with two people that I know of, one of who has since died. You know and they have mental problems and problems specifically around death and dying and you’re letting them do that. So, what’s up? And I tended one of them [post-ritual] and she was like off her nut all night.

Bear’s comments show that magical work, in this case aspecting death by people who were relatively new to the skill, can exacerbate pre-existing mundane physical and mental health problems. In fact, Bear goes so far as to implicitly link aspecting the archetype of death during camp to one camper’s untimely death before DreamRoads 2006. Bear described his partner, who he tended post-ritual, as “off her nut all night”

whereas a fellow camper who saw this individual said she looked “ridden hard and put away wet” when she came to evening snack. The five other campers that aspected death in that ritual seemed healthy after the ritual. They were tended as a group by Moon Watcher, and did not receive extra healing after the ritual the way Bear’s companion did. It may be that their experience aspecting death/sorrow was not as deep as the immersion described by Bear in 2005 in which the two “fragile aspectors” confronted “the abyss” and bottomless sorrow while the other five people tapped into the experience at a manageable level that allowed them to “come back” without much trouble as Bear put it. Bear’s partner is another case of chronic magic because the aspecting contributed to her ill health post-ritual, and Bear seems to link the other fragile aspector’s death to his lack of “return” from the aspecting experience and confrontation with “the abyss.” This is another example of magical reasoning being layered together with mundane explanations since the mental, physical, and emotional health of both of the fragile aspectors were not robust going into the experience. The chain of events in this case is of not-so-healthy people going into an intense ritual not to be healed or offer healing per se, but to build a skill- aspecting, and then coming out of the ritual in rough mental, physical, and emotional shape that necessitated extra “work and worry” from healers post-ritual performed for altruistic reasons and not-for-profit.

The three cases discussed in this section illustrate healing at the individual level, meaning that a single individual is the object of healing by another individual or a group of priestesses. These healings happen both during and after camp itself, and are performed both for-profit by healers who vend bodywork such as massage and Reiki

and on a non-profit basis if someone falls seriously ill. The cases also illustrate that some people in Reclaiming think healers need to take better care of themselves, and that this care or staying “in shape” involves keeping up one’s mental, physical, and emotional health. In addition to this point, the cases illustrate that healing itself and ritual work such as aspecting or a high-energy ritual may foster illness in either priestesses and healers or regular ritual participants. I have argued that understanding healing in Reclaiming is best accomplished by attending to both mundane mental, physical, and emotional aspects of health and illness as well as the role magical energy plays in experiences of health and illness. Grasping this blending or layering of magical and mundane explanations and perceptions associated with healing is a necessary step prior to exploring what actually happens camp regarding healing, and the discussion I present here in Chapter Three may help readers see the discussion of Spiralheart’s Inanna and Ereshkigal-themed camp in 2000 in Chapter One in a new light.

Turning to the connection between the inflow and outflow data and the other data we have seen regarding healing, I think there are some surprising findings. The anecdotes regarding healing show that people such as Bear and Vellamo do Reiki, yet there is no mention of Reiki in the inflow and outflow data from people who attended Spiralheart 2004. Looking back at the inflow and outflow diagrams, there is also very little evidence of Spiralheart either receiving or sending people out to groups associated with healing. For example, alternative healing and work at a Wellness Center were mentioned, but the Pagan Alliance of Nurses and groups associated with massage or Reiki were not. The cases I have presented in this chapter illustrate that both new and

veteran participants with these skills or in these professions were present at the Intensive, but they did not link these activities into discussions of how they found Reclaiming (the inflow and outflow data), what they did after camp, or what activism currently means to them. I interpret these patterns as people letting some of their skills/resources either stay dormant for the duration of the event or keeping them segregated into specific arenas of camp life such as spaces where bodywork and other healing get exchanged or vended. Put another way, I think people “turn on” and “turn off” their relationships to healing and identities as healers, and it is plausible that when surveyed after camp they were “turned off.” In order to understand these patterns further, I argue in subsequent chapters that healing should be linked to strategic, seemingly fragmented use of individual skills which is supported by the absence of an institutionalized healing ritual at Spiralheart camp (Chapter Four) and resources and a processual, cyclical approach to self-transformation, which includes the cultivation of cognitive, emotional, and somatic flexibility (Chapter Five). This transformative work is compatible with healing one’s own self as well as the wider world, which sums up Reclaiming’s “magical activist” project that fuses personal, social, and political change.

6) Conclusion

This chapter has presented information about the broader universe of movements that might send and receive people to/from Reclaiming and the Intensive events. I focused primarily on tracing inflows of people into the Intensive and illustrating the cross-movement ties of people who elected to become witches for a week in 2004 at the Spiralheart Intensive. In addition I discussed the contrast between the movement

origins and destinations of Witchcamp participants after illustrating that the Spiralheart 2004 event participants did not return to the exact same groups and movements that they reported being linked to prior to the event. The data used in this discussion come from respondents who answered the post-event survey or did an in-depth interview in 2004 along with comments from respondents about their biographies gathered during the Intensive itself in my fieldnotes. In future analyses, the inflow and outflow discussion can be expanded to include the longitudinal data I collected in 2005 and 2006 at both Spiralheart and DreamRoads.

The analytical payoff of this section, aside from answering the question: “where do these people come from” is a discussion of the costs and benefits of Reclaiming’s “and” logic, which is cooperative rather than competitive. Being able to be “Reclaiming and ...” another group or movement facilitates multiple, in-depth commitments over time rather than deep involvement in one group or another group at a single point in time, which is fostered by the “or logic” of some groups and movements. I argue that “and logic” should help Reclaiming to cross-pollinate ideas and resources with other movements, but the movement has more to gain from sharing people with widely disparate groups than it does with ideologically close groups such as the Unitarian Universalists, Pagan Cluster, Radical Faeries, and Feri Wicca. These diverse campers are few and far between, but they are more likely to contribute unusual innovations to Reclaiming and to help keep the movement as a whole and the Intensives in particular from stagnating.

Chapter Three also presented profiles of members of the 2004 Path class cohort as well as the 2000 Intensive veterans who were present for the Inanna-Ereshkigal themed camp, which was marked by illness and discussed in-depth in Chapter One. Introducing these cases helps illustrate the diverse group of people present within Spiralheart and it makes readers familiar with a set of newcomers and veterans whose cases may be revisited in subsequent chapters in discussions of who stayed in the community after 2004, how self-transformations work in Reclaiming, and how people transition into and out of leadership roles in the Spiralheart community and Reclaiming as a whole.

The third chapter also includes a discussion of health and healing, which illustrates how people blend mundane approaches to mental, emotional, and somatic-sensory perception with the idea of magical energy. Put another way, both health and illness are understood and experienced using a blend of magical energy and everyday experiences that are compatible with scientific rationality. This approach to health and healing is challenging to translate to an audience of outsiders to the Neo-Pagan subculture, and I drew on three cases of individual healing to show the variety of settings in which healing is performed, the mix of for-profit and non-profit healing within the Intensives, and the paradox that acting as a healer to someone or performing within a ritual in service of the community may make someone ill and in need of healing too. The cases I explore show people actively engaged in healing, but readers should not assume that healing is primary focus of an Intensive event, for example the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive was dominated by concerns about supporting and energetically “feeding” the Pagan Cluster activists prior to a major protest event. Healing groups and movements did not figure

prominently into the inflow and outflow patterns in 2004, but people within the community did have connections to Reiki healing, training in massage, or professional identities as doctors, nurses, and other health professionals. These people participate in healing “work” when they want to rather than developing a camp-wide institution of the healing-specific ritual, and in subsequent chapters I will explore how this kind of behavior and approach to healing is compatible with a processual, cyclical approach to self-transformation and the cultivation of cognitive, emotional, and somatic flexibility.

In the next chapter, I extend the work I have done in Chapter Three on “and logic.” So far I have shown that “and logic” helps foster diversity with Reclaiming broadly and the Spiralheart community specifically. Identifying as “Reclaiming and ...” is both a byproduct of involvement with the movement as well as a factor that contributes to involvement with the movement and attending Intensive events. “And logic” and being a witch for a week at the Intensives can be mutually reinforcing, and in Chapter Four I move to examining how experiences in Path class, affinity group, and evening ritual that cultivate emotional, cognitive, and somatic flexibility may operate as gateways to “and logic” and vice versa. For example, feeling multiple emotions or identifying with multiple characters in the story enactments in an evening ritual may prime a person for the cognitive openness that “and logic” requires. As readers will see in Chapter Four, there are a number of different ways that a person may become more cognitively, emotionally, and somatically flexible due to being a witch for a week, and these forms of flexibility should not be treated as synonymous with the cognitive shifts involved with “and logic.” Cognitive flexibility regarding identity labels is not reducible to other forms

of flexibility regarding thoughts and ideas or other mental work any more than it is reducible to emotional flexibility such as emotional volatility or experiences of simultaneous, combined emotions.

Chapter Four: What gets done at camp?

1) Introduction

Having discussed “and logic” in Chapter Three, which is important theoretically because the idea helps me understand the logical underpinnings of how cognitive, emotional, and somatic flexibility are cultivated in Reclaiming, in this chapter I discuss the specific settings “where the action happens” at the Intensives. The movement exhibits web and cell-like structures at the organization and group levels, and the same connective rather than exclusionary logic is present during entries into and exits from the Intensives, Reclaiming communities, and some of the ritual themselves as we saw in my account of the Spiral Dance in Chapter One. What I think shines through the structural unpacking of how the Intensive is set that I do in Chapter Four is that beneath the glittery, colorful, playful, Anarcho/Eco/Goth/Hippy/Renaissance Fair⁸⁶ surface is a deliberately, rationally crafted structure of nested rituals and activities put together using a utilitarian approach focused on creating a safe space for deep, sustained *emotion work* (Hochschild 2003) and ritualizing.

In line with the Principles of Unity of the movement (see Appendix B), people are “invited” rather than coerced into this kind of work, meaning that they can opt out of activities without being sanctioned. This being said, I offer examples within Chapter Four of individuals who break norms related to “working” and discuss how their actions are managed by organizers and/or other campers. I use “managed” rather than sanctioned here because the Intensives’ default mode of conflict management as far as I can tell is

⁸⁶ I am sure I missed some facets of camp culture, and hope within-movement readers will pardon the omissions.

“processing” and discussing what went wrong and how everyone feels. This processing is done prior to people in authority doling out any necessary sanctions including removing the person from the Intensive.

The issue of safe spaces is crucial for understanding three topics. First, the emotion and self-transformative work people do at the Intensive. Second, the idea that each segment of camp is a ritual in and of itself constructed to optimize both the doing of ritual and further socialization into Reclaiming and “magical activism.” These segments are complementary in that the same work is not done in each one, but the skill-building and practices do overlap. Thus, the socialization process is cumulative over the course of camp both within and between segments, particularly the sequentially organized Path classes and evening rituals. The affinity group tends to run in a cyclical way during the week-long Intensive, meaning it is basically the same ritual each day. This structure offers both mid-day continuity and a kind of touchstone every day to campers as well as a space to decompress between working in the morning and working in the evening. Third, the broader point that camp as a whole is a crucible for work that would be difficult or impossible in everyday life at the same depth and intensity. Entering the safe container of like-minded people is a ritual, an annual pilgrimage to community, and time for active, deep socialization.

Here at the beginning of Chapter Four is a good place for me to discuss how these ideas I just raised connect to social theory. I will discuss topics where I think new theoretical ground needs to be broken in order to understand the structure and execution of “the work” of camp including but not limited to the provocation of intense

emotions and blends of emotions in the large-group evening rituals. I comment briefly in a paragraph or two related to each of the three points I made regarding safety in order to keep the theoretical discussion from getting lengthy and overwhelming. Overall I think the Intensive as a ritual provides predictability, safety, and boundaries to experiences that make it possible for intense emotional/cognitive/somatic episodes to occur for people who then have the support and “technology”/tools to manage and integrate what they go through. People at the Intensives are not “left hanging” as Sanura emphasized to me multiple times at my first camp.

Emotions, Emotion Work and Self-transformations

One idea that forms the bedrock of the sociology of emotions is Arlie Hochschild’s (2003) idea that people do deliberate “emotion work” and “emotion management” meaning that they actively seek to evoke or eliminate particular emotions and feelings as well as associated facial and bodily displays to meet the expectations of people such as employers or family. Emotion management includes both “surface acting” from the outside in to internal experiences as well as “deep acting” that shift the internal experiences first and moves outward to external, social displays of emotion (Hochschild 1983; 1990). Rather than focusing on the social processes that shape emotions, which is what Hochschild’s ideas are excellent at helping sociologists do, I was interested in intense emotions and how emotions themselves shifted over time as people went through experiences such cognitive liberation (McAdam 1999), moral shock (Jasper 1997) or conversion experiences and other moments of self-transformation once people get committed to social or religious movements. Both the emotional turn sociological

work on social movements has taken over the past twenty years (see Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001; Jasper 2012), the pure sociology of Donald Black (2000), and IR chain theory (Collins 2004; Summers-Effler 2010) led me to think that 1) emotions mattered, 2) they could be treated “structurally” like building blocks in my theorizing, and 3) that temporality and general “emotional energy” (Collins 2004) should be incorporated into work on movement recruitment and commitment.

The work I do in this dissertation departs from the emotion management paradigm and contributes to work on emotional intensity in the sociology of emotions, which has been lacking (Turner and Stets 2006: 13). I found that I needed to develop new conceptual tools in order to follow through on treating emotions like building blocks and examine how blocks of emotions are connected through time for individuals and groups. I wanted to think about the social geometry of emotions, and figure out how to map flows of particular emotions and “flavors” of emotional energy (positive, negative, active, lethargic, etc.) through time. This approach builds on IR chain theory (Collins 2004), but departs from it because he theorizes emotional energy as having a uniformly “positive” flavor that people desire all the time. In contrast, I work on multiple, sometimes contradictory combinations of emotions such as hope and sadness or courage and confusion as well as the associated flows of emotional energy. This work has led me to contribute the ideas of the “emotion shape” and “emotion chain” (Williamson 2011), which I explain further and work with later in Chapter Four. These ideas help expand the sociology emotions by improving the language we have for talking about emotion patterns created by everyday emotion management as well as intense

conversion or awakening experiences that are either spontaneous or deliberately provoked by group leaders. The concepts also aid sociological thinking regarding the connectivity between particular emotions experienced by individuals or groups since the concepts work for multiple levels of analysis.

Multiple, Complementary Rituals Intended to Build Multi-Modal Flexibility

I have made it clear, I hope, that I think IR chain theory is valuable, and that my treatment of *emotional energy* departs from the way Collins (2004) himself uses it. My work also departs from orthodox IR chain theory because the topic I study and theorize about, the Reclaiming Intensive, does not fall into the realm of the regular flow of social life. I focus on an annual event that is anything but everyday in that it provides a safe container with likeminded people who do not see each other regularly. The Intensives use a nested structure which I think is apparent from the account of the first evening at camp I provided in Chapter One. Being at the event itself is a ritual, and people then select which pieces of camp, the Path classes, affinity groups, and evening rituals, they participate in for the duration of the week. These smaller segments are a key attraction for participants, but short shrift should not be given to other aspects of the larger camp as a ritual including the communal meals, the liminality that comes with camping (even cabin camping) for a week, and the overall break campers make with their lives back home. Thus, I think it is fair to approach the Path classes, affinity groups, and evening rituals as smaller rituals nested within the larger ritual of the Intensive event as a whole.

It may sound strange, but I find it useful to approach both the Intensive as a whole and the specific segments as forms of “ritual technology,” meaning that the ritual itself

is a technology or resource for accomplishing a specific goal. I think this term helps avoid confusion with resource mobilization approaches within sociology of social movements, which still take a narrower approach to what constitutes a “resource.” Emotion patterns and specific sorts of rituals do not count as resources to these scholars whereas money and cross-movement social ties do (Edwards and McCarthy 2004; Jenkins 1983; McCarthy and Zald 2002). Technologies and resources may end up in different hands, and I mean for the concept to be broader in emphasis than a specific technique, such as cutting the lights out during a ritual or a skill such as anchoring the energy of a ritual. Thus, the Intensive event or a ritual such as the morning Path class is a “ritual technology” that emotionally, cognitively, and somatically moves people. The technologies may be portable between different ritual environments or between groups and ritual technologies produce outcomes. I also argue that particular emotion patterns associated with rituals are also ritual technologies when they are deliberately evoked and/or modified over time by leaders and organizers. This makes spontaneous patterns potentially emergent ritual technologies, which then may get incorporated into the set of technologies used within the movement. Thinking about Reclaiming-style ritual in this manner makes comparisons to communal groups and new religious movements more productive because specific portable ritual technologies can be identified and compared between movements. The same is true for social and political movements, and considering ritual technology has helped me think through the overlap between week-long Intensives events run by the Radical Faeries (Hennen 2008) and Raelians (Palmer 2004) and the Reclaiming Intensives. In short, it seems that the technology nested inside

each event varies since neither the Radical Faeries nor the Raelians run co-taught morning classes run as a ritual in sacred space similar to the Path class.

Why Rituals Matter for Movement Socialization

I think the most basic way to argue that ritual matters for movement socialization is to state that movements use them to achieve the goal of cracking people open- mentally, emotionally, and physically- and in this open, perhaps vulnerable state people are more likely to take what the movement offering than they are during their solid, guarded everyday ways of being. Theories about new religious movements and conversions have been quite good at pointing out that people may be either vulnerable in their everyday walking around state or more easy to “crack” when placed in an environment with other recruits depending on their life circumstances (Lofland and Stark 1965; Sherkat and Wilson 1995; Snow and Machalek 1984). These ideas overlap with other sociological theories of resocialization, which can happen during any stage of a person’s life.

My work concentrates on understanding patterns of intense emotions associated with rituals as well as the specific emotions provoked by ritual technologies such as the Path class and the evening rituals. Rituals provide structure to social life, and enable movements to deliberately structure the experiences of recruits and veterans for a certain amount of time. In addition, rituals provide a coping mechanism in a sense for the very cognitive, emotional and somatic outcomes they seek to produce because the rituals offer movement-sanctioned tools for making sense of experiences. Rituals both provoke a disease and then provide a cure if reader want to think cynically about the

process. In sum, rituals are very bound up with what Reclaiming specifically, and many other movements generally, do to recruit and retain members, and if deliberate, structured work with intense emotions is the goal, a movement needs ritual to make a space safe enough for people to get into that state and requires ritual to efficiently help groups manage their cognitions, emotions, and bodily states once they get intense.

Structure of the Chapter

This chapter is focused on answering the questions of how the Intensive format works on the ground and why the Intensive format is used by Reclaiming to (re)socialize people into “magical activism.” The explanation focuses on the Intensive as a venue for “work,” how this norm of working can be broken, and the consequences for individuals such as leaving entirely, sanctions, and processing discussions. I then tackle the question “what happens at an Intensive?” and describe the three main pieces of an Intensive drawing on ethnographic data from the 2004 Spiraheart camp and 2005 DreamRoads camps.

In addition, I introduce the temporal mapping of the “emotional arc of the week” in this chapter. The emotional arc of the week is one type of “emotion shape” which displays fluctuations in properties of an emotion such as intensity or tone over time as a shape such as a curved “arc.” I also work with other conceptual tools such as the “emotion chain” to make sense of flows of emotional energy as well as Reclaiming’s “magical energy.” I argue that we need to pay attention to mind/body/emotion connections to make sense of how people are socialized into perceiving magical energy

and focus on two types of Path classes to show how this happens for novice and veteran campers.

Next, I turn to a brief consideration of the puzzle of why Spiralheart camp did have the institution of an all-camp healing ritual during my fieldwork from 2004-6. This discussion is the analytical opposite of the previous sections of Chapter Four in the sense that it seeks to understand why an event **did not** occur rather than outline what actually happened at camp. I argue that the absence of the healing ritual is notable since healing is a goal for both individual campers (see Chapter Two) and the movement as a whole (see the Principle of Unity document in Appendix B). In addition, I have shown in Chapter One that the 2004 camp worked effectively with an intensely emotional story focused on the goddess Amaterasu which might have stimulated the need for an all-camp healing ritual one afternoon or evening. In spite of these factors, a healing ritual did not happen. In this section of Chapter Four I offer two plausible explanations for why things played out the way they did at Spiralheart's camp in 2004 while also considering how the absence of the healing ritual influences socialization regarding healing.

I conclude this chapter by returning to the issue of moments when socialization/action in one site (such as the evening ritual) is reinforced by action in another site (such as a Path class) to show how socialization can subtly build up during the course of the week. Having shown these structures and processes the chapter ends with the issue of what happens after the week of the Intensive since there are fifty-one other weeks in the year. I argue that camp is structured to provide a safe space for

ritualizing by campers willing to engage in “the work” and that this work may carry over into the rest of the year from experiences in just the Path classes, affinity groups, and evening rituals or some combination of these three main segments of camp.

2) Doing the “Work” During Camp: An Examination of Pre-camp Expectations

This section of Chapter Four begins my answer to the question “what happens at camp?” because the expectations the campers bring with them influence both the goals they try to achieve during the Intensive as well as their responses to spontaneous and planned events that occur at camp. The points I make in this section have a connection to the discussion of goals I presented in Chapter Two, and readers should keep in mind two core points about the Intensive participants: 1) their expectations and goals are varied, much as their backgrounds exhibit diversity and 2) campers’ expectations involve “work” but that work may include taking a vacation or for-profit enterprises such as vending. In addition, I want to make the point at the outset of this discussion that pre-camp expectations are subject to flexibility. What I mean by this is that campers are generally open to change and surprises during their time at the Intensive, particularly during their first year at camp even they have done some anticipatory socialization and picked up expectations from veteran campers in their social network or from an online listserv run by a camp community.

In spite of this flexibility and the openness to diversity that characterizes camp, there are ways to break the norm of working and going through an acceptable, self-transformation over time. I return to this issue after analyzing campers’ expectations and activities. This analysis demonstrates how much variety is present in what campers

expect to learn and then actually do during the first half of camp. The data also show that people at the Intensive seem to expect “work” and get it blended with elements of a vacation including activities such as swimming and extra time for rest. Campers also do work blended with a vacation since they get a break from their daily living arrangements and indulgence in that they do not have to cook at all or clean regularly. They also get to dress as they like. I will argue that major breaks of norms regarding doing “the work” are pretty rare in the East Coast groups I studied, and usually managed with sanctions that reintegrate people into the camp community.

Methods for Collecting the 2004 During-event Survey Data

Readers should keep in mind that my own pre-camp socialization did not include information gleaned from pre-existing social networks or from participation on Spiralheart’s listserv. This makes me an unusual case, and it is fortunate that I gathered data about pre-camp expectations on the during-event survey I conducted in 2004 at Spiralheart. I examine some of these data in this section of Chapter Four. The responses come from a total sample of twenty-two people who completed the survey. The response rate is twenty-three percent if I include the teaching team. If the fourteen teachers are excluded, then the response rate is twenty-seven percent. None of the team took the during-event survey although they were present in the dining hall the night I distributed it. I think this non-response is a telling indicator of how much work goes into running the morning Path classes and planning the evening rituals.

The fifth question on the two-page survey was open-ended and asked: What are some things you expected to learn during camp? It was followed by the sixth question:

List four things you have done or learned at camp *so far* (for example: swimming, learned the history of Reclaiming, or built community during fireside discussions). I refer to these questions as “Q5” and “Q6” respectively when I present the data in the next sub-section. Coupled together the answers to these questions provide me with a picture of the relationship between individual expectations regarding camp and the reality of what they did during camp up to the midpoint including Wednesday evening and Thursday morning. All of these surveys were collected before dinner on Thursday.

Data on Pre- Camp Expectations and the Realities of Camp in 2004

The data I analyze here include responses from campers that readers have “met” in the earlier chapters of the dissertation, both veterans and newcomers. I am limiting the analysis to seven newcomers and seven veterans due to space constraints. This small sample of fourteen responses is enough to give readers a sense of trends in the data. I am grouping the responses by this status, and will refer to each respondent by their pseudonym along with providing very basic demographic information, when available, including the person’s gender and age group (“Younger” (20s-30s), “Middle” (40s to 50s), or “Elder” (60s or older), and whether the person attended either the Crones or Pagan Cluster affinity groups (“Crones”, “Cluster”, or “Other Affinity”). I have included the affinity group information because it is one important indicator of goals and expectations. One notable trend in these data is the weight given to religious and healing activities versus the lack of emphasis on activism.

Data from New Campers

I present just the data from people who were new campers at Spiralheart in 2004 in this section. I am leaving any and all summary points about the data for the analysis section.

1) Calandra (Female, Younger, Other Affinity) Q5: “More about the elements, magical tools and trance and aspecting, small group dynamics, anatomy of ritual.” Q6: 1) Shared the story of my passionate works. 2) Met new people. 3) Created sacred space. 4) Relaxed into my authentic self.

2) Cascade (Male, Middle, Other Affinity) Q5: Learn more about using magic. Q6: No response.

3) Rhea (Female, Younger, Other Affinity) Q5: How to build community and integrate the sacred to create a space that is emotionally and spiritually safe, creative, and encouraging of growth. Q6: 1) Built community through ritual, teaching, and affinity group. 2) Camped [in a cabin] and journaled each night. 3) Enjoyed good food. 4) Learned trancing.

4) Desta (Female, Middle, Other Affinity) Q5: History of Reclaiming. Ritual. Raised awareness. Magick. Q6: 1) History of the movement. 2) Energy sensing. 3) Kindness of new friends. 4) Interaction with community.

5) Egeria (Female, Younger, Other Affinity) Q5: Meditation techniques; new perspective on our world. Q6: 1) Swimming. 2) Napping. 3) Journaling. 4) Community building (meeting new people).

6) Cove (Female, Middle, Crones) Q5: Different aspects of the craft. Q6: 1) History of Reclaiming. 2) How to cast a circle.

7) Chan (Female, Younger, Other Affinity) Q5: About Reclaiming

traditions/terms/concepts. About local networking opportunities. New chants and songs. New ritual activities and formats. Q6: 1) Swimming. 2) Oracular voice trio activity in Temple of Artistry Path. 3) Danced to cast a circle. 4) Found some bones in the woods.

Data from Veterans

I present just the data from people who were veteran campers at Spiralheart in 2004 in this section. A “veteran” for my purposes here is defined loosely and may have attended another Witchcamp during a previous year not solely Spiralheart camp. I am leaving any and all summary points about the data for the analysis section.

1) Sanura (Female, Elder, Crones) Q5: I have learned not to make assumptions. It always turns out to be about thing(s) I did not anticipate. Q6: 1) More about Tarot cards in general, especially [card] 20. 2) The rest is hard because it is about having experiences and processing them- not about acquiring information per se.

2) Li Mya (Female, Middle, Crones) Q5: 1) I chose a path focused on music and movement. 2) I expect to learn new ritual techniques. 3) I expect to learn more about myself. Q6: 1) Have learned several new chants. 2) Have helped create a Crone affinity ritual. 3) Have gotten bodywork done. 4) Have asked for a very helpful Tarot reading.

3) Firefly (Female, Younger, Cluster) Q5: Enhance my ritual skills. Learn more about tarot and tarot readings. Q6: 1) Learned the history of tarot. 2) Built community connection by meeting people who live near my home. 3) Swam skylad. 4) Tranced.

4) Ukko (Female, Middle, Crones) Q5: Breathing. Listening. Personal Power. Witchwork for peace. Q6: 1) meditative infinity-sign swim before breakfast every day. 2)

Ritual birthing with great midwives-taken by the mysterie. 3) Learned more about harmonics. 4) Danced, drummed, etc.

5) Geas (Male, Middle, Other Affinity) Q5: Rituals. Q6: No response.

6) Moonbeam (Female, Younger, Other Affinity) Q5: Better grounding and flexibility with my energy. Tolerance of being in solitude. Joy of being in community. Don't know-it's a mystery. Q6: 1) Energy working and trance techniques. 2) Relearned being open to mystery. 3) Being safe with powerful feelings. 4) Drum rhythms.

7) Nu (Male, Middle, Cluster) Q5: Nothing in particular. Q6: 1) Played music. 2) Slept. 3) Talked to people. 4) Bought auction item.

Analysis of Pre- Camp Expectations and the Realities of Camp in 2004

One general trend in these responses that I see is that both the expectations and activities of the new campers and veterans do not stand in marked contrast to each other. I think the responses illustrate a "continuum of learning" since a new camper such as Cascade might state that he expected to "learn more about using magic," while a young veteran such as Moonbeam expected "better grounding and flexibility with my energy," and a seasoned veteran such as Li Mya expected "to learn new ritual techniques." These responses all reflect a desire to learn and improve the use of magic, energy work techniques, and ritualizing, which are all components of Reclaiming-style ritual as well as a personal practice of magic and/or activism.

Another trend in these data runs a bit contrary to the "continuum of learning" idea I just argued for in the previous paragraph. Readers may have noticed that the responses from men are not very verbose. Among the new campers Cascade did not respond to Q6

while the other six respondents who were all female did. Among the veterans Geas exhibited the same pattern for Q6 while Nu answered Q5 with “nothing in particular.” All five of the female veterans answered both questions, and several of the veteran women mentioned expectations or activities involving opening to “mystery” or going into the experience with “assumptions.” For example, Sanura stated, “I have learned not to make assumptions. It always turns out to be about thing(s) I did not anticipate.” Moonbeam commented at the end of her expectations list “Don’t know- it’s a mystery” while Ukko mentioned that she had been “taken by the mysterie” during a ritual birthing activity. Moonbeam reported that she “relearned being open to mystery.” These responses illustrate a trend not present in the data from new campers who do not mention “mystery” or avoiding assumptions in either their expectations or their experiences. Readers should also note that one of the Path classes offered at this camp was called “Mysteries and the Muse” (see Chapter Two; Appendix B) and this course may have influenced the comments.

I report the gender differences here because the men’s non-response to Q6 is puzzling, and Nu’s response to Q5 of “nothing in particular” struck me as similar to Sanura’s in some respects. I develop a fuller discussion of men’s experiences in Reclaiming in Chapter Five. In sum, I have questions about why the men responded with such short answers, and suspect that for veteran men the issue may be complicated by the flexibility, openness, and relationship to mystery present in some veterans’ responses. This trend does distinguish both the expectations and actions of veterans from those of new campers. I also find this trend particularly useful because it lends

some support to my ideas about the Intensives gradually cultivating mental, emotional, and somatic flexibility in people. If a person is open to mystery and willing to go into camp sans assumptions about what s/he will get out of it, then I think it is fair to say that the person is flexible in the sense s/he has general rather than specific goals, which may be attained through a variety of activities rather than one specific activity.

Next, I am going to make another argument about a distinction between the expectations and activities of veterans and new campers. I will then turn to analyzing similarities I see in the data, and will focus on three other general trends. One topic people learn about in the “Elements of Magic” Path class is the history of Reclaiming, and the data from new campers shows that only one person, Desta, listed learning about the movement’s history in her expectations. None of veteran campers listed the topic although Firefly mentioned that she “learned the history of tarot” in her Q6 answer. Among the new campers, only Desta and Cove, listed learning about Reclaiming’s history as a response to Q6. The new campers tended to list either meeting people or engaging in some sort of community-building when they answered Q6. For example, Calandra mentioned “met new people” and Rhea mentioned “built community through ritual, teaching, and affinity group” while only one veteran, Firefly, mentioned “built community by meeting people who live near my home.” Thus, community-building and meeting new people seem to be hallmarks of being a new camper even when the new campers do not explicitly list them as an expectation. In contrast, learning about the history of Reclaiming seems to be neither a shared expectation nor a shared activity that sticks with campers even when they engaged in it in Path class days before.

Instead both veterans and new campers report that they went swimming (N=4), slept/napped (N=2), and danced and/or drummed (N=3).

These data about what campers actually reported brings me to the first point about similarities between veterans and new campers: campers generally tend to expect and actually engage in a variety of activities during the Intensive including mundane-seeming actions such as “enjoyed good food” (Rhea) and “journaling” (Rhea, Egeria) as well as activities involving magical energy such as “trance” (Calandra, Rhea, PID 013, Moonbeam), “circle casting” (Cove, Chan) or “ritual” in a very general sense (Rhea, Chan, Li Mya, Ukko, Geas). Only one camper, Ukko, explicitly mentioned an expectation involving activism: “Witchwork for peace.” Neither of the people involved in the Cluster affinity group mentioned either expectations or activities solely focused on activism although several of the campers mention activities such as community-building and skills such as drumming and chanting, which could be useful for both witches and activists. More of the expectations and activities mentioned health-physical, emotional, and mental and physical activities. For example, Moonbeam listed “being safe with powerful feelings” while Rhea expected to “create a space that is emotionally and spiritually safe.” Li Mya mentioned “Have gotten bodywork done” and we know that several campers mentioned swimming, dancing, drumming, and sleep/napping. I think these expectations and activities help illustrate Reclaiming’s emphasis on healing, the body, and self-care more generally, and they stand out to me in these data as much as the religious/magical comments involving ritual, magic(k) (Calandra, Cascade, Desta), energy work or “sensing”, tarot or other oracles (Chan, Sanura, Li Mya, Firefly), and

sacred music (Chan, Li Mya, Ukko, Moonbeam, Nu). The responses from both new campers and veterans seem relatively religious yet even the stand-out veteran response of “being open to mystery” can translate into a skill that is helpful in direct action as well as event planning such as organizer meetings or consensus process discussions. Thus, I would caution people against seeing these data as a justification for framing Spiralheart as a primarily religious Intensive, and stopping there because what people expect to do and actually accomplish at the event is more nuanced, complex and varied.

The second point I want to make about these data is that I think both the expectations and activity comments show that the Path classes, both “Elements of Magic” and other Paths such as Mysteries and the Muse: Music Dance and the Arts, Art as Divine Embodiment: The Temple of Artistry, and Oracle Theatre are a meaningful part of camp. Paths are a place for doing “the work” whatever that means to the individual, and campers such as Li Mya may pre-select their Path class and integrate it their expectations. This same pattern holds for the new campers who may plan to take Elements in order to “learn more about using magic” (Cascade), learn “different aspects of the craft” (Cove), or generally get “raised awareness” (Desta). Readers will learn more about how path class actually functions in the next major section of Chapter Four, and I will return to this point about all sorts of Path classes being important tools for camper socialization and expectation/goal-attainment within that section.

The third and final point I want to make regarding these data relates to the tension between what the campers expected and the activities they actually pursued during the first half of the Intensive. I found that both new campers and veterans reported

expecting to learn something, and then actually achieving the goal. For example, Calandra expected to learn about the “anatomy of a ritual” and then “created sacred space” while Desta expected to learn about the “history of Reclaiming” and confirmed that she did so in her Q6 answer. Among the veterans Moonbeam expected to learn “better grounding and flexibility with my energy” and reported doing “energy working and trance techniques” while Ukko expected “listening” and actually “learned more about harmonics” and Firefly expected to “learn more about tarot” and then reported learning the history of tarot on Q6. Out of the sample of fourteen, only Egeria answered both Q5 and Q6 and did not have a “match” between what she expected and her actual activities. Both Sanura and Nu might also be construed as fitting into this category since they reported not having any expectations, and then gave answers to Q6. Overall I think these data illustrate a creative tension in that the campers do seem to have achieved some of their goals/expectations by the mid-point of the Intensive, but they also report activities and expectations consistent with surprises, openness to change, and a willingness to engage in activities they did not expect in Path classes, affinity group, and evening rituals. Next, I return to the issue of norms regarding “doing the work” and the consequences of breaking them.

Understanding Norm-Breaking Regarding Doing “the Work” and the Consequences

A discussion of how norms get broken at camp could fill at least a chapter just by itself, and in this section of Chapter Four I briefly discuss the topic of doing “the work”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Behavior-wise this “work” includes participating in Path classes, affinity groups, and the evening rituals. The attitudinal component of “the work” includes displaying

as a norm of the Intensive along with the consequences of breaking this norm. A good starting point for this discussion is the idea that it is actually pretty difficult to get kicked out of an Intensive. Over the course of three Spiralheart events and two DreamRoads events between 2004 and 2006, I learned about one person self-selecting herself out of camp by walking out the first evening while two other people stayed for the duration of Spiralheart camp, but were dissatisfied and may have asked for refunds and/or threatened to sue the community for false advertising.

One of these campers refused to be in an affinity group, and she is one of the best examples I have of someone explicitly and unapologetically not doing “the work” of camp. The organizers treated this individual, who was a new camper, as “confused” and waited for her to learn her lesson about participating in affinity group. By the middle of camp when the camper tried to reach out to other people “without an affinity group” the organizers assumed that she had changed her mind, and tried to place her into a large group that they thought could integrate her. The camper actually wanted just to go hiking and not to do “the work” of affinity group, and somehow her personal combination of refusing to be in a group, being new, and reaching out to people about an alternative course of action (hiking) mid-week was enough to get sanctions rather than support. The organizers scuttled the hiking plan and gently forced the camper to attend the affinity group and do “the work” everyone else was supposedly doing in the early afternoon.

openness to learning and change as well as a version of the “questioning attitude” regarding power arrangements mentioned in the Principles of Unity (PoU).

I am saying the camper was “gently forced” because the whole process was conducted with a veneer of politeness, good cheer, and concern on the part of the organizers. The camper opted to speak out during lunch, and rather than act aggressively to stop the camper on the spot during or immediately after the announcement the camp ops person acted passively in the moment, and aggressively after lunch was over by going to the camper individually and informing the camper that s/he understood from the camper’s announcement that the camper was lonely, but the camper’s announcement was moot because “everyone was already in an affinity group.” The camp ops person then went on to inform the camper that one would be difficult to join, but that he had spoken with people associated with one large affinity group, which could accommodate the camper.

The way the camper framed the situation in a lunch discussion included that fact that the operations person told the camper that this was a generous offer and that the camper should try the group at least one time. The camper then agreed to not go hiking and try the group, and after-the-fact recounted feeling misunderstood by the camp ops person and the affinity group, pressured to do something s/he did not want to do, and emotionally distraught by the prospect of interacting with the affinity group. The camper went to the group, but was deeply unhappy and vocal about it for the rest of camp. Compounding the incident is the fact that veteran camper friends of this camper informed the camper that the camp ops person had “misspoken” regarding affinity groups and that a few people always opted out. The veterans did not call the representation a lie, and thus I think the whole interaction was “gentle,” yet involved

social pressure and strategic misunderstanding and misspeaking (grounded in ideals and not realities of camp) by the camp ops person in order to achieve the goal of getting this deviant camper into an affinity group and silencing her desire for other activities during that time slot. Both of these goals were accomplished.

A second example of someone not doing “the work” and breaking the norm by acting too instrumentally during camp was Jone Salomonsen’s giving her research priority and surreptitiously recording of part of an evening ritual at British Columbia Witchcamp (2002: 116-119). Acting as a vendor or professional teacher with a profit motive or a researcher trying to maximize data quality first, and as a camper with a personal growth and “work” agenda second also breaks norms for doing “the work” in that personal and collective growth and change are supposed to be everyone’s top priority at the Intensive. Salomonsen was sanctioned using a group processing discussion as well as one-on-one processing during camp and back at home in her local community (2002: 119-123). Her case illustrates how forgiving Reclaiming communities can be.

Salomonsen’s account (2002) makes it clear that norms about power arrangements and collective boundaries were also broken in that Salomonsen took decision-making power that belonged to the community for herself and violated the privacy boundary set around the average Reclaiming-style ritual. In the earlier case from Spiralheart, the camper herself acted as “her own authority” in Reclaiming parlance by opting out of affinity group yet this action kept her out of an arena for “the work” without a justification such as being at the end of hard personal transformative work and being at a “vacation mode” point in her transformative cycle. Thus, her empowered decision-

making followed some norms, but was not acceptable in the organizers' eyes. The point here is not to judge who acted rightly or wrongly, but to unpack and examine instances of norms regarding "doing the work" being broken, and subsequent attempts to restore normalcy. Some sanctions like the processing discussion reintegrate people while others involve more "force" and the exercise of authority over the norm-breaker by those with power-over such as the organizers. These forceful, sometimes last-ditch efforts may lead the norm-breaker to self-select out of camp, and leave right then and there or to stick out the week and never return, which is what happened in the case from Spiralheart I analyzed here. I turn next to fleshing out how the three main components of the Intensive: Path class, affinity group, and the evening rituals work over the course of the whole week, which will give readers an even richer picture of how new and veteran campers get socialized.

3) Using Emotion Structures to Understand Socialization within the Intensive Event

Work in the sociology of emotions (Kemper 1990; Turner and Stets 2005; Thoits 1989) and on social movements and emotions (Flam and King 2005; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001; Groves 1995) has been expanding over the last two decades, but examining whether emotional experiences translate into continued involvement with movements remains challenging. Current sociological research on emotions emphasizes either general positive/negative shifts in emotional energy over time (Collins 2004; Summers-Effler 2002) or focuses on a narrow range of particular emotions (Turner and Stets 2006). For instance, we know a great deal about the relationship between shame and power (Scheff 2003) as well as movements that focus on fostering pride or anger

(Gould 2004) or hate (Blee 2002). In addition, emotional intensity remains an understudied topic within the sociology of emotions (Tuner and Stets 2005: 313) in spite of the fact that studies of conversions and awakenings (DeGloma 2010; Snow and Machalek 1984) and life within new religious and therapeutic movements (Ayella 1998; Goldman 2001; Lofland 1966; Williams 1998; Yablonsky 1967; Zablocki 1971) and social movements (Gould 2009; Jasper 1997; Summers-Effler 2010) do incorporate moments of intense emotions into theories of charisma and commitment processes.

I expand on these approaches by treating emotions like building blocks and examining what I think of as “emotional structures”, including “emotion shapes” which represent fluctuations in emotional intensity and other properties such as tone and “emotion chains” that represent connective patterns between emotions. The structures may manifest at other levels of analysis or in other settings, and I intend for these concepts to be compatible with other theoretical approaches to movement recruitment and participation including but not limited to rational choice approaches to religion and the resource mobilization perspective on social movements. It seems to me that the idea of emotion structures opens the door to treating emotions as a “resource” that gets strategically manipulated by both individuals and groups in the course of attaining goals such as recruitment or producing a successful event or ritual.

Coupled with this structural approach, I also innovate by doing two kinds of rethinking regarding the concepts we use for combinations of emotions and ambivalence on the one hand and the relationship between emotions, power relationships, and empowerment on the other hand. Both of these innovations are

related to my ideas about emotion chains and emotion shapes because chains can involve complex blends of emotions and both chains and shaped help me understand the flows of emotional energy that both reflect and help reshape power relationships. I argue that new concepts for various combinations of emotions are necessary for understanding emotional mixtures including positive-positive, negative-negative or positive-negative blends of emotions. Positive-negative blends of emotions should not be equated with “mixed emotions” that yield ambivalence (Weigert 1991). I also argue that emotional shifts over time not only reflect power relationships, which seem to be a cornerstone of Collins’ IR theory (2004), but also can help foster empowerment. I add to work on recruitment and conversion, which often focuses on movements that aim to “squash” the individual self by immersing it within the group and/or melding it with a charismatic leader (Sanders 1989; Van Zandt 1991; Zablocki 1971) by discussing how egalitarian power structures and emotional fluctuations that fit “arc” or incline” emotion shapes impact empowerment and self-transformations within Reclaiming.

This section also helps answer the question “what gets done at camp?” by attending to emotional energy patterns within individual campers and large groups. Readers should come away from this section with an even richer sense of why the week-long event is called an “Intensive” having seen that emotional experiences can suffuse not only the evening rituals, but also the Path classes and affinity groups. Rather than sticking strictly with Collins’ (2004) concept of emotional energy, in this section I attend to what I call *emotion structures*, which include *emotion shapes* that map patterns of positive and negative flows of emotional energy and individual experiences of *emotional*

chaining, which is the experience of connectivity and flow between a series of emotions over time such as moving from hope to despair to surprise. This section provides readers with a sense of why the new concepts are helpful and sets up the in-depth discussions of the socio-emotional mechanics of Path classes, affinity groups, and evening rituals. In short, I argue that we need these new concepts and a structural approach that treats emotions like building blocks in order to understand how socialization proceeds during these different segments of the Intensive. This discussion paves the way for considering the question of “who returns?” in Chapter Five.

The concepts I use to discuss emotional patterns and flows of emotional energy, the *emotion chain* and *emotion shape* respectively, can also be used to make sense of how emotions work in other settings. I work with survey data on emotion chains collected during the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive, and discuss how experiences of chained emotions can be provoked by a single activity such an evening ritual or a series of activities in different settings. I then turn to discussing emotion shapes and focus on shapes related to the evening rituals since readers already have a sense of how evening rituals work from Chapters One and Two.

A Structural Approach to Emotions: Concepts for Understanding Emotional Patterns and Energy Flows

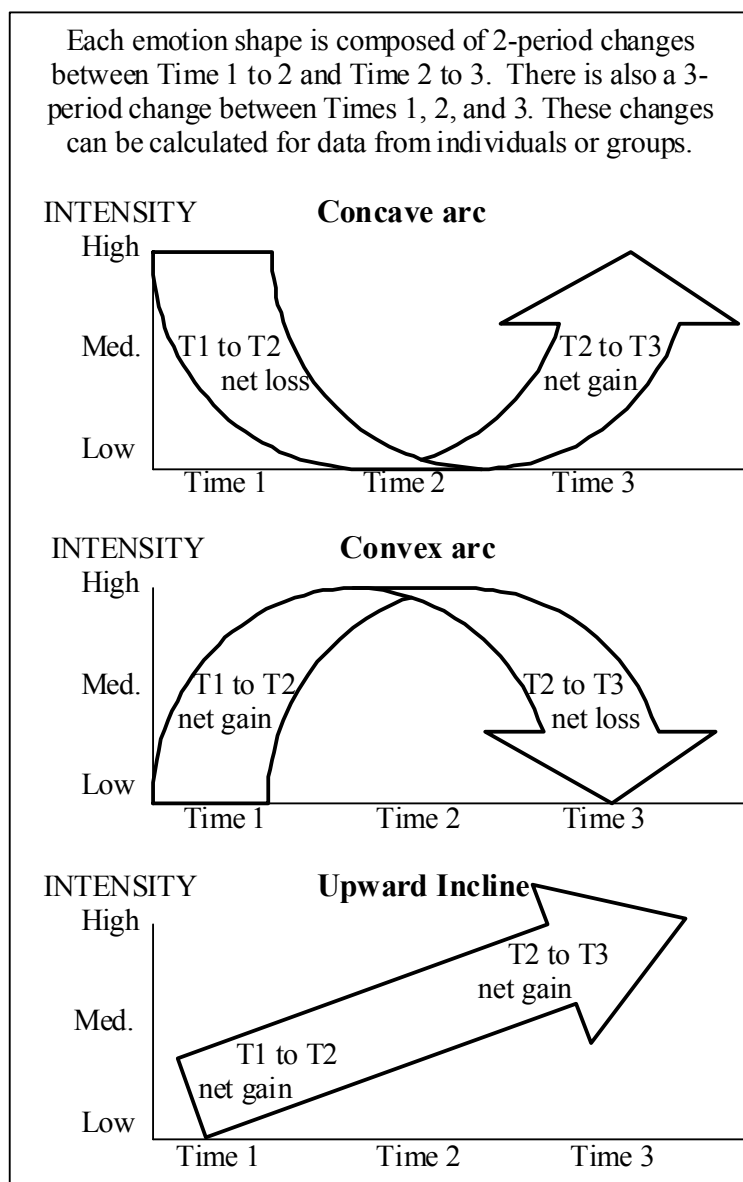
I take a “structural” approach focused on temporal structures, including shifts in emotional intensity levels over time, and connections between emotions that can be combined at a single point in time or connected to those that precede and follow them. The shifts in intensity can be thought of in terms of net gains and net losses, which

capture emotional volatility in a precise way. Net changes in intensity between two time periods are nested within larger patterns of volatility, which can be visualized as patterns called “emotion shapes,” such as an arc or an incline, over three or more points in time. Net gains and losses can also be calculated for each arc, incline, or other shape over the three time periods covered by the whole emotion shape. This approach reveals when emotional intensity is volatile and when emotions are solely intense, or volatile with low intensity, across three time periods. Assessing emotions this way has the potential to yield a richer understanding of the mechanics of emotional fatigue in particular and general comparisons of the impact of patterns across two time periods versus larger emotion shape patterns.

This way of theorizing about emotions focuses on emotional fluctuations and allows for systematic comparisons between particular emotions. It breaks new ground in enabling us to see, both empirically and via abstract visualizations of emotion shapes, how dimensions of emotions such as intensity ebb and flow over shorter or longer durations of time. In the case of *Reclaiming Intensives*, this line of analysis generates a multifaceted understanding of why a social actor may end where she started emotionally with no net change over three time periods, yet experience major two-period shifts within an emotion shape such as a convex or concave arc (see Figure 4.1). Both the overall three-period emotion shape and journey taken by an actor as well as the smaller two-period net gains and losses can contribute to our understanding of how emotions influence event reattendance and other outcomes (see Williamson 2011).

In this analysis, I expand the timeline for the emotion shape used in my article “The Magic of Multiple Emotions” (Williamson 2011) and examine a chart of an emotion shape related to my perception of the predominate tone (positive vs. negative) and intensity level of emotional energy generated in the evening rituals at Spiralheart 2004. I limit my discussion to this one event due to space constraints since a chart like this occupies a fair amount of space and should be coupled with contextual information about the camp story and information about weekly schedule or “grid” for each event. Readers can get this information for the 2004 Spiralheart event within this chapter, but I do not have enough space to do a comparative analysis. I do want to inform readers that I have charted the emotions shapes for the other eight camps I attended between 2004 and 2007, and the emotion shapes do vary and include an upward incline similar to the third image in Figure 1 as well as more complex shapes containing multiple arc shapes rather than a single main arc.

Figure 4.1: Examples of Three Emotion Shapes and Net Changes within Each Shape (originally published in Williamson 2011)



The patterns of connections between emotions make up what I call “emotion chains”, which are groups of emotions that are produced when one emotion leads directly into another via transformative processes. Emotion chains provide contextual information about how particular emotions form patterns over time. They do not happen all the time, but when emotion chains do occur, the phenomenon are

sometimes spontaneous and at other times deliberately provoked. Movements may seek to actively manage not only one particular emotion, but also entire chains as part of a planned recruitment journey. Emotion chains require a different, but equally intriguing and analytically productive, focus on multiple emotions rather than correlations between discrete, individual emotions.

The emotion chains concept opens the door to analyses of combinations of emotions at a single point in time such as love/hate or fear/anger as well as transitions to and from emotions over time such as confusion to anger to despair. Particular emotion chains might be associated with different lines of action. The confusion to anger to despair chain could lead into a lack of empowerment and inaction whereas a chain from confusion to despair to hope could lead to the opposite effect on empowerment and yield mobilization. Emotion chains are one way of systematically examining when emotions are co-present within a time period as well as complex and dynamic cascades between emotions that are challenging to research and theorize.

During-event emotion chain responses

The emotion chain data were gathered using a set of write-in questions on the 2004 pilot survey. Twenty people responded to the chain portion of the survey. Participants read the statement “Sometimes people work to actively change their emotions. Other times people experience rapid emotional changes without much effort. These changes can be pictured as chains of emotions such as: → sadness → hope → courage”.⁸⁸ They

⁸⁸ One possible critique of this question format is that the sample emotion chain led respondents to give an answer that is identical to the example. Only one respondent of the twenty reported a chain that was identical to the example, and she wrote a note on

were then asked, “Since you arrived at [camp], have you experienced any emotional changes?” If they answered yes, they were asked to specify which ones by writing emotions onto chain diagrams, which looked like this: ____ → ____ → _____. The survey question was meaningful to the respondents. None of them raised questions about what an emotion chain meant during or after the survey. There were twenty-three emotion chains reported on the survey, and in “The Magic of Multiple Emotions” I presented an exploratory analysis of a subgroup of nine chains that included either confusion, courage and hope, fear, or hope (see Figure 4.2).

her survey stating, “Sorry this one is the same as the example”. This response leads me to think that participants were just as likely to try not to report a similar chain, which would counterbalance the priming effect of the example.

Figure 4.2 Emotional Shifts Since Arrival at Spiralheart 2004 Intensive Event Reported on During-event Survey (Table 3 from Williamson 2011)

1st emotion	2nd emotion	3rd emotion	Context
Confusion*			
confusion	to courage	to sadness and hope	Path class, healing treatment, evening ritual
Courage and hope			
confusion	to courage	to sadness and hope	Path class, healing treatment, evening ritual
sadness	to hope	to courage	second evening ritual
hope	to courage	to confidence	second evening ritual
Hope			
anger	to sadness	to hope	second evening ritual
anger	to anger and sadness	to calmed down and hope	Monday afternoon and evening, locale varied
surprise	to sadness	to hope	Path class and evening ritual
sadness	to love	to hope	Path class and evening ritual
shame	to sadness	to hope	both evening rituals
fear	to inspiration	to hope	Path class and affinity group
Fear			
fear	to inspiration	to hope	Path class and affinity group
*Each chain was only reported once			

Validity and observations of chains versus sequences

The basic question regarding validity and emotion chains is: “how do we know a chain is a chain and not a sequence of disconnected emotions?” A short answer to this question is that it depends on the specific data source, and that I set up the during-event survey to specifically get data about individual emotions, their intensity, and then emotion chains. The exact form of the survey question for chains was discussed in the

previous section and the question directed respondents to describe moments when they felt “rapid emotional changes without much effort.” This question wording implies, without directly planting the idea in a participant’s mind, that there is some sort of short-term flow of something akin to Collins’ emotional energy (EE) concept happening as the emotions change. In chaining, the emotions are tied together and people who make the chains experience something flowing along the tie, and whatever that something is, it flows between multiple emotions and is experienced as a connectivity or “chain” between them.

I am relatively confident that the question on the during-event survey elicited chains because not every respondent reported having the experience. Of the twenty respondents who completed the section of the survey on emotions, emotional intensity, and chains, twelve reported at least one chain while eight did not. I take this split in the responses along with write-in comments such as “not yet, but it is only Tuesday [when camp went from Sunday to Sunday]” as evidence that the question was meaningful but did not prompt the respondents to list emotions that were experienced as separated, discrete and not part of a flow/chain.

Turning to the other observations from the ethnographic and interview data the pertinent question regarding validity is: “how do you know a chain when you see it or discuss it?” One key issue for distinguishing chains from discrete sequences is the target of the emotion, and I would tend to describe a series of emotions closely coupled in time that refer to the same target as a chain rather than a sequence. Likewise I consider the effort put forth by the person experiencing the emotions and whether or not I have

information about whether the person was actively working on experiencing links flows of emotions or not. Active emotion work such as managing anger can produce an emotion chain just as a spontaneous, easy set of emotions can. I only asked about the latter kind of chain on the during-event survey, but the other data provide instances of conscious emotion work that may or may not yield chains of connected emotions. Of course chains may also be an unexpected product of conscious emotion work, and one technique for uncovering this kind of chain is to pay attention to moments of surprise or shock and whether these emotions are experienced as discrete since they are targeted at the emotional experience itself or whether they are folded into the consciously evoked flow of emotions.

The most effective way to address all of these validity concerns is to clearly represent the data, especially my own participant-observation experiences in the rituals. It is crucial that I acknowledge exactly why I think a particular experience seems to be a chain or sequence as well as moments when my experience compliments or contradicts what a respondent reported. This format should enable skeptical readers to make their own judgments about the data and how the emotions fit together into sequences, shapes, and chains.

4) Path class

Overview

This section provides readers with an expanded picture of what being a witch for a week looks like including the tools used to socialize people during the morning Path classes and people's emotional responses to the activities. Path classes are generally

held in the morning from roughly 9am to 12pm depending on the timing of breakfast and the need for campers to participate in post-meal dishwashing. There are usually five or six Path classes held during the course of an Intensive, and these classes may follow a similar lesson plan in comparison to a series of six weekend workshops on the same topic such as The Elements of Magic. People who attend the Intensives may be drawn by the opportunity to take a particular Path Class with a specific teacher or teachers, and the Intensives I attended between 2004 and 2007 had teachers who were responsible for running both the Path classes in the morning and the main evening rituals. Student-teachers were given fewer responsibilities, but were also expected to be involved in both aspects of the Intensive. Spiralheart has deviated from this now “classic” Witchcamp teaching/priestessing model since I ended my fieldwork with them, but I am not discussing those changes here due to space constraints. Instead, the following sections focus on two different Path classes: Elements of Magic and Anchor, Aspect, and Oracle (AAO) and are limited to discussing the structure of the courses and how they contribute, in a complimentary way, to both preliminary and advanced socialization into Reclaiming Witchcraft and Magical Activism. The Path classes are generally of a moderate size, and provide a more intimate atmosphere than the evening rituals, but a less egalitarian power structure than either the affinity group or the evening rituals.

Path Class Structure Over the Week

Elements of Magic

I think the best way to get across the structure of an “Elements of Magic” (Elements) class is to sketch out what a typical week looks like and use the assumption that having either five or six days is “normal” although as we will see for DreamRoads we only used four days for Path classes because Saturday morning was used for an improvised family-friendly ritual. My point here is that I am going to generalize regarding the Elements class and present “a typical structure” rather than “the typical structure.” Having stated all these preliminary warnings and qualifications I will now outline the typical week based on topics and will mention some activities we did in the Elements class in 2004 without unpacking them very much.

Day One: This day is the first meeting of the full class if people did not sort themselves into Paths during the previous afternoon or evening. The first day is focused on the Element of Air. Our 2004 class was held on Monday and discussed: 1) the concept of immanence, “the sacred is everywhere”; 2) the triple soul and three selves: talking self, younger self, and divine self; and 3) the nine-step structure of a ritual. We also went outside and did an active learning exercise on different models of leadership (geese vs. robots see Williamson 2011), and then returned inside to discuss Air. Our discussion included the direction (East), symbols, astrological signs, and tools that correspond to the element as well as creative and destructive associations and “shadow qualities,” which were basically negative stereotypes and counter-productive actions associated with people doing air-associated things. Our class also received four handouts including one on the Principle of Unity toward the end of class. We were encouraged to take post-its to write feedback and questions for the cauldron. The

cauldron was part of the center altar in our classroom cabin and was used for feedback for the teachers and questions to start off the day in Path group. We were also told to bring altar items for air and fire tomorrow at that point we were free to go to lunch.

Day Two: This day is focused on the Element of Fire. Our 2004 class was held on Tuesday did an activity related to air and brainstormed as a group about “Air and community and creating and rethinking how we do things.” This activity transitioned into a discussion about “building [the] culture we want to live in-changing world for the better on smaller scale” and how we are all “in [the] process to getting to those values [we had brainstormed].” We also did a ritual were told by Black Swan, the other co-teacher, at the outset that we would want to take extra care of each other in Path and invoke deities and call the elements and cast a circle to create “an extra protective container” considering all the emotional stuff people went through in the previous night’s evening ritual. While we were in sacred space, and did multiple active learning exercises on sensing auras and manipulating magical energy. We then did an “aura carwash” activity to cleanse ourselves and returned inside the cabin to continue the class. At this point, the class in 2004 actually started focusing on the element of the day, Fire. Each time we did an element we brought out stuff and built an altar in the cabin so in the end we had five of them, but on Day Two in 2004 we built both the Air and Fire altars. Air had been earlier in class after we had checked-in. We discussed Fire and the discussion included the direction (South) and the other “standard” topics such as symbols. Toward the end of the class we did guided meditation led by Sky Mist (one of the co-teachers) that was supposed to help us meet our “younger” and “divine” selves.

We had the opportunity to journal about the experience and then checked-in as a class about it. We did a playful devocation called the “hokey devokey,” which is based on the Hokey Pokey. In my notes, I wrote “Path had been rather solemn this morning at the start, way before the aura carwash.” Singing/dancing the hokey devokey also lightened the mood considerably.

Day Three: This day is focused on the element of Water. Day Four: This day is focused on the Element of Earth. Our 2004 Path class on Wednesday combined the Water and Earth days together into a single class focused on Water and then Earth. Thursday morning in 2004 we had a “morning of repose” so that people could sleep in and did not have Path class. The 2004 class did a check-in at the beginning of Day Three and did both grounding/centering and created sacred space. After that we proceeded with “standard” discussions of the direction (Water went with West, Earth with North), and other things that correspond to the element. We discussed Water and then we went over the topic of “dropped and open attention”. Dropped and open attention means that a person “drop[s] shields and change[s] consciousness [into] active meditation to assess the energetic situation.” This skill is useful both within ritual and during street protests as Sky Mist related to us because he had been to a protest in Washington D.C. in the recent past. After the “standard” discussion of Earth, our class also discussed the idea of having “a daily practice” and we were told that having a “solid connection [to the divine] and talking care of body is really important” and that “routine is key” to consciously establishing this sort of practice. Finally, we discussed trance states during our third Path class in 2004 and learned that there are “different levels of trance state”

and that “trance is a way to bring magical realms into yourself.” There were two active learning activities and we saved them until the end of Path: one for Earth and one for Water. We did the Earth first so then we could move down to the pond. My partner for the Earth activity was Frost and we basically did fifteen minutes each time for the activity/meditation. We were guided in looking at the uniqueness and sameness of the body where one person examined the other’s foot, then the hand, and finally the head. The examined person laid down on blankets or mattresses on the floor of the cabin. The second activity was down in the pond and one guy sat it out under a tree due to being sunburned. Later we joined him to do group check-in after the exercises. The water activity involved emotions and inequality. We each had a cup and went into the water in a circle and Black Swan went around randomly and put water into the clear cups. We had to 1) trust and pour the water from cup to cup; 2) work out our feelings about not having any water at the beginning OR the responsibility of having it; and 3) work at breaking rules and scooping up lake water to equalize things.

Our 2004 Path class did an affinity group evening ritual the evening Day Three (Wednesday). We also had an “earthy” homework assignment to complete before class met again on Friday morning. After breakfast on Thursday I had to do the homework from Path with Tamesis and Taima. I had a nice session with them but it ran long. We used Black Swan and Sky Mist’s handout to look at global issues and reflect on the connections at different levels from the planet on down to the ecosystem at camp.

Day Five: This day is focused on Center. In the 2004 Path class this day matched up with Friday and we discussed a number of topics toward the beginning of class including

magic and spellwork and ethics; the Wiccan Rede: An it harm none, do as you will; and the Rule of three: anything sent out comes back three times. We talked about the need for clear intentions and symbols to appeal to younger and divine self. Center is related to “paradox- all the mysterious stuff” and we transitioned into having the standard discussion about it, which included questions about the shadow side of Center. Next, we discussed Pentacle work in Reclaiming including the history and roots in Anderson Feri Tradition. Pentacle work is “more related to personal self and energy blocks” and we were told it is a “tool for personal empowerment and freedom.” We then did a debriefing of Wed. night’s ritual, which was kind of an active learning segment of the Path class. We learned not to debrief directly after a ritual-give it 24 hours to process. Debriefing should focus on the question: “How did it go?” Within the discussion, we learned about different roles within the ritual including “dragon,” “anchor,” “tender,” “grace,” and “spider.” Path class closed out with a discussion of “Next steps and elements,” and it was suggested that we could try being an “element for a week and see what comes up”, or “work in activist way in one element, and see what comes to you on it.” Our class also planned to make a book list as a resource.

Day Six: This is the final day of Path Class and in 2004 it was held on Saturday. The class focused on the students planning and executing a ritual as well as on a first round of farewells and tying up loose ends such as taking down materials from any altars students created for the Elements and Center. The 2004 Path class was supposed to take an hour planning our ritual, but ended up running way long, and rescheduling our ritual to 4pm that afternoon. In the morning there was low energy among the group so

we did an invoking song as part of creating sacred space during the beginning portion of the class. The co-teachers shaped our planning and suggested we use the labyrinth and walk it in a dropped and open state while asking questions about the “graduation” ritual we were planning. Basically we did a ritual to figure out how to do another ritual. The class also learned about labyrinths and walking meditations in a discussion prior to going outside to the labyrinth in the grass. The general intention was to find out about the “next steps” on each individual’s spiritual path. We sorted out the content for the ritual later that afternoon, and planned a ritual that included the goddess Brigid.

Beforehand we got out the brown earth altar ground cloth and put anything we wanted charged on it- feathers, the woad cloth, the Cluster’s flag, Rana’s bead box, and Egeria’s wooden African beads. Black Swan and Sky Mist got seated at the edge of the circle and quarters were called, Brigid invoked and we did the dance we had discussed in planning to weave through each other in a single circle while singing “webs we spin, webs we spin this is how the work begins; mend and heal, mend and heal, take the dream and make it real”. Then we worked and sang while making packets to go with these tissue paper flowers Anala and Barika had made. And we did the work with half of the Path group working and half around the perimeter singing and tending and we all got tired of singing and it was time for stories. Next, after story time, we sang a two-line activist song “our hands will work for peace and justice, our hands will work to heal the land; our hands will work for peace and justice, let us feast and bless this land” or something to that effect. We shelled the money plant onto the woad cloth and people built packets tied in carnelians from Black Swan’s last class and tied them with string.

Rhea did yarn braided half way to symbolize our unfinished work. We sang, then devoked and closed the circle and took pictures. Then we all went on our way down to dinner.

Anchor, Aspect, and Oracle

The Anchor, Aspect, and Oracle (AAO) class is an example of an “advanced” Path class that is not considered to be “core” to Reclaiming. Discussion of and gaining practical experience related to the roles of anchor, aspect, and oracle are the heart of this Path class. The class is named after three types of ritual skills. Anchoring involves monitoring the energetic container of the ritual, and oracular work involves divination of various sorts including reading tarot cards or runes as well as communicating with spiritual entities about the future. Aspecting is a more complicated matter. Some people compare the skill to method acting within ritual while others refer to it as a form of spirit possession similar to what happens to practitioners of Afro-Caribbean religions who are ridden by spirits. In either case, a priestess is embodying a spirit, deity or other entity within ritual space and he has social interactions with ritual participants including but not limited to giving them advice, enacting a particular portion of the camp story, and helping to guide the ritual. The general goal within Reclaiming for aspecting is to have the process be planned rather than spontaneous, and be the byproduct of a previously cultivated relationship between the aspector and the entity being aspected. The level of consciousness of the aspector varies during the process, and some people have no recall of their actions because the entity assumes full control of the body whereas others negotiate for a 75/25, 50/50, or 25/75 split of control between

themselves and the entity. These negotiations embody Reclaiming's egalitarian values, and differ from the power relations involved in some other forms of spirit possession in other religious traditions.

People in the AAO class help to socialize each other especially when they have relevant skills such as mask-making, skills with divination tools or astrology, or theater experience. Thus, the class does not rely on the co-teachers as the sole experts on the topic although they do have the power to shape the AAO class plan. Several people who took the AAO class in 2005 expressed that they were "intimidated" by the class, yet they stayed. This AAO class had two co-teachers and about twenty students. This was twice as many people as the teachers expected, and the class size may have changed their course planning. Each day started with a check-in by all the class participants, and this took a chunk of time since all our check-ins consisted of verbal discussions and every person participated.

Day One: This day was the first meeting of the full AAO class in 2005 at DreamRoads. The first day was focused on the co-teachers introducing themselves and then meeting all the students, a discussion of the four roles of anchor, aspect, oracle, and tender, and divination using tools. The theme for the whole day was that divination is a conversation. Our activities included discussing our religious background, learning about the co-teachers opinions about how Reclaiming and these "advanced" ritual tools had developed. Our class had a break in the middle. When we all returned we collectively participated in a divination activity regarding the camp theme (Aradia, Avatar of the Witches) and received our "homework": perform several short divinations for other

people using tools such as tarot cards or runes without looking up the meanings⁸⁹. We had to rely on our intuition and the art/image on each card or rune.

Day Two: The second day was focused on divination along with anchoring and tending as well as a check-in about the previous night's evening ritual, which turned into a somewhat contentious discussion of how different roles get glamourized and the issue of using work, magic, or activism to avoid doing "the work." Our activities included discussing how people serving as anchors can drop into oracle mode, and that this shift has ill effects on a ritual. We all did an energy-raising activity in small groups, which was anchored. The other people tended the person who practiced anchoring after the ritual ended. The class also included a demonstration of found object reading done by a co-teacher for a class participant. We had homework: get together with a few other classmates and perform found object for our group members. We had to rely on our intuition and did not have an image or art to rely on this time around.

Day Three: The third day was focused on working with a labyrinth, doing spirit drawings in trance, and oracle practice with people playing five different roles. Our activities included discussing aspecting and mask work after we did a check-in. We then participated in an activity that combined walking a labyrinth to induce a trance and oracle work that resulted in spirit drawings done with chalk on a cement floor. The oracle practice which included the roles of oracle, questioner, witness, scribe, and

⁸⁹ Decks of tarot and rune cards generally come with a little paper booklet explaining how to do readings and the meaning of each card. People can also buy separate books about tarot or runes and use them as a reference during a reading. Our class was NOT supposed to rely on these "crutches" during our homework.

interpreter. We had homework: perform readings of other people using no tools. We had to rely on our intuition and not on any objects for meaning this time around.

Day Four: This was our final day of Path, and we did a check-in about the intense ritual from the night before, which took some time. People shared reactions and experiences with either doing masked aspecting in the ritual or their interactions with people in masked aspect. Our activities included discussing mask work a second time after we did a check-in. This time we discussed “fear of discipline” within Reclaiming and how discipline was necessary, but this kind of aspecting and oracle work could be “shot down” or stifled by discipline that was too linear. The co-teachers and fellow campers familiar with mask work discussed how it could be shamanic and come from mask helping to pull out what lies within or Western and a layer you put on to aid in aspecting, which was related to acting and using one’s imagination by the co-teachers. One stated “acting is no different from aspecting.” We then did an activity involving trying on different masks and discussing how they felt. In conclusion, the day left the class primed for the evening “practice ritual,” which involved co-aspecting and improvisation to prepare everyone for the Saturday morning community ritual we did during the Path class time slot the next day.

Path Class and Socialization

Elements of Magic

The data I presented here come from my field observations in 2004, and the ideal-typical Path class schedule spanned six days whereas the 2004 class ran for five days due to Spiralheart camp having a “morning of repose” on Thursday. Taking Elements path

socializes campers into the history of Reclaiming and into skills such creating sacred space and sensing auras and magical energy. These skills are practiced on a daily basis after people learn about them on Day One since part of sensing magical energy is doing a “grounding and centering” prior to creating sacred space including casting the circle. In addition, participants are learning to pay attention to mind-emotion-body connections as they work with magical energy. One good example of this socialization happened on Day Two of the Spiralheart 2004 Elements class when Black Swan suggested that the class “take extra care of each other” and “create “an extra protective container” considering all the emotional stuff people went through in the previous night’s evening ritual.” She was reminding the class to take stock of the mental and physical effects of the intense emotion work in the ritual, and was socializing us into working with our vulnerable or tired state rather than ignoring it and toughing it out.

One core point I think stands out regarding socialization and the Elements class is that the process is multi-faceted. Learning to pay attention to emotions and the body as well as the mid happens in some of the active learning exercises, which then feeds the work with magical energy. The magical energy work then relates to both the array of skills students build as well as the idea that they should do “the work” by having a daily practice back at home during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

A second core point I want to make before discussing socialization in the advanced AAO Path class is that some of the socialization in Elements pretty directly sets up people for more socialization in the future. People in Elements are socialized into doing “the work” and thinking flexibly about what their own “work” is. For example, in the

2004 Elements class we were given options for relating work with an element to activism by either being an “element for a week and see[ing] what comes up”, or doing “work in activist way in one element, and see[ing] what comes to you on it.” In addition, every time we did a “standard” discussion about the element of the day we considered both the “creative” and “destructive” aspects of the element and the associated symbols and themes. This socialized us into the idea that actions have “light” sides and “shadow” sides along with the paradox that in dealing with an element you have to deal with both the light and shadow. In addition, we learned about power-sharing and a bit about discipline by enacting a routine in class that encouraged multiple people to speak in check-in and discussion and called for different people to help co-create sacred space every day in class.

Finally, the class activity related to water done by the 2004 Elements class is another example of people in Elements being set up to think more about power and mind-body-emotion connections while getting an implicit lesson on flexible action in the moment. The exercise set up inequality, which was emotionally provocative and then eventually led people to act flexibly by rebelling and picking up lake water to equalize the situation. This activity socialized the class into further cognitive flexibility about the value of rebellion and into reflecting about power and emotion connections, which I would argue primed people for the discussion of pentacle work and some of the main ideas related to other Reclaiming core classes on the Iron Pentacle and Pearl Pentacle. Planning the graduation ritual introduced for a second time to the challenge of doing “a good ritual” and combined with our experiences in the main evening rituals people in

the class seemed to want more information about roles such as tending as well as time to debrief about our graduation ritual. This was done informally and directly after the ritual since we did not have another day at camp. In a sense this served as a lesson in spontaneity and independent action, since we ran late and did the ritual in the afternoon instead of the morning and then had to take time to debrief amongst ourselves without the co-teachers guiding us. I turn next to discussing how socialization worked in the more advanced class, Anchor, Aspect and Oracle (AAO).

Anchor, Aspect, and Oracle

I have relied on just my field observations to generate the data on the AAO Path class, and can compare my observations about socialization to what other people observed at DreamRoads and mentioned during the in-depth interviews in future analyses. Readers should keep in mind that I went into this course as a pretty inexperienced camper having done one previous Witchcamp. I had sympathy for the people in the class who felt intimidated early-on, and found that doing the homework combined with my researcher role put a great deal of work on my plate during this Intensive.

Thus, my first point about socialization is based on the data I have presented regarding the homework assignments. Even though the Path class was short, the daily homework assignments socialized class participants into the very discipline we discussed in the class. In order to get a full experience in the course, we had to perform homework that was increasingly difficult in that it prompted reliance on attending to images and intuition rather than prefabricated interpretations of symbols in books or on some of

the oracle tools themselves. The main tools we needed for divination were our own minds, emotions, and bodies rather than tarot cards or runes yet these tools were not banished from our repertoire either. Instead we were socialized into what I see as flexibility and discernment by learning that divination was a conversation that could but did not necessarily involve tools. We saw this in the sample/model divination sessions in class as well as the way veteran campers with skills behaved during and after the class. Nobody threw out their tarot cards or refused to use them because divination with found objects was more “advanced” for example. In sum, the homework was a multifaceted socialization tool as were many other aspects of the Path class.

I am going to make one additional point regarding socialization in the AAO Path class. There were a number of ways the class was set up to reinforce previous socialization regarding power-sharing and attending to emotions and somatic-sensory experiences as well as cognitions. The times during check-in when everyone in the class actively listened to a person speak socialized us into attending to both what the person had to say as well as how the person said it. In addition, the fact that the class was co-taught and that it made room for veterans to share skills and information too helped reinforce the idea that power should be shared. The specific skills we learned about in the class: anchoring, aspecting, tending, serving as an oracle, etc. each involved attending to mental, emotional, and somatic information to get the role properly executed. Simultaneously we were socialized into the idea that tending was a crucial role in “the work” that attended to the mind, body, and emotions and that should be as valued as the more visible roles of aspect and anchor. Finally, the Path class and co-teachers sent

the message that everyone's learning about the roles covered in the class was never over, and that divination could be an on-going "conversation" over time, which implies a relatively equal relationship between parties even if one is a deity and the other human.

Path Class Wrap-up

In this section I have presented information about two types of Path classes: the introductory "Elements of Magic" (Elements) core class and the advanced Anchor, Aspect, and Oracle (AAO) class. Both classes socialize participants into Reclaiming tradition witchcraft and activism while equipping students with tools and skills. One major point for readers to take away regarding these classes is that there is quite a bit of continuity regarding socialization. The Elements class both introduces and fleshes out the idea of magical energy and practices such as grounding and centering, power-sharing and how to embody a "radical analysis of power," and the practice of Reclaiming-style ritual. Elements mentions roles such as tending, and these roles then get fleshed out in advanced Path classes like AAO. As they progress from one class to another people shift from assimilating information about Reclaiming-style ritual and integrating it with what they have observed themselves thus far to seeing and experiencing the pros and cons of a role. For example, people in AAO tried out anchoring in class and some also "jumped into the deep end" so to speak and anchored in an evening ritual. These people then helped socialize classmates when they discussed the pros and cons of their experiences. This pattern creates a cyclical flow of experience as people assimilate information, try things out, and then participate in further socialization and skill-building.

This is not to say that the socialization processes in Elements and an “advanced” Path are interchangeable. The Elements class uses a blend of lecture, group discussion, different kinds of active learning exercises, and some homework whereas a class such as AAO generally pushes for more engagement outside of the morning time slot from students. This increase in engagement happens when students have to complete multiple homework assignments and when they get special opportunities to actively learn in evening ritual as a whole class or as individuals. In addition, people in Elements are socialized regarding topics such as “the work” of having a personal practice and developing discipline, attending to mental, emotional and somatic experiences, and developing flexibility by embracing spontaneity and paradoxes. In contrast, people in Path classes focused on advanced skills such as AAO are socialized into flexibility and discernment about tools, their personal relationships to spiritual entities and deities, and facets of priestessing and/or teaching including right exercise of authority in those roles. There are advanced skills for people to learn over time, and after reading this section I think the idea of picking a camp just so you can take a particular Path class probably makes more sense for the people reading this who have never attended an Intensive.

Overall this section has familiarized readers with Path classes by presenting data about how an introductory Elements of Magic (Elements) class and an advanced Anchor Aspect and Oracle (AAO) class were conducted. These courses were run at Spiralheart in 2004 and DreamRoads in 2005 respectively. I selected the AAO class for this discussion and analysis because the class taught skills that people in the Elements class in 2004

were not taught. In fact, Cascade asked in class about learning tending in 2004, and was told by one of the co-teachers that tending was too advanced, and not “formally” taught in the Spiralheart community. It made sense analytically to compare classes that were pretty clearly taught at different levels since they seemed least likely to overlap as use similar socialization processes. As the section progressed, I turned to analyzing how socialization proceeds in each class and examined the tools used to socialize people during the morning Path classes. I found that both the general topics and socialization processes in the classes did have a number of similarities including the use of a blend of active learning exercises and circle discussions and the creation of discipline with homework.

I also developed the idea that there are continuities in the socialization process as people pass from one Path class to another. These continuities include socialization into embracing diversity, magical reasoning, the value of activism, and the need to do “work” to change one’s self and the world. In addition, the continuities in socialization include the presence of a teacher-learner hierarchy in the Path class since some people are co-teachers and facilitators and others are not. Unlike the evening ritual, I have yet to see a set of Path class co-teachers/facilitators invite average campers to co-plan the class. This structure, like the use of priestesses in rituals, socializes even the most anarchistic of campers into the virtues of temporarily unequal power structures. Due to their “medium” size, the Path classes, like the “small” affinity groups serve as testing grounds for skills that are useful in magical activism, but unlike affinity groups the Path classes

offer a blend of passive and active learning via lectures, exercises, and discussions while creating discipline with homework.

5) Affinity Group

Overview

This section provides readers with an expanded picture of what being a witch for a week looks like including the ideals and realities of what happens in affinity group. Generally held during early afternoon, the affinity group is challenging to analyze precisely because they are supposed to operate with an iron-clad norm about participants not repeating what happens within each group to anybody outside it. An affinity group is usually small-as small as four people- and gets together daily for check-ins, which involve each person discussing how camp is going and everyone in the group listening and witnessing what the person has to say without judging or offering solutions. These groups bear some similarity to encounter groups in that they encourage emotional expression and are most similar to leaderless version of the groups and secondarily to small group activities run by therapeutic movements such as Synanon (Janzen 2001; Mitchell, Mitchell, and Ofshe 1980; Yablonsky 1967) and the Center for Feeling Therapy (Ayella 1998; Mithers 1994). As someone who came into the Reclaiming Intensives as an outsider and researcher, I felt lucky to be allowed into an affinity in 2004, and this sentiment has persisted throughout my fieldwork. Fortunately, I can honor the norm about affinity group and still discuss general trends in how affinity groups are run, and some general sentiments I observed in camp communities about the institution of the affinity group and its value. I myself think of affinity groups as a

surprising (for people without backgrounds in non-hierarchical protest groups) tool from Reclaiming's activist side that is not well-advertised in pre-camp materials compared to the Path classes and evening rituals. The affinity groups are generally of a small to moderate size, provide a more intimate atmosphere than the evening rituals along with an egalitarian power structure in comparison to the evening rituals and Path classes.

Affinity group is used with varying degrees of success, and this segment of camp presents an opportunity for the exercise of privilege or altruistic behavior in support of the community. Depending on how affinity groups are selected, some veteran campers may ask to opt out of the selection process and form their own group whereas other veterans may volunteer to switch into groups that lack any veterans and serve as a guide of sorts within the group. These volunteers are responsible for ensuring that the affinity groups function properly including 1) members not breaking the norm of silence, 2) participants listening to each other non-judgmentally and avoiding offering "fixes" for problems, 3) members allocating sufficient time for the group, which might run from twenty-minutes to over an hour depending on the size of the group, tasks at hand (such as signing up as group to do an invocation at evening ritual), and the amount of time each person needs to speak/affine, 4) participants avoiding monopolizing the group as speakers and engaging in active listening while maintaining boundaries and preserving their own cognitive/emotional/somatic health, and 5) guiding the group as it plans an affinity group ritual together. This is a tall order for a single veteran to carry out, and it seems to me that the success of an affinity group depends more on the mix of personalities involved, and everyone's willingness to play by the rules, trust one's fellow

participants, and try to live up to how an affinity group should function. A seasoned camper is not essential. This being said, I think affinity groups are like the little girl with curl who was “very good when she was good, and when she was bad she was horrid.”

The emotional openness and attentiveness to others called for in affinity group is difficult to fake, and this makes “bad” affinity groups either very tepid, boring, and disconnected or emotionally fraught with judgment and misunderstandings. A “horrid” affinity group can leave a person feeling emotionally violated and unsafe or like hours of precious camp time have been wasted going through the motions of being a group.

Affinity Group Structure Over the Week

There are a number of features of affinity group that are notable, and the overall structure of doing affinity group stays roughly the same over the course of the week in comparison to the Path class, which involves different activities and themes each day. The timing of when people are assigned to the groups varies little, and it generally happens after lunch during the second day of camp, and then the new groups immediately hold their first meeting. Affinity groups are comparatively small in size, and, like the Path class, continued attendance is expected every day although norms about attendance can break down. Unlike Path classes, which campers self-select into, affinity groups are either picked randomly or self-selection is used based on an identity/activity such as being male, a crone, or enjoying hiking or swimming. The exception to this rule is the teachers, who generally get their own affinity group, and are not allowed to affine with regular campers. I will discuss what this structure does to the power dynamics of camp in Chapter Five. Generally affinity groups are expected to hold

a group ritual in addition to their group meetings one afternoon or evening depending on how the evening rituals are sequenced. The teaching team and/or organizers decide on the schedule and they face the choice of omitting an evening ritual to make room or flip-flopping an evening ritual into late afternoon and placing the affinity group ritual in the evening ritual time slot. I have participated in effective affinity group rituals both in the evening and in the afternoon, and am not convinced that the time slot matters. The rituals tended to have some pre-planning and some improvised elements as well as less formal segments involving hanging out as a group in sacred space and doing divination or having a small picnic. Decisions about the rituals are left up to the affinity groups although some teaching teams may provide the groups with an intention statement so that the ritual can support the overall camp theme. I turn next to discussing affinity group as a socialization tool.

Affinity Group and Socialization

Affinity groups are run using non-hierarchical interactions for the most part, and in this way the participants model the “radical analysis of power” discussed in the Principles of Unity by running the groups without a leader or group of leaders. In addition, affinity groups prime people at the Intensives for participation in consensus process decision-making and meetings that are facilitated using feminist and egalitarian methods. Participants in affinity group get socialized into doing more listening than talking, not trying to “fix” the problems of others unless asked, reflecting about their emotional/somatic/cognitive states, and sharing the results of this reflection with others. These skills are useful in rituals that provoke intense emotions as well as

meetings when participants might “check-in” about how they are doing. Affinity group ritual reinforces ritual planning and etiquette, such as the skills taught in the Elements Path class while mere exposure to the idea of the affinity group acts to connect everyone in camp to a modified version of a tool associated with activism and protest (see Gould 2009: 190-2 for one example of how affinity groups functioned in ACT-UP). Finally, in randomly assigned affinity groups, the participants get a sense of the diversity of fellow campers, and the groups may act to even out the power differential between organizers and average campers since everyone is emotionally exposed and everyone’s participation is valued equally.

Affinity Group Wrap-up

In the overview I discussed my views regarding affinity groups as sociologically fascinating yet difficult to discuss in-depth. I want to conclude this discussion with the point that both new and seasoned campers seem to have very mixed feelings about affinity group. On the one hand affinity groups are seen as a duty and not necessarily enjoyable while on the other hand affinity groups are seen as an opportunity to do the “work” and connect with new people or those they do not know well. These perspectives mean new campers quickly get exposed to ambivalence as well as a divergent set of views about affinity group: as a setting for exemplifying core values, a supportive venue for emotional expression, a place to meet new friends, a setting that may be tremendously helpful or waste one’s time, and a place where one has to be careful regarding judgments, boundary-setting, and the consequences of emotional openness.

Structurally, affinity groups differ from the evening rituals in terms of size, but can share a leveled power hierarchy with segments or entire rituals done in the evenings or in a Path class that are run in an fully improvised manner. Affinity groups stand out to me as having the closest link to activism out of the three major segments of the Intensive, and they help build skills that are useful in both activist and religious communities, particularly those that use consensus process. The affinity group is a tool or resource that helps socialize campers into dealing with the emotional fallout of being at the Intensive, but I think the cognitive skills and physical discipline built by sitting in the group and not becoming entrained with the intense emotions others express should not be given short shrift. It is tough for me to back up this assertion given the constraints on the data I can use from my times in affinity group, and I hope readers will be able to image that the experience of witnessing and listening in affinity group and staying physically and emotionally nonreactive and “shielded” from any energy other people are sending out involves the mind and body, not just emotions. Affinity groups has a mental, “talky” side and requires attention to somatic perceptions even though affinity groups shine a spotlight on emotional experiences.

6) Evening Ritual

Overview

This section provides readers with an expanded picture of what being a witch for a week looks like including the patterns of emotional shifts and flows of emotional energy in the large evening rituals. The evening rituals stand out because they tend to follow one of two main emotional patterns: 1) a “concave arc” shape where emotions start

“up” and positive, descend into intense negativity mid-week finally transition back up to an ecstatic positive peak that is then modulated before people leave and 2) a less intense “upward incline” involving a slow build-up from weak positive or mildly negative emotions up to a positive peak that is then modulated before people leave. The stories and “work” of camp are picked with what the teachers and organizers call the “story arc” in mind. These broad week-level patterns are not a hallmark of either Path classes or affinity groups although there may be latent week-level ebbs and flows of emotions that characterize each of these segments as well. My point here is that people in Reclaiming consciously manipulate and fine-tune the intensives to produce these patterns although they focus on the “narrative” rather than the emotion side of the patterns. The evening ritual are generally the largest activity at camp, and provide a less intimate atmosphere than either the affinity group or the Path classes and a less egalitarian power structure compared to the affinity groups. What the evening ritual lack in intimacy is made up for by the potential for intense collective energy generated by the large group.

Evening Ritual and the Structure of the Week

Patterns of Energy Flow: Emotion Chains

Description of Methods and Data

I turn first to examining how particular emotions such as hope and despair are connected together for participants at the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive. I focus on data from individuals, and these data were reported on the two-page during-event survey, which was distributed on Tuesday at dinner and collected before evening ritual on

Thursday. The emotion chain data I present here include only those chains that mention the evening ritual. The fifteen chains I discuss here have been selected from a larger set of twenty-three emotion chains reported by people in the pool of twenty respondents⁹⁰ who completed the portion of the during-event survey on intense emotions and emotion chains.

Not every respondent in this pool reported experiencing chains, and as I discuss in the article “The Magic of Multiple Emotions” (Williamson 2011) these response patterns indicate that emotion chaining was a meaningful term for the respondents. Put another way, the pool of respondents both found the term to be a valid concept for certain experiences they were having at the Intensive, and they did not over-apply the idea of chaining so that it covered every emotional experience they had been through during camp. I know this because of the sequence of questions used on the survey which were formatted to collect data first about twelve particular emotions, then about emotional intensity of those same twelve emotions, and finally about emotion chaining.

The during-event survey asked “Since you arrived at [the Intensive] have you felt any of these emotions?” It prompted the respondent to consider twelve different emotions: anger, confusion, courage, despair, fear, guilt, happiness, hope, love, sadness, shame, and surprise. The survey also had several write-in blanks for other emotions. There was also a follow-up question that asked, “On the list below circle any emotions that you felt were very strong.” The respondents were presented with the same list of twelve

⁹⁰ To be clear the whole pool of respondents included twenty people and twelve of those twenty people reported at least one emotion chain. The subset of fifteen chains I report here come from nine different individuals and several individuals reported two different chains. One of the respondents reported three chains.

emotions and the write-in blanks were offered for this question as well. The answers regarding intensity are a somewhat inexact measure of whether each emotion within the chain was intense since intense emotions might have been experienced in other contexts besides the ones that involved the chains. To address this concern, I added a follow-up question that asked the respondents about the context for the intense emotions. Their answers can be used to sort out whether the intense emotion occurred in each chain or in another context.

The survey then transitioned to asking about emotion chains. The participants read the statement “Sometimes people work to actively change their emotions. Other times people experience rapid emotional changes without much effort. These changes can be pictured as chains of emotions such as: → sadness → hope → courage”. They were then asked, “Since you arrived at [camp], have you experienced any emotional changes?” Respondents who checked “Yes” were then asked to specify which ones by filling out diagrams, which looked like this: ____ → ____ → _____. The survey question seemed to make sense to the respondents and none of them asked what the term “emotion chain” meant.

I formatted the questions in this sequence so that the participants were asked a question they could definitely answer about particular emotions, and then followed up with the more exploratory and risky questions regarding emotional intensity and emotion chaining. Readers should recall from the first two chapters that I was breaking new ground both methodologically and theoretically by collecting survey data on particular emotions and flows of emotional energy that get “chained” over time. I was

very uncertain as to whether these questions would work out or not, and was grateful once the completed surveyed started rolling in on Wednesday and Thursday. As it turns out these survey data provide a valuable window into exactly what people went through during the evening ritual and during other activities.

Emotions Chain Data Connected to the Evening Ritual

I now turn to describing what the respondents reported regarding emotion chaining, and assess the extent to which the emotion chains seem to be responses to pre-planned elements of the evening ritual. I then turn to commenting on how these emotion chains fit into the experience of the Intensive, and discuss what these data tell me about how socialization processes work, particularly regarding intense emotions and emotional flexibility. The questions guiding this analysis are 1) what kinds of emotion chains occur? and 2) When they occur, are the emotion chains clear responses to emotional templates present in the story of camp or pre-planned segments of the evening ritual? Developing answers to these questions enables me to begin to speak to how the socialization process proceeds and comment on the role spontaneous emotional responses involving emotion chains appear to play in the process.

I have arranged the fifteen emotion chains and the brief comments about context for each chain into a Figure (see Figure 4.3), and the chains are grouped by context. This kind of presentation of the data enables readers to quickly compare chains that occurred in the same context. There are two chains: 1) self-conscious to courage to happiness and 2) frustration to peace to blissful that occurred during Sunday, the first evening of camp. The bulk of the emotion chains people reported have some

connection to the Monday evening ritual, which included the conflict between Amaterasu and Susanowo and Amaterasu's retreat to the cave. These chains were: 3) sadness to hope to courage, 4) happiness to joy to hope, 5) hope to courage to confidence, 6) shame to sadness to hope, 7) anger to anger and sad to calmed down and hope, 8) surprise to sadness to agitated but relatively happy, 9) anger to sadness to hope, and 10) anger to sadness to relief. One notable thing about chain seven is that it illustrates that multiple emotions such as anger and sadness can be reported within the same time period or "link" within the chain. This complex kind of response only occurs twice within the set of fifteen chains in the seventh and fifteen chains (see Figure 4B). The other five chains (twelve to fifteen) shown in Figure 4B came about in more complex or ambiguous contexts, meaning that the chaining experience happened in multiple venues such as Path class and evening ritual or that the respondent did not pinpoint which "ritual" in particular was associated with the emotion chain. The chains that occurred in complex contexts were: 11) sadness to love to hope, 12) surprise to sadness to hope, 14) anger to sadness to happiness, and 15) confusion to courage to sadness and hope. The thirteenth chain, anger to destruction to sad to ?[confusion], happened during an unspecified ritual, which could have been an evening rituals on Sunday and Monday, affinity group ritual done on Tuesday night, or Path class ritual done on Wednesday night. I include the chain in this analysis because the general convention at the intensive is to call the evening rituals "ritual" and to specify other rituals with modifiers.

Figure 4.3: Emotion Chains Related to Evening Ritual

Chain #	1 st Emotions(s)	to	2 nd Emotion(s)	to	3 rd Emotion(s)	Context
1	Self-conscious	to	Courage	to	Happiness	Spiral dance [1 st night]
2	Frustration	to	Peace	to	Blissful	[1 st day] [ran] late for ritual, once reached ritual became present
3	Sadness	to	Hope	to	Courage	During 2 nd night ritual, during the trance/walk
4	Happiness	to	Joy	to	Hope	During 2 nd night ritual, during the trance/walk
5	Hope	to	Courage	to	Confidence	During 2 nd night ritual, during the trance/walk
6	Shame	to	Sadness	to	Hope	2 nd night ritual
7	Anger	to	Anger Sad	to	Calmed down Hope	[2 nd day] afternoon and evening (locale varied)
8	Surprise	to	Sadness	to	Agitated but relatively happy	[2 nd night] evening ritual, Pavilion, dining hall
9	Anger	to	Sadness	to	Hope	[2 nd night] processing ritual when Amaterasu goes into cave
10	Anger	to	Sadness	to	Relief	During [2 nd] night ritual
11	Sadness	to	Love	to	Hope	Path [class] and evening ritual
12	Surprise	to	Sadness	to	Hope	Path [class] and evening ritual
13	Anger	to	Destruction	to	? [Confusion] still working on resolution	During a specific and challenging ritual
14	Anger	to	Sadness	to	Happiness	Ritual, healing treatment, Path [class]
15	Confusion	to	Courage	to	Sadness Hope	Ritual, healing treatment, Path [class]

Emotion Chain Trends

One major point about the emotion chains linked to the evening ritual is that they serve as evidence of the variety of emotional responses participants had to activities

during the Intensive. The participants as well as their emotional responses are diverse, which consistent with the movement's support of individuality and multiple forms of "work." Another general point about these data is that each chain, with the exceptions of the eighth and twelfth chains, exhibits a flow from negative into positive emotions or a steady chain of positive emotions. Put simply, when it comes to the chains positive emotions seem to be "sticky" with the exception of surprise, which starts off the eighth and twelfth chains. This finding seems consistent with IR chain theory (Collins 2004), which posits that people seek to maximize high emotional energy states and a general sense of positive emotions all the time.

These data shed light on surprise, which usually behaves like a positive emotion (see Williamson 2011) and are puzzling if I move beyond IR chain theory and consider both the larger emotional pattern the organizers and teachers aim for as well as the idea that both linear (see Metzner 1998; 1980; DeGloma 2010) self-transformations and cyclical (see Zablocki 1971) movement processes. All three of these patterns involve movement from positive emotions into negative emotions and back out again, which is discussed in Reclaiming as "going down into your deepest, darkest pain" mid-camp or as "hanging on a meathook," which is a direct reference to the Inanna and Ereshkigal story discussed in Chapter One. The question these patterns raise then, to me, is how these emotion chains which exhibit shifts into positive emotions fit with collective experiences in ritual that transition people into Intense negative emotions mid-camp. I will return to this issue later in the section after unpacking some other patterns in the data.

Having raised these major points I think the best way to proceed with the discussion is to present a reminder summary for readers about how the evening rituals worked up to and including the time when I distributed the during-event survey. This material repeats ideas presented in Chapters One and Three and Appendix A. After presenting this material I will discuss how the emotion chain data connect to the evening ritual content and particular “templates” or samples of emotions and emotion patterns including the patterns present in the Amaterasu story in the *Spiralbound* pre-camp booklet (see Appendix A).

Reminder Summary Evening Ritual Content

Each Intensive guides participants through a thematic journey that involves a story or broad theme (examples include “The Norse Ring Cycle” and “Thomas the Rhymer”) selected by the event leaders to provoke deep personal work that generally includes several emotional ups and downs. Some of these ups and downs are relatively scripted and predictable responses to the theme/story while other are unplanned and spontaneous. This blend of predictable reactions and surprising moments happens because each theme/story offers participants many different options for identifying with characters and subplots within the broad story. In short, the multivalent nature of the story/theme gives the participants many different potential paths to go down, and their deep emotion work is dependent on the particular path(s) taken and characters involved.

The evening rituals were organized to include an opening ritual and Spiral Dance the first night, and a ritual on the second night that included a reenactment of Susanowo

getting angry, Amaterasu and Susanowo fighting, and Amaterasu running away and hiding in the cave. The next two evenings, when respondents were completing and returning the surveys included small rituals done by affinity groups (night three) and Path classes (night four) rather than a large Amaterasu-themed ritual. This structure left participants to marinate in the emotions fostered by the second night's ritual for several days, and their recall of the first two rituals, their emotions, and the emotion chains seemed clear and reasonable.

One Possible Emotion Template: the Spiralbound Vignette

In order to highlight many of the emotions and emotion chains the respondents might have experienced in rituals involving the Amaterasu story, I am including a shortened “vignette” of the story the organizing team put into the Spiralbound pre-camp mailing. In 2004, the Spiralbound document was roughly nine pages long on legal size paper, and included information about how to prepare for camp including what to pack, things to expect, descriptions of the Path classes and teachers, and an overall intention and theme for the camp followed by the Amaterasu story.

Vignette of the Amaterasu story adapted from *Spiralbound* booklet

In those beginning times, the spirit of every living thing was called its kami. [...] All the **strength** of these kami poured forth from the great mother sun, Amaterasu; she was a vision of bright **beauty** and **strength**. [...] This is as it was in the earliest days, and how it is today. Amaterasu's brother, Susanowo, ruled the ocean. But he was **jealous** of the greater **power** of his sister. [...] she was **suspicious** when one day he sent word that he was coming to visit. But Susanowo came bearing gifts and speaking of **trust** and **loyalty**. [They] ate together, and after the meal [...] Amaterasu bowed to her brother. “How **glad** I am you've come in **friendship**,” she said, [...] “I was **worried** you'd come in **anger** and in **bitterness**.” Susanowo bowed in return [and said] “Let us forget the past. I have nothing but **respect** and **admiration** for you.” Late into the night they talked of their **love** for each other, [...] and the **joy** of their renewed relationship. Finally Amaterasu bid her brother farewell and went to the Celestial Weaving House to work [...] Susanowo sat alone [...] sipping sake and growing

increasingly **angry** as he surveyed the **beauty** of his sister's palace. The memory of Amaterasu's **graciousness grew ugly** in his mind. [...] Indulging his **violent rage**, Susanowo destroyed the rice fields, [...] Finally, in an attempt to gain his sister's attention, Susanowo broke through the wall of the room where the Sun Goddess was tending to the weaving [...]. Amaterasu and the divine maidens that were working with her were **terrified**. [...] "Susanowo!" Amaterasu's voice was like a light that suddenly fills a dark room, but deep within her heart **ached with sadness**. "Susanowo, where are the words of last night? You wrong me. But ask only that you sleep. [...]" Instead, Susanowo went to the palace [...] and desecrated her private temple. [...] this final act was more than she could endure. **Ashamed** [...] and **deeply wounded by the hurt** he had directed at her personally, the Sun Goddess **sought to retreat** [...], went to her cave, [...] and shut herself tightly inside it. When she did, [...] all the lands became dark. The kami [...] turned to gray ghosts. Life without Amaterasu was impossible. [vignette cut off to match end point of 2nd night (Monday) ritual in 2004]

If we look at the *Spiralbound* story text as a template for emotions we see that a number of possible emotions and emotion patterns are present. The particular emotions include anger, bitterness, jealousy, shame, sadness, worry, love, joy, and gladness. Depending on which character in the story a person identified with the possible chains include but are not limited to worry to gladness to love (Amaterasu), fear/terror to sadness to shame (Amaterasu), and love to joy to jealousy (Susanowo). If the story from the booklet is a template for emotions and chaining, the data in Figure 4.3 provide mixed evidence that the emotions people experienced in the evening rituals were close matches to those in the booklet.

For example, jealousy comes up in the *Spiralbound* narrative, but not in the chains. I interpret this as the campers being primed by the booklet material, but not by the evening ritual planners for jealousy work. Thus, it is not so surprising that jealousy does not occur in the emotion chain data and was not listed on the write-in sections of the during-event survey either. The emotion was not present anywhere in the during-event

data and this finding can be understood if we think of emotional priming in terms of tiers or layers of exposure to the story of camp. A first exposure occurs when people get the story narrative in *Spiralbound*, and a second exposure occurs during camp itself as the teaching team and ritual planners distribute intentions for the rituals and discuss the work they want to do with the story. The main intention for Spiralheart's camp was "to depart the solitary cave daring to reemerge into the joy, celebration, and beauty of community life" (see Appendix A). This intention focused on the positive, ecstatic emotional payoff of the Intensive and did provide much of a template for emotional patterns early in the week.

Emotion Chains and Socialization

Looking at the chains people created the first day and evening of camp, I think the first chain (see Figure 4.3) illustrates a typical response to the Spiral Dance from a new camper. The person basically followed the template of feeling self-conscious and then having that emotion shift into courage and then happiness. This pattern fits with the Spiral Dance helping everyone at camp to feel connected, integrated, and eventually happy. The other first-day emotion chain, chain 2: frustration to peace to blissful was a more spontaneous response to the respondent's van breaking down, which led the person to be late to ritual, which then helped transform the emotions into a "blissful" state. These chains do not necessarily fit with the larger Amaterasu story, but they do fit an emotional template for the first evening focused on positive emotions or peace and generating we-feeling among campers using the Spiral Dance.

Turning to the second night's chains I see evidence of people doing more work with anger and less work with shame. There are five chains (7, 9, 10, 13, and 14; see Figure 4.3) that include anger and one (chain 6; see Figure 4.3) that includes shame. Both emotions are present in the Amaterasu story template (see vignette later in this section), and since both major characters, Susanowo and Amaterasu experience anger I think it is not surprising that anger appears in more of the chains. It is important to keep in mind that the data I am discussing cover the connective, chained emotions not the full array of emotions or intense emotions the respondents reported. Shame might figure prominently on its own in the respondents' experiences particularly if they identify with Amaterasu's emotional template. Shame is primarily what led her to retreat into the cave.

In addition to anger and shame, the chain data show evidence of work with sadness in ten chains (3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, and 15; see Figure 4.3), but the position in chains varies. Sadness appears in the first, second, and third "links" in different chains whereas anger always appears in the first link (see Figure 4.3). In contrast to anger and sadness, hope is pretty consistently an endpoint in seven of the chains (4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and 15; see Figure 4.3). This is surprising given how the evening ritual ended Monday night with the lights in the Pavilion cut off and a strong general negative tone. I think the seven chains with hope in the third "link" show individuals departing from emotional template when it comes to their individualized experiences of connective "chained" emotions.

These data are evidence of a tension between the emotion chains individuals make, and the particular emotions and emotion chains created by the group as a whole grounded in pre-planned rituals and the story of camp. What I have done in this section is explore what the chains look like for individuals, and the connections the chains have to the story narrative of camp both the pre-camp version presented in *Spiralbound* and the materials used during the Intensive itself. These materials may reinforce each other or as I showed with the example of jealousy they may present templates that are not used widely if at all.

Overall the emotion chain data help demonstrate how multi-faceted socialization is at the Intensive, and are concrete evidence that the Intensive makes room for individualized self-transformations and patterns that depart from what the majority of campers may be doing. The comments on context show that some chaining happens over longer term periods, meaning through a morning Path class and into an evening ritual or vice versa. These longer-term chains raise questions about the durability of emotions and emotional energy since chains could have been limited to shorter periods of time such as a particular ritual or even just an activity nested within a ritual, Path class or other activity. While it makes sense that the chains that cross between activities might not be consistent with the group-level pattern of the evening ritual, the general stickiness of positive emotions and the chains linked to the evening ritual, which end with positive emotions remain puzzling. One possible explanation that I consider further in the next section on the week-level emotion shape patterns is that individuals somehow manage to collectively generate the concave arc emotion shape and dive

deeply into negative emotions while also individually buffering themselves using experiences such as emotional chaining. I turn next to examining the group-level energy flows and discussing another concept, the emotion shape.

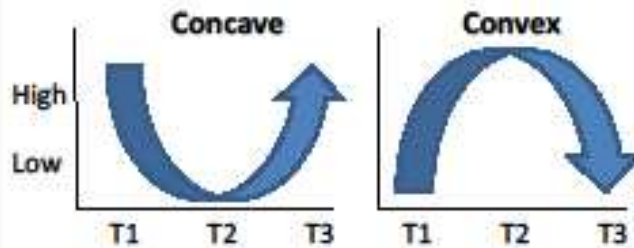
Patterns of Energy Flow: Arcs and Inclines for the Week

This section focuses on making sense of the evening rituals using a different conceptual tool, the emotion shape. Emotion shapes help make sense of general flows of emotional energy whereas emotion chains include specific emotions and combinations of emotions. The pattern of an emotion shape depends on how many points in time the shape covers and how specific the measurement scale is for the specific properties of the emotional energy such as intensity and tone. There are a number of emotion shapes that can be created using a simple high-low scale for a property such as intensity and three time periods (see Figure 4C). These include a “flat line,” two types of “incline” shapes, and “convex” and “concave arc” shapes.

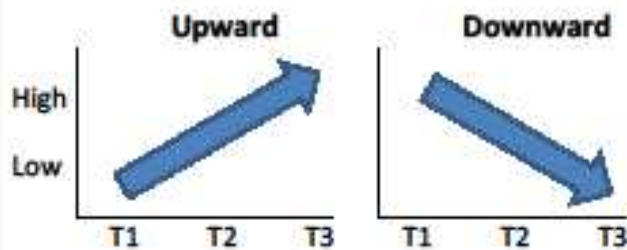
Figure 4.4: Examples of Some Simple Emotion Shapes

Major emotion shapes for three time periods

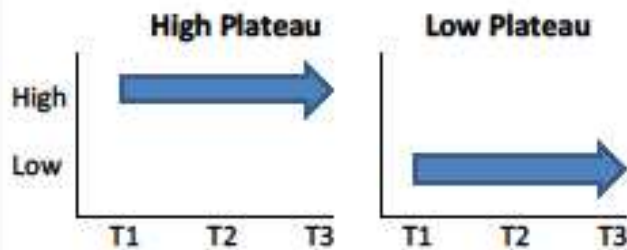
Arcs



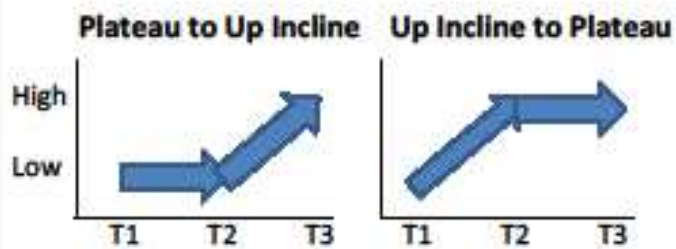
Inclines



Plateaus/straight lines

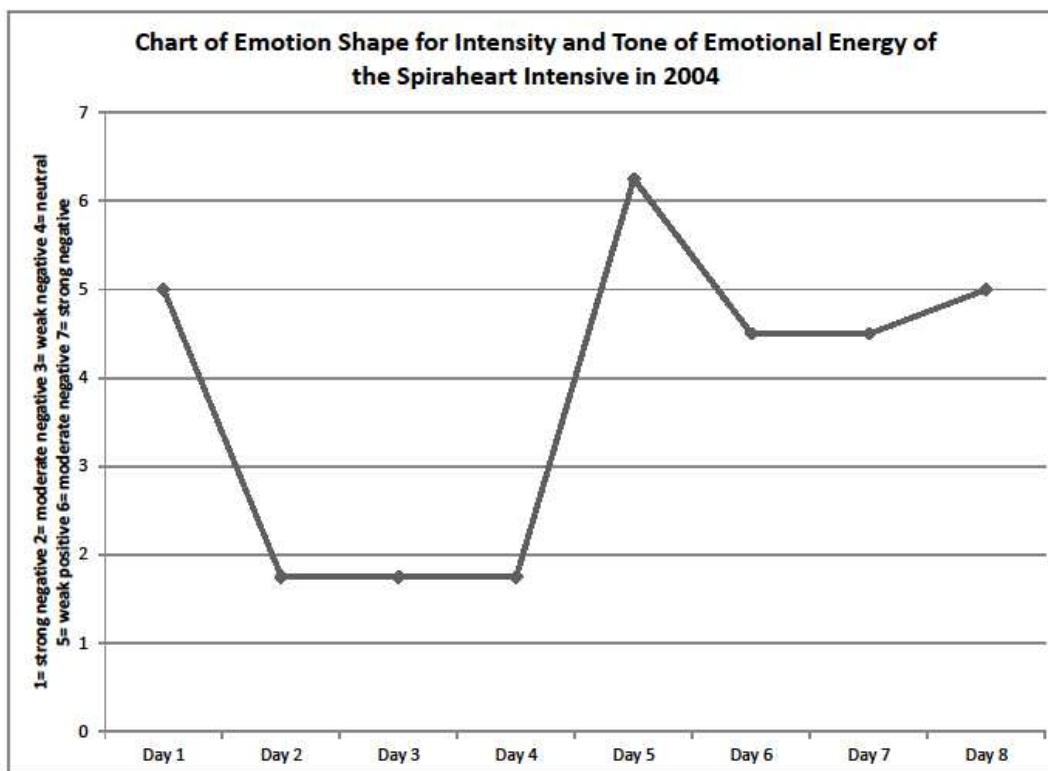


Incline/Plateau Combos



An emotion shape diagram for a week-long Intensive is more complicated than the examples I just discussed because it covers five to seven days on the horizontal axis and incorporates both emotional tone and emotional intensity on the vertical axis. The emotional tone is coded on a simple positive-negative scale with neutrality as the midpoint while the emotional intensity is coded on a scale from strong to moderate to weak to not present. Putting these two measures together yields a simple seven point tone/intensity scale ranging from strong positive to neutral/not intense to strong negative. This kind of scale works for recording general observations of a group's emotions in the field, and the data I present in Figure 4.5 summarize my own observations of the dominant emotional tone of each night's evening ritual. On nights when the ritual dramatically shifted in tone and intensity I coded the tone and intensity that occurred closer to the end of the ritual since it represents the emotional energy people carried with them out of the ritual.

Figure 4.5: Chart of Emotion Shape for Intensity and Tone of Emotional Energy of the Spiralheart Intensive in 2004



The emotion shape that mostly closely fits the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive's emotional flow is the "concave arc." This shape represents how the camp started with a generally positive emotional tone on Sunday night and then transitioned into intense negative emotions in Monday night's ritual when Amaterasu and Susanowo had a big fight and Amaterasu ran away to the cave (see Figure 4.5). The group's energy then held steady in a sense because we did not meet for another main evening ritual until Thursday night. On Thursday the energy shifted in tone and intensity, which is mapped by the upswing in the shape (see Figure 4.5). The group's energy then was modulated by the ritual on Friday and held steady on Saturday due to the Talent Show Saturday evening. On Sunday morning the whole camp did a closing ritual in the morning, which also helped everyone modulate their energy from Thursday's ritual if they had not done so already. I

include this ritual in the set of observations for the emotion shape since the closing ritual complements the opening ritual from Sunday night, and involves the entire camp taking down the energetic container set up at the beginning of camp.

Evening Ritual and Socialization

First and foremost, I want to highlight that the evening ritual cycle from the point of view of the event planners is socializing campers into producing and attending to intense emotions and the experience of a “story arc,” which is what the organizers and teachers call the pattern of emotional ups and downs associated with the Intensive’s theme. I would add that I think the camp is socializing people into creating and attending to what I call “emotions chains” and “emotions shapes,” particularly the concave arc shape associated with a descent into negative emotion work mid-way through camp. These sociological concepts help me make sense of connectivity between emotions that can happen in the evening rituals as well as the week-long patterns of emotional ups and downs that are planned and those participants actually experienced. While the “story arc” term draws our attention to the narrative enacted at camp, my concepts put emotions in the spotlight, and help me treat emotions and emotional energy as having structures over time.

Second, the evening rituals, like the rest of the Intensive, are socializing participants into Reclaiming-style magical activism, and the idea that they have “work” to do. This work involves transforming both the individual self as well as the wider world while living a life one believes is consistent with Reclaiming’s Principles of Unity (PoU) statement. Put together with the findings on emotional chaining, the emotion shape

helps illustrate that participants at the Intensive are exposed to emotional connectivity as well as flexibility via the ups and downs of the concave arc shape. In addition, the data from the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive provide evidence of what I call “emotional dampening” which a deliberate process of dialing down the intensity of emotions (see Figure 4.5 Days 6-8). This dampening is functional in that it prevents campers from going back out into the world after camp on an intense high and then crashing later on (Ayella 1998; Barker 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1979; Lofland 1966; Mithers 1994).

This modified emotion shape serves a protective sort function, while also socializing participants into “and logic” and flexibility in that the participants experience a volatile emotional patterns composed of being up, then down, then up again while simultaneously working through their own experiences of multiple emotions, which may include emotion chaining that runs contrary to the emotion shape. Having seen the people who completed the during event survey in ritual, I do not think simple deviance explains the contrary emotion chain responses that ended on a positive note. The people who reported these chains also seemed to fully participate in the group-level emotional down-swing of Monday night’s ritual. My point here is that if the data I have are valid and accurate what I think they show is a pattern of certain individuals embracing or coping with paradoxical, multi-level flows of emotional energy along with a simpler form of flexibility derived from having volatile emotions. The paradoxical emotional patterns help foster “and logic” in that the participants may come to recognize that they feel both their “deepest, darkest pain” while also feeling hopeful or confident or happy as a result of chaining. Both psychological (Plutchik 1991; Plutchik

and Conte 1997) and sociological theories regarding blended emotions (Weigert 1991) would predict deep ambivalence would be the emotional endpoint of this kind of scenario yet that is not what my data show. This pattern is challenging to make sense of, and as far as I can tell neither ritual process theory (Turner 1969) or IR chain theory (Collins 2004) help with this specific task other than the fact that they both consider temporality to be important for understanding emotions and ritualizing.

Third, the evening rituals also contribute to people becoming more emotionally, cognitively, and somatically flexible due to their experience being witches for a week at the Intensives. This is a less complex form of flexibility than I just discussed and it includes the use of “and-logic” regarding identity labeling, which results in people framing ties to Reclaiming and other groups and movements as a complementary rather than competitive endeavor. The evening rituals center on themes that are complex and multi-valent, and they socialize participants into being comfortable shifting between identifying with one character in the camp’s story one moment and another character the next, or extending the “and logic” into the ritual by sympathizing or identifying with multiple characters at once. “And logic” regarding work with story characters helps make it possible for Intensive participants to feel- figuratively and literally- for multiple characters even when their interests and emotions are quite at odds. In sum, getting socialized into “and logic” and can open the door not only to affiliating with multiple movements and groups, but also to experiencing multiple emotions, emotion chains, and emotion shapes.

Evening Ritual Wrap-up

I have argued that new concepts are necessary for understanding what goes on during the evening rituals, and that both emotional chaining by individuals and their group-level experience of an emotion shape pattern during the week of the Intensive are useful for understanding how the evening ritual experience on its own helps socialize people into embracing “and logic” and becoming more emotionally flexible. Both the flexibility and the “and logic” have multiple forms in that participants may become better at doing emotional volatility or experiencing multiple, contradictory emotions without lapsing into a tense form of ambivalence or shifting between identifying with one character or point of view in the story of camp and other perspectives. For example, someone building “and logic” might identify with both Amaterasu and Susanowo at a certain point in the story and experience a blend of fear, anger, and hope.

In section I also tackled the issue of the contrary patterns present in the emotion chain data, and the emotion shape for the week of Spiralheart’s camp in 2004. I advanced the point that individual may use emotional chaining to buffer themselves from the strong negative emotions evoked by the camp story and the evening rituals even as they fully participate in the group-level emotional ups and downs. If this explanation fits, then I think this paradoxical combination of emotional experiences also further socializes the people who experience it into further emotion flexibility and embracing emotion-related “and logic” in that a person can be both angry and hopeful at the same time or experience two very different negative emotions together such as

fear which might prompt a fight/flight response and sadness which might prompt lethargy and inaction.

My larger point is that the language for discussing emotional combinations needs to be improved so that emotional combinations can be discussed with more precision. At minimum I think more clarity is needed regarding what the term “mixed emotions” means, and that sociologists of emotion should distinguish between “mixed emotions” linked to tense ambivalence and a feeling of being pulled between two emotions such as love and hate and emotional blends such as the sadness and hope combination in the fifteenth emotion chain (see Figure 4.3) and the anger and sadness combination in the seventh emotion chain (see Figure 4.3).

Finally, I think it is fair to argue that the three main segments of the Intensive provide both reinforcement of socialization and a variety of structures and activities to participants at the Intensive. Rather than working with a one-size-fits all model such as the joy-crisis cycle used by the Bruderhof (Zablocki 1971) or an emphasis on love, sexuality, and adoration of a charismatic guru used by groups such as the Raelians (Palmer 2004) and followers of Rajneesh (Carter 1990; Goldman 2001). This variety further reinforces Reclaiming’s “and logic” because it encourages participants to respond to “work” in multiple venues rather than isolating their work into just the Path class, affinity or the evening rituals. This type of set-up makes it possible for people to actively work during camp and take experiences away for the other fifty-one weeks of the year or to operate on a restorative sort of model with rest and a vacation as one’s goal during camp while still picking up skills and stories in some settings or simply

reinforcing other campers' socialization process. I turn next to a brief discussion of what I consider to be a "missing piece" from the Spiralheart 2004 camp: the all-camp healing ritual.

7) Understanding the Absence of a Camp-wide Healing Ritual at Spiraheart in 2004

Given how important healing is within Neo-Paganism generally and Reclaiming as a movement, I want to complete my analysis of the complementary and contradictory features of the Spiralheart Intensive by pointing out that the event lacked a feature I saw at Intensives in other parts of the U.S. and Canada: an all-camp healing ritual. This ritual complements the work done in affinity group to some extent because both segments of camp focus on the constructive integration or release of experiences people have had before or during the Intensive. Size-wise the healing ritual offers another opportunity for high levels of magical and social energy, which makes the event attract to energy-focused campers (see Chapter Two). In addition, doing a healing ritual offers opportunities for campers to practice healing skills learned in Path classes as well as skills such as anchoring and tending (these were taught in the AAO class discussed earlier in this chapter).

I think it fair to assert that campers have ample reasons to conduct an all-camp healing ritual during the Intensive and that the absence of the healing ritual at Spiralheart in 2004 is notable. In addition, I showed in Chapter One that the 2004 camp worked effectively with an intensely emotional story focused on the goddess Amaterasu which might have stimulated the need for an all-camp healing ritual one afternoon or evening. In spite of these factors, a healing ritual did not happen and I think there are

two plausible explanations for why things played out the way they did at Spiralheart camp in 2004.

The first explanation is that the organizers and teachers spent a significant amount of time trying to engage and accommodate the Pagan Cluster, particularly during the planning for Friday evening's ritual. Even if campers had requested a healing ritual, I am not sure the teaching team would have had the time and energy to help out with it. Structurally, there were also a number of optional offerings during afternoon free time from roughly 2pm to 6pm each day, and these would have been compromised (meaning postponed or cancelled) by an all-camp healing ritual. Secondly, I think the idea of the emotion shape helps us understand what adding a major, all-camp healing ritual would have done to the camp. If the ritual had been added on Tuesday or Wednesday it would have disrupted the downswing into intense negative emotions (see Figure 4.5). This disruption might have then rendered the ecstatic and positive ritual on Thursday evening to be less striking. Put simply, it made structural sense for the 2004 camp to omit the ritual in the interest of attaining the goal of an ideal-typical, intense concave arc emotion shape. These two explanations can work in conjunction with each other, and help me make sense why the 2004 camp proceeded that way it did.

A secondary question is what does the choice to omit the healing ritual do to atmosphere and socialization? In brief, I think it shifts the burden of healing into other segments of camp. In camps with a healing ritual some healing interactions from the relatively egalitarian setting of the all-camp ritual into either the less egalitarian client-healer interactions or the affinity group, which is the most egalitarian setting within the

camp. This variability means that people in need of healing get forced out of the middle-ground setting of the all-camp ritual, and end up achieving their healing goals in settings that inadvertently reinforce either the idea of necessary hierarchy (professional healing done during free time) or equality and independence (affinity group). I am not sure that campers reflect about what these healing choices mean in terms of their overall socialization, but there is evidence in Chapter Three that healer-client interactions, while unequal, can spark the client to seek out further training both within an Intensive and outside it during the other fifty-one weeks of the year.

8) Conclusion

Chapter Four focuses on answering the question: “what happens during camp?” I discuss the structure and socialization experiences that happen within three key pieces of camp: the morning Path class, the afternoon affinity group, and the evening all-camp ritual. While these segments of camp vary in size and offer optimal settings for people who like small-, medium-, and large-group interactions they also complement each other in terms of content in that both the Path Class and evening ritual expose campers to Reclaiming’s “and logic” as well as specific activities that provoke emotional, cognitive, and somatic flexibility.

The affinity is particularly interesting because it offers opportunities for small group interactions with little to no hierarchical structure whereas the Path classes foster teacher-student relationships and implicitly socialize everyone in the class into the idea that expertise matters and temporarily unequal power relations can foster learning and self-transformations. The evening ritual lies in the structural middle ground regarding

hierarchy if we consider that some evening rituals have firm priestess-non-priestess structures while others are loosely structured and more spontaneous or even fully improvised. The payoff of discussing the evening rituals in this chapter is that readers get a new sense of how socialization proceeds grounded in my “structural” approach to emotions and temporality. In addition, I returned to the topic of healing, and offered two possible explanations for why the 2004 Intensive lacked a healing ritual even though the event would have contributed to the socialization of campers. One of these explanations also relies on the idea that emotions are “structured” because it points out that adding a healing ritual would have disrupted the group-level emotional pattern, the concave arc emotion shape, planned by the organizers and teaching team for Amaterasu-themed Intensive. Adding a healing ritual might have done more harm than good to the Intensive as a whole because it is likely to have reduced the “emotional punch” packed by the evening rituals done at Spiralheart in 2004. This point should be judiciously generalized to other Reclaiming Intensives since plenty of camps manage to integrate intense evening rituals and storywork with an all-camp healing ritual.

I also spent time in Chapter Four considering some puzzling data regarding the mismatch between the emotional flows and “sticky” positive emotions experienced by individuals at the 2004 Spiralheart intensive and the larger pattern of a descent into and ascent out of intense negative emotions that was attained by the group as a whole. I argue that these seemingly contradictory patterns actually make sense if the individuals involved are buffering themselves from intensely negative work with the camp story by individually creating emotion chains that end with positive emotions. In addition, I think

that the campers are getting socialized in a complex way into feeling and then coping with paradoxical emotions and the associated “and logic” of “descending into your deepest pain with the group and staying there AND experiencing emotions chains ending in hope or happiness in the same time period.” In sum, what happens at camp is often emotionally intense, multi-faceted in terms of format and content, and crafted to offer campers something beyond a “one-size-fits-all” singular pattern of emotions and self-transformation used by other new religious movements.

Chapter Four also includes theoretical work on concepts that contribute to the sociology of emotions. In order to understand what happens at the Intensive I needed better terms for discussing ambivalence and describing combinations of emotions. I built on Randall Collins’ (2004) concept of emotional energy, by extending it to cover generally positive as well as negative flows of particular emotions, and introduced a new concept, the emotion chain and emotion shape (see Williamson 2011) to make sense of experiences of connectivity between particular emotions and broader flows of emotional energy over longer durations of time respectively. Emotional chaining can occur at different levels of social life, and I confined my discussion to a limited amount of data from the during-event survey I conducted in 2004. I drew on field observations to create the emotion shape for the week of the 2004 Intensive (see Figure 4.5), and pointed out that emotion shapes can also accommodate different time horizons. These data raise as many questions as they provide answers to, but I think the discussion of emotion chains and shapes here in Chapter Four provides a solid foundation for future work with both concepts. I turn next to discussing how self-transformation processes in

Reclaiming work in Chapter Five, and also consider the question “who returns from year to year?”

Chapter Five: Understanding Reattendance and the Recycling Process of Self-Transformation

1) Introduction

Given my general concern with whether people stay committed to Reclaiming or to a particular Intensive community, Chapter Five focuses on understanding commitment outcomes using multiple forms of data. I start the chapter with a discussion of year-to-year retention in 2005 at the Spiralheart and DreamRoads events for the campers who completed Spiralheart's 2004 Intensive. First I estimate Witchcamp retention in general as measured by the proportion of attendees in 2004 who returned to the same Intensive the following year. Next, I look at male-female retention differences. I examine this quantitatively in terms of male-female differences in rates of return to the Intensives and qualitatively in terms of the issues male witches have with their minority status at Witchcamp. These interview accounts with male attendees show the diverse array of men Reclaiming retained for multiple years. In addition, I explore the case of one man who was very plugged in to his regional Reclaiming community and the associated Intensive and subsequently quit due to a perceived lack of sex-based equity in Reclaiming circa 2005-6.

I then shift back to a quantitative analysis of year-to-year retention in 2005 for the campers who completed Spiralheart's 2004 Intensive. The analysis in this section builds on the outcome of the analysis of sex and reattendance by assessing another set of independent variables that capture an individual's family heritage regarding the importance of religion and family engagement in politics and/or activism. Unlike the

sex-based reattendance analysis, which found patterns in the small-N data⁹¹ consistent with a small “man effect” of men being more likely to return to an Intensive in 2005, the family heritage analysis found patterns in the small-N data consistent with 1) reattendance serving as a “rebellion” against family heritage regarding religion being not very important to the family for the majority of campers and 2) reattendance serving as an “extension” of family heritage regarding engagement in politics and/or activism for the majority of campers. These ideas are a natural extension of both rational choice theorizing about religion (Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Stark and Bainbridge 1996) and specific work on spiritual and religious capital (Berger and Redding 2011; Iannaccone 2006; Woodberry 2005). The points I want readers to keep in mind about the family heritage analysis are 1) that I am not certain the participants themselves are conscious of the extensions or rebellions that are happening; conscious choice is cornerstone of rational choice theorizing, and 2) I am bridging ideas about how people keep up or let go of their religious heritage with ideas about how people keep up or let go of their political-activist heritage (Guigni 2004; Goldman 2001; Tipton 1982).

Thus, we have a richer picture of one particular form of commitment: reattendance outcomes in 2005 that incorporates both sex differences and the influence of family heritage regarding both religion and activism. One core tension in Reclaiming is between the movement’s magical religious and activist sides, so I think it makes sense to examine individuals’ heritage regarding both these topics in addition to examining one key

⁹¹ Due to the small sample size, these relationships have to be interpreted cautiously. I state that the data are consistent with a certain set of hypotheses, but there are other plausible explanations, which cannot be fully ruled out. This caveat applies to the findings in section two as well as those in section four of Chapter Five.

demographic variable: sex. Both sex and family heritage regarding religion and activism shape how individuals experience the Intensive, and my aim in Chapter Five is to assess whether there are latent associations with event reattendance, which might not be obvious to the respondents themselves. It turns out that there are some notable patterns in the data, and the stronger relationships are for the family heritage variables and reattendance.

This analysis of family heritage regarding religion and activism and reattendance in 2005 is related to the final section of Chapter Five, which introduces a more theoretical assessment of commitment to the Intensives grounded in four qualitative case studies and differences between prototypical people who are either primarily “activists” or “magical religious” people. In this final section, I develop a first iteration of a model for self-transformations in Reclaiming over a longer span of time: years rather than the annual assessments done earlier in the chapter. I use recycling as a metaphor for cyclical, iterative revisions to one’s self, cognitions, emotions, bodily sensations and overall worldview that both activists and magical religious people experience. Based on the metaphor I then develop a first iteration of a recycling model for movement-stimulated self-transformations, and contrast the recycling model with linear models of intense turning-point transformative moments associated with religious conversions and social movement recruitment. The recycling model also helps explain the cyclical development of multifaceted flexibility. I argue that the activist versus religious distinction does seem to be of primary importance for explaining the different paths by which people become more flexible. Reclaiming’s model has challenges which I think are

illustrated, in part, by the problems men within the movement have with issues of inclusivity as I discussed earlier in Chapter Five. However, despite the challenges and inefficiencies, the recycling process does seem to get results and make space for a diverse array of people. The recycling model builds on the analysis of family heritage and reattendance in a sense because it also relates to the core tension between activism and religion in Reclaiming.

Overall Chapter Five examines how sex, family heritage regarding religion and activism and present-day background regarding activism and magical religion are associated with short- and long-term commitment outcomes and patterns of self-transformation. The chapter ends with a discussion of my recycling model in comparison to other models of conversion and self-transformation that are linear including Lofland and Stark's classic "World-saver" model (1965) and DeGloma's work on "awakenings" (2010). The virtue of the recycling model is that it opens the door to thinking about circular, iterative transformations that involve the mind, emotions, and the body. I argue that prototypical activists and religious people experience contrasting sequences of shifts to cognitions and emotions with somatic sensory experiences serving as a touchstone throughout the transformative process. In addition, I point out that the recycling model helps make sense of the tensions at camp between people with these backgrounds since their needs at a given moment are varied and possibly competing with each other. This kind of competition between needs can happen across different camps as well as activists and magical religious people reattend the same Intensive and cycle through deepening their involvement in activism and religion.

Thinking this way about commitment to Reclaiming and the Intensive helps make sense of the tension between the Pagan Cluster activists and religiously-oriented campers at the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive (see Chapters One and Two). Moving beyond that particular camp, I also argue that the recycling model helps social scientists to think about a whole genre of self-transformations that have been conceptually and theoretically neglected within sociology. Ideally the recycling model opens a new door to considering temporality as well as the timing, speed, and iterative nature of some self-transformations while the bridging between the work of Randall Collins on IR chains and emotional energy (2004) and Victor and Edith Turner's work (Turner2012; Turner 1969) on the ritual process and the state of *communitas* that I did in Chapter One helps shed light on the ritual technologies movements use to catalyze self-transformative processes. Both the Collins-Turner synthesis from Chapter One, and self-recycling model in Chapter Five are necessary for developing a full understanding of the mutual influence between how people experience particular rituals, their backgrounds and present place in the self-recycling process, and short- and long-term commitment to Reclaiming as a whole and a particular Intensive event and the associated regional community. Chapter Five presents a series of analyses and conceptual-theoretical work that move my ideas in this direction.

2) Did people return? A Look at Spiralheart and DreamRoads Reattendance in 2005 and Sex Differences in Reattendance

This section presents a basic analysis of data from a small sample of individuals who completed post-event surveys in 2004. I kept track of whether these individuals reattended either the Spiralheart 2005 Intensive or the DreamRoads 2005 Intensive

using both the mailing list sent out after camp and my own field observations. The main question this section answers is: did people return to camp? I also answer a secondary question: was sex associated with patterns of return? Given that Reclaiming is a movement that values feminism, I was curious about how many women returned and whether men found the feminist atmosphere tolerable over time. One simple way to assess this is to investigate reattendance. Readers should note that my analysis does not include another regional camp, Vermont, which I know received inflows of campers from Spiralheart during the course of my study. Thus, I am investigating a very specific pattern of reattendance focused on people returning to the exact same Intensive (Spiralheart) that they went to the prior year or the new split-off Intensive (DreamRoads), which was founded by long-time Spiralheart campers. Basically the community I entered in 2004 split, and my analysis of reattendance accommodates this by assessing general return to either Intensive as well as specific reattendance at just Spiralheart and just DreamRoads.

The survey data show that there was variation in the sex of people who attended camp in 2004 (see Table 5.1). Roughly a quarter of the sample was male and the other seventy-five percent was female. Nobody who completed the survey wrote that they were intersexed although the survey offered a write-in option to accommodate people who felt they did not fit into the binary categories. Regarding reattendance, the data in Table 5.1 show variation in reattendance patterns: roughly seventy percent of people returned to an Intensive within the broader home community in 2005. For Spiralheart roughly half the people in the sample returned whereas for DreamRoads roughly fifteen

percent of the sample “returned” to a piece of the 2004 community by attending the new camp (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Sex and Reattendance Analysis		
	Percentage Answering Yes	Valid N
<u>Dependent variables</u>		
Reattendance either camp in 2005	Yes= 68.9%	
	(31)	45
Reattendance just Spiralheart (Mid-Atlantic) camp in 2005	Yes= 53.3%	
	(24)	45
Reattendance just DreamRoads (Deep South) camp in 2005	Yes= 15.6%	
	(7)	45
<u>Independent variables</u>		
Sex	Female= 75.6%	
	(34)	45
* N for the category listed in parentheses		

In order to assess the relationship between sex and reattendance at either Intensive in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.2), which shows that roughly ninety percent of the eleven men in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005 while roughly sixty-two percent of the thirty-four women in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005. This looks like a big percentage difference- over twenty-five percent- when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.2), but the sample size is small,

forty-five cases so these findings have to be interpreted cautiously. I think the main trend in these data is that more men return than expected while fewer women do.

When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for sex and the general reattendance variable there was no significant association between sex and returning to either camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 3.29, $p=.07$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or strongly statistically significant sex differences in general reattendance at either the Spiralheart or DreamRoads Intensives in 2005.

Table 5.2: Cross-tabulation of Data on Sex and Reattendance at Either East Coast Event in 2005 (N=45)				
		Independent variable: Sex		
		Male	Female	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at either East Coast event in 2005	Did not Reattend	9.1% (N=1)	38.2% (N=13)	31.1% (N=14)
	Did Reattend	90.9% (N=10)	61.8% (N=21)	68.9% (N= 31)
	Column Total	100% (N=11)	100% (N=34)	

What I think we see here is a small “man effect” in that men are more likely to return than women. This finding has a couple of different plausible explanations. The first is a form of cognitive dissonance, which might operate more strongly for heterosexual men and less strongly for LGBTQ men and (even more weakly for women) in that men, especially heterosexual men, have to invest in making the leap to identifying as “feminist witches” prior to and during the Intensive. The logic goes that once they make the difficult leap of identifying with a feminine archetype and feminist values, dissonance results if they try to abandon it by doing things such as not returning to an

Intensive annually. The leap is less taxing for LGBTQ men⁹² and women generally, thus they have a less heavy investment to abandon, and are more likely to leave Reclaiming and the Intensives after initially getting involved. This being said, I want to point out to readers that I think this dissonance effect is buffered/reduced by the number of male role models available to men within Wicca including Gerald Gardner and Alex Sanders who founded Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca respectively. When people get interested in Wicca and start reading about British Traditional Wicca, prominent men are as unavoidable as feminist American women are when people investigate American Wicca and Neo-Paganism; the Brits exported Wicca to the U.S. and the U.S. exported feminist witchcraft back (for this latter point see Clifton 2006: 122).

Moving on, I think a religious marketplace-based rational-choice style explanation is also a plausible way to make sense of the “man effect.” It can also be used to generate reasons why other groups might reattend, but I am going to stay focused just on men’s reattendance here. Please pardon the bluntness of how I put things in the rest of this paragraph. If you put Reclaiming in the context, the movement fits a niche and “sells” something: a non-initiatory, activist and politics-friendly, feminist but not separatist form of Wicca that does not work exclusively with gender binaries when it comes to either the deities people work with or the roles used to accomplish rituals. Reclaiming is

⁹² I plan to analyze sexuality and reattendance in this section in the book manuscript, but have not taken the time and space to do the analysis here. I can say, having looked at the data, that there are sexuality effects on reattendance and that these effects persist when a cross-tabulation of sex as the independent variable and sexuality as a control (coded heterosexual vs. non-heterosexual) variable is run with either reattendance at Spiralheart in 2005 or reattendance at DreamRoads in 2005 as the dependent variables.

non-initiatory, which appeals to anarcho-Pagans and others wary of initiations who might avoid Feri Wicca and British Traditional Wicca. Reclaiming is friendly to blending politics, activism, and religion. The movement pretty much has a monopoly on this niche at the progressive and perhaps the libertarian ends of the political spectrum within Wicca and Neo-Paganism. If you want to do magical activism, it really is “the only deal in town” for good and for ill. In addition, because Reclaiming is a feminist, but not separatist tradition it admits men, especially heterosexual men who support feminism who cannot find a place in Dianic Wicca and do not want to work in groups with Priest-Priestess roles and matched male-female couples. This kind of set-up might happen in British Traditional or Eclectic Wiccan groups and maybe some others I am missing here. Thus, if you are a heterosexual man, Reclaiming is “the only game in town” in two other respects: 1) they let men play and 2) they have rules compatible with feminism and LGBTQ approaches to priestessing and divinity that are shared by other groups that are either LGBTQ-centric (Radical Faeries) or initiatory and not focused on activism (Feri Wicca). In sum, Reclaiming remains competitive in the religious marketplace, and men may stick with the movement and reattend Intensives simply because they lack other venues for goal-attainment.

Before I examine more data, I want to consider a third plausible explanation for why men might reattend an Intensive at a slightly higher rate than women. If we think back to Chapter Two when I discussed the 2004 Path cohort, readers might recall that many of the men were coupled up. Readers might also recall that some campers might attend the Intensive because they are either “supportive” or “suspicious” about their partner’s

participation (see Chapter Two). These same motives may influence reattendance behavior because one partner may feel lukewarm about the Intensive yet stick with it to accommodate or just keep track of a most invested partner. Of course, couples might also split the difference between Reclaiming and another group due to what each group offers and their shared interest in Reclaiming-style magical activism and other religious or activist pursuits. I just want to be clear that I am **not** saying that all couples are composed of a less-invested and more-invested partner although this pattern is what I have in mind for the supportive/suspicious type I described above. These are just three plausible explanations, but I think they are enough for readers to consider as I go over more data and ask more questions regarding reattendance.

Next, I want to answer the question: “what about just Spiralheart?” When I attended the camp in 2005 it really did feel like an exodus had happened, and while new people did attend, the absence of the DreamRoads contingent was quite noticeable. To assess the relationship between sex and reattendance at just Spiralheart in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.3), which shows that roughly seventy-three percent of the eleven men in the sample did reattend Spiralheart camp in 2005 while roughly forty-seven percent of the thirty-four women in the sample did reattend Spiralheart camp in 2005. Again, these findings have to be interpreted cautiously due to the sample size. I think the main trend in these data is that, like the relationship between sex and general reattendance in Table 5.2, more men return than expected returned to Spiralheart in 2005 while fewer women did (see Table 5.3). When I examined Chi-Square statistic for sex and Spiralheart reattendance variable there was no significant

association between sex and returning to Spiralheart camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 2.20, $p=.14$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant sex differences in reattendance at the Spiralheart Intensive in 2005.

Table 5.3: Cross-tabulation of Data on Sex and Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005 (N=45)				
		Independent variable: Sex		
		Male	Female	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	27.3% (N=3)	52.9% (N=18)	46.7% (N=21)
	Did Reattend	72.7% (N=8)	47.1% (N=16)	53.30% (N= 24)
	Column Total	100% (N=11)	100% (N=34)	

If some women did not return to Spiralheart, did more of them return to DreamRoads? To assess the relationship between sex and reattendance at just DreamRoads in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.4), which shows that roughly eighteen percent of the eleven men in the sample reattended by going to DreamRoads camp in 2005 while roughly fifteen percent of the thirty-four women in the sample reattended by going to DreamRoads camp in 2005. Again, these findings have to be interpreted cautiously due to the sample size. I think the main trend in these data is that the results show very little difference between men and women within each reattendance category (see Table 5.4) and look like what I would expect due to chance rather than any systematic differences. The data also show that people reattended DreamRoads in smaller numbers (two men and five women; see Table 5.4) compared to

Spiralheart (eight men and sixteen women; see Table 5.3). When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for sex and the DreamRoads reattendance variable there was no significant association between sex and returning to DreamRoads camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= .08, $p=.78$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant sex differences in reattendance at the DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 and the answer to my earlier question about women attending DreamRoads in greater numbers is a “no.”

Table 5.4: Cross-tabulation of Data on Sex and Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 (N=45)				
		Independent variable: Sex		
		Male	Female	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	81.8% (N=9)	85.3% (N=29)	84.4% (N=38)
	Did Reattend	18.2% (N=2)	14.7% (N=5)	15.60% (N= 7)
	Column Total	100% (N=11)	100% (N=34)	

In this section I have taken one kind of approach to answering the question “who returns to camp?” I used quantitative data from a small sample of forty-five respondents to examine the association between sex and general reattendance at either Spiralheart of DreamRoads in 2005. The data did not show any strong and significant differences between women and men, and I was able to show that within the sample roughly thirty-one percent (N=14; see Table 5.2) of people did not return to a camp at all. This kind of outflow helps put the recruitment efforts of regional communities in context by showing that the groups do need to get new people into the

Intensives each year to compensate for the outflow. I then moved to examining the association between sex and reattendance just at Spiralheart as well as just at DreamRoads. Again, the data did not show any significant differences between women and men regarding reattendance, particularly for DreamRoads. This leads me to the tentative conclusion that these communities do not have a major issue retaining people generally or men specifically.

I have discussed the fact that there were a number of men in my Path class in 2004 as well as a male student teacher, Sky Mist, but I have yet to explore the topic of men's issues generally. Having looked at the data for the retention of men between 2004 and 2005, I can tentatively say that men do return to the camps, and if anything, their retention rates are slightly higher compared to women's. This being said, I think men are one minority group at camp whose experiences deserve more analytic attention. While we have not seen evidence of a "man problem" related to retention, this does not mean that men at the Intensives do not face particular challenges and advantages while they are at the intensives. I discuss this topic further in the next section of Chapter Five, and draw on qualitative data to further flesh out what men's experiences at camp are like. I think this is particularly warranted given the small "man effect" present in the data, which showed that men were generally more likely to return to either Spiralheart or DreamRoads between 2004 and 2005.

3) Diversity, Dissatisfaction, and Men in Reclaiming

One basic point that I want to make clear from the outset of this section is that Reclaiming Tradition Witchcraft and Activism attracts various sorts of men, that is to say

that men add diversity to the movement. The men also have diversity within their ranks with regard to key demographic variables such as age, GBQT (gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer) versus heterosexual identification, and their status as organizers and teachers. In the previous section of Chapter Five I used quantitative data to explore sex differences in retention and the potential of Reclaiming having a “man problem,” meaning trouble either attracting or retaining men generally. In this third section of Chapter Five, I explore qualitative data from eight men who share some of their views about gender, sexuality, and their experiences as men at the Intensives and within the wider movement.

Because some of the views may be controversial within Reclaiming and the specific regional communities, I am providing basic background information (age range during the year when interviewed, organizer/teacher status during the year when interviewed, and identity labels regarding gender and sexuality for heterosexuals versus those who adopt a GBQT label). In addition, I am mixing comments from men associated with Spiralheart and DreamRoads with those from men involved with camps in other regions of the United States and Canada. This blending of cases should help to further obscure the men’s identities, and it has the added benefit of creating a general Reclaiming-wide picture of the diverse sorts of men involved with Reclaiming circa 2004-7.

This picture is a starting point for further explorations of men’s issues in future analyses, especially since it is based on a small number of cases. Even with this caution I think the data illustrate that men in Reclaiming do not march in ideological lock-step, and that they bring varying perspectives on manhood, male-bodied living, and sexuality

to the Intensive events. In addition, I argue that if Reclaiming has a “man problem” it is more a matter of differing forms of dissatisfaction among men related to the movement’s values, how men are treated, and sorting out how to be a witch and activist when the dominant Western culture continues grant individuals “privilege” grounded in their status as men. As the data show, the paths men take to transcend their status as oppressors with privileges vary: some men seek perpetual healing for their self-loathing within the movement while others adopt what I call a “bisexual, but...” identity that is more politically correct than being strictly heterosexual yet less edgy than calling oneself queer. Staking a claim to bisexuality seems to happen the most for single men in the “middle” age group, which encompasses men in their 40s and 50s versus “youngers” in their 20s and 30s and “elders” at or over age 60.

Table 5.5: Age Group, Organizer/Teacher Status, and Identity Labeling for Eight Men in Reclaiming

	Youngers: 20s-30s	Middles: 40s-50s	Elders: 60s+
Organizer or teacher	Man 1: queer-identified, single	Man 2: heterosexual, single Man 3: queer-identified and married	
Regular camper	Man 4: sexuality not specified, single, fearful father	Man 5: “struggling” heterosexual, single Man 6: heterosexual, married, father Man 7: bisexual, single	Man 8: heterosexual, single

The eight cases included in Table 5.5 are labeled simply as “Man #” and classified to make their age group, organizer/teacher status, and self-labeling regarding gender and sexuality clear. Man 1 fits into the “Younger” age range, and is an interesting case because he described himself as a queer man who had recently dated a queer young woman whom he was still “very connected to.” He became involved in a family/clan

sub-group and stated “I really brought some new elements to them, as far as pushing the boundaries of how they see certain gender dynamics” and “working that queer magic” within the small sub-group as well as in the wider camp community. Man 1 described how his first year at the Intensive, he became “pissed off” due to

a skit [...] they take the new people who are [joining the sub-group] and like put them in the skit. And it looks like very sexist in a certain way, like they were all, there was like [a straight man] was playing the piano. And they were singing “Little Red Riding Hood,” and there was like all these girls dressed up like Little Red Riding Hood. And I felt like I was part of the sub-group and what, I couldn’t be a Little Red Riding Hood? [...] Now [a few years later] I’m petering out, like sometimes I’ll be like yeah,[...] my family, [...] and then other times I don’t know what that even is. So, it’s tricky. It’s very tricky. Like kind of spaced out community building, like I see it in all of them. I can see it [...] whatever there is its kind of ambiguous grouping going on. So, I don’t know. But, I do love the [sub-group], [...] and I definitely resonate with a lot of the people that are involved.

Man 1 was “petering out” in his own estimation, but this was after having successfully advocating for queer-inclusive magic and pointing out “very sexist” actions by his own Reclaiming sub-group. Man 1 helped make the Intensive a space where men could also “be a Little Red Riding Hood” and get dressed up, but he also appeared to be in the midst of cycling out of both camp organizing/teaching and strongly pushing for sub-group magic as well as very visible queer magic.

In contrast to Man 1, the other “Younger” man, Man 4 felt integrated into his camp community and “did some spell work around – or put out my intention that I wanted to, you know, stay up late and [...] have a positive outcome with that and still be able to – you know, be able to function well enough to, you know, help out with the healing ritual. So I was, but I didn’t get much sleep [...] but I got what I wanted so I was happy

with that.” Man 4’s process included “kinda realizing my ability to – like some – that I have stuff to offer a community” and early on working through

having dialog in a safe space with people. So a lot of that to really work through and worked through that and just being heard, you know, understood and being able to dialog about, you know, patriarchal oppression [...] really did wonders for me. But I had an activist background and as such I thought – I was kinda a zealot [...] around magical activism, you know. [...] So I was all about doing the work and I wasn’t really looking for, you know, personal growth in it. But I obtained that by working in communities.

Man 4 wanted to contribute healing during the Intensive because it allowed him to demonstrate that he had “stuff to offer” a magical activist community that had helped him overcome his own zealotry on the one hand and “fear of death and fear of all sorts of things” stemming from trauma during his teen years and subsequent participation in “messianic Christianity” that he abandoned while he was in college. On final interesting point about Man 4 is that while he never self-labeled regarding his gender and sexuality, he did make it clear that he was a father with “a failed relationship” with his child’s mother. Thus, there was another point prior to the time I met him when Man 4 was in need of even more healing and aid from activist and religious friends. He appeared to have received the aid in his time of need, and was focused on contributing to the community in ways that would enhance his self-esteem and perhaps his status. Man 4 was plugged in to Reclaiming and cultivating a masculine identity bound to fatherhood, fear, and past “failures.”

In terms of emotions, Man 2 contrasts mightily with, well, everyone else I will discuss in this section. Man Two participated in the Intensives and camp organizing for several years yet became turned off from Reclaiming due an international-level controversy

about an all-women Intensive that was allowed to use the “Witchcamp” brand name. Man Two felt that the situation with the all-female camp was deeply contrary to the Principles of Unity (see Appendix B), and his sense that the movement was not “walking the talk” regarding inclusivity eventually led him to leave Reclaiming entirely. Man 2’s comments need to be put in historical context because they show his awareness of happenings in the wider Reclaiming web in the 1990s and early to mid-2000s. In short, there was a group of women in Germany who started an Intensive called either “German Witchcamp” or “Feencamp”⁹³ and was the first European Intensive. This Intensive was all-female (see Simos and Gordon 2000: 266) and was run from 1988⁹⁴ until roughly 2005. The other important thing for readers to know is that people in the Reclaiming web in the U.S. and Canada were aware of this camp and did frame it as connected to Reclaiming as a whole. This connectivity still holds true for the current European and Australian Intensives are today, which all allow men. Turning back to Man 2, he argued that “the Principles of Unity. They don't mean crap, [...] they don't mean anything.” I asked, “So how did you come to that?” and Man 2 responded,

I can track it back to a singular incident. Our community representative said “do you want me to take anything to community counsel?” You know, a point of concern. And I went, “Sure, tell me why we have camps who exclude men? Because it seems to me that it violates the inclusion thing in Principles of Unity.” Well, it started a big hullabaloo, and what came out of it was, in essence, was they're not “Principles of

⁹³ See http://reclaiming.nl/?page_id=17, accessed August 22, 2012, http://www.belili.org/salon_july_info.html, accessed August 22, 2012, and <http://www.reclaiming.nl/loreley/engels/doc/lluk-95.htm>, accessed August 22, 2012, for evidence that German/Feencamp existed. The link provided in the third source, <http://www.witchcamp.de/> was no longer functional as of August 22, 2012.

⁹⁴ See Portland Reclaiming’s page on Witchcamps: http://portlandreclaiming.org/Portland_Reclaiming/Witchcamps.html, accessed August 22, 2012, which lists the German Witchcamp as starting in 1988.

Unity.” They’re “Recommendations of Unity” because they’re not going to make anybody do it. You know, we’ve got a camp that won’t allow men. Their excuse is we don’t understand German men [...] which tells me, that no, this is not – this is fear based. This isn’t because of anything really. It’s a fear of inclusion. [...] I thought [...] we’re all one community, and we all believe in these Principles of Unity, but then there were people going, “No, you don’t understand.” [One man] said, “Well, you don’t understand. We’re allowed to exclude anybody we want like criminals and perverts,” and all this kind of stuff. And I just wanted to write, “Oh, thank you for including me in that pot because I’ve got a penis. Fuck you, pal. I’m out of here. If that’s what you guys think, I’ve got no time for you.” Because I can’t change that anymore than anybody else can change. You know, just because you don’t like being a guy. It’s like I’m sorry. If you want to be inclusive, be inclusive. If you want to say – you know, under these rules the KKK could have a camp because exclusion is within the Principles of Unity. See, based on that it’s, like, well, OK then that invalidates the whole thing then. It does, in **my** opinion. [...] So it taught me that these are one-week camps. If you want to do it that’s fine. As a general movement, sure, I’m willing to dance around and say we’re all brothers and sisters and everything. When it gets down to brass tacks though, it’s just as fake as everything else. [...] It raised all kinds of hell, and quite frankly I don’t care because it exposed them all as a bunch of hypocrites. But it did a lot of damage. And people that I did respect, I kind of look at them now and go, “That doesn’t change anything.” A rock is still a rock, even if you call it a flower.

Man 2 self-identified as “male and heterosexual” and his lengthy comments above illustrate a belief that language play can only go so far since “a rock” or a male body remains the same “even if you call it a flower.” To Man 2, a penis is not something he can change, and it is not a valid reason for exclusion and being lumped in with “criminals and perverts.” Next, I asked him “In your knowledge, has there been a straight man on a teaching team at a Reclaiming camp?” I intended to explore whether Man 2’s anger extended to the dynamics teaching and organizing, and whether sexuality as well as the male body was pertinent to discussions of inclusion/exclusion and hypocrisy. He responded with mixed signals, “Yes, [name redacted] is straight. There’s a couple of bisexuals. Oh, yeah, there is. Yeah, there is. What is his name? There’s a guy from [state name cut] [...] But no, I mean, you really have to be either gay or bi. Not to be safe, but

to be chosen. It helps if you're suspect. Let's see. Yeah, yeah, that's so well-known."

Man 2 explained that becoming one of the "chosen" men involved "bullshit" he tried to avoid, and that he felt that he got "backdoor" offers due to being unapologetically straight rather than formal offers to organize/teach.

In fact, Man 2 had taken a break from one community due to anger over the controversy about the German camp and his sentiment of "wow, what planet are you from that you don't understand this? And you think you're enlightened?" He reiterated that "I've lost a lot of respect for a lot of those people," and seemed most puzzled by the other men who did not share his idea that "just even equality without having a feminist, you know like pro-women stance. As long as you get neutrality you're good to go and you'll change some things. It's, like, wow. I'm not a psychologist and I understand that." In sum, Man 2 did not apologize for being heterosexual and was proud to be a "rock" rather than a "flower", but he was personally invested in the Reclaiming Principles of Unity to enough of an extent that he stayed angry for several years regarding the hypocrisy he saw related to the German women-only Intensive. Watching his fellow male Reclaiming witches support their own exclusion broke down Man 2's trust in the community over time in a way that the politics of identity labels connected to being "chosen" for teaching did not.

Is the situation better on the other side for "the chosen ones" who get formally selected to organize and/or teach, and also happen to be male-bodied people who identify as gay, bisexual, or queer? Man 3 explained his situation:

my job as a priestess is basically just to empower people to do that work and to support them, and to remind them that they are their own spiritual authority. [...]I

can tell them over and over again. You know “you can always talk,” “your voice is important,” but so many people just don’t believe it until they actually experience it. So you have to go over it and over it. So you are in teacher mode at the Intensive 24 hours a day except for hopefully when you are sleeping.

This man self-identified as “queer” and was married to another man who would also attend local events and Intensives. Having his spouse present at events did get Man 3 a break, and he stated, my spouse “has been a little bit of a shield that I use. When he and I go to our [dwelling], I am left alone. [snickers] I don’t if that’s really good, but I’m really enjoying that.” Man 3 explained why he needed time with his spouse or close friends:

because you put, you are given authority over other constantly, and it gets really old. But um, people are constantly giving you their authority. Also, its hard often being perceived as a man in this tradition, so all this sexist stuff comes in and um a lot of times women will give me their authority because of the man-woman thing or be really reactive and make me the dad. Or um so I have to be really prepared to really pay attention a lot around this stuff. I never can be off. Very rarely can I be off, but um, not that anyone is going to hurt me, but that I don’t undermine the work that I’m trying to do, you know [laughs].

Man 3 explained that this kind of vigilance and “priestessing constantly” did not seem healthy, but he had to balance his own health with not undermining “the work” he was doing in the community either. His comments such as “I can never be off” show that he held himself to a high benchmarks regarding priestessing and teaching, and that his “priestess” role included combating “sexist stuff” arising from “the man-woman thing” as well as younger women making him a father-like authority figure and getting “really reactive.” Thus, a queer man married to a man can call himself a priestess, and still gets cast in the role of an oppressive male authority or father figure due to his male body and being middle-aged. Male 3’s solution was simply to be vigilant, and he made no

comments about identity labels helping or hindering “the work” of mutual empowerment.

Overall I think the case of Man 3 shows that men can be committed relationships with other men, use female pronouns, and be vigilant about their work in Reclaiming, yet age and just living in a male body can both subtly undermine their efforts. Man 3’s solution at the time I interviewed him seemed to be hard work, and self-sacrifice balanced with self-indulgence that some people might interpret as a reasonable, sustainable balance and other might see as the priestess paying a penalty (just or unjust) for his age and gender-related privilege on a regular basis.

Another interesting case is Man 8, the only “elder” in my array of cases. Man 8 was a regular camper who at the time I interviewed him had never been “chosen” to organize or teach, and never told me that he aspired to do so. When I asked him about his gender and sexuality Man 8 responded,

Well, I consider myself basically, heterosexual. I think partly because I think my culture has scared any bisexual things out of me. I do remember being sexually attracted at an early age to some boys in my class, although more attracted to the girls, but some of the boys and being uncomfortable and embarrassed about it. You know, I grew up at a time where that was the worst insult you could give a person is to say you’re “gay” or you’re “queer.” So, I mean I’m not a woman. I defend women’s rights. I’m not gay. I defend gay rights. I’m not Black. I defend Black rights. I mean, but I have felt weird and I have felt alone. I have felt isolated and creepy. And so, I know what it’s like to be an outcast and to feel like an outcast, even if I’m not. So, I’m very supportive of the gay rights movement. And I will demonstrate with them if there’s a demonstration happening in my town or wherever.

Man 8, who felt “isolated and creepy” did not use healing skills like Man 4 to demonstrate to the community that he was a “quality heterosexual” rather than an

oppressive male or authoritarian father figure. Like Man 4, Man 8 expressed the sense of feeling marginalized and need for healing from his own situation as a privileged male,

Well, I've written about that a lot, in my performance stuff and things like that. I don't like it. I have been really depressed on account of it a number of times. I'm not sure that, well I'm not sure that that's really true, but there's times that I've questioned whether anybody could understand how I felt being I'm part of the oppressive class, heterosexual and White and male.[...] You know, I have dreams, there's another recurrent symbol in my dreams is a woman who's wearing a white blouse. And she's a fighter. [...] And I'm cheering her on in the dream, but at the same time I don't expect her to know why I'm cheering her on or to trust me, and I'm probably as afraid of her, as I am, as the person who she's fighting.

We can see Man 8's self-loathing in his comments, but can also see that rather than embracing the healer or priestess archetypes, Man 8 seems to favor one that could be called "the defender/fighter." The way to buffer oneself from being an oppressor is either acting as a "defender" or cheering on others, especially women. I followed up on these comments by asking, "What about specifically being in the Reclaiming culture, is [the culture] different from how you feel in kind of like out in the world in the dominant culture?" Man 8 responded,

I would say yes. [...] In fact, I was, one of the things that attracted me to Witchcamp that it had a man-hater reputation. And I mean, I have to confess, I am a man-hater. And I mean I don't like what maleness has been characterized in the culture and in the media and so you know, I tell male-bashing jokes. And I've been criticized [...] But, I think they deserve it, [...] you know it's not politically correct, but I love it. [...] So, I'd heard that about Witchcamp and said this is the place for me. [...] and then I was really surprised when I came and not only did I not see any instances of male-bashing, but that particularly the year that I came they were honoring the red god, blue god, and green god, and Starhawk [...] was dancing as if she was dancing in a male body. And you know it was like everything, what I'd heard about it. And I had expressed, I was even kind of disappointed, you know, but when people talk about Witchcamp as being male bashing, lesbians, I can now say I've been [...] and I know you're full of shit.

Man 8's response paints a fuller picture of his coping strategies related to being cast in a role he does not like: he acts as a "defender" by actively bashing ideas about maleness from the dominant culture by telling jokes even though his "male-bashing" also provokes criticism. In addition, Man 8 supports ritual work with both male gods as well as work with "goddess energy," which is what he was expecting the first time he went to camp. Man 8's response to both Witchcamp, and his privileged status is multi-faceted, and involves casting himself not only as a self-aware man who is happy to be an audience for female fighting while feeling both marginalized and depressed in his own right, but also as both a traditional masculine fighter, a "basher" of oppressive masculinity. What is non-negotiable here is Man 8's sexual identity, and I think he uses this complex array of strategies because his heterosexuality is relatively set in stone due to his age and early childhood socialization.

The other three cases I will discuss in this section are men whose ages are similar to Man 2 and Man 3 while they share the status of being regular campers with Man 4 and Man 8. Man 5 was in his mid-forties, lived on the West Coast and was "single" at the time I interviewed him in 2007. Man 5 characterized himself as someone who experienced physical difference early in life and found himself to be cognitively exceptional:

I was born club-footed. [...] My psycho-socio development was shaped by the fact that I had a body cast on until I was three years old. And it separated me from people. It separated me from activities. It hindered my need for ability to use language. When I was in a body cast I learned that I could say "ah" and point and get whatever I wanted. [...] I had a speech impediment until I was like 21 or 22, a really harsh one. [...] Growing I up I was always by a large margin the smartest person in any classroom I was ever in, generally speaking, including teachers.

What I found interesting was that Man 5 also brought up how his physical problems and intelligence impacted his attitudes about women. He also vaguely alluded to doing work “in camp” on this very issue. Man 5 explained,

When you combine my speech impediment and the smart thing and the clumsy thing, I didn’t exactly have the real exciting social life. However, there’s a whole issue and it came up for me in camp is as a teenager my best friend was the guy who didn’t have to work hard to get any woman he wants. And me being incredibly shy, clumsy, smart kid with a speech impediment and him being the suave, ladies’ man who had half a dozen women at the beck and call, I tended to have most of the attention I got from girls in school, was girls who wanted to get to know him. [...] So, I developed this [...] really, strong reaction of negativity towards conventional flirtation, mental flirtation and that whole mating dance. It became very much a turnoff.

During the interview I asked Man 5 about his daily practice and he linked his “witchy daily practice” to his Catholic education. He stated,

A lot of what I now see as my witchy daily practice were things I picked up in Catholic high school. By the time I graduated from high school, I’d already realized that I was more happy being in my sacred space, what I called that sacred space. [...] And I had a teacher in one of my religion classes that had what they called “self hypnosis,” which I think of as trancing. And these things became a part of my daily practice and grounding. I did what, to this day I think of as absolutely, overpoweringly strong grounding as a part of my daily practice. And it’s something I learned in religion classes. [...] What I do is meditation trance work, [...] and it’s like, seems like spell work to me. The only thing missing were the castin’ and the callin’.

I would characterize Man 5 as a primarily religious person since his practice seemed to be shaped by his religious heritage, and not by any experiences with activism. Man 5 seems more concerned about sorting out his sexuality than enriching the “activism” side of his involvement with Reclaiming. When I asked him “do you have anything you want to say about gender, sexual orientation [...]” Man 5 responded,

I’m struggling to identify as heterosexual, however I have no issues with any gender identification. I mean how can you at camp? But, I accept hugs and kisses, and embraces, from everybody and nothing pushes my buttons or anything like that. [...] The only ones that actually give me a charge, that make me say okay, I want to go

with this are typically women.

What I find interesting here is that Man 5 frames his essentially heterosexual impulses as a “[struggle] to identify as heterosexual” rather than a straightforward sexual orientation. He makes it clear that “nothing pushes my buttons” regarding body contact and the sometimes sexually charged atmosphere at camp. This response is similar to one from Man 6, a man in his mid-forties who had been married for over a decade. I asked Man 6 about gender and sexuality by stating: “Gender and sexuality. These are two identity issues that some people can have a lot to say about, so if you could tell me how you identify your gender and your sexual orientation and then if you have anything to say around those topics, feel free.” Man 6 responded:

Male, hetero. Although I don’t – I feel that – to me sexuality is [...] It’s not a black and white [...] you’re heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual [...] certain people who are 100 percent homosexual. The other end was 100 percent heterosexual. Then the rest of us are in the middle somewhere. [...] it may be that if you’re in this narrow band that’s 100 percent heterosexual then there’s some people who are – they don’t want to have a lover of the same sex or relationship with a person of the same sex.

Man 6 went on to say that he had a daughter who was in her early twenties at the time of the interview. He mentioned that his daughter identified as a lesbian and stated “Yeah, she’s – I guess she’s out” in the manner that made it sound he had not exactly reflected about the topic until the moment when I was interviewing him. At the same time Man 6 shared that his daughter was the reason he left Roman Catholicism and stated , “Yeah, I’m what I would refer to as a recovered Roman Catholic. I was baptized and raised in the Roman Catholic Church [...] My first marriage was in the Roman Catholic Church and [...] I started to become disillusioned. I have a daughter and she was

about three years old.” Man 6 said he was in church looking at the altar and reflecting about his daughter and thinking “And here I’m trying to raise this little girl as best I can, smart kid, driving into her at every opportunity that she can be anything she wants to be in the world, anything.” At that moment Man 6 realized his daughter could never be a church leader and that “something is wrong with this.” He realized his deep affinity with nature soon after this moment during a hike on the Appalachian Trail, and subsequently got involved with an Alexandrian Wiccan coven prior to coming to the Intensive with his second wife. Man 6 differs from Man 5 in terms of his simultaneous involvement with Alexandrian Wicca and Reclaiming as well as his status as a father while they both shared a common religious heritage: a Roman Catholic upbringing including Catholic education. These cases are further evidence of both the diversity and similarities among some of the men who participate in Reclaiming Intensives.

Moving back to sexuality, Man 6’s approach to sexuality seems to be shaped by his daughter being “out” but quiet about her girlfriend yet he also took an approach that is standard within Reclaiming, which frames sexuality as having gray areas, ambiguity, and not being “black and white” as Man 6 put it. During the interview Man 6 was not shy about revealing his heterosexuality, but like Man 5 he then quickly moved to framing himself as not being “100 percent heterosexual.” This position of exhibiting heterosexual behavior yet latching onto bisexuality or being “in the middle somewhere” on a continuum of sexuality seems characteristic of the middle-aged men, but not the “youngsters” or the one “elder” I have discussed here.

There seems to be generational variance with regard to sexuality as well as a pattern of claims-making regarding bisexuality by middle-aged men whose actual behavior seems in line with heterosexuality. Another instance of this kind of framing comes from Man 7, who was in his early fifties when I interviewed him. Man 7 stated, “I suppose the best way to describe my sexuality is I wish I had some.” He laughed and then said, “No, as far as orientation I guess you would call it bisexual with a bent towards heterosexual.” Man 7 was twice married, twice divorced, had no children, and had been connected to Pentecostal Christianity. Just like Man 5 and Man 6, he did not mention having sex with men, but Man 7’s framing of his sexuality also included a strong connection to bisexuality. Thus, the case of Man 7 illustrates that it is not just ex-Catholic men in Reclaiming who make these sorts of claims.

I think this pattern of middle-aged heterosexual men being politically correct within the movement by identifying as bisexual to a certain extent may be one way some men of a certain age within Reclaiming try to mediate the effects of male privilege. This reframing of one’s sexuality as more varied and in line with a bisexual rather than heterosexual label is just one pattern some of the men in Reclaiming use, and in this section we have seen that queer men still have issues with male privilege, and counter the privilege of being male-bodied by either working hard and serving the community like Man 3 did by priestessing and teaching or by advocating for a truly queer-inclusive subgroup community like Man 1.

Overall what I think readers should take away from this section about men’s experiences is the large lesson that Reclaiming does attract and retain a variety of men

over a multi-year span of time. These men are a small sampling of those present at the camps I attended, but they are representative of the variety of religious backgrounds, life circumstances, and array of different sexual orientations men bring to the table at any given Intensive. The Witchcamps are a multi-general space, and I think the data I have explored here illustrate some generational patterns including the tendency for middle-aged men to shy away from heterosexual labels in favor of bisexuality and the presence of queer self-labeling by both middle-aged and young men. In addition, I should add that only Man 2 left Reclaiming during the course of my research, and that his dissatisfaction stemmed, at least in part, from a perceived lack of sex-based inclusivity within Reclaiming at an international level.

These data help flesh out my earlier analysis of sex-based reattendance patterns in 2005 because readers can see the diverse array of men who might have reattended camp in that particular year. The cases also show the men's particular social positions regarding sexuality and their particular "work" within the movement, which included fatherhood, priestessing, and just plain coping with their sexuality and male privilege. In the section of Chapter Five, I make a big leap from discussing sex, reattendance, and men's experiences to examining the relationship between family heritage regarding religion, politics, and activism and reattendance. This discussion, like the one I just developed about sex-differences, reattendance, and male privilege addresses another core tension within Reclaiming between activism and magical religion. These tensions play out at different levels within the movement, and the next section of Chapter Five focuses on individual backgrounds and reattendance behavior.

4) Did people return? A Look at Differences in Reattendance for People with Different Family Heritages Regarding Religion, Politics, and Activism

In a manner similar to the second section of Chapter Five, this section presents a basic analysis of data from a small sample of individuals who completed post-event surveys in 2004. The main question this section answers is: were either family religious heritage or family activist heritage associated with patterns of return for the people I surveyed in 2004? I kept track of whether these individuals reattended either the Spiralheart 2005 Intensive or the DreamRoads 2005 Intensive using both the mailing list sent out after camp and my own field observations. Considering that people might be capitalizing on or rebelling from their family backgrounds with religion, politics, and activism, I was curious about whether either religious or political or activist family heritage were associated with reattendance outcomes. I think the answer will interest people with Reclaiming itself, and it is the kind of subtle, unacknowledged pattern a sociological approach to religion and activism can uncover. As I did in the second section, I am investigating a very specific pattern of reattendance focused on people returning to the exact same Intensive (Spiralheart) that they went to the prior year or the new split-off Intensive (DreamRoads), which was founded by long-time Spiralheart campers.

The analyses in this section focus on two different independent variables which capture 1) the importance of religion in the respondent's family up to age 16, and 2) whether the respondent's family was involved in politics and/or activism while the respondent was growing up. I discuss how I collected and coded the data for each variable in turn. For the first independent variable about the importance of religion, the

original survey question asked: “How did your family (meaning the one you spent the majority of time in up to age 16) feel about the importance of religion and spirituality?” The respondents were offered answer options including ‘religion was important to the family,’ “religion was important to some family members but not others (please specify)[write in],” ‘religion was not very important to the family,’ and “religion was not important at all to the family.” I recoded the responses into a binary variable shown in Table 5.6, which splits the responses into a category for “religion was important to some or all of the family” and a category for “religion was not very important or not important at all to the family.” The second variable was created based on responses to the open-ended question: “Please describe *your family’s* relationship to politics and activism including any ties to a religion or spiritual tradition while you were growing up.” The second variable’s data were grouped into two categories: “No, not engaged with politics and/or activism” and “Yes, family engaged with politics and/or activism” (see Table 5.6).

The survey data show that there was variation in both of the family background variables (see Table 5.6). Roughly thirty-six percent of the sample grew up in families that saw religion as not very important or not important at all and the other sixty-four percent grew up in families that saw religion as important. The second independent variable shows that about thirty-nine percent of the sample grew up in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism while sixty-one percent grew up in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism. These data show that the majority of the sample grew up in families that saw religion as important and were engaged in politics and/or activism. Regarding reattendance, the data in Table 5.6 show variation in

reattendance patterns in the smaller sample of thirty-six cases: roughly sixty-nine percent of people returned to an Intensive within the broader home community in 2005. For Spiralheart about fifty-three percent of the people in the sample returned whereas for DreamRoads roughly sixteen percent of the sample “returned” to a piece of the 2004 community by attending the new camp (see Table 5.6). These patterns are consistent with reattendance data for the larger sample presented in section two of this chapter.

Table 5.6 Descriptive Statistics for Variables Used in Religion, Politics, and Activism Background and Reattendance Analysis			
	Percentage Giving Response		Valid N
<u>Dependent variables</u>			
Reattendance either camp in 2005	Yes= 72.2%		
	(26)		36
Reattendance just Spiralheart (Mid-Atlantic) camp in 2005	Yes= 55.6%		
	(20)		36
Reattendance just DreamRoads (Deep South) camp in 2005	Yes= 16.7%		
	(6)		36
<u>Independent variables</u>			
Importance of Religion to Family up to Age 16	Religion was important to some or all of family= 63.9%	Religion not important at all or not very important to family= 36.1%	
	(23)	(13)	36
Family engagement with politics and/or activism	Yes, family engaged with politics and/or activism= 61.3%	No, not engaged with politics and/or activism= 38.7%	
	(19)	(12)	31
* N for the category listed in parentheses			

Family Heritage Regarding the Importance of Religion and Event Reattendance in 2005

In order to assess the relationship between religious background and reattendance at either Intensive in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.7), which shows that roughly eighty-five percent of the thirteen people raised in families that saw religion as not important in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005 while roughly sixty-five percent of the twenty-three people raised in families that saw religion as important in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005. This looks like a big percentage difference of roughly twenty percent when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.7), but the sample size is small, thirty-six cases so these findings have to be interpreted cautiously. I think the main trend in these data is that more people raised in families that saw religion as not important return than expected while fewer people raised in families that saw religion as important do. If we think about this pattern in terms of people either “extending” or “rebelling” from their religious roots in a general way, then the data show that people who were “rebelling” from backgrounds that saw religion as unimportant were more likely to reattend one or the other regional Intensive in 2005. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for religious background and the general reattendance variable there was no significant association between religious background and returning to either camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 1.56, $p=.21$). Thus, I think is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant differences in general reattendance at either the Spiralheart or DreamRoads Intensives in 2005 associated with religious background regarding the importance of religion to the family.

Table 5.7: Cross-tabulation of Data on Importance of Religion to Family up to Age 16 and Reattendance at either East Coast event in 2005 (N=36)				
		Independent variable: Importance of Religion to Family up to Age 16		
		Religion not very important or not important at all to family	Religion important to some or all of family	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at either East Coast event in 2005	Did not Reattend	15.4% (N=2)	34.8% (N=8)	27.8% (N=10)
	Did Reattend	84.6% (N=11)	65.2% (N=15)	72.2% (N= 26)
	Column Total	100% (N=13)	100% (N=23)	

While the story so far with the data on religious background is that there was no statistically significant association with general reattendance, I think the data still show an interesting pattern consistent with people innovating and “rebellious” from their family background by coming from year-to-year. This is a particular sort of rebellion because it shows people turning away from a family heritage of nominal, lukewarm religiosity or of a belief that religion is not important at all. Drawing on ideas about religious and spiritual capital (Berger and Redding 2011; Iannaccone 2006; Woodberry 2005) I could hypothesize that people try to capitalize on their family heritage and work with tools that they already have such as a general belief that religion is important, which is what the families of the majority of people in the sample (see Table 5.6) passed to them. The data for the relationship between religious background and general reattendance (see Table 5.7) are evidence that does not support this capital preservation or extension hypothesis.

I will now move to looking at data for the relationship between religious background and reattendance at just Spiralheart and just DreamRoads in 2005. These data can be used to test the capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and they can also shed light on whether the camp communities differed in terms of the type of veteran campers they attracted in 2005. This topic relates to other discussions of diversity such as the one in Chapter Two, but in this case the diversity is at the level of the camp community and I am checking to see if “rebels against” and “extenders of” their family religious background tended to return to one camp or the other. I using a boring, methodical sociological unpacking of data to get beneath the surface differences in the camp cultures that are common sense: DreamRoads had the flamboyant, rebellious GlitterWhores and younger eco-activists while Spiralheart’s culture was staid, posh, and shaped by both the Beltway regional culture and the Crones subgroup.

In order to assess the relationship between religious background and reattendance at Spiralheart in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.8), which shows that roughly seventy-seven percent of the thirteen people raised in families that saw religion as not important in the sample did reattend Spiralheart in 2005 while roughly forty-four percent of the twenty-three people raised in families that saw religion as important in the sample did reattend Spiralheart in 2005. This looks like a big percentage difference of over thirty percent when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.8), yet the sample size is small, thirty-six cases so these findings have to be interpreted cautiously. I think the main trend in these data is that more people raised in families that saw religion as not important return than expected while fewer people raised in

families that saw religion as important do. If we think about this pattern in terms of people either “extending” or “rebellious” from their religious roots in a general way, then the data show that people who were “rebellious” from backgrounds that saw religion as unimportant were more likely to reattend Spiralheart in 2005. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for religious background and Spiralheart reattendance variable there was a statistically significant association between religious background and returning to Spiralheart in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 3.76, $p=.05$). There is a substantive and statistically significant difference in general reattendance at the Spiralheart Intensive in 2005 associated with religious background regarding the importance of religion to the family.

Table 5.8: Cross-tabulation of Data on Importance of Religion to Family at Age 16 and Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005 (N=36)				
		Independent variable: Importance of Religion to Family at Age 16		
		Religion not very important or not important at all to family	Religion important to some or all of family	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	23.1% (N=3)	56.5% (N=13)	44.4% (N=16)
	Did Reattend	76.9% (N=10)	43.5% (N=10)	55.6% (N= 20)
	Column Total	100% (N=13)	100% (N=23)	

These data can be used to test the capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and they can also shed light on whether the camp communities differed in terms of the type of veteran campers they attracted in 2005. The Spiralheart data show that the camp

drew more veterans who were “rebellious” from their family heritage regarding the importance of religion since they were raised in families that did not see religion as important, and their camp reattendance is behavior consistent with seeing religion as an important facet of their lives, at least for the week of the Intensive. In terms of the hypothesis test, the data do not support a simple capital preservation or extension hypothesis which predicts that there would be more veterans raised in families that did see religion as important who reattended the Spiralheart Intensive than statistically expected. I also want to add that these findings provide support for the idea that there are subtle differences between the Spiralheart and DreamRoads community cultures, and that sociological analysis helps uncover them even though we need to be cautious about the findings due to the small sample size. What we see is that Spiralheart has “rebels” or “innovators” in spite of the camp’s overall conservative reputation. I turn next to the DreamRoads data for religious background and reattendance in 2005.

In order to assess the relationship between religious background and reattendance at Spiralheart in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.9), which shows that roughly eight percent of the thirteen people raised in families that saw religion as not important in the sample did reattend DreamRoads in 2005 while roughly twenty-two percent of the twenty-three people raised in families that saw religion as important in the sample did reattend DreamRoads in 2005. This looks like a somewhat large percentage difference of fifteen percent when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.9). I think the main trend in these data is that fewer people raised in families that saw religion as not important return than expected while more people

raised in families that saw religion as important do. If we think about this pattern in terms of people either “extending” or “rebellious” from their religious roots in a general way, then the data show that people who were “extending” their backgrounds that saw religion as important were more likely to reattend DreamRoads in 2005. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for religious background and DreamRoads reattendance variable there was not a statistically significant association between religious background and returning to DreamRoads in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 1.18, $p=.28$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant differences in general reattendance at the DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 associated with religious background regarding the importance of religion to the family.

Table 5.9: Cross-tabulation of Data on Importance of Religion to Family at Age 16 and Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 (N=36)				
		Independent variable: Importance of Religion to Family at Age 16		
		Religion not very important or not important at all to family	Religion important to some or all of family	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	92.3% (N=12)	78.3% (N=18)	83.3% (N=30)
	Did Reattend	7.7% (N=1)	21.7% (N=5)	16.70% (N= 6)
	Column Total	100% (N=13)	100% (N=23)	

In spite of the relationship not being statistically or substantively significant, these data can be used to test the capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and they can also shed light on whether the camp communities differed in terms of the type of

veteran campers they attracted in 2005. The DreamRoads data show that the camp drew more veterans who were “extending” their family heritage regarding the importance of religion since they were raised in families that did see religion as important, and their camp reattendance is behavior consistent with building on their family heritage by seeing religion as an important facet of their lives, at least for the week of the Intensive. In terms of the hypothesis test, the data do support a simple capital preservation or extension hypothesis, which predicts that there would be more veterans raised in families that did see religion as important who reattended the DreamRoads Intensive than statistically expected. These findings provide support for the idea that there are subtle differences between the Spiralheart and DreamRoads community cultures, and that sociological analysis helps uncover them even though we need to be cautious about the findings due to the small sample size. What we see is that DreamRoads has “extenders” who build on their family heritage rather than rebelling against it. This pattern runs contrary to the camp’s overall reputation as edgy, creative, and rebellious. The larger story about these data is that neither sex nor general heritage regarding the importance of religion consistently help predict reattendance behavior. Examining the religious family heritage data did allow me to evaluate the capital preservation hypothesis, and to see the contours of the divergent camp cultures at Spiralheart and DreamRoads. Overall I saw that Spiralheart camp tended to have veterans who “rebel” against their family heritage regarding religion by reattending camp while DreamRoads tended to have veterans who “extend” their family heritage by reattending camp. Next, I consider the question: “does family heritage regarding

activism and politics help predict reattendance in 2005?” and draw on data related to the respondents’ family’s engagement with politics and activism and this variable’s relationship to reattendance in 2005.

Family Heritage Regarding Politics and/or Activism and Event Reattendance in 2005

In order to assess the relationship between political-activist background and reattendance at either Intensive in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.10), which shows that roughly fifty-eight percent of the twelve people raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005 while roughly seventy-four percent of the nineteen people raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample did reattend a camp in 2005. This looks like a somewhat large percentage difference of sixteen percent when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.10), but the sample size is small, thirty-one cases so these findings have to be interpreted cautiously.

I think the main trend in these data is that fewer people raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism return than expected while more people raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism do. If we think about this pattern in terms of people either “extending” or “rebellious” from their political-activist roots in a general way, then the data show that people who were “extending” their backgrounds that included family engagement in politics and/or activism were more likely to reattend one or the other regional Intensive in 2005. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for political-activist background and the general reattendance variable there was no significant association between political-activist background and returning

to either camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= .79, $p=.37$). Thus, I think is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant differences in general reattendance at either the Spiralheart or DreamRoads Intensives in 2005 associated with political-activist background regarding the importance of politics and/or activism to the family.

Table 5.10: Cross-tabulation of Data on Family Engagement with Politics and/or Activism and Reattendance at Either East Coast Event in 2005 (N=31)				
		Independent variable: Family engagement with politics and/or activism		
		No, not engaged with politics and/or activism	Yes, family engaged with politics and/or activism	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at either East Coast event in 2005	Did not Reattend	41.7% (N=5)	26.3% (N=5)	32.3% (N=10)
	Did Reattend	58.3% (N=7)	73.7% (N=14)	67.7% (N= 21)
	Column Total	100% (N=12)	100% (N=19)	

While the story so far for the data on political-activist background is that there was no statistically significant association with general reattendance, I think the data still show an interesting pattern consistent with people a political-activist capital preservation hypothesis which posits that people seek to build on or conserve their family background with engagement in politics and/or activism by staying involved in “magical activism” and camping from year-to-year. This is a particular sort of extension of political-activist heritage because it shows people trying to work with tools that they already have such as a general belief that engaging in politics and/or activism is worthwhile, which is what the families of the majority of people in the sample (see Table 5.6) passed to them. The data for the relationship between political-activist

background and general reattendance (see Table 5.10) are evidence that does support this political-activist capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and this pattern runs contrary to the innovative behavior we saw regarding religious capital preservation in Table 5.7. I will now move to looking at data for the relationship between political-activist background and reattendance at just Spiralheart and just DreamRoads in 2005. These data can be used to test the political-activist capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and they can also shed light on whether the camp communities differed in terms of the type of veteran campers they attracted in 2005.

To assess the relationship between political-activist heritage and reattendance at just Spiralheart in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.11), which shows that roughly fifty-eight percent of the twelve respondents raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample reattended by going to Spiralheart camp in 2005 while roughly fifty-three percent of the nineteen respondents raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample reattended by going to Spiralheart camp in 2005. Again, these findings have to be interpreted cautiously due to the sample size. I think the main trend in these data is that the results show very little difference between respondents raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism versus those raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism within each reattendance category (see Table 5.11). The patterns look like what I would expect due to chance rather than any systematic differences. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for political-activist heritage and the Spiralheart reattendance variable there was no significant association between political-activist heritage and

returning to Spiralheart camp in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= .08, $p=.76$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or statistically significant differences based on political-activist heritage in reattendance at the Spiralheart Intensive in 2005. If I ask the question “does a respondent’s family political-activist heritage help predict reattendance at Spiralheart in 2005?” the answer is a pretty resounding “no” in spite of the small sample size concerns regarding the data. Is the pattern similar for DreamRoads or do the DreamRoads bear a closer similarity to the general reattendance data I examined in Table 5I?

Table 5.11: Cross-tabulation of Data on Family Engagement with Politics and/or Activism and Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005 (N=31)				
		Independent variable: Family engagement with politics and/or activism		
		No, not engaged with politics and/or activism	Yes, family engaged with politics and/or activism	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at Spiralheart Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	41.7% (N=5)	47.4% (N=9)	45.2% (N=14)
	Did Reattend	58.3% (N=7)	52.6% (N=10)	54.8% (N= 17)
	Column Total	100% (N=12)	100% (N=19)	

In order to assess the relationship between political-activist background and reattendance at DreamRoads in 2005 I created a cross-tabulation table (see Table 5.12), which shows that none of the twelve people raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample reattended DreamRoads in 2005 while roughly twenty-one percent of the nineteen people raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism in the sample reattended DreamRoads in 2005. This looks like a

somewhat large percentage difference of roughly twenty percent when I compare across the “did reattend” category (see Table 5.12), but the sample size is small, thirty-one cases so these findings have to be interpreted cautiously.

I think the main trend in these data is that fewer (none in this case) of the people raised in families that were not engaged in politics and/or activism return than expected while more people raised in families that were engaged in politics and/or activism do. If we think about this pattern in terms of people either “extending” or “rebellious” from their political-activist roots in a general way, then the data show that people who were “extending” their backgrounds that included family engagement in politics and/or activism were more likely to reattend DreamRoads in 2005. When I examined the Chi-Square statistic for political-activist background and the DreamRoads reattendance variable there was a weakly statistically significant association between political-activist background and returning to DreamRoads in 2005 (Pearson Chi-Square= 2.90, $p=.09$). Thus, I think it is fair to conclude that there are no substantively or strongly statistically significant differences in reattendance at the DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 associated with political-activist background regarding the importance of politics and/or activism to the family.

Table 5.12: Cross-tabulation of Data on Family Engagement with Politics and/or Activism and Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005 (N=31)				
		Independent variable: Family engagement with politics and/or activism		
		No, not engaged with politics and/or activism	Yes, family engaged with politics and/or activism	Row Total
Dependent variable: Reattendance at DreamRoads Intensive in 2005	Did not Reattend	100.0% (N=12)	78.9% (N=15)	87.1% (N=27)
	Did Reattend	0% (N=0)	21.1% (N=4)	12.90% (N= 4)
	Column Total	100% (N=12)	100% (N=19)	

I think these data for DreamRoads reattendance show an interesting pattern consistent with a political-activist capital preservation hypothesis which posits that people seek to build on or conserve their family background with engagement in politics and/or activism by staying involved in “magical activism” and camping from year-to-year. The data for the relationship between political-activist background and DreamRoads reattendance (see Table 5.12) are evidence that does support this political-activist capital preservation or extension hypothesis, and this pattern runs contrary to the innovative behavior we saw regarding religious capital preservation in Table 5.7 and are consistent with the data in Table 5.10, which showed behavior consistent with political-activist capital preservation.

The data in Table 5.12 regarding the relationship between political-activist background and DreamRoads reattendance also shed light on whether the camp communities differed in terms of the type of veteran campers they attracted in 2005. I think the data show that DreamRoads attracted “extenders” of their family heritage

regarding engagement with politics and/or activism, and these “extenders” came from families that did engage in politics, activism, or both while the respondent was growing up. Thus, again we see the DreamRoads camp attracting veterans who were building on their family heritage and acting in a manner predicted by the capital preservation hypothesis. I will end this section by reiterating points I made earlier that these behavior patterns are fascinating because 1) they show that family heritage shapes later behavior in subtle ways the respondents themselves may not recognize and 2) the patterns go against the common sense explanations of the DreamRoads camp culture as generally more rebellious and creative than Spiralheart’s culture.

Section Wrap-up: Understanding Reattendance the Preservation of Family Heritage

Overall, what I want to stress to readers is that the data analyzed in this section show interesting patterns useful for understanding the preservation of two types of family heritage by the respondents: 1) ideas about the importance of religion and 2) ideas about the importance of politics and/or activism. The data about religious heritage are not directly comparable to the data about family engagement in politics and/or activism, but they both can be used to test variants of a capital preservation hypothesis. In short, the hypothesis posits that people act efficiently by trying to extend or preserve their heritage regarding ideas such as religion being important everyday life or politics and activism being worthwhile pursuits. Even when people switch or add on participation in Reclaiming-style magical activism, they can still behave in ways consistent with the idea of capital preservation. For example, reattending an Intensive when a person comes from a family that saw religion as important would be behavior

predicted by and consistent with religious capital preservation. On the political-activist side of things, reattending an Intensive when a person comes from a family that engaged in politics and or activism would be behavior predicted by and consistent with political-activist capital preservation.

The data analyzed here show that Spiralheart camp is distinctive not only because, as we saw in section two of this chapter, there is a slightly greater tendency for men to reattend the camp, but also because veterans at the camp did not behave in a manner consistent with the capital preservation hypothesis for either their religious background or their political-activist background. In contrast, people at DreamRoads did appear to “extend” their heritage regarding both the importance of religion and family engagement in politics and/or activism. Dreamroaders, contrary to their creative and rebellious reputation, appeared to generate a community subtly grounded in more conservative behavior. I argue that these patterns are consistent with the Spiralheart and DreamRoads camp cultures diverging from one another, although they diverge in ways the respondents themselves are not deliberately crafting. This is a case of a sociological approach to multi-method data uncovering hidden patterns.

The story of the data so far in Chapter Five is that readers have seen quantitative evidence that neither sex nor a participant’s family heritage regarding the importance of religion or family engagement in politics and/or activism consistently predict reattendance behavior in 2005. What we do learn from these data is that there was a small “man effect” in that men were more likely to reattend the Intensives in 2005 compared to women. This finding might be explained by men experiencing more

cognitive dissonance or simply looking at their options in the Neo-pagan religious marketplace and not seeing a better option than Reclaiming and the Intensives. In a similar vein, the data also show patterns for reattendance at DreamRoads by people who seem to act in a manner consistent with preserving both their religious and political-activist heritage from their families whereas people who reattended Spiralheart camp acted in a manner consistent with “rebellion” against their religious and political-activist heritage and family history of disinterest in religion and lack of engagement in politics and/or activism. I turn next to discussing the recycling model for self-transformation that I have created to make sense of the cyclical multi-modal changes that happen over time for people who stick with Reclaiming and the Intensives. Discussing recycling as a metaphor for transformation and walking through the first iteration of my model for change also helps us understand what people carry forward into camp, the issue of who returns to camp, and how people fine-tune their identities and cognitive, emotional, and somatic experiences over time.

5) Using the Recycling Model to Explain Commitment Processes and Outcomes for Ideal-typical Activist and Magical Religious Campers

Why use the recycling metaphor and model?

The recycling model moves beyond other ideas and models of recruitment and self-transformation because it enables us to think differently about temporality and the possibilities for how conversions and recruitment proceed. Recycling as a metaphor helps us account for instances when movements have some cyclical components, such as backsliding or multiple awakenings, within their conversion processes which do not really fit classic, linear models of conversion or existing self-transformation metaphors

(Metzner 1998; 1980). Rather than tackling one single but wide-reaching transformation using a linear process such as cognitive liberation, movements with multiple goals sometimes adopt a circular recycling-style process involving smaller revisions to the self and various sequences of goal attainment. These features enable people to customize their self- transformations to a certain extent, and to pace their exposure to intense transformative moments out over a number of cycles, which may help prevent burnout.

An additional benefit of the recycling model, which I constructed after thinking through recycling as a metaphor for self-transformation, is that the recycling model is more inclusive of the interactions between somatic perceptions, cognitions, emotions, and social ties. The concepts of cognitive liberation (McAdam 1999) or moral shock (Jasper 1997; Jasper and Poulsen 1995) emphasize how cognitions, social ties, and emotions interact during intense transformative moments. This attention to somatic perceptions also moves beyond the accounts of fatigue, rigid scheduling, collective activities, and isolation shown in the updated version of the classic “World-saver” model from 1965 (Lofland 1978; Lofland and Stark 1965). While the “World-saver” model focuses on how movements control somatic experiences that contribute to self-transformation and channel participants into reflective relationships with charismatic leaders rather than their inner selves, the recycling model incorporates sensory perceptions and self-reflections that can be actively managed by the converts themselves. In short, recycling expands on the idea that transformations and conversions have both active and passive sides while drawing our attention to how bodily sensations interact with other factors.

Overall, this section introduces a new model, which may eventually give rise to a new theory of how movement socialization works, for understanding cyclical self-transformations involving flexibility. In addition, the recycling model calls into question the idea that linear models are adequate for understanding how either social movements or religious movements transform people over time. Considering the case of Reclaiming reveals a general form of self-transformation that we need a new concept to understand as well as the need for bridging between models of conversion from work on religious movements and work on recruitment and emotions in social and religious movements.

I develop a general model of how the recycling process proceeds and examine four cases of people from Reclaiming whose recycling process included developing relationships with divine entities as well as social ties within Reclaiming itself. These four cases are drawn from a larger set of eighty-five in-depth interviews and sixty-seven follow-up surveys. Whereas some movements try to merge an old self into the collective identity, Reclaiming belongs to a group of movements, including men's movements and some therapeutic movements that encourage people to change via a series of what I think of as gradual "turns". These turns contrast with a "pivotal" (Blee 2002: 41-42) radical about-face from an old self seen in members of hate movements, which is also evident in work on awakenings (DeGloma 2010) to movements and counter-movements. The recycling metaphor turns our attention a cyclical process, the gradual turn, which we know less about compared to pivotal experiences.

Self-transformation metaphors and processes

Metaphors for self-transformation reflect particular processes that people go through as their self-concepts and identities shift. I call this process “self-recycling” because it is one that can be repeated multiple times. Each time the process incrementally modifies the existing self rather than ever making a sudden complete break with it. The process can be imagined as a series of small incremental turns rather than a single dramatic pivot or vast turn away from the old self. I follow Clifford Staples and Armand Mauss in defining self-transformation as “a change in, or the creation of, what [Ralph] Turner (1976) has referred to as the “real self”” (1987: 137). This perspective treats events such as conversions or dramatic self changes (Athens 1995) as shaping a new experience and vision of “who we *really* believe we are” when any roles or presentations of identities are taken away or are otherwise unavailable (Staples and Mauss 1987: 137). This way of thinking about shifts in the self treats the subject as a participant with some degree of agency and activity in the emergence, maintenance, and transformation of the self and the social relations that help to reinforce it.

The self-recycling concept is broad because it covers the general idea of taking particular aspects of the self or personality and reworking them, sometimes dramatically but at other times mundanely, and fitting the changed, “recycled” pieces back into the rest of self and personality. Recycling can imply a repurposing of a trait or skill, such as the capability to express an emotion like anger in reference to personal troubles being transformed into feelings of both anger and love towards members of an oppositional movement. Recycling can also imply a process closer to composting where some parts are transformed and incorporated into a new whole, which subsequently

changes and can be put through the process again. Both these types of recycling may be useful for understanding the Reclaiming case, and this multi-facetedness is part of what makes the recycling metaphor so interesting. The self-recycling process involves not only the change itself, but also accommodation as the new and old facets of the self are fit together. This process of self-recycling can be conscious and deliberate or unconscious and spontaneous.

Flexibility and socialization into Reclaiming

Flexibility is a key concept for my analysis, and I use the term to refer to a multi-faceted way of interacting in the world that involves embracing paradoxical situations or perceptions and having the capability to flow between different, competing modes of feeling, thinking, and sensing. For emotions flexibility takes the form of people being able to experience and express either combinations of emotions such as hope and despair simultaneously or to shift between competing emotions such as anger and love without becoming trapped in emotionally intense ambivalence. In addition, emotional flexibility can include the capability for experiencing emotionally neutral ambivalence where any intense emotions are let go of and replaced by a sense of peace. Cognitive flexibility describes the capacity to hold multiple, competing and sometimes contradictory beliefs, ideas, or frames in mind or to shift between ideas and perceptions that could provoke cognitive dissonance and inaction. Flexibility as I use the term also applies to somatic experiences and describes the ability to have multiple perceptions of objects or have multiple or competing types of sensory experiences, or to shift between

these perceptions or sensory experiences without dismissing some as “real” or “true” and the others as fabricated or illusory.

Like other members of ecstatic religious traditions, people in Reclaiming cultivate trance states and individual relationships with deities. These relationships are built on more than cognitive imaginings and guided meditations, although these activities can set the stage for somatic perceptions and experiences. Such sensory, bodily experiences include hearing non-corporal entities speak, having visions of them that are perceived as “real” and distinct from imagined visualizations, sensations of temperature change, or having tactile contact that is also perceived as “real” and different from sensations perceived in a trance or meditation. When these bodily states occur in the liminal space of the Intensive, they are ripe for being labeled as associated with magical energy, which is what happens if the socialization process works.

Reclaiming-style Recycling and Transforming the Self

One example of the cyclical nature of the transformation and the multiple possible pathways participants take can be seen in the model of how flexibility is cultivated at the Reclaiming week-long “Intensive” recruiting and training events (see Figure 5.1, 5.2). The Intensive itself creates a liminal space that serves as a context in which a turning point might be reached much like the “Loving” step in the Lofland (1978) model (see Figure 5.1), which has a turning point that is primarily emotional. In Figure 5.1 each turning/pivot point is enclosed in a circle symbol to show where these similar moments occur in the process. The McAdam (1999) and Jasper (1997) models have moments of cognitive liberation and moral shock that are primarily cognitive or cognitive and

emotional turning points, respectively, while the recycling model has a turning point that mixes cognition, emotion, and somatic states (see Figure 5.1). The week-long Intensive experience has two nested types of liminality. First participants experience the everyday liminality of living for a week in a camp setting defined as “magical” space freed from regular chores and contact with the outside world. Second, within the week they participate in particular rituals or activities that provoke deeper feelings of liminality and/or we-feeling (see Figure 5.2). These deeper liminal states come about due to particular rituals or activities that last two to three hours and often involve intense emotional work or in-depth meditations.

Figure 5.1: Four Models of Self-transformation in Religious and Social Movements

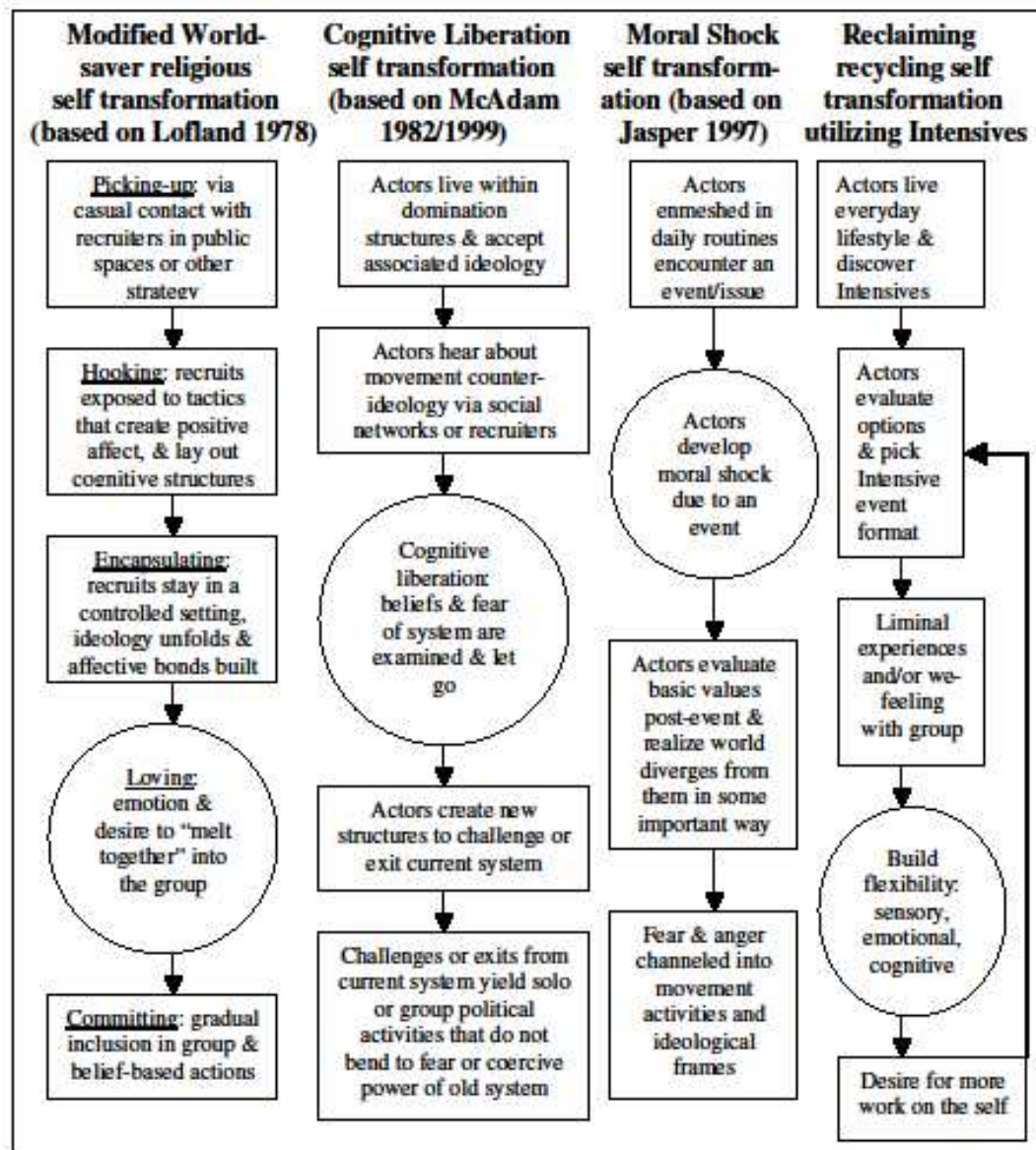
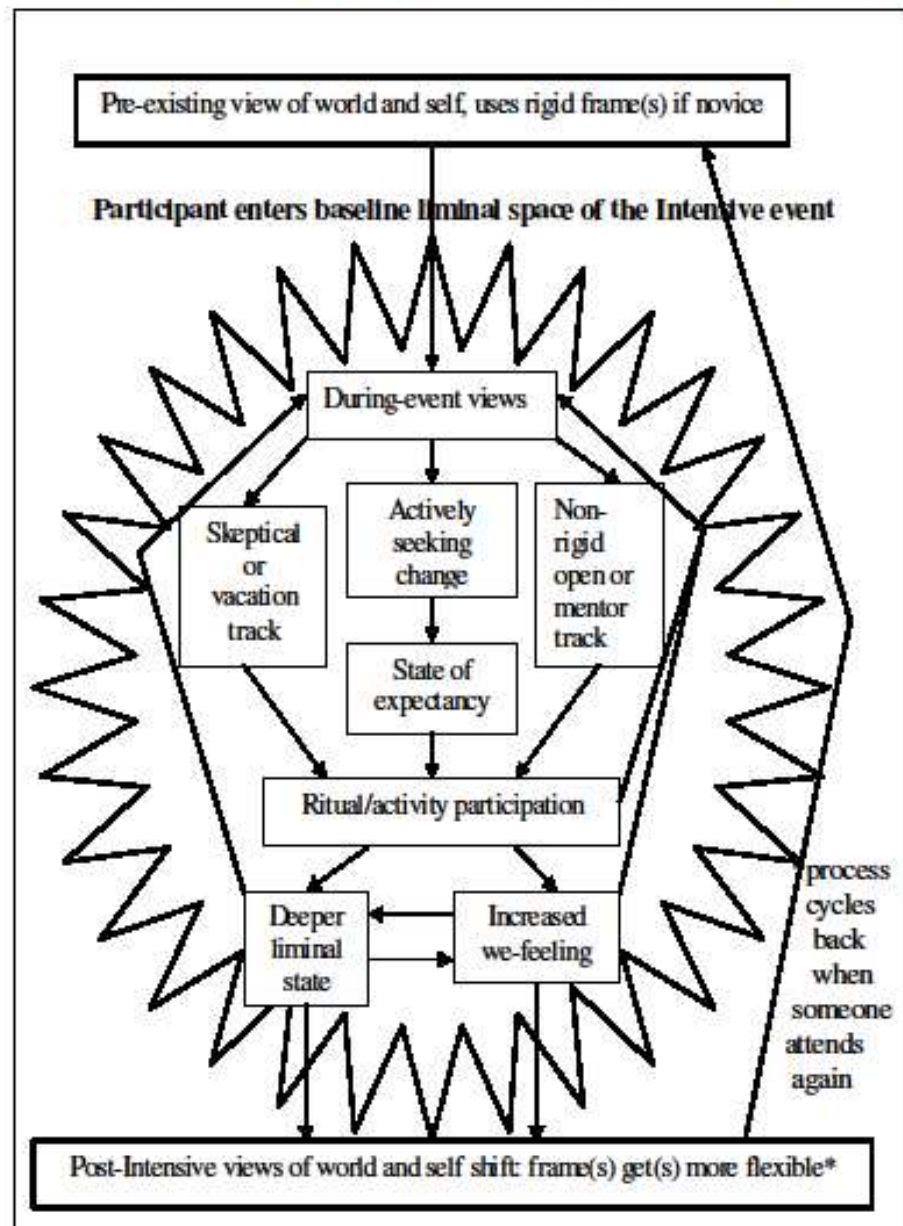


Figure 5.2: Model of the Recycling Style of Transformation Done at the Reclaiming Intensives



In order to illustrate some of these points I will now examine how one respondent, who I interviewed at the Midwest/Dreamweaving Intensive in 2007, began to get involved with Reclaiming. This example shows that a one-shot metaphor such as an awakening or straight-line transformations is not the best tool for understanding the respondent's experiences and deepening involvement with the movement.

And I came to camp and my universe was turned inside out [...] It's like every moment from a little before camp to all the way through it was all one unified dance. Like there's universes orchestrating my coming to some understandings and realizations [...] It was like a really good novel or movie [...] where you have 12 threads going that seem to be completely unrelated to each other, and [...] finally they start to come together. At the very end everything gels into this exquisite poetry, [and that is] what my first Reclaiming [Intensive] camp was like. [...] I was seduced to step out of that hiding place and actually open to some of these things that I thought I'd be closed off to, the relationship with the divine and other people. [...] The Reclaiming [Intensive] camp kind of woke me up and over the years has been a cauldron of experience.
(Male, 40s)

Several features in this participant's comments stand out. The experience was more than just a singular, one-shot awakening. It shifted the respondent's sense of his place in the world because his "universe was turned inside out" as the unrelated threads began to "gel." This transformation involved the respondent getting "seduced" and exposing himself to relationships with the divine and other people, yet the exposure was selective because he was "open to some."

In the second comment, we see that the participant equates the camp experience as a whole with coming out of hiding and also states that the event "woke me up." These metaphors are also found in classic conversion stories (DeGloma 2010), but in this case they represent what happened in one cycle. After these initial experiences, the participant continued to transform and stew in the "cauldron of experience." The cauldron reference illustrates the ongoing, intense and cyclical nature of the experience. It makes sense that the self can continue to stew in the cauldron by going through the process shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.3 over the years because the self is a work in progress. The self moves through various stages of becoming more flexible or otherwise changed rather than reaching a single transformative turning point or point of no return

that serves as the primary change that shapes all subsequent actions. Unlike one-shot metaphors and straight-line processes which have an inherent lack of flexibility, a recycling metaphor for self-transformation is compatible with changes to the self that are taxing to accomplish because they involve repeated reworking of certain aspects of one's self rather than one major moment of liberation, moral upheaval, or radical all-encompassing transformation. These changes create sustainable, individually variable progress toward an ideal movement-sanctioned self composed of an amalgamation of equally important and weighty transformations to social relations and how people sense, feel, and think about the world.

Recycling and the transformations of activist versus religious recruits

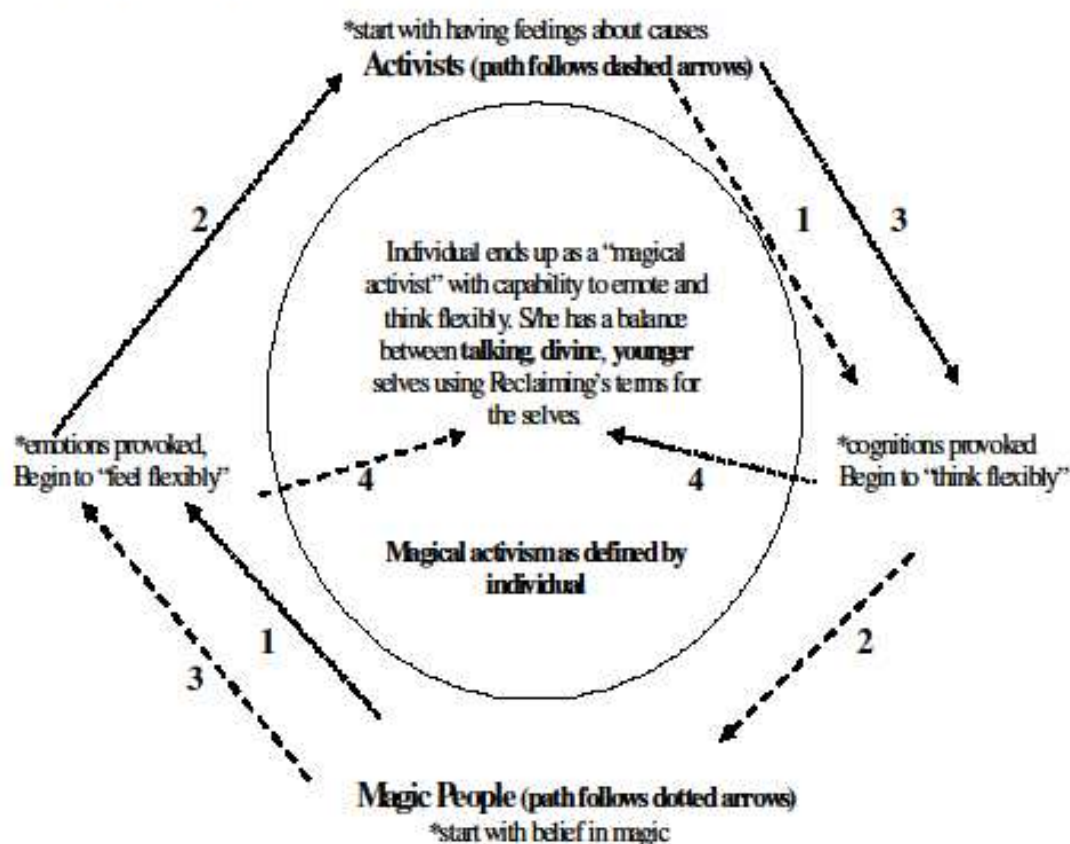
In this section, I discuss an ideal typical image of how people with either activist or religious backgrounds deepen their involvement with Reclaiming. All of the cases are middle-aged people, ranging in age from the 40s to the late 50s at the time of the data collection. The cases were selected for gender diversity and are evenly split between veterans and newcomers as well as people with primarily "magical religious" versus "activist" backgrounds.

The discussion of the ideal-typical recruiting process includes necessary background information about Reclaiming's ideas about the self. Reclaiming describes a self that is three-fold and divided into a Younger self (the unconscious mind), a Talking self (which gives verbal and conscious expression), and a Deep self or God self (the Divine within) (Simos 1999: 44-5). Reclaiming's triple self combines the premise of a core self with the idea that multiple contextual sides of the self also exist. It is a middle-ground approach

to conceptualizing the self that sees contextual, malleable facets and more robust, core, portable facets of the self as equally valuable and coexisting together.

In Figure 5.3 I give an ideal-typical representation of the diverging pathways by which activists and those I term “magic people” are drawn into deepening commitment to either street activism or magical religion. Most activists start with intense emotions and feelings about particular causes including feminism, animal rights, the environment, anti-globalization and LGBT and/or queer rights and politics. These emotional experiences may come from the moral shocks described by Jasper (1997; also see Jasper and Poulsen 1995) or actually participating in street protests or direct actions, which may involve fear, anger, and hope among other emotions. People get involved with magical religion by reading or talking about it and thinking about whether such beliefs make sense. This is a largely cognitive process, but emotions are not completely absent.

Figure 5.3: Ideal-typical Reclaiming Self-transformation Process



This diagram (see Figure 5.3) presents the idea that the ideal-typical magical and activist recruitment processes each follow a recycling-style multi-step process involving the cultivation of flexible perceptions, feelings, and sensations. The presence of dual recycling processes helps solve the puzzle of why activists do not emote in the same way as the magical people and do not exhibit emotional flexibility by accessing the playful Younger and Deep selves in ritual when they first get involved with Reclaiming. Instead they emote in the same way they would in a protest regardless of the direction the theme/story may be taking them. In addition, the prototypical activists attend to the body and somatic sensory perceptions and work on extending or developing for the first

time both good physical self-care and an awareness of magical energy. For participants with activist background, the part of their camp where flexibility is exhibited is in the processing discussions, not the ritual. The reverse is true for the magic people, who do not become fully engaged in processing discussions and shifting their cognitions when they start out at an Intensive. What the prototypical magic people do share with the activists is continuous work on extending or developing for the first time both good physical self-care and an awareness of magical energy. While the activists and magic people start out in different places, they both end up going through the same set of steps and ending the process by adopting both a magical worldview and a view of themselves as activists.

The Magical People's Self Process

In some cases, people bring an interest in magical religion to the Intensives and follow the path marked with dotted lines on the diagram, consisting of a recycling-style process of sporadic, but ongoing transformations. My first case is, Cloud Hunter⁴, a white male with a Nordic ethnic background who became involved with Reclaiming while being a part of the Radical Faerie and Queer Spirit movements in the 1970s and early 1980s. He was not a part of the Reclaiming Collective, and did not live in California. Cloud Hunter attended Intensive events starting in 1985, and served as a priestess⁵ across different movements when friends and strangers needed help with death and dying because of the AIDS epidemic. When describing this time in his life, Cloud Hunter stated that he was “a Witch, strongly influenced by Christianity and Buddhism” with commitments to “anarchy, feminism, and spirit.”

Cloud Hunter adopted the magical activist worldview around 1980, yet he continued the process of self-transformation during subsequent decades. In the period from 1980-1985, Cloud Hunter's religious and activist selves were a flexible amalgamation of beliefs and associations from several different groups, combining values that he was raised with together with ideas and relationships formed during or after college. Cloud Hunter's narrative follows a version of the Reclaiming self-transformative process where an initial interest in spirituality and magic led him to have emotionally transformative experiences that subsequently led him to become a priestess who served multiple groups.

Having moved around the circle shown in Figure 5.3 once, Cloud Hunter's process continued after 1985 as he became involved with the Reclaiming Intensive events and deepened his spiritual practices. One part of this process involved becoming "a deist" (sic)⁶ who had meaningful, real interactions with spirits or deities that he experienced as physically tangible rather than as mental constructs. Cloud Hunter stated,

I wasn't a deist until I was part of this for quite a while. [...] In the late 1980s, Hera [the Greek goddess] made an appearance to me and it was just like whoa-oh, oh, oh. Well, I knew I wasn't having a psychotic break, but what in the hell was going... I mean, it was like totally out. I mean, I've read about these things, but they were like ethnographic studies of people who lived in Siberia. [...] So, it just like, well, it rocked my world, and all of a sudden they [deities including the Greek Goddess Hera] chose to reveal themselves to me. We developed relationship and we went through all the stages. I had all this baggage about the hierarchy that we're taught just culturally that Gods, the Mysterious Ones, and us couldn't be peers. [...] So just learning that we are all cocreators and peers in some way together. I mean, it's still an ongoing thing.

This transformation took place well after he became a magical activist capable of carrying out the role of priestess. In the process of becoming a "deist", Cloud Hunter's holistic experience of the world shifted. This included specific changes in emotions

related to his world being “rocked” and the surprise or shock at Hera’s appearance as well as shifts in physical perceptions and cognitive frames for his experience. Physically, his perceptions shifted to include hearing, seeing, or feeling the presence of deities who were interacting with him, and cognitively, the change included framing the experiences as authentic, real interactions with deities rather than as a psychotic break.

Cloud Hunter’s self was transformed because his “deism” caused him to revise his interpretive frameworks, and led him into a whole new set of social interactions with deities such as Hera. His revised frameworks included schemas or cognitive frames for interpreting his experiences as evidence that Hera and the “Mysterious Ones” were real rather than the product of a psychotic break. In addition to these cognitive shifts, the relations between Cloud Hunter and the deities led to new physical sensations and emotions connected to communication and magical energy associated with the deities. The new “deist” self paid attention not only to magical energy and seeing activism happen within daily life, but also to loops of feedback that were being generated with Hera and the Mysterious Ones. Cloud Hunter’s self was not maintained exclusively within these new feedback loops, as would be the case with a pivotal experience such as a rebirth or a metamorphosis. Instead, Cloud Hunter’s self was recycled and turned into one that could converse and interact with deities that became significant others who helped Cloud Hunter enact his self as a “deist” and magical activist.

Cloud Hunter experienced another shift in his self in the early 1990s that preceded him becoming a Reclaiming student teacher from 1994-1995 and a full-fledged teacher between 1995 and 1996. He recalled,

The difference between the sacred/profane totally disappeared, and I live, I've always been a pretty well integrated individual, but the, there's a myth in Reclaiming about the Younger self and all those different parts. By the early 1990's that was totally, totally meaningless to me because I recognized that I was an integrated being.[...] That was a huge bit for me and to be fully myself, aware that I was in Midgard^[7] and yet still immersed in the sacredness of life and there was no division.

This comment demonstrates that a few years after building relationships with deities and becoming a "deist", Cloud Hunter's transformation process continued. During this next step, the boundaries between different parts of his self disappeared and Cloud Hunter experienced himself as "an integrated being." Interaction with deities helped contribute to Cloud Hunter's development as a Reclaiming teacher in the mid-1990s, which eventually led to a career as a full-time priestess that involved traveling for several months out of the year. Cloud Hunter scaled back his "spirit commitments" in 2005, but his process continued during local activities.

The interview data examined here demonstrate that Cloud Hunter experienced an overall shift of something greater than the sum of his emotional, physical, and cognitive changes that shifted his whole way of being and relating in the world. He came to experience himself as immersed in sacred space, and capable of fostering ongoing, peer-like relationships with spiritual entities and having emotions, sensation, and cognitions related to the experience. These developments were part of his experience of recycling his self after becoming a magical activist. Cloud Hunter is an example of someone with a long-term involvement with the Reclaiming movement who carried the self-recycling process forward after his initial transformation into a magical activist and continued to actively self-recycle after attaining power and status within Reclaiming.

The second case of a person who started as a magical or religious person is a woman named Goldstone. Goldstone's early exposure to magical religious ideas was a class led by members of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) four to five years before she attended the Spiralheart Intensive. Goldstone describes this time as "before I began to think of myself as a pagan, a CUUPS member, or any sort of serious magical practitioner (I did have a couple of techniques that I called magic, but I thought I was joking)." Over several years Goldstone began the process of taking magical religion seriously by affiliating with her local CUUPS group and self-defining as a pagan. When Goldstone came to the Intensive in 2006 she entered the ideal-typical self-transformation process as a magical religious person who then proceeded to have emotionally moving experiences during the event, which is the first step on the dotted path shown in Figure III. Goldstone described one experience during camp this way:

The aspecting [⁸] ritual, on the other hand, still amazes me as I think of it today. I did a lot of grieving for the world as well as for losses of my own. What made this remarkable was having [a goddess] Guadalupe present (in the person of [teacher who was aspecting]) to hold me as I wept. Unlike several other witches I know, I haven't had a deity show up in person for me before- or since- in fact, my life has taught me that this doesn't really happen. This was not [teacher who was aspecting]; it was Guadalupe/Tenantzín who gave me permission to cry as much as I needed to and told me she would never leave me. As an experience, while it didn't "make" me "feel better," it was deeply satisfying and deeply confusing. [...]

Goldstone's experience was religious in nature, and highly emotional. Her comments indicate that she experienced a complex combination of emotions- grief, amazement, satisfaction, and confusion. I think that experiences like this yield a greater degree of emotional flexibility because the person is dealing with several emotions such as deep grief, satisfaction, and confusion within a short period of time or even simultaneously.

At this point, Goldstone had transitioned to the second point in the ideal-typical self-transformation process (see Figure 5.3), but she was still developing an identity as a Witch or Pagan involved with magical religion.

During a follow-up interview in January 2007, I asked Goldstone about her transition into self-identifying as a Witch, and whether she could pinpoint when it happened. The process she described involves encounters with her friends from church, having a health issue in 2004, and eventually attending the Intensive in 2006 and taking the “Rites of Passage” Path class. She began by describing her interactions with her friends:

I have been very lucky in who I have around me for magical friends when I’m home. In a sense its not luck, in a sense its more like if I didn’t have them around me, I probably would not be doing this in the first place. I did not go looking for magic. I cannot stress this hard enough. [...] At that point I had no interest in being a Pagan. I had no interest in being a witch. I hadn’t even figured out that all these Pagan people called themselves Witches. [...] And I found a lot of what went on in the rituals they put on for the whole congregation frankly embarrassing. Dopey. [...] It did not move me. What I noticed was that apart from it all they were simply among the brightest, most interesting and outright kindest people in the church. Of all the people in the church that I didn’t actually know terribly well, but who I would really like to have for my friends, they were right on top.

This anecdote makes clear that personal networks and the example set by her friends were what attracted Goldstone to Reclaiming-style rituals and witchcraft more generally. This happened in spite of the fact that she initially found the rituals “dopey” and not emotionally moving. Around 2004, Goldstone experienced a health crisis where she was hospitalized and had her spouse fetch her “Witch friends” to give her healing energy. Goldstone had a prolonged year-long recovery that led her to change her first name in an effort to remind her spouse that Goldstone was a different person than before the incident. Goldstone described her self-transformation process as involving a

“drift” and stated, “Between [...] [2005 and 2006] I somehow moved from “gee, you guys had fun at [the Intensive], it sounds really cool, too bad I’m never going” to [laughs] “to OK, I’m going but I’m scared to death and you are going to have to hold my hand the whole damn time.” By the following January, Goldstone had transitioned into self-identifying as a Witch, and she identified a Path class in particular as the time when this took place. Goldstone stated, “I don’t remember what there was in the Rites of Passage Path work that led me to realize that I had definitely crossed the line from “I’m not sure I’m a Witch” to “what nonsense is this, of course I’m a Witch”. But, that’s where it happened.” Yet, in January 2007, Goldstone was still placing constraints on where she could express her new identity and was still sorting out whether she really was “qualified” to take on the name.

It is a loaded word. It took me a long time to feel like I could say with a straight face “I’m a Witch.” Complicated, of course by the fact that you don’t really want to go around saying it to just anybody. [...] People have lost jobs over this. People have lost child custody over this, and you know, this is a real situation. A large part of the problem I have with saying I’m a Witch for I would say a substantial period, was not being sure I qualified to say that.

These comments illustrate that while Goldstone had experienced intense emotional shifts during the Intensive in 2006, she was still doing a great deal of thinking about what it meant to be a Witch and the risks of expressing the identity outside of the context of the Intensive and her local circle of “magical friends” from church. In her case, we can see that an emotional experience within religious ritual as well as taking the Path class contributed to Goldstone labeling herself a Witch within a limited context. It should also be noted that Goldstone reported this change lasting months after the

Intensive was over, and that she has continued her involvement with the Intensives up to the present (2012).

Turning back to Goldstone's relationship to activism, some of the comments from her 2007 interview illustrate that while she had a history with activism and had feelings about particular causes, Goldstone's feelings were not strong enough to provoke either activist self-labeling or a deepening of the activities she was already involved in prior to going to the Intensive. Goldstone considered activism to be more political, "hands-on," and time consuming than her own actions.

I guess it's being more active politically than I am. Writing letters and going to rallies and hands-on stuff with actual individuals involved. Our church will have letter-writing campaigns [on issues such as same-sex marriage] and there will be a table set up in the church lounge on Sunday mornings. [...] But its pretty low-level activism as such things go. It doesn't take up a huge amount of my time or anything. [...] And there has been an on-going effort in our congregation including giving out buttons that say "My husband and I support marriage equality for all" and I'm even limited in where I feel I can wear the button because you can't really go out and be a [name of job here] wearing political messages on me.

Thus, we see that again, as was the case for Goldstone's Witch identity, context matters, and her actions regarding activism are driven by cognitive reflection, rather than an emotional transformation. Her ideas about what constitutes activism are straightforward and not flexible enough to allow her to reframe actions such as shopping decisions or letter writing as truly being activism "worthy of the name." Goldstone then described the role fear played in influencing her "low-level" engagement with activism and reluctance to publicly support causes including same sex-sex marriage.

Where I am with that right now is that I find what I consider activism worthy of the name mostly would, mostly would involve things that I find really scary and difficult.

[...] Going out in the streets now. Identifying myself publicly with a cause I simply should be for. [...] Same-sex marriage because its something I feel strongly about. I'll write letters. I don't know that I would want to show my face to the whole world publicly, indiscriminately because there are some real whack jobs on the opposing side. People that frighten me. Some of them are in my family [on her husband's side]. [...] [They] have quit being Episcopalians because the Episcopalians appointed a gay bishop. They actually, they are flaming homophobes and have become I would say at least bordering on fire-breathing fundamentalism [...] they have become much more outspoken conservative and consequently harder to have a conversation with. I'm certainly not about to tell them that I'm a witch. I don't think they'd do me any physical harm, I think it would make a whole bunch of trouble in the family with no really useful end. I'm still struggling with, who is it safe to mention that [I'm a Witch] to.

Goldstone's comments illustrate that from her point of view the world was safe for "whack jobs on the opposing side" and her "fire-breathing" fundamentalist Christian relatives to express their views while she was afraid of being targeted if she did the same. Even more interesting is that Goldstone then mentioned her Witch identity and how speaking out about it to her relatives would serve "no really useful end." Goldstone had clearly reflected a great deal about whether or not people would physically harm her for her beliefs, and had concluded that she lived in a world where it was safe for her conservative relatives to be outspoken, but she was not free to take the same liberty to publicly identify as a Witch or supporter of same-sex marriage. At that time, Goldstone lacked emotional and cognitive flexibility in relation to activism. She embraced only fear rather than hope or courage in conjunction with the negative emotions about her safety and the possibility of shifting her relatives' attitudes. A flexible interpretation, which might have led her to speak out, would have included the potential value of outing herself as a liberal or a Witch to the relatives in terms of self-expression and demanding tolerance even when it was unlikely to be granted.

In sum, Goldstone's case illustrates both the deep impact attending a single Intensive event, and how far away Goldstone was from being fully recruited into Reclaiming's "magical activism." Goldstone was right in the middle of a process of change that included her adoption of the Witch identity within the circle of her magical friends and her highly emotional and embodied experience of encountering a deity and being held by it during a ritual. In the 2007 interview Goldstone stated, "I didn't have any kind of big fat conversion experience. [...] I once was lost, but now I'm found. [...] So far the closest I have come to that experience is [the Intensive]." Here she draws on the metaphor of prodigal return, and associates it with the "big fat conversion experience" she has never had. The recycling metaphor is more appropriate than conversion for describing Goldstone's self-transformation. At the 2006 Intensive, she developed an identity as a Witch and had a deeply transformative encounter within a ritual with the entity Tenanzin/Guadalupe/Mary. While these experiences were important, Goldstone was still making sense of them afterwards and had not developed flexible thinking in relation to publicly outing herself as a Witch or standing up for same-sex marriage to her "flaming homophobic" relatives. Goldstone saw only the costs and not the potential benefits of these actions, and felt only fear rather than a mix of emotions about these topics. She was in the midst of a long-term transformative process that might eventually lead her to embrace "magical activism."

The case of Goldstone shows a general tendency for magical people to be emotionally open and volatile in religious settings and to struggle with cognitive issues of identity and labeling related to both magical religion and activism. Cloud Hunter's

case is closer to the ideal-typical pattern of a recycled, Reclaiming “magical activist” self that also emotes and senses the world in a flexible manner. Cloud Hunter reached this point after several rounds of the process, yet he was also still engaged in further self-recycling after downscaling his commitments. His case helps illustrate how repeating the process can yield further cognitive, emotional, and somatic flexibility over time after the initial recruitment to “magical activism.”

The Activists’ Process

The self-transformation process of people who enter Reclaiming with experience participating in street activism or direct action follows the same steps as the process for religious people, but the steps are experienced in the opposite order (see Figure 5.3). I will discuss two cases of individuals who came to Reclaiming with primarily activist backgrounds, and show how their selves were also transformed over time via a recycling-style process. The next case is a man who was raised Catholic and had been a right-to-life activist in his youth. Nu began his transition away from his conservative politics due to experiences he had during an informal discussion with a friend he met via his volunteering at a suicide prevention hotline. He described the situation:

I was talking with this one person, and from somewhere floated in this thought of something and I was thinking, “What the fuck is wrong with me?” This is going to make them get off the phone and slit their throat on the spot. [...] So I finally decided after a bunch of hemming and hawing to keep them [the suicidal friend] on the phone and it was exactly what the person needed to hear, and so it didn’t exactly start happening frequently, but maybe once a month. And I started to learn that I would get a slight bit of heat in my forehead there. Whatever stupid thing floated into my head, I was to say, and it was always right. So, I eventually came to perceive helpers. [...] But there are three of them, and they act in concert.[...] [S]o this all started around ’93 or so. So by 2001 they had worked up a lot of street cred with me. When they gave me the first bit of advice pertaining to myself.

Nu's experience had a somatic component, the "heat" in his forehead, and it appears that he treated the situation pragmatically. The voices got results, and he continued to listen to them. Note that Nu did not frame the "helpers" as related to either a Catholic religious viewpoint or a Pagan/Wiccan one. He took a neutral view of them, and also did not see them as symptomatic of psychological problems. This way of telling the story about the voices emphasizes the somatic indicators of "the helpers" and how Nu thought he used advice from the voices to help others. A more flexible account would have been less self-centered and also focused on connections between Nu's experience and those of other people, and how the experience helped Nu himself and transformed him. In contrast to Goldstone's meeting with a deity during an Intensive ritual, this experience was not markedly emotional. This difference helps illustrate the point shown in Figure III that people with primarily activist backgrounds, such as Nu, enter into a recycling-style transformation process via changes to their cognitions and somatic perceptions that eventually enhance their flexibility in these areas rather than major emotional shifts related to flexible feelings.

In 2001, Nu's voices began advising him to attend an Intensive. He characterized his struggle with the voices at the time:

So they [the helper voices] start insisting I have to go to [an Intensive] and I'm telling them they are out of their fucking minds. Or whatever they have. And on top of that a new voice is coming in [...] and saying "No!" [...] And so like, they [the three original voices] are trying to tempt me and lure me. "You need to learn things there that you'll need to help other people." [...]

In the midst of this struggle, Nu had been attending a drum circle at a liberal church. He had also attended "a couple of speeches and things there too, by [Starhawk]" over a

two-year period. These talks made an impression on Nu that moved him intellectually: “[Starhawk] can put together and preach, basically, a very coherent and workable liberal strategy. OK? So the first time [she spoke at the church was the first moment] I ever heard what to me sounded like a reasonable liberal [...]”. Somehow Starhawk’s speech and discussions about the voices with other members of the church led Nu to reconsider the “No” voice and register for the Intensive in 2001:

[...] So on the way home, I realize as I’ve just left [the church] that the “No” is sort of an anthropomorphization of my own fear.[...] And so I just told it to go the hell away, and it did.[...] [T]his was on a Sunday. Monday, my registration form was in the mail.[...] I made a deal with the helpers. OK, I’ll go to the lousy damn Paths [morning classes], fine. I’ll learn the shit they want me to learn, and the rest of the time I’ll spend in my cabin. I’m NOT going to these damn rituals. I brought along two big books [...] and the books never made it out of the car.

In 2006, Nu recounted that during his first Intensive “I felt overwhelmed walking into ritual, being introduced by [a veteran camper] to people, welcomed, but uh, I was still wary [...] the camp was more than half over before I felt more “we” than “they”. I’m a very cautious person.” His turning point was intellectual and came about due to the way the event organizers and teachers in 2001 responded to a concern Nu raised during a mid-week feedback meeting. He recalled:

[...] [T]hey [the teaching team] knew that it wasn’t all about them and they made a successful container, and when they were told that there was a problem by me telling a couple of organizers and the organizers taking it to the teachers, they addressed it immediately.[...] [The teachers] announced at dinner that night, you know, if you are having problems processing, [...] go to one of these people [veteran campers], and they will talk you through. And that’s when I decided I was going to stick around.

This part of Nu’s story shows that he was cognitively attracted to how the teachers at the Intensive put their egalitarian ideology into practice by acting as though the event

“wasn’t all about them.” The intellectual consistency exhibited by the teachers and organizers drew Nu in during the event. This anecdote contrasts with his registration story, which focused on his personal growth and the deal he struck with the helper voices. Both of these show that Nu was focused on thinking, related to learning skills or ideological consistency, during his early involvement with the Intensive and Reclaiming. This pattern of cognitions being the early focus for someone with a primarily activist background is consistent with the ideal-typical self-transformation process shown in Figure 5.3.

Once Nu had decided “to stick around” Reclaiming and the Intensives, his transformation process continued as he became involved in street activism and associated support activities with the Pagan Cluster, a group that draws membership from both within and outside of Reclaiming. Nu also deepened his involvement with religious and spiritual activities by attending local Reclaiming events and continuing to attend the Intensives between 2002 and 2007. Nu is an interesting case because he became more deeply involved with both the activist and religious sides of Reclaiming, yet he diverges from the ideal type because he had maintained his less flexible style of reasoning regarding activism. On the 2006 survey, Nu was asked whether he considered himself an activist in daily life. He responded, “I don’t [...] but other people think my idea of what an activist is is too narrow, and describe me as an activist based on their definitions.” This illustrates that people, both in Reclaiming and perhaps others involved in the Pagan Cluster or social or political activist groups, have pointed out Nu’s lack of cognitive flexibility to him. His response illustrates his awareness that his cognitive

standards differ and demonstrates some degree of flexibility because he does not think his definition of activism is more reasonable or correct than those used by the people who do label him as an activist. Thus, by 2006 Nu was more cognitively and somatically flexible than he was emotionally flexible and his case fits the ideal-typical activist recycling process shown in Figure 5.3.

A second case of a primarily activist trajectory into Reclaiming and the Intensives is the experience of a woman named Acanthite. Acanthite described herself as “the third generation of very proud activist women supported by very, very feminist men.” She was deeply involved in several movements during the 1960s including Civil Rights when she was a teenager, Anti-War, and the American Indian Movement. She has continued her Anti-War activism up until the present by staying involved with Vietnam Veterans’ groups. Acanthite also volunteered after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, participated in the American Public Health Association’s Peace Caucus, and volunteered at a local Pagan Pride Day.

Acanthite was raised Jewish and emphasized that her upbringing was both ecumenical and magical due to her grandmother’s “inherent magic” and the men in her family who were Masons. Thus, her upbringing supported the kind of flexible thinking that allowed her to accept the idea that magic mattered. Acanthite stated:

I always knew there was something more than the Judaism I was getting in Jewish Sunday school, which was a pretty good foundation and then I was sent to [Moravian] Vacation Bible School because it was right across the street and [...] I sang in the Moravian and Catholic children’s choirs on Sunday and in the Jewish choir on Saturday. So I grew up in a very ecumenical household [...] that was rife with magic [...] my grandmother’s inherent magic and my father, grandfather and uncles with their Masonic magic. So I always knew that these things existed and that they were, could be integrated.

As an adult, Acanthite eventually became involved with Paganism. She explained that reading both Starhawk's *The Spiral Dance* (1999) and Margot Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* (1997) led her to say "oh, there are other people in my shoes, let me go find a group of them and see if I can work with them." This in turn led her to investigate Paganism and discover Reclaiming in the late 1990s. Acanthite stated in 2005, "I actually became formally a Pagan probably five years before I came out in the Unitarian Church so maybe twelve years ago, but it was sort of more of a metamorphosis sort of an evolution rather than "whoa, I was that, now I'm this" I didn't have this conversion." She used the terms metamorphosis and evolution to describe the gradual nature of her transformation, which was characterized as not a "conversion," i.e., a sudden, complete transformation from "that" to "this."

When I first interviewed Acanthite in 2005, she already thought about activism in a relatively flexible way as permeating her daily life and not limited to protesting or formal political activities. She described her views:

It means breathing.[...] And my activism can include championing my patients, making sure that my patients get the care that they need, it can include being public about my witchcraft in all areas where that is appropriate [...] Who I am is my activism. So I'm very public about it. And I also go to peace demonstrations, I also go to, but my activism is much more a, same way as my magic, is aimed toward everything, you know. Its who I am, its not what I do. And that's been true for life, so.

Thus Acanthite, perhaps due to her pluralistic upbringing, was fast-tracked in a sense through the first two steps of the activist process shown in Figure 5.3, and was going through the religious side of the process between 2004 and 2006 when I did my study. Acanthite's self-transformations were focused on emotional work including gratitude

and happiness after being widowed a few years before and doing transformative work at a previous Intensive. She reflected about her journey:

My biggest emotion is just happiness. I have worked through lots of stuff. And I've been doing my work for a while and last year's camp [in 2004] really helped me do a lot of really serious deep work. And so this year I'm in a less emotionally fragile place by a lot, and I was never terribly emotionally fragile to begin with. I got shot at for a couple of years [while doing activism], and other things don't rock your world all that much, you know. And people go "how can you handle this?" And I go "being armed". [laughs] You know, hello? And yet for some people just the challenge of just attending ritual can be more than they can bear, and I'm not judging anybody else. I'm just saying that for me I have not had, I am not the most emotionally rocky person. But heat will usually bring it out, if its going to be there. [High temperatures] will usually cause me to have serious difficulties with controlling my personality and what I do, and [...] recognizing that, yes, I'm having a challenge with the heat, therefore so is everybody else, so suck it up.

In this account, Acanthite links her emotional robustness to what some would characterize as traumatic experiences during her activist days. She describes herself as not being "emotionally rocky," meaning her emotions are not very volatile, and describes her solution to being emotional due to the heat as needing to "suck it up" and control herself. This is a pragmatic, but not necessarily flexible response to "having a challenge with the heat." A more flexible response might include more compassion for one's own self and a revised view of the personality so that one's personality is not seen in a negative light as something that had to be controlled and managed. For a more flexible person volatility might not be associated with weakness, and both volatility and weakness might be seen as valuable in certain contexts. These values do not come across in Acanthite's account of her problems with the heat in 2005, and illustrate that while Acanthite was cognitively flexible, her perspective on her own self, magic, and

emotions could be further refined as she continued the recycling process and became more emotionally and somatically flexible.

Overall the case of Acanthite shows a general tendency for activists to batten down their emotional hatches and to work for emotional control in situations where they could be cultivating a rich, emotionally volatile experience. Acanthite is a complex case because in spite of being raised in a cognitively flexible, ecumenical environment where magic was discussed, she still follows the ideal-typical activist recycling pattern. In 2005, she was in the midst of becoming more emotionally flexible and adept at magical techniques such as grounding after intense experiences and visualizing during meditations. Her case shows that activists can be very demanding of themselves, and expect their emotions to fall in line while having very flexible cognitions about how activism and in some cases magical religion fit into daily life. The challenge for these people is to move through the recycling process and embrace emotional volatility along with new skillsets related to magic and ritualizing. While people with primarily activist backgrounds may cognitively embrace magic as a part of daily life, the cases discussed here demonstrate the challenges involved in following the ideal-typical pattern of a fully recycled, Reclaiming “magical activist” self that also emotes and senses the world in a flexible manner. Neither Acanthite nor Nu were finished with their particular round of self-recycling because they further emotion work to do, and utilizing the ideal types to understand their cases helps uncover not only how the cases diverge from Reclaiming’s own vision of “magical activism” but also how the activists and “magic people” diverge from patterns that are not recognized within the movement itself.

Putting the Recycling Model in Context

In this section of Chapter Five I have built on a recycling metaphor for understanding self-transformations in Reclaiming that are cyclical and involve multiple, iterative shifts in how people think, emote, and perceive the world. I developed a first iteration of a recycling model, which helps make sense the similarities and differences between how ideal-typical “activists” and “magical religious” people are recruited into and subsequently deepen their involvement in Reclaiming. The general argument I make in this section regarding differences in the self-transformative process between people whose backgrounds are primarily activist versus primarily magical religious helps extend the earlier quantitative analysis of differences in reattendance behavior associated with family heritage regarding the importance of religion or family engagement in politics and activism. In the quantitative analysis I examined a short term outcome, reattendance in 2005, while the recycling model makes sense of long-term commitment processes and specific individual self-transformations. In both cases, I think my work is a step towards a fuller understanding of a core tension within the Reclaiming movement between social and political activism and magical religion. The movement stands out within the broader Neo-Pagan milieu precisely because it advocates giving equal time to activism and religion yet living up to this ideal either individually or at the movement level is challenging. I hope that my work, particularly the recycling model, helps people within Reclaiming continue their discussions about how activists and magical people are transforming both themselves and the world at large.

I also am going to present one final visualization in this chapter (see Figure 5.4), and I have placed it here in the conclusion of the section on the recycling model so that readers will get a sense of how I think the recycling model fits with other models of self-transformation that focus on linear processes of conversion, recruitment or self-modification. My goal is to put the recycling model in context by placing my model alongside other work on conversions, recruitment, and awakenings. The visualization should help clarify some of the similarities and differences between states such as “moral shock” (Jasper 1997) and “cognitive liberation” (McAdam 1999) and processes including “interpretive drift” (Luhmann 1989). I classify each model using four dimensions: 1) the shape (linear versus circular) and iterative nature of the process, 2) the duration of the process: sudden versus gradual, 3) the level of consciousness (un- or sub-conscious versus conscious) and amount of deliberation involved in the process, and 4) the depth of the transformation to the self, including the mind, emotions, and somatic-sensory perceptions (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4: Four-dimensional Comparative Theory Diagram

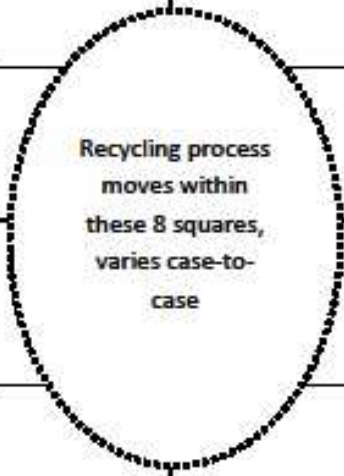
		One-shot, linear		Multiple iterations, circular	
		Sudden	Gradual	Sudden	Gradual
Un- or sub-conscious, Not deliberate	Shallow	World-saver Part 1A for non-seekers			
	Deep	Moral Shock; <i>Cognitive Liberation</i>	<u>Interp. Drift</u> <u>Part 2</u>		
Conscious, Deliberate, "Agentic"	Shallow	<u>Interp. Drift</u> <u>Part 1</u> World-saver Part 1B for seekers			
	Deep		World Saver Part 2 "Deployable agents"		

Diagram annotations:

- An arrow points from the "Interp. Drift Part 1" cell to the "Interp. Drift Part 2" cell.
- A box labeled "DeGioma's Awakenings" is positioned between the "Interp. Drift Part 1" and "World Saver Part 2" cells.

Using four dimensions to map the terrain of transformations covered by current social theory seems warranted, and I argue that the four dimensions are distinct from each other. Consciousness of a transformation should not be conflated with the depth, and I think that discussions of self-transformations have tended to mix two different dimensions of timing: the duration of one transformation (sudden versus gradual) and the iterative nature (one-shot versus multiple times) of the process as a whole. This kind of thinking does add complexity to our thinking about the timing and nature of self-transformations, but it seems to me that using the sixteen-fold table shown in Figure 5.4 is worth it due to the added clarity regarding how the recycling model can work. The recycling process is varied, and using a sixteen-fold table makes it possible to track individual or group transitions over time between a sudden and gradual pace as well as

a one-shot versus an iterative process and shallow versus deep change to the self that may be deliberately provoked or a spontaneous event.

Overall my point in this section of the chapter is that theorists need to move beyond solely linear approaches to self-transformations because they limit our accounts of how transformative processes work and our comparisons between cases. The recycling model and the associated circular process of transformation produce a richer account of how prototypical activists and magical religious people are transformed in Reclaiming (see Figure 5.1, Figure 5.4) than I could have produced using other available theoretical approaches and related concepts. The recycling model incorporates mental, emotional, and somatic change, which is one theoretical selling point, but my model also does more than bringing the body and emotions into theories of conversion and recruitment. It also opens the door to thinking about four related, but separate dimensions of the self-transformative process. In addition, I think there should be more bridging work done between theories about how rituals work, the associated emotional and social energy, and the different forms of self-transformations. Basically this kind of work would put together ideas about the ritual technologies that provoke intense emotions and liminal states with the long-term transformative outcomes including one-shot linear transformation, and iterative processes such as the one I have described using the recycling metaphor and a Reclaiming-specific model. This is the bridging between the Collins-Turner synthesis and my own work on self-recycling that I discussed earlier in Chapter Five, and I hope readers can see why this kind of work is the next logical extension of what I have been able to accomplish in the dissertation.

6) Conclusion

In Chapter Five I have developed answers to the questions: “who returned to an Intensive in 2005?” and “what does the self-transformation process experienced by people in Reclaiming look like?” These questions may seem unrelated, but I maintain that they both help address the broader issue of who returns to the Intensives in the short term and how people change over time when they do stick with the movement. I focus on people involved with the Intensive events, and cases of people that are mostly drawn from the East Coast communities, but I think the recycling model is generalizable to people involved in other segments of Reclaiming and people in Reclaiming communities in other parts of U.S. and around the world. I argue that the recycling model of self-transformation that I develop in the chapter helps make sense of tensions between activists and magical religious people that arise within the movement and within specific Intensives such as the 2004 Spiralheart Intensive. Prototypical activists and magical religious people have different goals and backgrounds, but they also are moving through different variations of an iterative process of self-transformation. Thus, their endpoints are the same when a cycle is over, but their experiences and needs during the middle phases of the process differ. Hopefully, my discussion of these differences will open up even more dialogue within the movements about these differences and how the Intensives accommodate them.

This chapter of the dissertation is comprised of four substantive sections and I summarize findings from each section here, and end it by commenting further about the overall story about commitment to Reclaiming that has developed over the course of Chapter Five. In the first section, I worked with small N data and assessed annual reattendance in 2005 at Spiralheart and DreamRoads for people who attended Spiralheart camp in 2004. This analysis examined sex differences in three types of reattendance: general at either Spiralheart or DreamRoads, just at

Spiralheart, and just at DreamRoads. I found evidence consistent with a small “man effect,” meaning that men were more likely than women to reattend an Intensive even though men are generally a minority group at the Intensive events comprising roughly twenty to thirty percent of campers. In a more comprehensive analysis I would have turned to investigating age and sexuality-based differences in reattendance, but space has prevented me from doing so here. Instead, I turned next to investigating men’s experiences using qualitative data in the next section of Chapter Five.

The second substantive section of Chapter Five deepened the discussion of sex-based reattendance in 2005 by stepping back and examining what eight different men had to say regarding their experiences in the movement. In this analysis I was able to bring sexuality and age into the discussion, and found that there was a lot of variation in how the men talked about their sexuality and managed their status as men in the movement. I found that younger and middle-aged men were more comfortable expressing a queer identity whereas several middle-aged and the one “elder” man in the group of eight expressed a verbal, but not behavioral affinity for bisexuality. Put another way, several men called themselves bisexual, but did not indicate that they had ever had sex with a man, and I argued that this pattern might occur since bisexuality is more politically correct within Reclaiming than heterosexuality. In addition, I found the men who were fathers discussed fatherhood in different ways, but that the fathers were unified in that fatherhood helped mediate their status as men and oppressors in the dominant culture and gave them one area to focus on during their “work.”

In the third substantive section, I also worked with small N data and assessed annual reattendance in 2005 for people who attended Spiralheart camp in 2004. This analysis examined two types of differences in family heritage: the first was the importance or lack thereof of religion in the respondent’s family and the second was the family’s engagement with politics or

activism. As I did in the first quantitative analysis of sex differences and reattendance, I examined three types of reattendance: general at either Spiralheart or DreamRoads, just at Spiralheart, and just at DreamRoads. For the religious heritage variable, I found evidence consistent with the respondents “rebellious against” rather than extending their family background, meaning that people whose families found religion to be not very important or not important at all were more likely to reattend an Intensive than people from families who found religion to be at least somewhat important. For the politics and activism heritage variable, I found evidence consistent with the respondents “extending” rather than rebellious against their family background, meaning that people whose families did engage in politics and/or activism to some extent were more likely to reattend an Intensive than people from families that did not engage in either politics or activism.

After this small N quantitative analysis, I turned to considering how the respondents’ backgrounds with magical religion and activism might shape their long-term self-transformations and commitment to Reclaiming. I developed a model of self-transformations in Reclaiming based on the metaphor of recycling. One advantage of the recycling model is that it focuses on the multi-faceted nature of self-transformations and makes room for cognitive, emotional, and somatic shifts that contribute to the overall transformation of the self and adoption of a new, movement-sanctioned worldview. In addition, the recycling model incorporates the idea that a circular, iterative self-transformation process exists, and that this kind of process is a better fit for the transformations experienced by both prototypical activists and magical religious people. Everyone ends the transformative cycle in the same place, yet the sequences of steps people take to get there vary. In the recycling process the “work” is never over, yet there is room for people to rest and vacation at certain points in the process.

This kind of structure helps buffer people from different forms of burnout even as it draws them deeper into transformative work over time. In this way, I think the recycling model helps make sense of why a diverse array of people find Reclaiming and the Intensives appealing and tend to stick with the communities that produce them over long spans of time. While Chapter Five has showed that sex and family heritage regarding religion and activism help predict short-term reattendance at the Intensives for a small sample of data, I think the larger lesson learned in this chapter is that both the self-transformative process, the Intensives events, and the people who go through the intensives and the self-transformative process are diverse and multifaceted. A complex, multi-level account of the Intensives and how they transform people is necessary in order to understand why people stick with the events and Reclaiming as well as how people like Man 2 spin out of the transformative cycle after a sustained period of involvement. Of course, some people truly play out the pattern of attending one Intensive, being a witch solely for the one week, and then never returning. These cases are just as interesting as those of the four veterans I profiled in Chapter Five, and they deserve an in-depth analysis in the future. This being said, I think the data have presented here suggest that sex and differences in both religious and activist backgrounds are crucial for understanding the experience of being a witch for a week as well as the longer-term cyclical self-transformations and “work” people do when they are committed to the movement.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

1) Introduction

This chapter sums up the findings of the previous chapters with regard to the central question of why people become witches for a week at Reclaiming Intensive events. In this concluding chapter, I first revisit each component of these questions: why witches, why a week and which witches return and why do they return. The answers to the sub-questions are integrated with comments about the common sense, sociological, and my own theoretical explanations related to these topics. This kind of formatting keeps pertinent theories integrated into the discussion rather than segregating the theoretical comments into a separate section on theoretical contributions. Next, I devote a section to the wider perspective, looking at the entire central question. Finally, I end the dissertation with a brief discussion of current developments within Reclaiming and within the Intensives and some thoughts about future directions.

I provided a great deal of information about Reclaiming and the Intensives in Chapters One and Two, and it seems fitting to end of the dissertation with a discussion of current developments within the movements and the Intensives. My intention for the conclusion is to create a bridge to the present and future from my analysis of the Intensives, which is dated to 2004 to 2007. Reclaiming and the two regional communities, Spiralheart and DreamRoads changed during and after my study, and I think it is important for readers to keep in mind that I completed this research project during a decade that was bookended by recessions. Hard economic times have certainly shaped the Intensive events and Reclaiming as a whole although economics constraints

are not a focal point for my analysis of which witches return to the Intensives over time. Financial constraints, age differences, gender, sexuality, and parenthood are five factors that I think should be discussed more fully in the future, and I elected to give analytical attention primarily to sex and the respondents' past and present experiences with religion and activism.

I made this decision because of my interest in intense emotions and my observations that sex differences and the contrasting perspectives of activists and magical religious people seemed to give rise to core tensions within Reclaiming and the Intensives. In addition, I had reasons, grounded in both common stereotypes and sociological theory, to expect that there might be sex-based, activism-based, or magical religion-based differences in the emotional experiences of campers. For instance, street activists are stereotyped as being angry and women are generally stereotyped as being more emotional than men. Sociologically, I expected that magical religious people might be more adept at evoking joy and love during the recruitment process (Barker 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1979; Zablocki 1971) while Joanna Macy's (1983) work on hope and despair and James Jasper's (1997) work on moral shock led me to expect that people involved in activism might be more adept at evoking these emotions. Having read the first five chapters of the dissertation, readers have seen that I argue that the differences run deeper than just the particular emotions. Somatic-sensory perceptions and cognitions also figure into Reclaiming's recruitment process, and the emotions people experience at camp are as diverse as their backgrounds.

Overall the dissertation gives an account of how recruiting and commitment work in a specific setting: the week-long Intensive event, which is a ritual technology used to provoke intense emotions as well as emotional patterns that I refer to as *emotion chains* and *emotion shapes*. The emotion chains concept helps make sense of connective experiences of emotional energy flow as one emotion is transformed into another emotion either deliberately through *emotion work* (Hochschild 1983) or spontaneously. The emotion shapes concept helps make sense of both short- and long-term patterns of emotional ups and downs and I argue that emotion shapes are particularly useful for understanding the week-long emotional pattern of the thematic evening rituals created at the Intensives. The evening rituals are deliberately crafted experiences, which also leave room for spontaneous responses by every participant during certain segments of the ritual and individualized “work” with the story narrative throughout the experience that deviates from “work” done by the majority of campers. In sum, people are not forced to march in emotional, cognitive, or somatic lockstep by Reclaiming as a whole or the Intensives in particular and this openness to diversity is both an asset and a liability when it comes to achieving the general goal of getting people committed to Reclaiming-style “magical activism” and sustaining an Intensive event from year-to-year.

Readers know that I selected the Intensive as a research site due to my interest in intense emotions and the balance the movement struck between social and political activism and religion. I approached the Spiralheart community in 2004 as an outsider to Reclaiming and went in blind to the Intensive during August that year. My theoretical agenda initially included a desire for better concepts for discussions emotions and

emotion patterns as well as my interest in transformative moments such as cognitive liberation (McAdam 1999) and moral shock (Jasper and Poulsen 1995) along with the technologies and specific techniques movements used to provoke those states. In addition, I was intrigued with the argument about general flows of emotional energy from IR theory (Collins 2004) and recognized that bridges between the magical energy discussed by witches and Neo-Pagans and the social and emotional energy examined by sociologists should be created. Making these bridges involves considering mind-body-emotion interactions, and this theme of integrated analysis of mental, emotional, and somatic changes is a common thread that runs throughout the dissertation.

After attending the Spiralheart Intensive in 2004, I realized that working solely with IR chain theory would not yield answers to some of the questions I had about how specific emotions emerged during the rituals as a response to the story narrative. The Spiral Dance ritual in particular seemed to generate a distinctive form of “we-feeling,” and I wanted to explore the nuts and bolts of how the ritual evoked intense emotions and personal connections between participants. The Spiral Dance seemed like a ritual technology which connected people, and it also served the function of generating general positive emotions within the group after the deep, negative work around the mid-point of the week. Victor and Edith Turner’s work (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) on rituals and the state of *communitas* ended up being tremendously useful although I was not aware of it when I started the project.

The larger theoretical work that has emerged during the course of this project focuses on the development of a synthetic approach to examining rituals grounded in

the Turners' and Collins' work and a complementary theory about movement socialization processes focused the possibility of circular rather than solely linear patterns of deepening one's work and commitment to the movement over time. My argument for the presence of circular, cyclical recruitment processes is related to the four dimensions I used to classify different recruitment and commitment models in Chapter Five. While I have developed these arguments based primarily on the case of Reclaiming, I believe the conceptual and theoretical work I have done here will be useful for understanding socialization, ritualizing, and emotional patterns within other movements and groups. Being a witch for a week is an unusual, and as Marion Roach's work (2005) shows a potentially unsettling, activity to take on even a person attends camp with a friend. The value of the Intensive in very general terms is that they provide what the Turners would call a *liminal* space and place, outside of everyday space, place, and time, where people can reflect about who they are, what they want for future, and how Reclaiming-style "magical activism" fits into the picture.

2) Summary of Answers to "Why a week?"

A simple answer to the question of "why a week?" is that the people in Reclaiming at the time the Intensives were created in the early- to mid-1980s wanted the experience to be more intense, and they expanded weekend retreat events to fill a whole week. This is the answer I have heard long-time Reclaiming veterans and former members of the Reclaiming Collective give in their standard accounts of how things in the movement developed over time. I see the "why a week?" question as one core question that should be asked regarding the Intensive as a form of ritual technology which is used to achieve

certain goals by the people involved with any given Intensive. This perspective on leaders and goals is shaped by data I collected which show that the event planners and average campers are both helping to set the agenda for camp. This shared authority and autonomy within the space of camp helps distinguish Reclaiming and the Intensives as case study from other groups and movements that give recruits far less say in shaping their experiences during recruitment and training (Barker 1984; Bromley and Shupe 1979; Lewis 2009; Wallis 1977).

My main point regarding the week-long time frame is that the Intensive is a ritual technology as a whole with other ritual technologies nested within the event. These ritual technologies aid event participants in imagining and attaining short- and long-term changes to their overall worldview and ways of feeling, perceiving, and thinking. I have argued that the week-long structure allows more space for participants to do deep emotion work and to create the typical “concave arc” emotion shape, which involves a transition from generally positive and intense emotions to intense negative emotions and back again. While this pattern could be achieved over the course of a weekend or even a day-long retreat event, the week-long structure leaves more room temporally for participants to sit with their emotions as well as more time for participants to interact with each and build social bonds. Varied activities and diverse people are two hallmarks of Witchcamp and the week-long structure enables event participants to do more social mixing and complete more activities. If we think about the timeframe in terms of nesting, a week-long event creates a bigger nest, which fits more ritual technologies such as Spiral Dances and Path classes within the event as a whole.

I hope I have demonstrated to readers during the course of the first three chapters of the dissertation that the structure of the weeklong Intensives is crafted so that the participants are exposed to different sizes of groups via the Path classes, affinity groups, and evening rituals. These activities are medium, small, and large in size respectively. In addition, the form of each of the three main activities is varied both due to what the participants do and the power structures in place for mentoring people and/or running the activity. The Path classes use a clear co-teacher and student structure and a mix of active and passive learning activities while affinity groups are co-facilitated by all members and ideally give each member room to speak about their “work” and any problems in a non-judgmental atmosphere. After being on equal footing in affinity group, participants attend the large evening rituals which are priestessed, and leave room for a variety of people to practice ritual skills aside from the main priestess(es). These skills include basic practices such as doing an invocation and devocation of a direction (East, South, West North or Center) or deity, and grounding and centering one’s own energy and advanced energy work in support of the ritual such as anchoring and tending, as well as serving as an aspect or oracle within the rituals.

The Intensive experience is multifaceted and varied, which works to the camp’s advantage in that most recruits will have some activities that work really well, and help to pull them further into the Intensive and Reclaiming. Basically the movement is not putting all its metaphorical eggs in the same basket when it comes to the tactics used within the Intensive. In addition, different timeframes are available for workshops, and I do not want to leave readers with the impression that Reclaiming only uses Intensives to

get the job of recruiting and training done. Weekend workshops and other styles of events are also used, and these settings may serve as less costly entry points into the movement and as gateways into attendance at an Intensive later on. For example, someone could get involved in planning an annual Spiral Dance ritual around September and October with a local community, and then go on to attend Witchcamp the following summer. There is flexibility built into the recruitment pathways people take as well as the Intensive itself, which allows people to opt in and out of activities as long as one's actions are framed in terms of "doing the work" of camp.

I am going to end this section by returning to points I made about healing and the Intensive in the earlier chapters so that I can make a connection between the timeframe of the Intensive and healing practices. Readers have seen an account of a camp, Spiralheart's Inanna-themed camp held in 2000, which included a "plague" of physical illness that beset many people in the camp. One common thread that runs through the dissertation is that healing, like the recycling process of self-transformation I outlined in Chapter Five, is multi-faceted in that both processes are mental, emotional, and somatic-sensory. Thinking about healing in this manner helps me make sense of why people from the 2000 Spiralheart camp returned for subsequent camps, and sheds light on another notable feature of the week-long format: it creates a space for healing that is arguably more isolated and safe than a weekend retreat. The healing can be targeted at problems provoked by the camp itself such as when people have what is essentially a hangover from evening ritual, or the healing may address issues people brought with them to camp such as feelings of burnout precipitated by street activism or life

circumstances such as grieving a loss. I argue that while there may be East Coast versus West Coast differences in healing during the Intensives, the overall outcomes are similar and include movement through the recycling process and further development of mental, emotional, and somatic flexibility over time. This multi-modal flexibility, which includes the ability to consider and embrace paradoxical ideas, practices, and emotions, is a resource for modern living. Reclaiming is not unique in fostering this kind of general outlook, but the movement does stand out because it combines multi-modal flexibility together with “magical activism” and a set of complementary ritual technologies that are nested within the larger Intensive event format.

If I had to give a short answer to the question “why a week,” my answer would be that the week-long Intensives are suited to particular story narratives, which foster deep work at both the collective and individual level. These narratives foster a circular, cyclical process of self-transformation for people who stay involved with the movement, and I think the flows of emotional energy produced within the liminal space of the Intensive also stand out from those produced in everyday spaces and smaller group rituals and make a lasting impression on campers, even those who attend one Intensive and never return. These people who are truly witches just for a week get exposed to the social and magical energy generated by a large and focused group of like-minded individuals, and it is the intense collective energy as well as the varied experiences paced in a particular order that are the hallmarks of the week-long Intensive format.

3) Summary of Answers to “Which witches return and Can we explain why?”

Over the course of the dissertation, I have argued that we need to bring emotions and the body further into our understandings of the socialization techniques movements use and explanations for why people stick with particular movements and groups. This same general idea, that the body and emotions need to be brought into our theorizing without sacrificing attention to cognition and rationality, applies to self-transformation processes as well. In this section I summarize two core ideas from the dissertation that I think need to be put together in order to answer the question “which witches return and why?” The first idea is the “and logic” I described during the first half of the dissertation, and the second idea is the recycling model of circular, iterative change to the self, mind, body, and emotions that summarizes how the self changes over the long haul as people deepen their commitments to Reclaiming-style magical activism.

The analytical payoff of Chapter Three, aside from answering the question: “where do these people come from” was a discussion of the costs and benefits of Reclaiming’s “and” logic, which is cooperative rather than competitive. I argue that the connective logic Reclaiming uses enables both new campers and veterans to be able to be “Reclaiming and ...” another group or movement without feeling as conflicted about multiple movement affiliations. The “and” logic facilitates multiple, in-depth commitments over time rather than deep involvement in one group or another group at a single point in time, which is fostered by the “or logic” of some groups and movements. This cooperative “and logic” should help Reclaiming to cross-pollinate ideas and resources with other movements, but the movement has more to gain from sharing

people with widely disparate groups than it does with ideologically close groups such as the Unitarian Universalists, Pagan Cluster, Radical Faeries, and Feri Wicca. These diverse campers are few and far between, but they are more likely to contribute unusual innovations to Reclaiming and to help keep the movement as a whole and the Intensives in particular from stagnating.

The open question for any Intensive community is what the inflows and outflows of campers look like, and what sort of diversity a camp community has during any given year. In Chapter Three I provided a portrait of the 2004 Path cohort from Spiralheart as well as information about the 2000 Intensive veterans who were present for the Inanna-Ereshkigal themed camp, which was marked by illness and discussed in-depth in Chapter One. Introducing these cases helps illustrate the diverse group of people present within Spiralheart, and readers should keep in mind that members of the cohort contribute to the retention patterns discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four extended the ideas in Chapter Three regarding “and logic.” I argued that identifying as “Reclaiming and ...” is both a byproduct of involvement with the movement as well as a factor that contributes to involvement with the movement and attending Intensive events. “And logic” and being a witch for a week at the Intensives can be mutually reinforcing, and in Chapter Four I examined how experiences in Path class, affinity group, and evening ritual that cultivate emotional, cognitive, and somatic flexibility could operate as gateways to “and logic” and vice versa. There are a number of different ways that a person may become more cognitively, emotionally, and somatically flexible due to being a witch for a week, and in Chapter Four I used

qualitative accounts of different activities at camp to demonstrate how material covered in Path class and the emotional, somatic and cognitive experiences people go through might overlap with the content and experiences people have in the evening rituals. For example, both activities reinforce specific ritual formats, combinations of emotions, and the sensing of magical energy through the body. These forms of flexibility fostered within the activities and the Intensive as a whole should not be treated as synonymous with the cognitive shifts involved with adopting “and logic.” Cognitive flexibility regarding identity labels is not reducible to other forms of flexibility regarding thoughts and ideas or other mental work any more than it is reducible to emotional flexibility such as emotional volatility or experiences of simultaneous, combined emotions. Thus, we need the idea of flexibility to make sense of who returns, but I argue throughout the dissertation that readers should be careful to treat the process in a nuanced and multi-modal manner so that cognitions and cognitive processes are not unduly privileged.

Chapter Five focused on understanding commitment outcomes using multiple forms of data, and this final substantive chapter of the dissertation provides concrete answers to the question “who stays” and “why do people return.” Combining the findings from two small-N quantitative analyses together created a richer picture of one particular form of commitment: reattendance outcomes in 2005 that incorporates both sex differences and the influence of family heritage regarding both religion and activism. These findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample size and limited

number of hypotheses I test with the data, but the findings do provide a preliminary answer to the “who stays” question, which can be expanded in future analyses.

Regarding the “why do people return” question, I have argued that “and logic” contributes to why people return to Reclaiming. The movement does not demand an exclusive commitment from people, and acts as a crossroads for skill-sharing and between-movement networking. In addition, the Path classes and evening rituals at the intensive events provide solid basic and advanced training for participants in skills that are useful for priestessing rituals, participating in social and political activism, and sustaining active participation in egalitarian communities. The training Reclaiming provides is a resource that is generally portable to other Neo-Pagan groups as well as other movements and groups that are “allies” in that they share some goals and values. While some of the specifics of how to do ritual in the Reclaiming style may not work in the context of another group the general sense of how to accomplish ritual and work with magical energy is a resource that people who are witches just for one week can take with to other groups. The same general dynamic is true for affinity groups and consensus process decision-making: once people are exposed to the process, they have learned at least some rudimentary skills and emotion management techniques that are useful in a non-Reclaiming context. These skills include but are not limited to active listening, the idea that speakers must take turns and be “stacked” into a queue by a facilitator, and the value of being heard in a nonjudgmental atmosphere in which listening is both the goal and the process.

4) Summary of Answers to “Why witches?”

The in-depth examination of how recruiting and training works in the Reclaiming movement that is incorporated into my project contributes to the growing field of Pagan Studies. Scholars in this field should be particularly interested in the answer I have developed to the “why witches” question as should scholars interested in social and new religious movements. The Reclaiming movement sits at the intersection of a multitude of groups and movements that share some progressive political and/or religious values, and Reclaiming is linked via its emphasis on magical religion to the three variants of Paganism I described in Chapter 1: Paleo-, Meso-, and Neo-Paganism (see Bonewits 2006). In addition, it is reasonable to see Reclaiming as sharing the practice of magic with groups that perform witchcraft and/or magic outside of a religious framework. In sum, Reclaiming fits into a large web of groups and movements, and the visualizations I presented in Chapter Three enable readers to see the particular state of the web for the Spiralheart Intensive in 2004.

I have argued throughout the dissertation that Reclaiming competes within a religious and activist marketplace for adherents. I think that understanding why people choose Reclaiming or at least choose to attend a single Intensive event is bound up with both Reclaiming’s use of cooperative “and logic” as well as the web of movements that send people to and receive people from Reclaiming. These movements may operate with “or logic” and see themselves in a competitive relationship with Reclaiming, and a more traditional comparison of the niche each group fits into is also necessary for understanding resources and experiences they use to compete for adherents in the

marketplace. The Intensive event itself is one resource Reclaiming has, which makes it competitive with some closely related groups such as the Pagan Cluster, but not other such as the Radical Faeries, which also offer Intensive events of similar duration. Thus, it is the combination of what Reclaiming has to offer adherents, including but not limited to the Intensive events and the equal value Reclaiming places on magical religion and activism, which make the movement competitive in the marketplace, particularly for feminist men.

Another key feature that makes Reclaiming in particular and witchcraft and Neo-Paganism in general attractive to people is the process I described using the recycling model of self-transformation in Chapter Five. The opportunities for continuous, incremental growth and change to the self as well as the encouragement to change both the self and world at large also help answer the question “why witches.” Witches and Neo-Pagans are more likely to change and grow by moving around a circle time and again rather than moving through a single linear process with a clear beginning and end. In addition, the multi-faceted nature of “the work” done in Reclaiming-style ritual is a feature that stands out in the movement marketplace although people may have trouble articulating precisely why the work stands out and is otherwise attractive. My point here is that Reclaiming has taken steps away from privileging cognition and has integrated somatic-sensory and emotional experiences into the socialization process in a manner that empowers individuals and encourages them to reflect and embrace “a radical analysis of power” in line with the movement’s Principles of Unity (see Appendix B). Reclaiming differs from groups such as the Bruderhof (Zablocki 1971) which use

intense emotions and emotion shapes in the service of squashing the individual self and blending individuals into a collective. Instead of following this model, Reclaiming uses ritual technologies such as the Spiral Dance, which generate moments of *communitas* interspersed with times of individually high emotional energy to emotionally, physically, and mentally transform ritual participants and get them to embrace “magical activism” and integrate it into daily life.

Regarding the “why witches” question, I have argued that Reclaiming attracts a diverse array of participants because the movement is multi-faceted and offers people the option of an open-ended sort of affiliation with the movement grounded in “and logic.” The week-long Intensive event is not unique to Reclaiming, but the particular structure described in-depth in Chapter Four as well as the opportunity to participate in Intensives and participate in the self-recycling process is a connected set of experiences that people can only get from Reclaiming. If people are looking to re-enchant modern life, there are a number of options available including other Earth-based religions, the mystical variants of major world religions, and new religious movements whose re-enchantment projects are often grounded in charismatic relationships. Reclaiming as a movement offers adherents a more challenging and complex re-enchantment project that focuses both inward on the self and outward toward building new cultures consistent with movement-sanctioned values. The complexity and ongoing nature of Reclaiming-style self-transformation may turn people off from being witches, at least in the Reclaiming style, but the movement also offers training and tools focused on

sustaining the self and communities that other political and activist groups may lack entirely or use in a manner that privileges cognition over emotions and the body.

In the end, I think part of the answer to the “why witches” question is that witches heal and are willing to take holistic approaches that are less common in other religious and activist communities. The healing focus helps create Reclaiming’s niche, but, as I argued in Chapter One we also have to keep in mind that healing and Reclaiming-style rituals can produce as many problems as they solve. This pattern is tricky because people may become witches because they need healing and then become embedded in a cycle of further work and healing from that very work that can be empowering and beneficial on the one hand yet unsustainable on the other hand.

5) Summary of Answers to “Why do people become witches for a week at Reclaiming’s Intensive events?”

In a world ingrained with “or logic” it may be difficult for people to understand the value of becoming a witch for a week as well as the value of sticking with the Reclaiming movement for a sustained amount of time. The idea that a movement might benefit from having a stable of members with solid commitments to other movements seems odd, particularly if we assume that movements are competing in a marketplace for adherents. Yet, as I argued in Chapter Three, Reclaiming’s use of “and logic” does confer certain benefits, and perhaps the largest one is that the very logic it operates by helps distinguish Reclaiming in the marketplace. People can attend the Intensive events knowing that the movement will not make a hard sell to them and start socializing them into dropping old social ties and group allegiances, which is what happens in demanding

sorts of new religious movements such the Divine Precepts and the Bruderhof (Lofland and Stark 1965; Zablocki 1971). The “and logic” and lack of conversion pressure enable Reclaiming to attract a diverse group of people to the Intensives, which in turn allows inflows and outflows of information between individual campers and Reclaiming and other groups and movements.

My point here is that the cooperative logic and diversity among Intensive participants are reasons for individuals to become witches for a week, and that the “and logic” works to benefit not only the movement, but also individuals who are spiritual seekers or seeking new resources to take home to other movements and groups. These kinds of campers ideally give as good as they get during an Intensive event and share skills and resources with veteran campers who have a sustained commitment to Reclaiming and run the highest risk of stagnation in their work and just plain boredom. Overall what I think “dabbling” at an Intensive by attending it once and never returning can do for people is to expose them to a model for coping with modernity via multifaceted flexibility and to Reclaiming’s “and logic” as well as the recycling model of self-transformation. This is not to say that people will self-recycle or embrace “and logic,” but even people who are dissatisfied with the Intensive generally will walk away with a broad sense that Reclaiming is building a new culture via the Intensives and modeling its commitment to diversity on multiple levels.

In Chapter Five I examined cases of people who did develop sustained involvements with Reclaiming and explained a first iteration of the recycling model of self-transformation. I also examined accounts of men’s experiences in the movement

including one case of a man who was involved for several years and then left Reclaiming and the Intensives due to his dissatisfaction with a single-sex Intensive being run in Europe at the time. Both of these sections in Chapter Five provide answers to the “why do people become witches for a week” question although the answers vary. For men, Reclaiming fills a niche in the movement marketplace that is more difficult for them to find since they cannot participate in Dianic Wicca, and other similar groups and movements are either 1) not open to heterosexual men, 2) lack an emphasis on progressive activism, 3) lack an emphasis on magical religion, or 4) either turn inward and retreat from the world or reach out into the world to create change without emphasizing individual change and growth. Reclaiming manages to strike a balance between these interests while remaining open to a diverse array of individuals, and this openness helps make sense of why people might look up the Intensives and decide to attend alone or with a friend like Marion Roach did (2005).

The final answer to the question of why people become witches for a week brings me back to the social movements literature and the idea of the abeyance structure (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; Taylor 1989). When the Occupy movement was in full swing during the fall of 2011, it was criticized for casting a wide net and lacking focus, but when I look at the group I see a variant of the “and logic” used by Reclaiming. It seems to me that people become witches for a week in order to be their best, most together and sustainable selves while doing magic and also mobilizing for various forms of activism, which are shaped by structural opportunities. I think it is fair to argue that people in Reclaiming are unconsciously and/or subconsciously creating webs and

networks that are similar to abeyance structures in that these social ties and latent structures could be capitalized on for a focused, single-issue mobilization in the future. Time will tell whether a cross-group mobilization occurs and what, if any, role people from Reclaiming and its ally groups and movements might play. What I think can be said at present is that part of the appeal of being a witch for a week is that the Intensive is a ritual technology that is effective at helping participants work on their emotional shit and come to terms with their shadow sides in the Jungian sense. The process may take years, but circling through the recycling model does yield results as we saw in the case studies in Chapter Five.

6) Conclusion

Overall I hope the dissertation has helped readers to learn about the dynamics of self-transformations and generative power of emotions, meaning the bottom-up process of emotional change leading the way in a larger transformative process. This idea that emotions can be generative contrasts with how both Randall Collins (2004) and Victor and Edith Turner (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) treat emotions in their ritual theories. In IR chain theory individuals' emotions reflect power relationships while in Turnerian ritual process theory emotions are unleashed during certain segments of rituals, but not others (Turner 1969). This latter model seems more hydraulic and compatible with Arlie Hochschild's ideas about emotion management (1983). For the Turners emotions serve a signaling function in that individual emotions may be unleashed in a ritual but then become irrelevant if and when a group achieves a state of *communitas* (Turner 2012; Turner 1969) which transforms all the individuals involved.

Putting these ideas together, I argue that both immersion in group emotion as well as the notion that emotions signal a person's status and power are important points, but that theorists need to pay more attention to how shifts in individual emotions may be the starting point for transformative processes such as the recycling process used by Reclaiming.

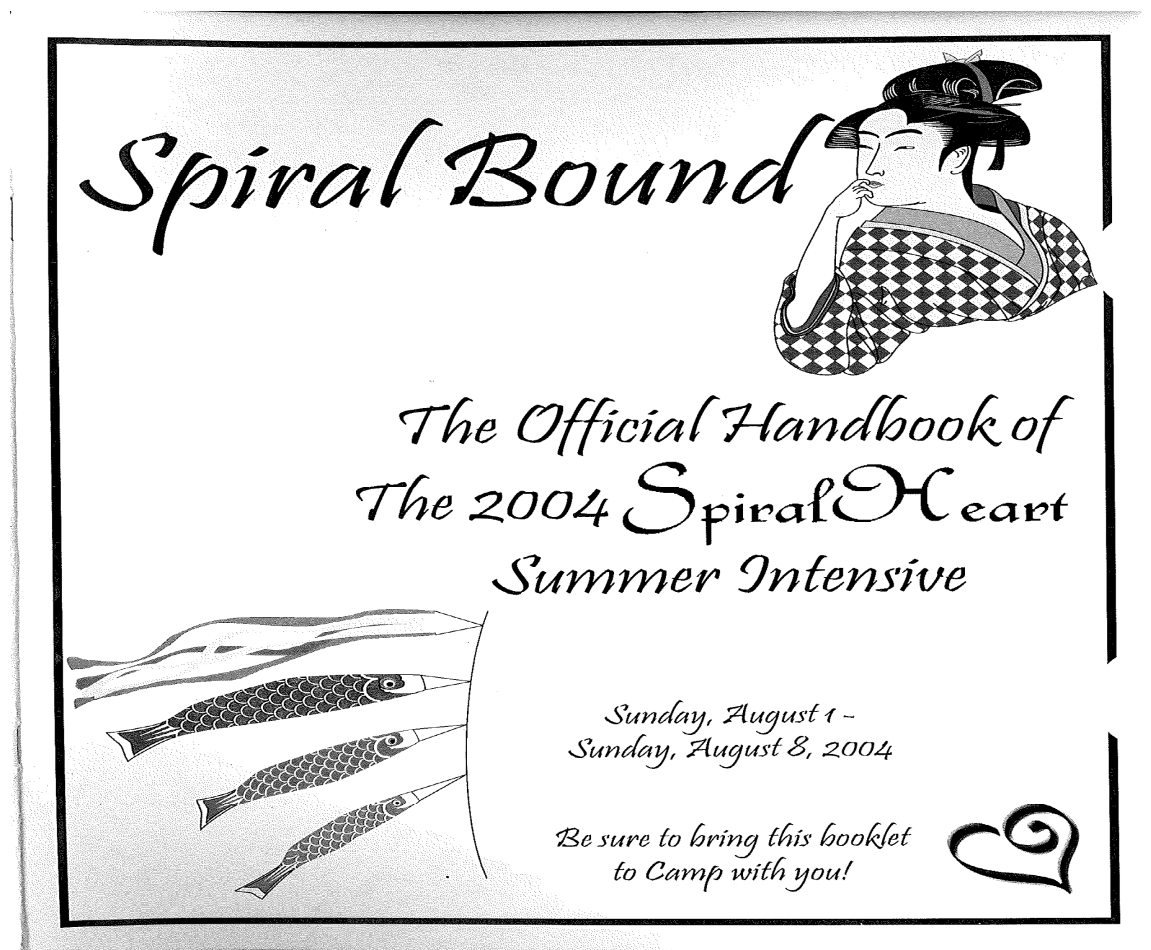
It also seems to me that the general idea that self-transformations can follow a linear or circular trajectory is an insight that may help movements and groups within the progressive milieu to reflect about their transformative goals as well as the means used to attain them. I hope that my study of Reclaiming and the Intensives has generated a deeper understanding of what a 21st-century version of a re-enchantment project can look like including the idea that "the work" movements do can be cognitive, emotional, and somatic-sensory rather than mainly cognitive in scope. In addition, I have contributed new concepts for discussing emotion patterns and emotional combinations: emotion shapes and emotion chains. These concepts should be useful far outside the context of Reclaiming since everyone has emotions and we sorely need to improve our language for discussing how they shift over time and interact with power dynamics.

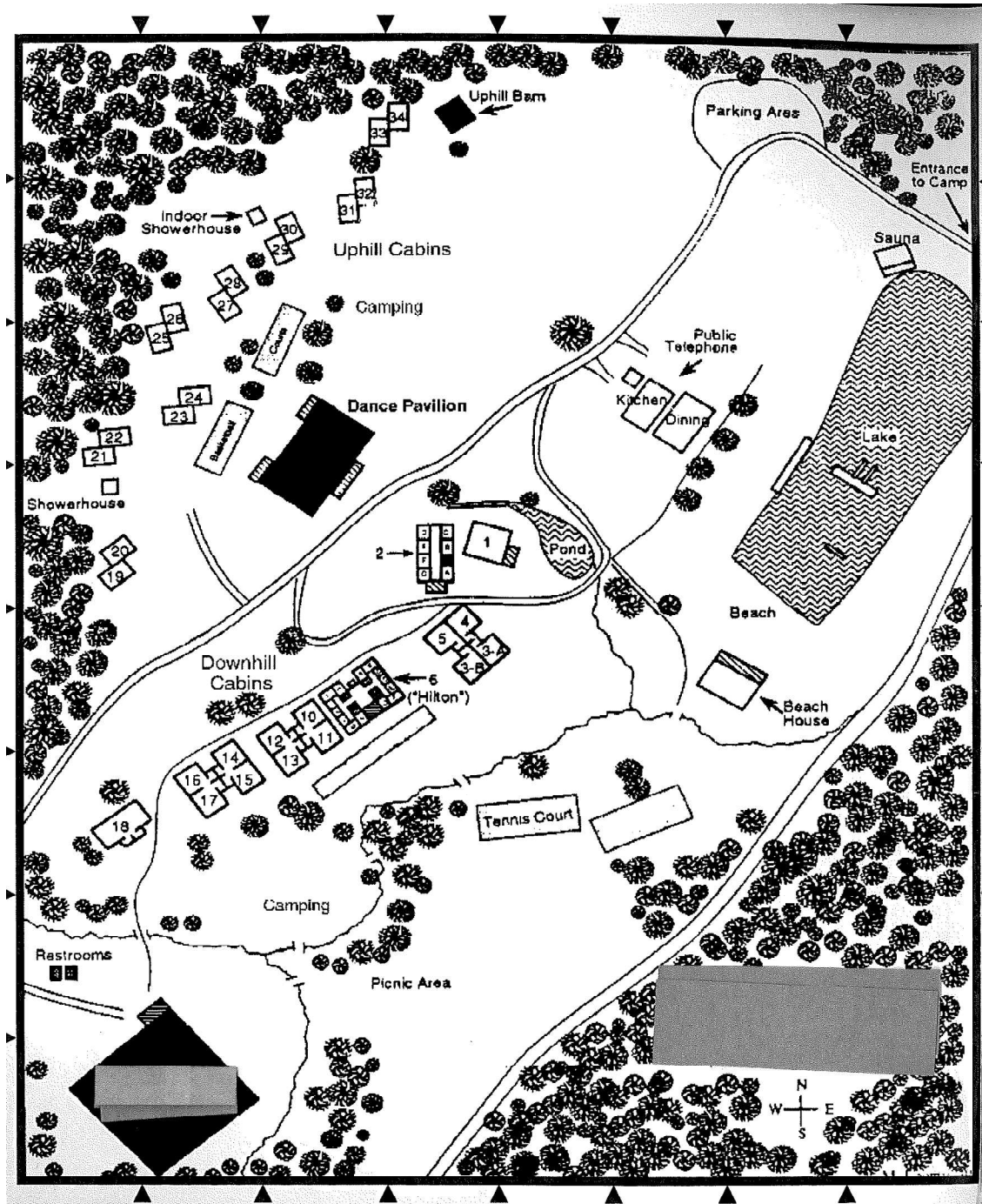
Finally, I think Reclaiming is one case of a movement that can be seen as creating a 21st century retooling of the legacy left by movements from the 1960s in some respects. The interesting thing about Reclaiming is that the movement does try to create generational bridging that was largely absent back then. These movements are united in the sense that they all engage in culture-building projects, and the case of Reclaiming shows that culture building and intense individual work can happen in a non-residential

setting without the presence of intoxicants and charisma over the course of just a week. Creating a safe, but temporary container that fosters deep work is no mean feat, and even if Reclaiming moves on from using the Intensives as a ritual technology to socialize people in the future, the movement has pioneered and fine-tuned a resource that fosters continuous incremental change in people and fosters a particular sort of movement worldview that includes the “magical activist” frame, the use of “and logic,” and self-transformations that increase cognitive, emotional, and somatic sensory flexibility and the ability to embrace the paradoxes of modern life.

Appendices

Appendix A: Selected material from Spiralbound 2004





Welcome

Darekawo Kangeisuru だれかを かんげいする

There are times when the horror is so great that our Being seeks the solace of the silent, dark and deep places in the earth where the healing waters flow. Our soul seeps into the ground like water, merges in the Void with Love, the untidy energy that fuels creation, and is renewed.

The mundane mind imagines that it is in control, denying the soul, for it fears the descent. The mundane mind constructs a "safer" Dark, an illusion to protect it from the dissolving union with the Void, which it sees as death. This manufactured darkness must be a blacker shade and a thousand times more terrifying than reality in order to distract the mundane mind from the simple truth.

The magical mind knows that mind itself is only a by-product of the soul's incarnation – a characteristic of, and not discrete from Being. The magical mind does not seek control nor fear dissolution, for it merges with the essence of the Void consciously and swims in the deep ocean of Love to become a co-creator of the world. To the magical mind, descent is power — a homecoming that refreshes.

Shame is the scourge of the mundane mind, since only imaginary punishment can discipline an imaginary entity. The mundane mind reckons its true self unworthy as measured against some fabricated yardstick, and shields its weakness in puffy, belligerent masks.

The magical mind knows no shame, for it is the servant of Divinity, and when it heeds the subtle messages from the Mystery, it cannot stray from the path. The magical mind leaps for joy, and joins with the community of magical beings, giving over to the dance and daring to be dorky.

In its papier-mâché reality, with its pinwheel terrors, the mundane mind cannot enjoy or even experience its own incarnation. The hot breath of the Dragon wilts the edges of its cellulose conceit, bringing chaotic visions and dreams of the simple truth. In its cardboard castle, the mundane mind imagines that it is alone, frightening itself into immobility.

The magical mind basks in the beauty of its own Being and revels in the sensuality of the flesh, for it knows that our bodies are what the five senses can perceive of the soul. The magical mind is not alone and knows that Being is Unity, that the All are connected at the source – that the Dragon *is* the dance.

The magical mind assembles the "larger circle of lovers" and joins hands in the dancel

*Welcome to the eleventh annual
SpiralHearWitchcamp!*



Welcome

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Reclaiming Principles of Unity

The values of the Reclaiming tradition stem from our understanding that the earth is alive and all of life is sacred and interconnected. We see the Goddess as immanent in the earth's cycles of birth, growth, death, decay and regeneration. Our practice arises from a deep, spiritual commitment to the earth, to healing and to the linking of magic with political action.

Each of us embodies the divine. Our ultimate spiritual authority is within, and we need no other person to interpret the sacred to us. We foster the questioning attitude, and honor intellectual, spiritual and creative freedom.



We are an evolving, dynamic tradition and proudly call ourselves Witches. Honoring both Goddess and God, we work with female and male images of divinity, always remembering that their essence is a mystery which goes beyond form. Our community rituals are participatory and ecstatic, celebrating the cycles of the seasons and our lives, and raising energy for personal, collective and earth healing.

We know that everyone can do the life-changing, world-renewing work of magic, the art of changing consciousness at will. We strive to teach and practice in ways that foster personal and collective empowerment, to model shared power and to open leadership roles to all. We make decisions by consensus, and balance individual autonomy with social responsibility.

Our tradition honors the wild, and calls for service to the earth and the community. We value peace and practice non-violence, in keeping with the Rede, "Harm none, and do what you will." We work for all forms of justice: environmental, social, political, racial, gender and economic. Our feminism includes a radical analysis of power, seeing all systems of oppression as interrelated, rooted in structures of domination and control.



Kanji meaning "Feelings of the Heart"
Look Familiar?

We welcome all genders, all races, all ages and sexual orientations and all those differences of life situation, background, and ability that increase our diversity. We strive to make our public rituals and events accessible and safe. We try to balance the need to be justly compensated for our labor with our commitment to make our work available to people of all economic levels.

All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred elements of air, fire, water and earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations.

"My law is love unto all beings..."

—The Charge of the Goddess

Between the Worlds

Camp Intention, Theme, and Story

Sun Goddess Amaterasu あまてらす

Intention

Our intention is to depart the solitary cave daring to reemerge into the joy, celebration and beauty of community life.

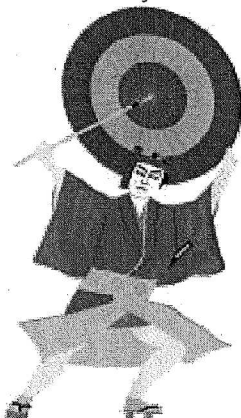
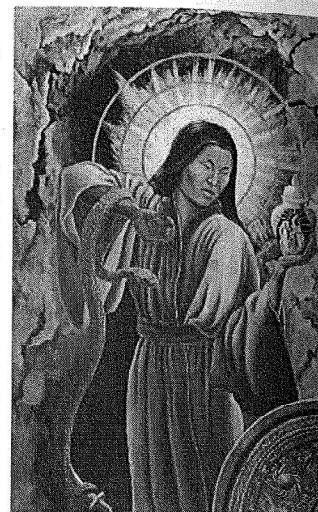
Theme

We choose to recognize and to embrace the work that we have done individually and collectively for the past eleven years. We choose to exercise our sacred obligations to laugh, sing, dance, and love together as if our lives depend upon it – for they do. We choose to thrive, not merely survive.

"Light from the Cave" or "The Mirror Dance of Life"

No one is alive anymore who can remember the time Amaterasu, the great sun goddess, took herself into the cave of heaven and refused to come out. But to those who know the story, every mirror on earth is a reminder of that time and of the glorious moment she stepped again into the open sky, sending her surge of strength and will again through all of life.

In those beginning times, the spirit of every living thing was called its kami. The kami of the mountain was lavender and long. The kami of the trees was great and green. Animals had kami, fish and flowers had kami. The kami of the rocks and rivers were silent and calm. All the strength of these kami poured forth from the great mother sun, Amaterasu; she was a vision of bright beauty and strength. Her black hair hung down, bound with strands of five hundred sparkling jewels. This is as it was in the earliest days, and how it is today.



Amaterasu's brother, Susanowo, ruled the ocean. But he was jealous of the greater power of his sister. Because she knew of his ill feeling, she was suspicious when one day he sent word that he was coming to visit. But Susanowo came bearing gifts and speaking of trust and loyalty. Amaterasu and Susanowo ate together, and after the meal had been cleared away, Amaterasu bowed to her brother.

"How glad I am you've come in friendship," she said, her eyes shining. "I was worried you'd come in anger and in bitterness." Susanowo bowed in return. "Amaterasu," he said. "Let us forget the past. I have nothing but respect and admiration for you." Late into the night they talked of their love for each other, their plans for the future, and the joy of their renewed relationship. Finally Amaterasu bid her brother farewell and went to the Celestial Weaving House to work with her women in the weaving of sacred tapestries and celestial garments for all the divine realm.

Between the Worlds

Camp Story

Camp Story

Susanowo sat alone at the huge table, sipping sake and growing increasingly angry as he surveyed the beauty of his sister's palace. The memory of Amaterasu's graciousness grew ugly in his mind. The liquor he drank slowly heated his resolve to show his sister who was really more powerful. Indulging his violent rage, Susanowo destroyed the rice fields, and brought chaos to wherever he passed. Finally, in an attempt to gain his sister's attention, Susanowo broke through the wall of the room where the Sun Goddess was tending to the weaving of garments for all the gods and goddesses. Amaterasu and the divine maidens that were working with her were terrified. Amaterasu rose to her full height to protect the maidens from the violence of her brother.

"Susanowo!" Amaterasu's voice was like a light that suddenly fills a dark room, but deep within her heart ached with sadness. "Susanowo, where are the words of last night? You wrong me. But I ask only that you sleep. Leave off, brother. Sleep." Instead, Susanowo went to the palace where his sister lived and desecrated her private temple. For Amaterasu, this final act was more than she could endure. Ashamed by her brother's violent actions, and deeply wounded by the hurt he had directed at her personally, the Sun Goddess sought to retreat from the world of the gods. She went to her cave, the Heavenly Rock Dwelling, and shut herself tightly inside it. When she did, her radiance was withheld from the world, and all the lands became dark. The kami of the rice withered. The kami of birds and animals, mountains and trees turned to gray ghosts. Life without Amaterasu was impossible.



The eight hundred deities called a great council at the River of Heaven. How could they restore their precious Amaterasu, how could they convince her to return to her shining work? "We must moan and grieve outside her cave. We must shout to her of our dead," said some of the deities. "No," said the Dread Celestial Woman, Amanouzume, "We must remind her of the joy she brings. We must dance for her."



And so it was that the dance of mirrors was planned. All of the ghostly kami of the world gathered up what little strength they had left and brought together pieces of shiny mirror. Together they crafted a great mirror of polished iron. They wove a strand of five hundred jewels like the ones that the goddess wore in her hair. They hung the mirror, a symbol of the radiance of Amaterasu, along with the strand of jewels and many offerings on a sacred tree outside the cave. Finally, they joined together in song to try and coax Amaterasu from the Heavenly Rock Dwelling. The kami began to take strength from each other, a dance bloomed, and deep inside

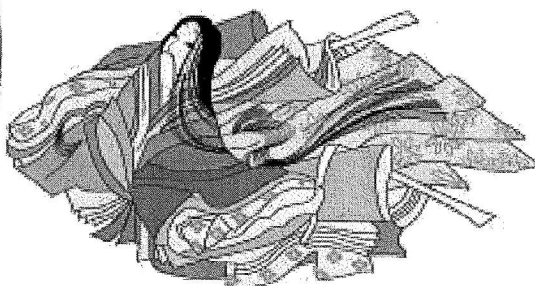
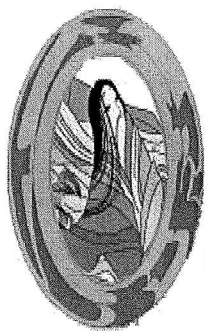
Between the Worlds

Camp Story

the cave of heaven Amaterasu heard the voices of the world joined together in song.

It seems that it was inspiration, rather than well-made plans, however that finally lured the Sun Goddess from her cave. As the dance and song continued, Amanouzume, Goddess of the Heavens — the Night Sky and Stars, began to dance to the great delight of the gathered company, and encouraged by her antics, the other gods and goddesses began to laugh.

From within her cave, Amaterasu heard the sounds of those gathered outside. She had heard their songs of praise, and understood the loss her absence would be for the world, but still she had no intention of leaving her cave. When the sounds outside turned to those of laughter, she became puzzled. She opened the entrance to the cave just a little, and a slit of her brilliant light lit up the night. When the kami



felt the surge of life they had longed for, the dance became jubilant. Amaterasu opened up her hiding place and emerged from the darkness. When she did, the mirrors of all the kami reflected back to Amaterasu her own stunning beauty so that the Sun Goddess was met with her own reflection. Fascinated with the bright vision of her own beauty, the goddess came forth from the Heavenly Rock Dwelling. As

she did, Amanouzume pulled her forward, while other deities blocked the cave entrance. The Sun Goddess was welcomed back amongst the gods and goddesses.

Once again the kami of the mountain grew lavender and long. The kami of the trees soared once again great and green. The animals and the flowers, and the fish and the rivers, and the rocks swelled alive. On that day Her brother, Susanowo, became the god of the underworld, and as the God of Darkness, he was well suited to his mission. Amaterasu resumed her place in the heavens, and continues to shine her light upon the world of the gods, and the world of the mortals. On that day the strength of all kami poured forth from the great Amaterasu, and in her honor was woven the great pattern of the seasons and of the planting and the harvesting. And so it is to this very day.



6 -Adapted from sources by Carolyn McVickar Edwards and Gwydion O'Hara.

Camp Paths

Camp Paths

Each morning from 9:30 to noon you will be at work (and play) in Path. Consider your choice and your personal work carefully. You will be in the same path all week.



The Elements Path (Facilitated by Gretchen and Ray)

Mysteries and the Muse: Music, Dance, and the Arts (Facilitated by Willow and Crow)

Art as Divine Embodiment: The Temple of Artistry (Facilitated by Sylvan and Aerianna)

Living Divinity: Co-Created by the Prismic Broadz of Chaos
(Facilitated by Bunny Slayer and Molly Rae)

Oracle Theatre (Facilitated by Medusa, Georgia, and Amy Moondragon)

Sacred Sex (Facilitated by Donald, Dawn, and Rebecca)

The Elements Path

Facilitated by Gretchen and Ray

Air



It's elemental! With the art of magic, we deepen our vision and focus our will, empowering ourselves to act in the world. In this path, we develop the practice of Magic, Witchcraft, and Goddess spirituality by working with the Elements of Magic: Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit!

Water



Witchcamp newcomers are welcomed with this path focusing on some of the basic and most important skills of magic and ritual, such as creating magical space, spellcraft, chanting, trance, energy work and developing rituals in an experiential format. We'll work and play with the five Elements and their associations, expanding to integrate spirituality into our every day lives. Build trust in your body's wisdom with movement, sound, energy, intuition, attention and shifting consciousness. Lay the foundations of deep spiritual connections. Open your heart to the wonder and healing of your own beauty, authority and power. Welcome your Self home, accepting and acknowledging ourselves in all of our glorious, wild, shadowy parts so that we can create the magic that transforms all worlds. Worlds full of desire, beauty, love and grace surround us, but cultures of domination and control can keep them invisible.

Fire



Prerequisite is reading at least the first six chapters of the *The Spiral Dance* or the *Elements Path* in *The Twelve Wild Swans*. Bring your personal symbols of the five Elements, as well as flowers, plants, art, scarves/fabric, instruments, etc. for the altars we will build for each Element during the week. You'll also want a journal, art materials, beads and jewelry-making supplies, a water bottle, snacks and a comfy chair. This is considered the first of the Reclaiming tradition core classes.

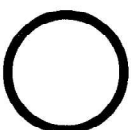
Earth



Elements of Magic Facilitators

Gretchen is a mystic Granny Reclaiming WitchCamp teacher who has served a wide community as Wise Woman, healer and teacher/mentor for over 15 years. Her passion is building community and being with children. Her spiritual practice is centered in compassionate self care and the discipline of her body's needs. She is a dedicated Priestess in the ever present Temple of Order, Beauty and Comfort, and a Witch of Health. She creates her North Carolina country home daily with her beloved partner, Dave.

Spirit



Ray was born in Chicago but currently hails from Charlotte, North Carolina. He has been drawn to witchcraft and the occult as long as he can remember and has been involved with Reclaiming for four years. He has a great fondness for the Crowley and Cosmic Tribe Tarots and a keen interest in the Western mystery traditions. He enjoys writing poetry, late night circles in his backyard beneath the dark and full moons and magickal work with the Dark Faery, to whom he is a dedicant. He has been seriously involved as a student of the Anderson Feri tradition for the last year.

Mysteries and the Muse: Music, Dance, and the Arts

Facilitated by Willow and Crow

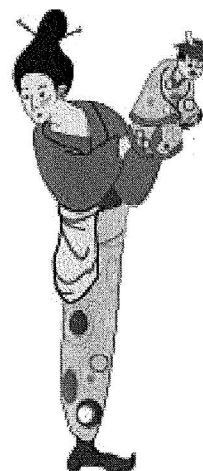
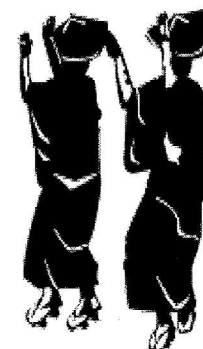
We will be celebrating the ecstatic energies of music and dance as we allow them to take us deeper into ourselves and heighten our awareness of group energy. We will sing, dance and make music as tools of self-discovery, group awareness and direct experiences of Divinity. We will push our edges, step out in new ways of service, and fall into new levels of devotion. We will practice improvisation as a skill for supporting group rituals. We will sense group energy and find the music of the moment. This is a path for people experienced in music and movement devotion as well as those that are just beginning to explore their power. Bring whatever instruments you feel could contribute to group energy (nothing too loud, please), especially your voice, and get ready for the ecstasy of the Muse.

Let us allow the Muse to show us our shining selves, what holds us back from giving our gifts of expression, and how to live a life of ecstatic worship. We will dare to call our artistic selves out of the cave and share our beauty with our community.

Mysteries and the Muse Facilitators

WILLOW says, "I am a lover of the Fae, a seeker of my shadow, a musician, priestess and student of Life. I am wildly in love with the natural World, especially here in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. I am passionate about co-creating community, magic, art and music. My personal practice embodies many tools of self-discovery, expression and devotion that help me to know and understand myself, those around me, and the intricate cosmic dance we are all moving to. I am so looking forward to coming back to SpiralHeart this year and continuing the work we do together. (Oh yeah... I have been teaching magic and drumming, as well as facilitating rituals and drum circles for over a decade.)"

CROW has been practicing music magic since his teenage years, and to this day he's all about moving energy with music and teaching others to do the same. He's especially passionate about playing music in sacred space. For the past 10 years he's been actively providing music and leadership for his local Dances of Universal Peace community. He's been attending Reclaiming WitchCamps for the past five years and loves enhancing ritual with music and inciting playful participation. Crow is a member of several local and national bands and has performed and recorded with many well-known artists including John McCutcheon, Robin and Linda Williams, and Tom Paxton. Along with playing music professionally, he's a full time faculty member at his local community college teaching the mysteries of mathematics. Crow lives in central Virginia with his partner Willow and several other wonderfully loving bears.



Mysteries and the Muse: Music, Dance, and the Arts

Art as Divine Embodiment: The Temple of Artistry

Facilitated by Sylvan and Aerianna



From the earliest days of our humankind the Artist has been a living channel between the worlds. From the time our ancient ancestors painted upon the cave walls and formed goddess figures from the red earth we artists have been sharing, listening to, and expressing the voices of the Universe. We will be exploring the Artist, and the creation of Art, as vessels for communication with deity, and other forms of spirit collaboration. In this path we will be focusing our artistic processes with the tools of Aspecting, Deep Trance techniques, Ancestor and Oracle work. We will collaborate not only with our fellow artists, but the

beings of other realms, as well as honoring and remembering our Artist Ancestors. In co-creating this Temple of Artistry, each day will hold a balance of collaborative and individual work. Poets, writers, painters and sculptors, installation and performance artists, mask makers, and altar builders will all be needed to craft this sacred space. We will be consciously weaving the threads of words and symbols, blending the visual, written, and performing arts while deepening our relationships with Mystery. Participants should bring their own artistic projects and ideas, art supplies (both for their own use and to share,) and choose an Artist Ancestor to work with during the week. For instance: Lorca, Njinsky, Tolkien, Josephine Baker, Sappho, Leonardo DaVinci, Virginia Woolf, Frida Kahlo, Victor Anderson, Zora Neale Hurston, are all included amongst our Artist Ancestors. In our lives and in our acts of creation and artistry, we honor you, and are inspired. The naming of oneself Artist is a powerful act; similar to the first time you called yourself, Witch. Let us dare to embrace our shadows and fears surrounding our artistry, and join together to strengthen and celebrate our magical, artistic lives! You need not be a "professional" artist to be a part of this gathered group, just bring your crayons, your journals, and your childhood joy of creation! This is a time and a space for deepening your own commitment to creation in your own life, and for sharing your unique vision and talents in a collaborative, artistic community. Please e-mail Sylvan (sylvanMask@aol.com) with questions.

Art as Divine Embodiment Facilitators

Sylvan is a sober, queer Witch, and a sacred artist. Though he is the first of the Witches in his family, his parents are now pagan, too! Originally of the Welsh Tradition with strong Feri roots, he is an organizer and Reclaiming teacher from the SpiralHeart community. He has taught at Witch Camps in Texas and California, and mask and ritual workshops throughout the country. Sylvan is thrilled and honored to be teaching at his home camp this year! He is deeply interested in the magical work of divine embodiment, collaborative art as an expression of prophecy and mysticism; he is committed to listening to the spirits of the land and exploring other forms of spirit contact. Sylvan is passionate in his exploration of Myth and Story, and he enjoys sharing mask-making as a tool for ecstatic ritual.

L. Aerianna Tayerle says, "I most often describe myself as a Shamanic Artist, and a bit of a hermit. My magic is shamanic and prophetic. I am a full time artist- my art is my magic and much of my magic is art. Art for me is about embodying the divine. It is my portal key to other realms and my means of recording prophetic vision. I teach magical and mundane workshops designed to help others seek and define the Creative Divine within them; to integrate creative techniques into their magical and practical lives and work through creative and artistic blocks. I also work extensively with past artists as ancestral allies/guides. Areas of special interest include, making shrines and altars, creating art from found objects, and sacred drama."

Living Divinity: Co-Created by the Prismic Broadz of Chaos

Facilitated by Bunny Slayer and Molly Rae

We will work to build emerging cultures with a zest for community! Broaden definitions of community to be inclusive with nature, people and the mysteries! The gods are changing, and so are we. What does that signify within our lives? Looking through the lens of gender fluidity, we will explore gender barriers, gender definition, and connection with mystery in genderless form. In recognizing our living divinity, we take the next step towards co-creating the communities beyond the boundaries of SpiralHeart.

Bring the tools of your own creativity. Fab costumes! Dancing feet! Instruments! Beads! Paints! Dare to work with uncontrolled vitality! Before arriving at camp, we ask that you bring a biography (in whatever expressive form you choose) of your passionate works. This path will not sit at the kiddy table. Be aware! We are cone-of-power size queens!

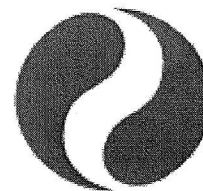
Living Divinity Facilitators

BunnySlayer is a young witch in love with life. Some of the labels that she goes by includes lesbian, witch, anarchist, activist, artist and animal lover. BunnySlayer is an active college student in her mundane life. She resides in the North Carolina Charlotte area and loves the land that she has come to call home. Spike is the name of the boxer/bull mix who has adopted her to teach her the joys of living the furry philosophy. In her role as a witch she is involved and interested in simples, deep dreaming, animal communication, journal work, sacred art, and creating the new myths of her time. She is 1/6th of a fine circle of witches intent on healing themselves and the world. As an activist she is involved in beginning to form a Gay/Straight Student Alliance at her community college, volunteers her time for animal causes, and speaks out daily on the injustices that she witnesses. BunnySlayer has been practicing the art of witchcraft for seven years and was brought into the Reclaiming tradition five years ago. This will be her 4th WitchCamp and her first Camp teaching experience. She is very excited to be stepping into this part of the community and is already learning from the experience.

Molly Rae says, "At 11 years I realized the cyclical nature of the Earth and knew that I myself was not separate from that awesome force. When I was 17 years old I crawled through some priestess's legs and was born to the Goddess, and have been hanging out with her ever since. I am the first generation to be born into the Glitter Whore tradition, but am unafraid to wear clunky black shoes and have smelly arm pits. I am Capricorn and feel strongly rooted into the rich black soil of my native Indiana lands. I am an active member of the Bloomington community which nourishes me. My magic is the daily kind, waking with wide eyes, constant thankful prayers and conversing with strangers on the sidewalk about our new cultures of Beauty, Balance, and Delight. My passions are gardening, beer brewing, and the weekly attendance of rock and roll shows. I look forward to attending my third camp this year and co-creating not only new myths, not only changing the world, but co-creating a deeper way to live."



Kanji meaning 'Dream'



Camp Life

If You're a New Camper

We hope you'll enjoy your first time with us. We will spend a week in a safe, sacred space, where we can discover and display our authentic selves to the delight of all. There will be a newcomers' meeting to answer any questions you may have and generally help you feel more comfortable. If you still have questions, feel free to snag an organizer and fire away. The camp bulletin board (aka the "Grid") is in the dining hall and has more up-to-date information as well.

If You're a Returning Camper

Welcome back! We're delighted to enter the eleventh year of this camp.

Camp is simply unmatched for hospitality and natural beauty. We're sure you'll feel right at home.



If You're Looking for Community

In addition to being proud of our program, we're also proud to be part of a much larger community. There are, in fact, eleven Intensives being conducted in North America and Europe by members and associates of the Reclaiming Community. The unofficial name for these Intensives is "WitchCamp," a term that reflects the affection, warmth, solidarity and camaraderie past participants have felt after their "week between the worlds."

If You Want to Reach Someone

Shortly after Camp, we'll be sending out the Campers' Contact List. Your fellow campers have voluntarily signed up to stay in touch and expand our community's network. Check it out - and see just how many neighbors and spirit mates you have!

The Surroundings

Nestled in the mountains of northeastern West Virginia, [REDACTED] offers a beautiful, spacious, open-sided pavilion that's ideal for large rituals in any weather. In addition, there's a large freshwater pond with a sandy beach for swimming and sunning, a wood-fired sauna, spacious grassy areas for open-air ritual, beautiful wooded areas with walking paths and breathtaking scenery.

The Schedule

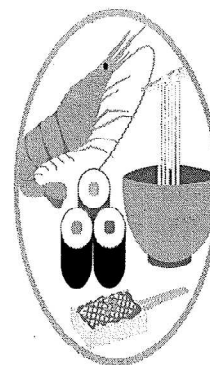
A "typical" day at Witch Camp begins with breakfast from 8 to 9 am, followed by Path work from 9:30 to noon. Lunch is served from 12:30 to 1:30 pm, and Affinity Groups meet from 2 to 3. (An Affinity Group is a small group that creates a safe place for expressing feelings that come up in Path, Ritual or Camp.)

Mid-afternoon (3 to 5 pm) is reserved for personal down time or Optional Offerings, which generally are single-focus, one-time classes offered by teachers and/or campers. These usually run from 3:30 to 5 pm. Twelve-step meetings are offered from 5 to 6 pm, with supper being served from 6 to 7. On most evenings, an all-Camp ritual will start at roughly 8:30 pm, sometimes preceded at 8 by a short camp meeting. Snacks are available in the Dining Hall after the ritual and throughout the day.

What You'll Eat

All meals and snacks are included as part of your camp fee. Roughly half of our campers are vegetarians or vegans. Camp cooking staff provide a healthy, balanced diet with a variety of vegetables and grains. They are able to meet most special dietary needs. In addition, meat-based dishes will be available for the omnivores among us. A reminder: given that we'll be camping in rural West Virginia, the type and number of foods available locally may be different than that which you have in your mundane world. You might want to bring your own seaweed or organic truffles. Please feel free to bring any foods that don't require refrigeration and can be sealed against insects.

(NOTE: while some refrigerator space is available, it's limited. Bring minimal amounts of perishables. Mark your refrigerator items well. This will help prevent confusion on those bleary-eyed mornings.)



Camp Supplies and Maintenance

Each cabin will be provided with toilet paper, brooms (non-magical), and cleaning supplies. You'll be expected to leave your cabin neat and tidy at the end of your stay (broom clean, bathrooms disinfected and trash bins emptied). For safety reasons, all cabins are designated non-smoking. Burning candles inside them is also prohibited. Outdoor smoking areas will be designated for those who want them.

Taking Care of Yourself

(If you don't do it, who will?)

Reaching Out to Each Other - for New & Experienced Campers Alike

If you're new, or alone, camp can sometimes feel overwhelming. Here are some ideas on how to connect.

At mealtimes, take the initiative to ask the person next to you for their name. Introduce yourself, find out where they're from, and what brings them to camp. Ask if you can join an ongoing conversation - you might get a "no" if it's private, but generally if it's at mealtime, or a large group conversation, it's probably not. Look for the "special interest" tables at mealtime — there will be chances to discuss the evening rituals or specific topics. Let someone know if you're new, scared, overwhelmed, or have questions... more than likely, every person at camp will have felt the same way at one time or another, and can listen and relate. If you're having a hard time, and need to talk to someone, ask a teacher or organizer for suggestions. If they don't have the time to sit and listen, they will probably know of someone who's experienced the same thing you're going through, and will introduce you. Take advantage of the new camper orientation. Check out the afternoon 'optional offerings' that sound intriguing - they are usually much smaller than the morning paths, and will attract people of like mind.

If you're an experienced camper, not alone, and/or already have a group of familiar friends you hang out with at camp, be open to widening your acquaintances. If you see someone new, or someone looking scared, overwhelmed, or pensive, introduce yourself. Ask if they'd like to join your conversation. See if they'd like to get involved in a project that you're working on. Find out where their interests lie... if you don't feel that you can offer them anything of interest, introduce them to other people who might!

Sexual Energy and Your Camp Experience

You will most likely find that camp can have a highly charged sexual atmosphere. We in the Craft affirm the erotic as sacred. Flirting, jokes, nudity, erotic touch, naked Red Rover and other forms of experimentation that push the edges of sensuality and sexuality are common at camp. Do not be surprised if you experience sensations and feelings that may be new to you, or more intense than usual. As you become more comfortable, your inhibitions may fall away, and it can feel like the energy that you feel is resulting in action when it may just be an energetic charge moving through you and others. In spite of appearances, however, not everyone is having sex!

Sexual activity at camp is 'extra curricular,' and is not promoted nor prohibited. You are encouraged to think about where your comfort zone is and set boundaries accordingly. During camp, check in with yourself often, and please clearly express your boundaries to those around you, and respect the expressed boundaries of others in turn.

You are an adult, and we expect that you will treat sexual activity at camp with the same level of adult consideration that you would anywhere else. The combination of having your heart open, pushing edges in community and the sexual energy swirling around can lead to that 'swept away feeling.' If you make the choice to take a lover, please practice safe sex.

20 Remember that there are many places to check in with others about what you are experiencing - with facilitators, your affinity/check-in group or any of the camp organizers.

Taking Care of Yourself

(If you don't do it, who will?)

Taking Care of Yourself

If You Need Time for Yourself, Take It!

Whether you're naturally an introvert or an extrovert, the continuous social activity of Witch Camp can drain anyone! So if you're feeling a bit frazzled, take time for yourself - even if it means skipping a class or a ritual. As a safety measure, please let someone know what you're doing, and where you'll be.

Ground that Excess Energy!

Feeling nervous, wired or spacey after an intense ritual? It could be all the left-over energy you drew up during the event itself. Try placing your hands or forehead on the earth and imagine the energy draining back into the soil. If that isn't calming enough, have a snack of protein-rich 'grounding' foods like nut-butter sandwiches, cheese or a hard-boiled egg. These foods will be available throughout the day, each day, and a variety of snacks will be available in the dining hall after each evening ritual. Still spaced out? Take a nice, long shower, rinsing the energy back to the earth, or ask for an aura 'brush down.'

Help Keep Mealtimes for Meals.

Rather than making an announcement during meals, give your information to the Camp Operations Person or place it on the dining hall bulletin board. Your fellow diners will thank you for it!

Want a Fire?

If you'd like a fire for your specific circle or gathering, please see the Camp Operations Organizer for the necessary arrangements.

Swim with a Buddy

For safety's sake (and companionship!), always have somebody with you when swimming in the lake. Use of the Buffalo Gap Camp slide, while fun, is at your own risk.

Support Our Store and Vendors

Remember, a percentage of the proceeds from all our vendors go into the SpiralHeart treasury. If you think you might be interested in vending, either this year or next, contact vending@spiralheart.org for more info.

Lost and Found?

It's located at the Camp store in the Dining Hall. Check for your missing items there.

Share Your Talents!

If you'd like to present an Optional Offering, find an open slot in the afternoon schedule and write it up on the community bulletin board in the Dining Hall.

Got suggestions?

Please take a moment to complete a survey sheet and drop it off at the Camp Store. The Teachers and Organizers sincerely solicit and appreciate your feedback.

Preparing for the Journey



You'll have a lot more fun if you plan and pack carefully. Knowing you have everything you need will help clear your mind for the week's spiritual work. Being prepared will let you stay in camp for the entire week, preserving our unbroken sacred circle. Here's a list of things to keep in mind as you pack, with some specifics for tenting, dorm-style rooming in a cabin, and private rooming.

Camp Theme Related Items

In honor of Amaterasu, bring hand mirrors, costume jewelry, Japanese art, clothing and other appropriate items.

Sleeping, Eating, and Self-Care Necessities

Bring a reusable mug or cup. Bring your own sleeping bags, blankets, sheets, pillows, pillowcases and comforters for use on the single beds provided by the camp. If you signed up for a private room, you may have a full or queen-size bed; bring the larger sheets just in case. Also, bring your own towels and washcloths, toiletries, soap, sunscreen, menstrual supplies, bug repellents, hangers and hair dryers (for wet clothing as well as wet hair). A portable or box fan is highly recommended for those in cabins or private rooms, as well as an extension cord - there aren't many electrical outlets in the rooms.

Other Tips Offered by Experienced Campers

- ☐ A bedside rug (or towel on the floor) is nice to wipe off your feet before slipping between the covers. Also, a bath mat on the floor for stepping on when you get out of the shower keeps your feet clean until you can get them dry.
- ☐ A battery-operated or wind-up clock with alarm is good to help wake up in time for breakfast.
- ☒ A small thick blanket (cotton or wool "Mexican"-style blankets work well) is good for lying down for guided trance, for extra warmth on your bed, or folded up and used as a meditation cushion.
- ☐ Bring emotional comfort items. It could be a snuggly blanket, a stuffed animal, or a favorite photo. Bring a stash of your favorite tea or coffee.
- ☒ Junk food cravings hit about mid-week; bring some of your favorites, and a bug-proof bag or container to keep them in.
- ☐ "Sports drink" mixing powders for water are good to have when you're sweating alot. Bring a portable drinking container, and drink plenty of fluids (especially if it is hot)!
- ☒ Bring a pre-paid calling card. You can get them at local convenience stores. There's only one payphone at camp, and change is not always available.

Preparing for the Journey

☐ If you smoke, bring a metal tin (like a bandage box, or mints box) for cigarette butts.

☐ If you are sharing a cabin or have booked a private room: A length of clothesline & some clothespins are helpful, in case you need to hang clothes to dry - you can also use it to hang lengths of fabric for "curtains" against your window. A small reading lamp (remember that extension cord!) is good, since dorm rooms have only one overhead light. A mattress pad keeps that clammy feeling from the plastic-covered mattresses from being so intense. You can bring things in a few crates or boxes that can serve as tables or altars. Try inexpensive plastic storage boxes sold at your home improvement store.

☐ If tenting: the walk to the bathrooms in the middle of the night can feel daunting. Bring an empty coffee can with lid, and small plastic baggie for toilet paper for elimination needs. Empty both out the next morning in a nearby toilet. Be prepared for at least one good rainstorm. Bring plastic ground cover for your tent to rest upon, and if your tent doesn't already have one, a rain tarp for over the tent.

☐ Bring a soft ski cap to wear while sleeping during cold evenings to help the body retain heat.

☒ A bandanna or cheesecloth to hang down the back of your hat/neck helps keep bugs away.

☐ Bring a couple of 30-gallon trash bags - cut out arm/neck holes for instant rain poncho; use later for dirty clothes, or for sitting on wet ground.

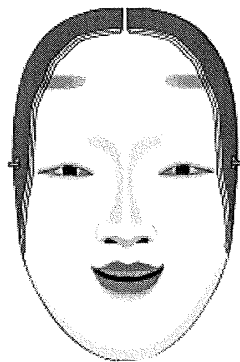
Practical Clothing

Bring summer clothes for daytime and warmer clothes for evening. Bring layers, such as tights, leggings, thermal underwear, and t-shirts. Bring sweats, socks, and jackets for rain & cold, a poncho, a bathing suit (optional), sandals, a sun hat, and sturdy waterproof shoes or boots. Hiking boots and rugged athletic sandals are recommended choices for the hilly terrain and gravel pathways.

If it sounds like we're advising you to be ready for anything - we are. The weather at previous Witch Camps has run the gamut from blazing hot (90's & up) to cold and rainy (60's & below), sometimes within the space of one week!



Camp Auctions

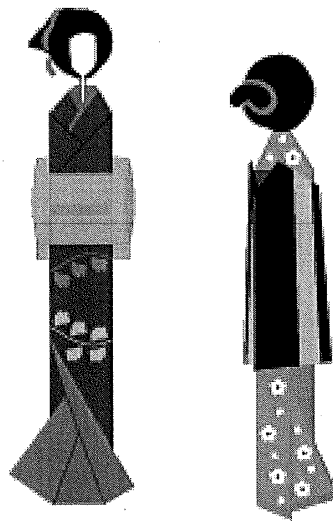
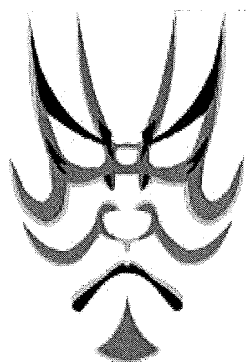


Camp Auction

This year there will be a silent auction as well as a live auction during the day of the Morning of Repose. While people are bidding on items in the live auction, they can also be walking around the same space and bid on items in the silent auction. Please consider donating items to both the silent and live auctions. All money raised goes to the "Send a Witch to Camp" scholarship fund.

Scholarships Are Available

Don't let lack of funds keep you away from Camp in the future. If you need financial aid, apply for a scholarship for next year. All scholarships are determined on a need basis and cover up to 50% of the basic Camp fee. How much you decide to ask for is up to you. Understand that the less money you require, the more we'll have left for other campers.



Camp Marketplace

Camp Marketplace

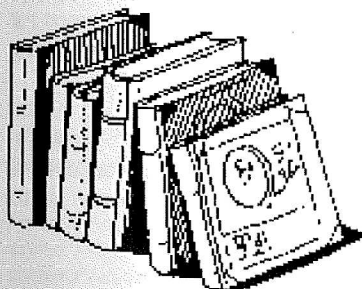
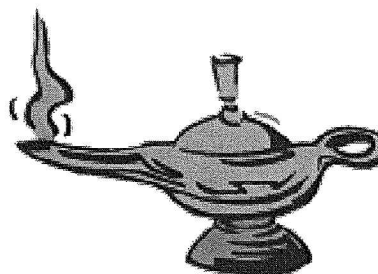
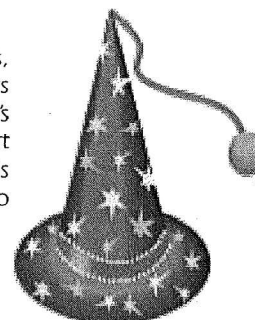
Camp Marketplace

Witch Camp has a really fun, hands-on Marketplace featuring magical supplies, statues, jewelry, books, clothing, tapes and CD's. Each year is different as vendors change. There are always some great "finds" here. In addition, the Marketplace's "Magical Flea Market Table" will offer a variety of donated items for sale in support of SpiralHeart and its various workings. We welcome your donations for this table. Please bring any items you're ready to pass along when you come to camp.

We'd really like to see:

- ☐ Books - preferably on spiritual subjects, but other topics are OK, too.
- ☐ Ritual items - including candleholders, masks, artwork, talismans, pendants, stones and other related items.
- ☐ Clothing - particularly items that would be appropriate for rituals and celebrations. They should be clean and supplied on hangers.

On clothing or ritual items, we need you to suggest an estimated value; this will help us set pricing. 100% of all sales from the table go into the SpiralHeart General Fund.



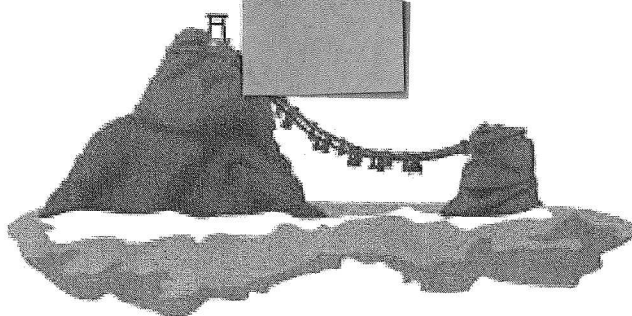
Organizer List

Camp Operations

Media Cell

Anchor Cell

Other Organizers



Meotoiwa Rocks symbolizing unions,
joint endeavors, coming together,
and weddings.

We Want You! Volunteer for SpiralHeart!

SpiralHeart relies on volunteers to organize all of the many activities that you enjoy throughout the year. We invite you to join us in building our community by being a part of the planning and organizing.

- ☐ Classes
- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Rituals
- ☐ Witch Camp
- ☐ Public Relations
- ☐ Fund Raising

Every event or activity helps bring Reclaiming Witchcraft to a wider audience, so please consider getting involved with the year-round work that is SpiralHeart. No contribution is too small and you can make a difference with as little as one hour a month.

Send email to info@spiralheart.org for more information, or sign up during camp at the sign up sheet under the 'grid' in the dining hall.

Witchcamp Checklist

Witchcamp Checklist

- ☐ Electric Fan, alarm clock, extension cord, reading lamp, light bulb
- ☐ Bedding (for single bed in cabins, full in the private rooms) sheets, pillows, pillowcases, blankets, sleeping bags, bedside rug, mattress pad
- ☐ Sundries and bath supplies - soap, shampoo, conditioner, towels, washcloths, bath mat, menstrual supplies, hangers, hair dryers
- ☐ Trash bags, cleaning solutions, sponges, paper towels
- ☐ Ritual items
 - o Water from your special place
 - o Musical instruments
 - ☒ Clothing
 - ☒ Tools (Handmirrors for Amaterasul)
- ☐ Warm and Cold weather clothing
 - o Headgear (sun hat, ski cap)
 - o Bandanas, scarves
 - o Shirts, sweaters, t-shirts, sweats
 - o Long and short pants
 - o Socks, tights, thermal underwear
 - o Sandals, sneakers, boots
 - o Jacket, poncho, rain gear
- ☐ Writing/Art Supplies
 - o Pens, Pencils
 - o Notebooks, loose paper
 - o Watercolors, crayons, paints and brushes
 - o Fabric, yarn, needle and thread, pushpins
 - o Laptop, speakers, printer, cartridges
- ☒ Pre-paid calling card
- ☒ Reusable mug or cup, Sports drink
- ☒ Sunscreen, bug-repellent
- ☒ Junk food and bug-proof bag or container to keep it in.
- ☐ Emotional comfort items
 - o Snuggly blanket, stuffed animal, favorite photo
 - o Favorite tea or coffee
 - o Smoking supplies (metal tin for butts)
- ☐ Small thick blanket (good for lying down for guided trance)
- ☐ Clothesline & some clothespins
- ☐ Plastic storage boxes
- ☐ Optional offering description
- ☐ Tenters
 - o Coffee can with lid, and small plastic baggie for toilet paper
 - o Protective plastic ground cover and/or rain tarp

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound to mine, let us work together.

-Lilla Watson

Quest for Amaterasu's Sacred Title

Puzzles to Learn More about Amaterasu and Meet Others Who Solved Them

An Amaterasu Haiku: Amaterasu; Golden Goddess in the Sky; Still, we search for you...

You Will Know Each Other With This Password

Her other sacred name is spoken here; Its name, a code you say when drawing near
A tree with roots in Heav'n, your map shall be; Tween force and form the lightning strikes a Z
Each orb and pillar helps you find the one; Look to the mystics of old Solomon
On solid Earth, we reach toward the Crown; The path where down is up, and up is down
B3-2; J2-4; Z2-1 J1-1; B2 6; Z3-2; Z5-1; B2-4 _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ _

Her Sacred Title In Japanese

To find each letter, you must wait to ride the deck and search within. Remember that Japanese is read downward from right to left. _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

1. Number of leaves on the first staff. 7, 7, 3
2. Number of sides on the shape on the temperate angel's chest. 11, 4, 8
3. Number of swords that accompany the bound woman. 5, 12, 8
4. Number of flames on the tree behind the loving man. 7, 3, 3
5. Number of yellow flames on the first sword. 8, 5, 6
6. Number of pentacles surrounding the wealthy woman and her bird. 11, 12, 4
7. Number of stars that accompany the Star. 5, 8, 1 8. Number of rays of the Sun. 13, 6, 1
9. Number of twigs growing on the flying staffs. 11, 8, 3
10. The first cup has a letter. Flip it upside down. 11. Number of Judgement Day. 6, 4, 3
12. Death's unlucky number. 9, 6, 4 13. Number of birds with the Page of Swords. 6, 6, 1
14. Number of letters, times five, of the suit from the King that faces you. 1, 1, 4

Her Sacred Title Translated Into English

Our Twenty-Four Elders have spoken this wisdom: "For under the arcane runes, knowledge given without hesitation naturally imbues judgement. You ponder zodiac systems to better extract meaningful lightni(ng). Discard overabundance." Nothing is as it appears. The wild ox appears as cattle, joy comes in the form of a gift, and the lake has the face of mankind.

XXXXXXXXXX XXXX OGS BSB XTS OXXXXXXXXX DXXX OXXXXXXXXX HXO RXXX

When to Meet

Assemble to mark the anniversary of a day Amaterasu surely must have wept. The orbs will tell you when the day and time have arrived. Amaterasu will call you from the penultimate Heavenly House enthroned on fixed, firey stars. On this day and at this time, She dreams of group consciousness and integration of the human family. Warmly greet each other when Tsuki-Yomi, Izanagi's Right Eye, ends His aimless dance and bullishly enters the fourth prime House. He offers encouraging words of security, abundance, and warm relationships...

Where to Meet

To find the others who have solved this quest, you need only summon Fire's army. Q2-Q4; Qb1-Kk5; K2-K3; Q1-Kr5; Ok1-Qb3; K1-Qb1; K3-K4; Ob3-Q5; Q1-Q3; K4-K5; Kr5-Kr6; Q3-Kb3. Stand in the crossroads.

SpiralHeart

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An Obsidian Rook Production

☐ *YES!* I want to learn more about SpiralHeart and the Reclaiming Tradition of Witchcraft!



Name: _____

Magickal Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

☐ Let me know about SpiralHeart Sponsored workshops and activities in my area.

☐ Send me information about Witch Camp!

☐ Tell me how I can help! Send me information about volunteering with SpiralHeart.

☐ I want to support SpiralHeart and its activities. I have enclosed a tax-deductible contribution of \$_____. (SpiralHeart is tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to SpiralHeart are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law).

☐ I prefer to contact SpiralHeart by Internet: info@spiralheart.org or www.spiralheart.org

Return to:

SpiralHeart, Inc., PO Box 1773, Wheaton, MD 20915-1773

Spiralheart, Inc.
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Wheaton, MD 20915-1773

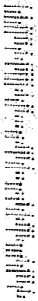


Elizabeth Williamson
22 Harrison Ave
Highland Park, MI
08904



We clasp the hands of those that go before us,
And the hands of those who come after us
We enter the little circle of each other's arms
And the larger circle of lovers,
Whose hands are joined in a dance,
And the larger circle of all creatures,
Passing in and out of life,
Who move also in a dance,
To a music so subtle and vast that no ear hears it,
Except in fragments

-Wendell Berry



Appendix B: Reclaiming Principles of Unity (1997-present) From

<http://www.reclaiming.org/about/directions/unity.html>, accessed May 25, 2012, This statement of core values came out of the hard work done at the Collective Annual Retreat held the weekend of November 8, 1997.

"My law is love unto all beings..."

The Charge of the Goddess

The values of the Reclaiming tradition stem from our understanding that the earth is alive and all of life is sacred and interconnected. We see the Goddess as immanent in the earth's cycles of birth, growth, death, decay and regeneration. Our practice arises from a deep, spiritual commitment to the earth, to healing and to the linking of magic with political action.

Each of us embodies the divine. Our ultimate spiritual authority is within, and we need no other person to interpret the sacred to us. We foster the questioning attitude, and honor intellectual, spiritual and creative freedom.

We are an evolving, dynamic tradition and proudly call ourselves Witches. Honoring both Goddess and God, we work with female and male images of divinity, always remembering that their essence is a mystery which goes beyond form. Our community rituals are participatory and ecstatic, celebrating the cycles of the seasons and our lives, and raising energy for personal, collective and earth healing.

We know that everyone can do the life-changing, world-renewing work of magic, the art of changing consciousness at will. We strive to teach and practice in ways that foster

personal and collective empowerment, to model shared power and to open leadership roles to all. We make decisions by consensus, and balance individual autonomy with social responsibility.

Our tradition honors the wild, and calls for service to the earth and the community. We value peace and practice non-violence, in keeping with the Rede, "Harm none, and do what you will." We work for all forms of justice: environmental, social, political, racial, gender and economic. Our feminism includes a radical analysis of power, seeing all systems of oppression as interrelated, rooted in structures of domination and control.

We welcome all genders, all races, all ages and sexual orientations and all those differences of life situation, background, and ability that increase our diversity. We strive to make our public rituals and events accessible and safe. We try to balance the need to be justly compensated for our labor with our commitment to make our work available to people of all economic levels.

All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred elements of air, fire, water and earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations.

Appendix C: Structure of Reclaiming after the Reclaiming Collective was dissolved in 1997

From <http://www.reclaiming.org/about/collective/retreat.html>, accessed May 25, 2012.

CONSENSUS: We dissolve the group known as the Reclaiming Collective, and in its place we adopt the following structure, which will remain in place for a year and a day before major changes are made to it:

1. Draw a circle. This represents the Wheel, a decision-making body made up of representatives from the cells. Its areas of responsibility include policy-making, allocation of money and resources, approval of new cells, prioritizing, resource development, core values and structural changes, new directions, holding the identity of the group and its "product" name, trouble-shooting; and mentoring of new members. Each cell will have proportional representation - at least one representative on the Wheel, and larger cells will have two. The Wheel will meet at least four times a year, and we suggest one of those meetings be a retreat. Meetings will follow a regular, pre-scheduled rhythm (i.e., the first Tuesday after the cross-quarter date, or the last Sunday of every third month) determined by the Wheel, so that representatives can plan far ahead.
2. Representatives/Spokespersons will be chosen by the cells, according to the following criteria:
 - They must have worked in the cell for at least a year and a day. (An exception would be made in the case of new cells.)
 - They must continue to be actively involved in the work of the cell and attend meetings.
 - They must be committed to attend meetings of the Wheel, missing no more than one out of four, and to finding a prepared substitute representative if they must miss a meeting, and to report back to their cells.

Representatives will rotate on an annual basis, but the terms will be somewhat longer or shorter for the first year or two so that rotations can be staggered and continuity of experience be kept. Two representatives will not rotate: the Financial Officer as one representative of the Administrative Cell, and the Spider (described below.)

1. Inside the circle draw a triangle. This represents the Triad or Triumvirate - three members of the Wheel who are empowered to make ongoing running decisions between meetings, or to refer such decisions to the Wheel. They will each serve for a term of a year, again with staggered rotation.
2. Inside the triangle draw a small dot with eight legs. This represents the Spider, a paid administrative position who will be a central focus of communication. The Spider would keep office hours, would be the keeper of the complete schedule of all meetings, events, etc., and would keep and maintain archives and a database/hard copy manual of policies and decisions made by the Wheel and by cells. The Advisory Council (see below) is charged with working out a clear plan for hiring, supervising and paying the Spider before someone is chosen and empowered to fill this role. Reclaiming will do a formal hiring search, circulating a job description and taking applications, in order to choose the Spider. The Spider will be hired, at least for the first year and a day, as an independent contractor. The Spider's placement in the center of the diagram indicates only her/his connection to lines of communication - not to any extra authority or decision-making power for the group.
3. Around the Wheel, draw thirteen circles. These represent the Cells of Northern California Reclaiming, who do the actual work of our organization. Each cell is autonomous in the area of its work - for example, the Magazine Cell can decide whether ads go in the back or throughout. The Ritual Planning Cell can decide when to schedule rituals. Cells are currently in a process of self-definition, which we continue to support.

CONSENSUS: Cells are empowered to communicate with and work with each other as desired and needed. These lines of communication and relationship are not reflected on the diagram.

Following is the list of cells and the number of representatives each is entitled to on the Wheel:

1. Magazine Cell: 2
2. Ecell: 1
3. Inside (formerly the Prison Project Cell): 1

4. SF Teachers Cell: 1
5. East Bay Teachers Cell: 1
6. North Bay Teachers Cell: 1
7. SF Ritual Planning Cell: 2
8. North Bay Ritual Planning Cell: 1
9. East Bay Ritual Planning Cell: 1
10. Samhain Cell: 1
11. Administration Cell: 2
12. Special Projects Cell (books, tapes, etc.): 1
13. The thirteenth circle is for the Witch Camp Teachers Cell which may or may not exist as such after the upcoming Austin meeting.

Draw a bubble that includes the three Teachers' Cells. They are encouraged to meet together at least once a year in a Teachers' Caucus for the purpose of ongoing training, development of classes and programs, and policy-making.

1. Next, in a different color, draw a circle toward the outside of the circle of cells. This represents the Advisory Council.

CONSENSUS: We now create an Advisory Council which for a year and a day will consist of members of the "current collective" (active and on-leave members of the Reclaiming Collective prior to Sunday, November 9, 1997), each having the right, but not being required to be on it. This Council is charged with defining core values, criteria for its future membership, and deciding how it will work in the suggested areas of ethical accountability, mediation, conflict resolution, theology, ordination, vision, mission, etc. It is also charged with implementation of the new structure and is accountable to the Wheel.

In discussion, our vision of what the Advisory Council will ultimately include Elders, however we will define them, and community members.

1. Outside and to the right of the Administrative Cell, draw several wavy cloud forms. These represent groups or projects that are not formal cells of Northern California Reclaiming, but which use our resources, in particular, our 501C3 number and/or our insurance. We listed:
 - The El Salvador Friendship Fund
 - The Headwaters action.
 - The Day of the Dead.
 - Belili Productions/Marija Gimbutas Film.
 - There was much discussion of how these do and should relate to the Wheel, and we realized a policy is strongly needed.

CONSENSUS: We institute a moratorium on any new extra projects using our 501C3 until the new structure is created with clear policies defined. This is the kind of decision that the Wheel is empowered to work out before the expiration of a year and a day.

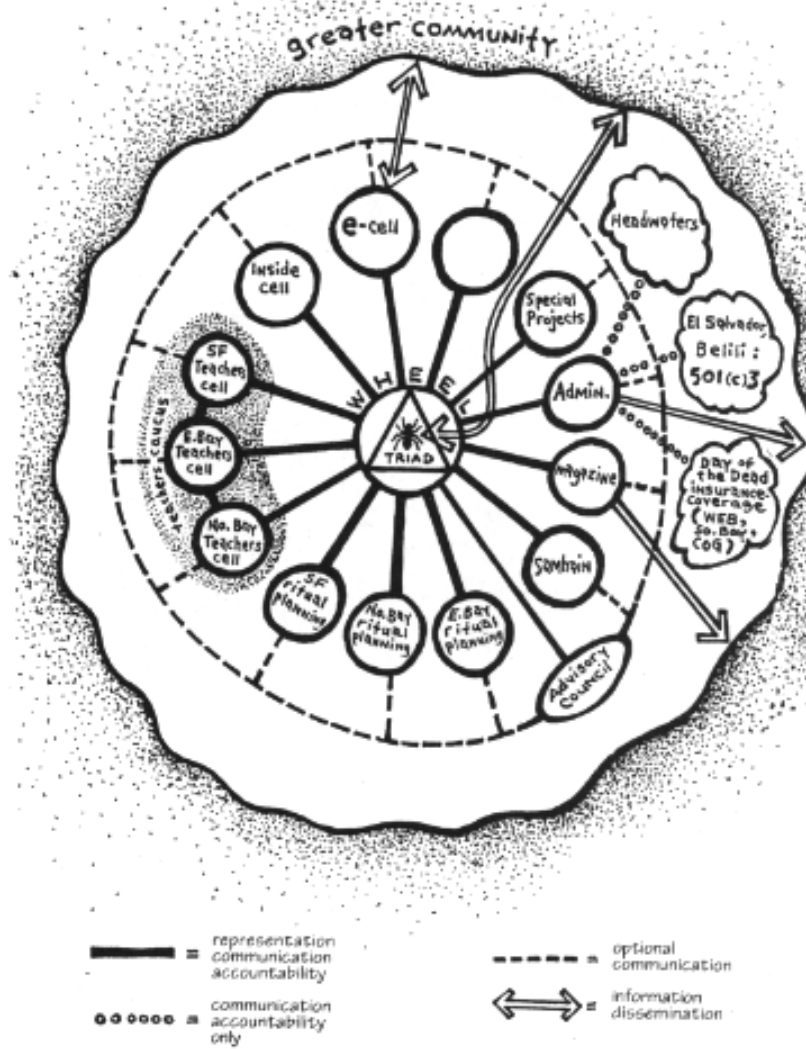
There was also discussion of whether or not some of the political projects should be linked into a Social Action Cell. This is a possibility that can be further explored, but for now, since it does not yet exist, we did not diagram it.

1. Draw a circle around the whole picture. This represents the Greater Community, from which we come and whom we ultimately serve.

LINES OF COMMUNICATION/DECISION-MAKING:

1. Draw lines in a color of your choice from each cell to the Wheel, and from the Advisory Council to the Wheel. These stand for representation and decision-making power. Obviously, representation includes communication and accountability.
 - Draw lines in another color from the cloud forms to the Administrative Cell. This represents expected, mandatory communication and accountability (at least in so far as we are responsible by virtue of the use of our 501C3) but not representation.
 - Draw a dotted line from the Advisory Council around the circle of cells, with a dotted line to each. This represents optional communication - that the Advisory Council is available to Cells for advice, help, history, and mediation. Concerns were expressed that we need guidelines in place for conflict resolution within cells, and that the Advisory Council not become a "court" or a means of interpersonal manipulation.
 - Draw lines of another color from the cells, the Advisory Council, the Wheel, the Greater Community and the clouds to the Spider. Use the same color to draw lines between the Ecell, the Magazine and the Administrative Cells (Events Line) to the Greater Community. These represent information sharing, news of events, scheduling, etc. Our intention is that people need only post information to one place to reach the Magazine, Web Page and Events Line, our three permanent sources of information for the greater community. Currently the Ecell is serving this function - when the Spider is in place that might change or the Spider might continue to delegate this job to the Ecell.

We are aware that we cannot represent all forms of communication in a diagram - and that much communication will always go on among and between all these parts.



new RECLAIMING structure

Acknowledgment of Previous Publications

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