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In this dissertation, I posited the need to understand how an invented community (the Society for Creative Anachronism) constructs symbolic meaning in material objects and value systems. Using ethnographic methods, I focused on the Knights and their regalia as this is the most widely accepted material symbolism. People go to the SCA to find the communitas offered by a fantastical performed history. They create the material culture in order to enhance the atmosphere they seek in their mediated performance of history. This material culture then gains value, as it becomes imbued with the emotional contexts provided by the performance and embodied history. As American culture becomes increasingly fragmented, with place-bound community becoming a thing of the past, it is important to understand how humans adapt. One method of adaptive behavior is the construction of communities around beliefs, hobbies, products, or vocations. The SCA is one such example.

Honored Values and Valued Objects: The Society for Creative Anachronism

by
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

> Here do I swear fealty and service to Gondor, and to the Lord and Steward
> of the realm, to speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, to come and go,
> in need or plenty, in peace or war, in living or dying, from this hour
> henceforth, until my lord release me, or death take me, or the world end.
> So say I, Peregrin, son of Paladin of the Shire of the Halflings. (Tolkien,
> 1955, p. 14)

With these words, Peregrin Took, or "Pippin," of the Shire, swears fealty and
takes service with the Steward of Gondor in a ritual that is rich with symbolic objects and
meaning. Pippin is given livery in the colors of Gondor, blazoned with the emblem of the
King, and instructed on his duties as a Guard of the Citadel. His change in status is
reflected in the clothing and armor he is given by Denethor, Steward of Gondor.
Although there is still an arduous journey to complete, he knows that he is different than
he was before swearing the oath. The change in clothing is an outward manifestation of
the internal change in status and self-awareness. Before, he was Pippin of the Shire, and
afterward, he was Master Peregrin, Guard of the Citadel. As Beregond, a plain man of
arms told Peregrin, "to be only a man of arms of the Guard of the Tower of Gondor is
held worthy in the City, and such men have honour in the land" (Tolkien, 1955, p. 27).

While what is valued speaks volumes about the culture, values and valued objects do not exist in a vacuum. Cultural values emerge organically from within the context of the worldview of a culture. Shared cultural traits create bonds between individuals that, in turn, strengthen cultural cohesion. Belief systems, systems of meanings, symbols, and signs are but a few of the areas of study in traditional anthropology. If we are to make sense of a culture, then we must find a way to make sense of what E. B. Tylor (1871) refers to as "the complex whole" (p. 1). The foods prepared and eaten, the clothing produced and worn, the hierarchy of the family, the music that provides the rhythm of life, the objects that fill the home and provide comfort - all make up the physical manifestation of a culture. The same things that allow communication, such as language and music, also create barriers between individuals and social groups. The increase in social movement leads to shifts in cultural topographies and transformed identities of place (Allon, 2000). Modern society features continuous change and disruption (Jing, 2006).

Americans keenly feel a loss of tradition and of central values. This perceived loss creates nostalgia for "times past," where morality, ethics, and identity were clear and uncontested (Erisman, 1998, pp. 1-2). Joseph Campbell (1988) says that, "The world is different today from what it was fifty years ago. But the inward life of man is exactly the same" (p. 139). Man is inherently a questing agent; he makes "an effort" in response to his environment (Asimov, 1962, p. 2). Individuals who don't find what they need within a culture will often create subcultures that fill whatever niche is needed (Erisman, 1998).

For some, this invented subculture takes the form of living history or historical reenactment. Participation in these intentional communities is a shared experience, creating a distinct culture, complete with a rich material culture. The range of history covered by reenactors is as vast as the human experience, from Paleolithic clans to Mod hipsters. These groups create worlds within, and apart, from the larger culture.

In the United States, culturally based notions of personal honor and chivalry have largely disappeared from everyday conversations. Wachs (2005), states, "the concept of honor has lost its social significance and has been replaced by a concern for dignity" (p. 121). To the modern person, accustomed to a culture of law, the concept of a culture of honor may be quaint and even antiquated. It harkens back to a time when a person's place in a community was based more on personal actions and less on state mandated control systems (Blok, 1981). The former use of the concept of honor dealt with the "proper performance of expected roles given one's place in a society" (Wachs, 2005, p. 121). Cultural performances can illustrate the values that have power within a society.

The ritualistic words of Tolkien's mythic character, Pippin, are used by an historical recreation group, the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), in an investiture ceremony that to some participants, speaks to the heart of their culture. This investiture ceremony of the Order of the Chivalry draws on both a fictional history and a more reality-based history.

The SCA is an entirely invented community built on a "heroic and mythic past" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). It is an intentional and international organization dedicated to researching and re-creating the arts and skills of pre-seventeenth-century Europe. The

"Known World" consists of seventeen kingdoms, with over 30,000 members residing in countries around the world (Society for Creative Anachronism, 2004, p. 1). This imagined medievalism owes more to Lord Tennyson and J.R.R. Tolkien than to the realities of life in the Middle Ages. The SCA is "meant to be fun," a pleasurable voyage back to a time widely acknowledged to have never truly existed (Anderson, 1984, p. 170).

The word *anachronism* comes from the Greek words *ana*, back, against and *khronos*, time. It means "something or someone that is not in its correct historical or chronological time, esp. a thing or person that belongs to an earlier time" (*Random House Webster*, 2001, p. 73). A phrase often used in the SCA is, "the Middle Ages as they ought to have been" (Society for Creative Anachronism, 2004, p. 1). Hygiene, modern medicine, and human rights are parts of the modern world not left behind when participating in the SCA.

The group can trace its roots back to the 1960s and Berkeley, California. Diana Paxson, among others, wanted to hold a "Last Tournament" based on an event in 1839 Scotland that recalled Sir Walter Scott's vision of the Middle Ages. The date for the "Last Tournament" was May 1, 1966. The party was for a participant's birthday as well as a going away party for Ms. Paxon, who was leaving for the Peace Corps (Anderson, 1984). While the original participants may have intended a one-time affair, the concept took hold and soon grew (Keyes, 1980). Marion Zimmer Bradley gave the group its name and, in 1969, it was incorporated in the state of California as a nonprofit educational organization (Anderson, 1984).

This performance of a mythical past does not happen without a stage and props. Much is made of the material objects used by reenactors creating the proper atmosphere and "fantastic façade" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). Objects, such as clothing are passed from person to person, gaining a genealogy and story all their own. Ritual objects, such as a Knight's regalia, can become greatly valued. These objects can come to have great meaning to a person but that person does not exist without context. That person is part of a community, a culture with a way of life. Born of traditions of the past, this invented culture still reflects the desires of modern people and those people have things. But how is the system of meaning that gives "value" to objects constructed? What kind of community is created when participants actively seek fantasy, and what are the "things" that become valued?

Benedict Anderson (1991) has stated that all communities are, to some extent, imagined. One thread of discourse, on community, centers on the thought that there is much lost that needs to be relearned, and replaced, in order for a community to become the safe and happy place that people remember (Erisman, 1998). "The definition of the concept of community continues to be contested along the definitions of culture and identity" (Mayo, 2000, p. 2). Nostalgia for an imagined past becomes a driving force in constructing communities which can stand against the deprivations of an immoral modernity (Erisman, 1998).

But where is this happy community and how can we find it? Past researchers have often looked for community in place-bound constructs like villages or urban neighborhoods rather than looking for the practices and persons who, through

relationships and shared interests, create community (Erisman, 1998; Mayo, 2000). Anthony Cohen (1985) wrote, "People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity" (p. 118).

Living history groups perform the past for both themselves and a wider audience. They attempt to produce an "authentic" experience of some time and place in history. Nostalgia fuels the development of a socially constructed system of meanings (Belk & Costa, 1998) which actively reflects a desired set of values (D'Andrade, 1984).

Arjun Appadurai (1996) writes that social groups "are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous" (p. 48). Community can be defined as something that is not inherent in a social group but as something negotiated in the public meaning of signs and symbols. So the question becomes, how are these communities constructed without a geographic locus, and what kind of symbolic meanings become attached to the objects of nostalgia passed from one individual to another?

It is my belief that many people will still seek to find others of like mind and beliefs even as modern culture becomes less place-bound. If they cannot find a subculture that meets their needs, they may develop one. The ease with which the Internet allows communication and connection makes it possible to create virtual communities. If we learn more about what drives the cultural processes generating these subcultures, we will better understand how modernity is affecting the parent culture.

The purpose of this study is to understand how an invented community constructs symbolic meaning in material objects and in value systems. By looking at how

participants value authenticity, connection to community, and an idealized past, I hope to

learn how material objects become symbolic texts and how participants perform this

pseudo-history. It is possible that these individuals seek invented traditions that fulfill an

unmet cultural need for community.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Humans are endlessly fascinating. The whys and wherefores of studying humanity are as diverse as humanity itself. The purpose of this study is to understand how an invented community constructs symbolic meaning in material objects and value systems. I have chosen a question and method of study that leads to an ethnographic approach. Others may find equally valid, but different methods, of pursuing the same research objective. In this literature review, I will explore how culture is defined in the context of this study. Additionally, I will discuss subcultures and countercultures, community, tradition, ritual, authenticity, nostalgia, historical reenactment, and material culture.

Culture and Meaning Systems

The definition of culture, according to the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (2001), is "the sum total of ways of living built up by a group of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another" (p. 488). Ember and Ember (1990) define culture as encompassing "the learned behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, values, and ideals that are characteristic of a particular society or population" (p. 17). While Keesing and Keesing (1971) state that culture is "the totality of man's learned, accumulated experience" (p. 20).

When we view the world through the lens of cultural and social theory, we only see a partial view (Jenks, 1995). No single person from within a culture can know its entirety. Cultural descriptions are composites and generalizations. Individuals within a culture will know aspects that others within that same culture will not. A description of a culture is thereby ever incomplete and is an abstraction of commonalities (Keesing & Keesing, 1971). It is a complex web of social rules and cultural meanings that tattoo our everyday lives (Deegan, 1989).

Culture is an interpretive system that draws from the stories it tells about itself and others. (Doty, 1986) Herbert Blumer (1969) is credited with defining symbolic interpretation of culture. He stated that culture, language, and thought are based on symbols and symbolic meanings (p. 1). Saleebey (1994) draws attention to two often overlooked characteristics of human nature. Humans find their place in the world by creating meaning (p. 351). Behavior at the individual level is not determined by the culture. Culture emerges as part of the social process of individuals creating a "framework of meaning" from their differences and similarities (Campbell & Rew, 1999, p. 19).

Culture provides the raw materials for the meanings, and instills the patterns that become embedded (Saleebey, 1994) in our social memories (Alonso, 1988). Ideas come attached to language and symbols. Words have meaning that may not be the same for all individuals in a culture. Ethnic or social group and past experiences can color how words are perceived. In order to legitimize the present cultural systems of meaning much is based on the "criteria of sacredness, pastness, and origin" (Eisenstadt 1973, p. 139). We

look into the past for an ideal on which to build our present. Members of every culture

draw upon their observations, for various purposes and with various motives, (Mykkanen,

2003) to create the everyday and sacred actions of their culture.

Objects as symbols have a wide diversity of meaning. These symbols can trigger

an emotional response in both the holder and perceiver of the symbol (D'Andrade, 1984).

Culturally derived patterns are colored by feelings (Rosaldo, 1984).

Standing during the performance of the national anthem is a symbolic action

revealing a relationship between the cultural processes of a society and the memory of the

historical past. What develops is a "reciprocal and reflexive" relationship, accessing

viewpoints on social history (V. Turner, 1986, pp. 21-22).

All social histories and social memories are created from a symbolically

meaningful social action, even though the individual may not be consciously aware of

this action. Because histories are always perspectives on a retrospective view, they are

contingent on the necessities of the present (Alonso, 1988).

Individuals "pay attention to what they want to" and organize their intentions in a

"hierarchy of goals" (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981, p. 6). However,

individuals are not free to act in any manner that they wish or to form culture "ex nihilo"

(Sapir, 1958, p. 322). What is expected of an individual within a community is specified

by rules, codes, and patterns of behavior (Eisenstadt, 1973). There are incentives to "fit

in" and consequences when an individual cannot, either by choice or chance. A person

must not be "de trop" (Goffman, 1963, p. 11). Shared cultural traits create bonds between

individuals that in turn strengthen cultural cohesion. A vibrant culture is the result of active participation by individuals within the culture (Sapir, 1958).

Subcultures

Theories of subculture are not grand theories but are grounded in everyday life (Blackman, 2005). Beginning with the Chicago School, the theories of subcultures have been used to help define the current dominant paradigm. Over time, subcultural theory has been the "site of interdisciplinary theorization and ideological conflict" (Blackman, 2005, p. 2). Tension between individual and cultural frameworks can lead to exploration of subcultures that have an alternative view of social memory. This memory of the past can be shaped by individual interpretation, subject to both the individual's and the culture's goals (Handler & Lonkin, 1984) and history. Subcultures differ from the concept of "multi-culture" and are generally based on diverse cultural origins coexisting in parallel within the context of the larger parent culture.

Early theory on subculture, in the 1950s, was based on class structure and conservative academic research, with most of the studies on youth gang cultures. O'Connor suggested, "that youth who cannot achieve according to social norms, who cannot do well in school or find good jobs, create subcultures. These in turn have their own roles and norms which these youth can fulfill" (O'Connor, 2004, p. 409). This theoretical basis put the youth subculture in a conflict situation with the parent culture.

More recently, researchers rely less on a notion of conflict than on diverging goals. Mizrach (1997) defines subculture as "a group of persons within a culture who

seek to divide themselves from the rest of 'straight' or 'mainstream' normative society" (p. 133). He goes on to state that subcultures do not challenge the parent cultures in the same manner that countercultures do. Unlike countercultures, subcultures do not necessarily challenge the core values of the parent society (Mizrach, 1997). Countercultures often focus on social transformation and a unitary Utopian cultural vision. On the other hand, subcultures simply seek to evolve away from the existing culture, assuming there are multiple available alternatives. Subcultures, rather than seeking social change, "pursue social fractionation, negation, and rejection" (Mizrach, 1997, p. 133).

Members of subcultures set themselves apart from the parent culture in a willful defiance of the larger population. It is an active stance to deviate from, but not totally reject, the parent culture (Blackman, 2005). Subcultures emerge when individuals interact more significantly with each other than with the parent culture. Rose (1965) states that:

> [t]his occurs under two possible sets of circumstances: (1) the members have appositive affinity for each other on some basis (e.g., gains to be had from each other, long-standing friendships, common background and interests, common problems and concerns). (2) The members are excluded from interaction with other groups in the population to some significant extent. (p. 3)

Many scholars researching subcultures have focused on adolescent subcultures. Wood's (1999) study on youth straightedge culture shows how the culture evolved over time, from one simply opposed to drugs and sexual promiscuity, to one that also includes animal rights. Kinney's (1999) study on adolescents' formation of alternative peer groups and socialization illustrates the formation of one subculture from within another;

"hippies" from "metalheads." Mayer's (2001) work on pop music and Mexican-American girls studied a neglected segment of the youth culture, a specifically female music-based subculture. It should be noted that most youth subcultures actually include adults with real resources who play key roles (O'Connor, 2004).

Some recent postmodern studies have left the theories of criminal deviancy behind and adopted different memes to explain the emergence of sub- and counter-cultures. Others argue, "subcultures are 'fixed', in contrast to 'neo-tribes' that are 'fluid'" (Blackman, 2005, p. 12).

In another post-modern study, Moore (2004) examines commodification resulting from a crisis of meaning in the lives of participants in the punk music subculture. Appadurai (1986) in his *The Social Life of Things* defines commodities as "objects of value" (p. 3). Moore goes on to describe two main themes in the punk culture; the first is:

> [a] homology between postmodernism and punk performance, attitude and style. Suffused with self-reflexive irony, these punks have recycled cultural images and fragments for purposes of parody and shocking juxtaposition, thereby deconstructing the dominant meanings and simulations which saturate social space. (Moore, 2004. p. 307)

The second theme Moore illustrates about the punk subculture is that the subculture "involved a quest for authenticity and independence from the culture industry, thus altogether renouncing the prevailing culture of media, image, and hypercommercialism" (Moore, 2004, p. 307). The punks that Moore studied use an appropriation of the parent culture's signs and symbols in order to shock and set themselves apart. In a common thread among subcultures the punks tried to separate themselves from the parent culture.

In a move that places theory on adolescents even further from the original roots in criminal deviancy, Blackman argues for dropping the concept of subculture altogether and adopting the "concept of 'lifestyle.' " Again reaching for an economic basis in commodification of cultural artifacts and symbols, researchers looked at construction of lifestyles that transformed "cultural commodities for their own authenticity" (Blackman, 2005, p. 13). By appropriating "recycled cultural images and fragments for purposes of parody and shocking juxtaposition, thereby deconstructing the dominant meanings and simulations which saturate social space" (Moore, 2004, p. 307), the punk subculture engages in a self-reflective agency. They think, therefore they are.

Theories of subcultures moved from conversations about deviancy to trends that could be commercially exploited for profit. Subcultures are not perceived as the social threat that they once were due to the fractionalization of the larger culture. This is partly a result of the loss of a sense of community.

Community

The notion of community centers around an ideal that shapes much of American culture. Much of what is considered wrong in modern culture is blamed on a loss of this ideal community (Erisman, 1998). This idealization is the process of cleaning up the memory of the past and making it agreeable to the present set of values (Alonso, 1988). Benedict Anderson (1991) has stated that all communities are, to some extent, imagined.

Community is not defined as a static "place," but is a choice that we have available to us. Our notions of community, and the sense of belonging to a community,

are changing from those of our parents (Obst & White, 2007). Past researchers have often looked for community in place-bound constructs, rather than looking for the practices and persons who, through relationships and shared interests, create community (Erisman, 1998).

People can belong to more than one community, whether it is interest-based or neighborhood-based. Victor Turner (1977) preferred the Latin term "communitas" to "community" in order to distinguish the social relationship from an "area of common living" (p. 96). He describes communitas as a "relationship between concrete, historical, idiosyncratic individuals" that seldom retained "the spontaneity and immediacy" for extended periods of time (pp. 131-132). He goes on to describe three types of communitas: existential or spontaneous, normative, and ideological. The first is fleeting and is transformative, delving into the central concepts of self. This is accomplished when individuals spontaneously come together around a central action or concern, such as when volunteers simply materialize to find a lost child or puppy. The second forms the spontaneous happening into a social system over time, with the goal of resource and member control. An example of this would be if those who helped to find the lost puppy decided to continue the service and find other lost puppies. The third category of communitas is the model utopian society where no puppies would ever be lost (V. Turner, 1977, p. 132). Voluntary participation in a group or community greatly enhances the connection to the chosen community; for instance, those who choose to join the culture to find lost puppies will feel a close connection to the Lost Puppy Society (Obst & White, 2007).

Anthony Cohen (1985) wrote, "People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity" (p. 118). Community can be defined as something that is not inherent in a social group, but as something negotiated in the public meaning of signs and symbols. Robert LeVine (1984) states that culture is, " a shared organization of ideas that includes the intellectual, moral, and aesthetic standards prevalent in a community and the meanings of communicative actions" (p. 67). While individual members of a community are unique and have free will, they share common "symbols and representations through which they communicate" (LeVine, 1984, p. 68). Without these systems of common meaning, community and culture would not be possible.

Community is a mediated conversation between the collection of individuals and the place, within a "shared sense of the past" (Goodings, Locke & Brown, 2007, p. 463). When modernity clashes with this ideal of community, we feel like we have lost something vital. "Community, apparently, is something we once had but now have lost and, without which, we will be unable to combat a pervasive sense of social alienation" (Erisman, 1998, pp. 1-2). Discourse on community has often centered on the thought that there is much lost that needs to be relearned and replaced in order for community to become the safe and happy place that people remember (Erisman, 1998). However, community does not encompass everything that "we can do or be" when individuals come together to create a culture (Fortier, 2006, pp. 73-74).

Tradition

Random House Webster's Dictionary (2001) has eight different definitions for

tradition. The first one is probably the most common, "the handing down of statements,

beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation" (p. 2006).

"*Traditio* was a mode of transferring the ownership of private property in Roman law.

Tradition is whatever is persistent or recurrent through transmission, regardless of the

substance and institutional setting" (Shils, 1981, p. 15). Tradition provides a measure of

meaning and stability within a society. For some, tradition is the basis of what is most

important and meaningful in human lives (Bendix, 1997).

Tradition is, and was, a "term to think with, not to think about" (Ben-Amos, 1984,

p. 97). Ideas of progress overrule tradition when "innovation has become coterminous

with improvement" (Shils, 1981, p. 4). Researchers placed tradition opposite modernity

in the early twentieth century of folklore studies. Eventually, they "shifted to a

conception of a gradual continuum in which the two are conceived as mutually

complementary social and cultural phenomena" (Ben-Amos, 1984, p. 101).

"The process of tradition is also a process of selection" (Shils, 1981, p. 26). Pieces

of historical lore are chosen, with specific motives in mind, to achieve the purposes of the

originators (Handler & Lonkin, 1984). Traditions are not handed down to succeeding

generations as an intact whole. "These features are the latest states of a tradition which

has moved through various distances down from the past with varying degrees of

modification" (Shils, 1981, p. 43). They are constantly being reinterpreted within the

context of the present (Handler & Lonkin, 1984). In this sense, all traditions are invented. Traditions do not create themselves, it takes human agents to enact them (Shils, 1981).

Understanding tradition and the concept of authenticity means understanding the ideological and social motives within the social context. Authenticity is valued in the created market place of modern culture (Bendix, 1997). This social context provides a framework of possible responses to a given tradition (Shils, 1981). Inhabitants realize their own cultural motives through invented traditions (Mykkanen, 2003).

In the introduction to the book, *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argues that invented tradition includes, "both 'traditions' actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner with a brief and dateable period - a matter of a few years perhaps - and establishing themselves with great rapidity" (p. 1).

These invented traditions are:

> [a] set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules
> and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values
> and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies
> continuity with the past. (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 1)

For an example of this invention, one can look to Hutton's (2008) study of modern Paganism and its appropriation of ancient symbology and calendrical cycles. There is something inherently post-modern in the acquisition of ancient traditions and the repurposing of them to create new ones. This is the paradox of invented traditions: they are both ancient and newly born.

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) stated that there is probably no time and place that has not seen the invention of tradition, although they also argued that invented traditions occurred more frequently at times of rapid social transformation when old traditions were disappearing. They, therefore, expected an especially large number of new traditions to be invented over the past two centuries, in both traditional and modern societies. They not only mentioned adaptations and new uses of old traditions for new purposes, but also the re-use of ancient elements in new contexts. Even extinct traditions can be revived become re-invented traditions. Hobsbawm and Ranger argued that all invented traditions use references to the past, not only for the cementation of group cohesion, but also for the legitimating of action; and that historians in the present should become much more aware of such political uses of their work in the public sphere (pp. 7-11).

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) distinguished between three types of invented traditions, with each having a distinctive function:

> those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion and collective identities, those establishing or legitimatizing institutions and social hierarchies, and those socializing people into particular social contexts; the first type has been most commonly referred to and often taken to imply the two other functions as well. (p. 9)

Phillips and Schochet (2004) take umbrage at the term "invented tradition," with its "oxymoronic" connotations. (p. 4) They go on to state, "a simple opposition between 'genuine' and 'invented' traditions is unworkable" (p. 6). They dispute the notion that the

> 'invented' traditionalisms of the sort that are the real subject of Hobsbawm and Ranger's book should become the defining for the category of tradition as a whole. This blurring together of tradition as such with a

(putatively) bogus traditionalism lends itself to a notion that tradition is necessarily static or reactionary, never adaptive, constructive, or creative (Phillips & Schochet, 2004, p. 6).

Ritual

All cultures set aside time and spaces to use in celebration and ritual. This use of ritual can instill "personal and communal creativity" (V. Turner, 1982a, p. 11). For all its ubiquitous appearances in a wide spectrum of cultures, "there is no clear and widely shared explanation of what constitutes ritual or how to understand it" (Bell, 1997, p. x). As with many cultural artifacts, such as ritual, precise definitions are not possible. Highly contextualized definitions position the artifact according to the needs of the researcher. However, what is clear is that "ritual is a communication device necessary to humane society" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. xi).

The earliest studies of ritual centered on debates about the origin of religions. There was a bifurcated split in these nineteenth century debates. The most common question was "whether religion and culture were originally rooted in myth or in ritual[1]" (Bell, 1997, p. 3). This early history of ritual theory firmly roots ritual action within the dichotomy of the sacred and profane (Rothenbuhler, 1998). Doty (1986), says that "[m]yths and rituals have a way of disclosing us to ourselves, either as we are or as we might be – and as we might be in either a negative or a positive light" (p. xviii).

Beyond the early studies, situating ritual within folklore and religious studies, functional anthropologists, such as van Gennep (1960), developed some of the most

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[1] There is also a myth and ritual theory that "claims not that myth and rituals happen to go hand in hand but that they must" (Segal, 1997, p. 1). This line of inquiry, while interesting, is beyond the scope of this study.

enduring concepts surrounding ritual. He was among the first to look at how cultures

view and adapt to transformative and transitional phases of human life. He coined the

phrase, "rites of passage" which has continued to be a major organizing concept in the

study of ritual (V. Turner, 1982a, p. 24). Using positivism as a starting point, van Gennep

based his theories on "the insistence that general laws of social process should be derived

from empirical observation rather than from metaphysical speculation" (Kimball, 1960,

p. vii). According to Bell (1997)

> [h]e argued that rites of passage serve to order chaotic social changes that
> could threaten to disturb society. Such rites distinguish status groups with
> clearly marked boundaries, which contributes to the stability of social
> identities and roles. Rituals are the means for changing and reconstituting
> groups in an orderly and sanctioned manner that maintains the integrity of
> the system. (p. 37)

Van Gennep (1960) demarcates three phases in his rites of passage: separation,

transition, and incorporation. He says, "[s]o great is the incompatibility between the

profane and the sacred worlds that a man cannot pass from one to the other without going

through an intermediate stage" (p. 1). During separation, the participating individual or

culture must go from the secular everyday to a sacred space, "a cultural realm which is

defined as 'out of time,' i.e., beyond or outside the time which measures secular

processes and routines" (V. Turner, 1982a, p. 2).

> Transition from group to group and from one social situation to the next
> are looked on as implicit in the very fact of existence, so that a man's life
> comes to be made up of a succession of stages with similar ends and
> beginnings: birth, social puberty, marriage, fatherhood, advancement to a
> higher class, occupational specialization, and death. For every one of these
> events there are ceremonies whose essential purpose is to enable the

individual to pass from one defined position to another which is equally
well defined. Since the goal is the same, it follows of necessity that the
ways of attaining it should be at least analogous, if not identical in detail
(since passing through several stages and traversing several boundaries).
(Van Gennep, 1960, p. 3)

During any given rite of passage ritual, there are three stages which include

"preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition), and postliminal

rites (rites of incorporation), in specific instances these three types are not always equally

important or equally elaborated" (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 11). Victor Turner (1982a) calls

the liminal phase, "a sort of social limbo which has few (though sometimes these are

most crucial) of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane social

statuses or cultural states" (p. 24). Rituals have clearly delineated beginnings, middles,

and endings. This marks them as separate, as other, from the rest of the cultural flow of

social action (Rothenbuhler, 1998).

Rituals are rarely a one-off action that happens only once. They usually form a

chain of happenings based either on an individual experience, such as coming of age; a

social experience, such as the election of a president; or a calendrical experience, based

on the time of year and the changing of the seasons. Action is repetitive, stereotyped, and

stylized. However, to the observer or participant, it goes beyond formalized stylings of

behavior (Rothenbuhler, 1998). Ritual creates common knowledge within a culture

(Chwe, 2001).

"Rituals in the United States vary widely for different groups of people in various

regions, for different classes, races, sexes, religions, occupations, ethnic backgrounds,

and generations" (Deegan, 1989, p. 14). This gives rise to the issue of how we see and

interpret each other's rituals. Adoption and assumption of another groups' rituals leads to

common understandings. As stated by Chwe (2001), "public ceremonies help maintain

social integration and existing systems of authority; public rallies and demonstrations are

also crucial in political and social change. Social integration and political change can

both be understood as coordination problems" (p. 3).

Although individuals can conduct private rituals, they are still situated within the

context of the larger culture. There is almost always something "socially structured about

them: language and other sign systems, tradition, systems of morality" (Rothenbuhler,

1998, p. 13). The signs and symbols used in ritual, whether public or private, refer back

to "social relations, orders, and institutions of the society in which the ritual is

performed" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 14).

> From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a
> positive force in an activity field. Symbols, too, are crucially involved in
> situations of societal change-the symbol becomes associated with human
> interests, purposes, ends and means, aspirations and ideals, individual and
> collective, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred
> from the observed behavior. For these reasons, the structure and properties
> of a ritual symbol become those of a dynamic entity, at least within its
> appropriate context of action. (V. Turner, 1982a, pp. 21-22)

Turner felt that the use of ritual bound the individual to the group in everyday life.

Using a commonly understood lexicon of signs and symbols, the "structure of rituals is a

means for connecting experience and meaning between the individual and the group"

(Deegan, 1989, p. 8). As Chwe (2001) put it,

> [p]ublic rituals, rallies, and ceremonies generate the necessary common
> knowledge. A public ritual is not just about the transmission of meaning

from a central source to each member of an audience; it is also about letting audience members know what other audience members know (p. 4).

Whether public or private, ritual is performed for the self or for others (Rothenbuhler, 1998). Performance ritual theory emerged in the 1970s (Bell, 1997). Bell describes the basic concepts of the performance theory of ritual. "First, ritual is an event, a set of activities that does not simply express cultural values or enact symbolic scripts but actually effects changes in people's perceptions and interpretations" (p. 74). Victor Turner (1982a) goes even further:

For me, the anthropology of performance is an essential part of the anthropology of experience. In a sense, every type of cultural performance, including ritual, ceremony, carnival, theatre, and poetry, is explanation and explication of life itself, as Dilthey often argued. (p. 13)

Actors in ritual are not passive agents, but active in the reinterpretation of the symbols and meanings behind the ritual. This concept can extend beyond the actual ritual to be a model for a dynamic cultural process. "Hence, ritual as a performative medium for social change emphasizes human creativity and physicality: ritual does not mold people; people fashion rituals that mold their world" (Bell, 1997, p. 73).

Authenticity

Authentic is defined in *Random House Webster's Dictionary* (2007) as "not false;" "real;" "having the origin supported by unquestionable evidence;" "entitled to acceptance or belief because of agreement with known facts or experience;" and links the word *authentic* with "veritable," stating that it "suggests the general truthfulness but not

necessarily the literal or strict correspondence with reality of that which it describes" (p. 139). While this gives direction to our queries, it can be difficult to pry the concepts of authenticity, tradition, and nostalgia apart from each other. Notions of authenticity and tradition have been linked to the rhetoric of nostalgia (Grainge, 1999).

Virginia Postrel (2003) gives us three categories of definitions of authenticity that have been used in the past. The first, *authenticity as purity*, implies that truth is at the center of authenticity. It is the original form that is the true and authentic one. The second, *authenticity as tradition*, speaks to the ways things have always been done. It relies more on custom than anything else. The third is *authenticity as aura*, which posits the true form is that which shows the wear of time, with all the nicks and dings (p. 110). In Attfield's (2000) discussion of furniture design she states, "the concept of producing a 'reproduction' of an authentic piece is an impossible and contradictory project" (p. 99).

MacNeil and Mak (2007) use three categories of authenticity: "(1) authentic as true to oneself; (2) authentic as original; and (3) authentic as trustworthy statement of fact" (p. 27)[2]. It is perhaps the last category that best applies to authenticity in historical reenactment. However, what is authenticity really? Ask twelve social scientists and you are likely to get twelve different answers. Bendix (1997) turns that question around and asks, "who needs authenticity and why?" as well as "how has authenticity been used?" (p. 21).

For some, authenticity is a remedy for the ills of modern civilization. Authenticity has become as negotiated as any social construction. No longer is authenticity regarded as

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[2] In this case, fact is meant by something that is accepted to be true.

a static entity, the property of "uncivilized" folk groups, but rather a reflection of expressive culture (Bendix 1997, p. 156). The whole notion of "authentic primitive art" was thrown into disarray with the arrival of postmodern discourse   (Errington, 1998). Authenticity is a modern idea (Attfield, 2000). Postmodernism is a phrase tossed around frequently in social science circles. Lyotard (1993) in his, "A Postmodern Fable" describes postmodernism as "the state of writing, in the broadest terms, of thought and action, after it has undergone the contagion of modernity, and has tried to cure itself of it" (p. 244).

With modernity comes the diachronic discussion of the *past/present* authenticities of place. The more recent rise in heritage tourists, "Americans who were increasingly interested in exploring bygone eras and ways of life" (Schnell, 2003, p. 45) are an example of such discussions. Gordon states that heritage:

> passes on myths of origins and continuation, endowing groups with a
> sense of purpose. Unlike history, heritage is innately presentist. It *must*
> revise the past in order, not simply to suit current values, but to give those
> values legitimacy by rooting them in our shared, if imagined, past.
> (Gordon, 2004. p. 509)

Steven Schnell (2003) looks at one such example of heritage tourism in his article, "The Ambiguities of Authenticity in Little Sweden, U.S.A." Created to honor the ethnic culture and history of the region, the town of Lindsborg, Kansas promoted its Swedish heritage in festivals year-round. The town became a successful example of such heritage-centered festivals. While the town has had success in creating and promoting a Swedish heritage, it raises the question of authenticity. Can a purpose-created and tourist-centered

town such as Lindsborg be considered authentic? And authentic to what? As Schnell puts

it, "Such arguments show a distinct romanticism of the past by scholars on a par with that

held by the cultural revivalists themselves" (p. 47).

To some, this contested authenticity is important, and to others, not so much (R.

Turner 1990). Authenticity, for some, can be sacrificed to the needs of expediency and

cost. Historical reenactors routinely engage "in what might be thought of as a social

construction of unreality" (Belk & Costa 1998, p. 232). Authenticity is a negotiated

construct and to some participants the use of the term "acceptable" is used in the place of

authentic, even while maintaining the illusion of authenticity (Belk & Costa 1998, p.

232). So how do we define a concept that, while based on an incomplete record of

artifacts within the context of historical reenactment, is separated temporally from any

hope of "true" authenticity?

Authenticity is more personal, driven from the wants and needs of the individual

as much as from the culture (Postrel, 2003). The cultural recollections of a group,

whether national or personal, reflect the desires and aims growing out of a storytelling

writ large or small. This recourse to the past for legitimacy is not necessarily inauthentic

(Mykkanen, 2003).

In the context of this study, "authenticity" is defined by both the method and

material object. It is the attempt, to the best of an individual's ability, to use what they

believe to be a method used in historical times to produce an artifact that reproduces

something from an historical time.

Nostalgia

Nostalgia was a phrase coined by the Swiss physician, Johannes Hofer, in the sixteenth century, to describe a range of ills suffered by Swiss mercenaries. He brought together the Greek root words *nostos* (return home) and *algos* (pain) to describe the melancholic conditions suffered by soldiers far from home. Symptoms of the soldiers included longing for home and refusal of food, sometimes resulting in infirmity and death (Bissell 2005; Cashman 2006; Fritzche 2001).

In the nineteenth century, the medical definition of nostalgia gave way to new concepts of a "general condition of estrangement, an essentially incurable state" (Bissell 2005, p. 223). By the late twentieth century, nostalgia was considered to be a postmodern reaction against modernity and many of the ills associated with it. It became a modern phenomenon dependent on the notion of being fundamentally out of place and out of time (Fritzche 2001). The new understanding of nostalgia grew from a growing discontent with urbanization, mechanization, and diaspora of large populations (Fritzche 2001).

While nostalgia trends to conservatism (Grainge, 1999), the canonization of history and meaning offers space for the "emergence of popular counter-histories" (Alonso, 1988, p. 49). Nostalgia, in its looking backwards, hearkens to a golden age before a decline in the present time (Grainge, 1999). This longing for an ideal reveals a deep-seated nostalgia for the comfort of the past (Erisman, 1998). In this view of nostalgia, the past is associated with stability, the present with a loss of identity associated with a dissatisfaction in the present (Jing, 2006).

For some, modernity is seen as a corrupting influence and for these individuals the nostalgic need exists to return to a more "authentic state." This created a new kind of public sphere where authenticity was valued (Bendix 1997). Modernity has brought many changes, one of which was the emergence of multiple cultural and social discourses. We emerged from the past with the knowledge that social order and identity were not the unshakeable things we once thought (Campbell & Rew, 1999).

The meaning of nostalgia is not limited to sentimentality for a wistful golden age. It encompasses all of the 'things' that define and make the experience of the past sensual. The material culture of nostalgia has become a marketing tool used to sell the past to an eager public (Grainge, 2000).

Recent scholars, such as Cashman, have looked at nostalgia as more than an anti-modern malaise. In his study of socially critical (in the value-neutral meaning) nostalgia and material culture in Northern Ireland, Cashman (2006) states:

> Overall, many academic critics have overstated their case about the universally uncritical nature of nostalgia. This overstatement may be due in part to the fact that many of these critics are not the sort who engage in ethnographic fieldwork. Without proper ethnographic research, the traces from the past that people retain are bound to seem overwhelming in number and triviality. Through prolonged and honest engagement with others, however, we come to appreciate the value of the backward glance as an instrument of critical evaluation and of efforts to (re)build community. Likewise, we may come to appreciate material culture anew as a primary resource in this worthy and timely project of critical nostalgia. (pp. 155-156)

Beyond the critical uses of nostalgia as a creative action for social good, nostalgia can be a form of leisure activity. In today's world of fast paced life, leisure time has

become increasingly scarce. "During such busy, hectic times, the exercise of nostalgia might function as forced down time -- a means of escape and/or relaxation" (Wilson 2005, p. 29).

Historical Reenactment

Historical re-enacting is much more than a hobby. It assumes the identity of a culture itself with its own unique traditions, language, and ritual (Allred, 1996). Outside of such places as Williamsburg and Plymouth, most re-enacting takes place in parks and is of a temporary nature. A re-enactment, of some kind, takes place on virtually every weekend of the year (Hall, 1994).

The emergence of living history museums and historical hobbyist groups allows participants to not only know the past, but also re-live it, in sensual detail (Erisman, 1998). These groups reflect the notion of imagined community. "Group members share not only a sense of their organization as a community, but also a vision of the past as a location from which to draw the symbols on which their community is based" (Erisman, 1998, pp. 22-23). Within invented communities, such as historical reenacting, there is a "shared understanding of intention and content, and the intrinsic validity of the interaction, that rituals have their effect and affect" (Alexander, 2004, p. 527).

Within a shared vision of history, an individual can find a community with shared meanings and goals. Most frequently, in historical reenactment, this centers on a vision of history mediated by popular culture. Modern society lacks the values found in these imagined communities. While individuals in historical re-creation groups do not always

agree on which values have been lost, they share a view of the past in a way that separates them from the wider American culture (Erisman, 1998).

In the reenactment communities, history becomes performance, framed by a re-representation of the past. The specific group ideology is communicated through the different forms of framed knowledge (Alonso, 1988), depending on what kind of story is being told. "Living history is a form of theatre. Participants use performance to create a world, tell a story, entertain, and teach lessons" (Magelssen, 2007, p. xii).

These historically-based performances become a reflexive activity. This turns the gaze of the culture back on itself (V. Turner, 1986). In some ways, and to some people, the fantasy becomes more real than reality. "Very little is needed to trigger off this type of fantasy, and once the images get going, they can be of a totally absorbing, or even obsessional kind" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 220).

Individuals involved in historical reenacting can find that their invented self is more meaningful than their modern self. "The play identity transforms the reenactor into someone else – a Civil War-period personage – and at the same time someone more fully himself, a creative individual freely engaging in a personally meaningful activity" (R. Turner 1990, p. 126).

Those involved in historical reenactments jointly construct a "fantasy time and place" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). This outlet has great potential for creative expression of the self-- especially aspects of the self that are necessarily subdued during the routine of daily living (Miller, 1998). Belk and Costa (1998) analyzed how modern mountain men enact fantasy experiences of a primitive alternative reality within the

bounded ritual space of the modern rendezvous. They concluded that participation in this fantasy world offers a special opportunity for transformative play while reinforcing a romanticized set of beliefs. The consumption of historical experience is nostalgically rendered with heroic archetypes and a focus on ostensibly simpler times and values.

The individual can seek cultural meaning within imaginative activity, illustrating their views of their own, and others, cultures (Jain, 1977). "Adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 5). This mediated history speaks of invention, rather than preservation. Participants separate content from the original meaning systems and places them within a consciously invented wished-for present. New meaning is developed as "reconstructed tradition" (Handler & Lonkin, 1984, p. 280).

These reenactments are not just "symbolic texts that express cultural meaning" to be studied by anthropologists but are "moments of charged experience, in which the possibility of transformation is present, where among other things, relationships can be made or broken, identities forged or questioned" (R. Turner, 1990, p. 131). The meaning systems, devised by participants in historical reenactment, are defined by fantasy which speaks to a "mythic and heroicized past" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). These culturally created scripts can appear to be natural and enforce behavior in particular ways (D'Andrade, 1984).

But why do individuals choose to leave the modern world to engage in imaginative activities? Individuals will look for what they feel they lack, and in this case, it is "passion, power, and transcendence (and, we would add freedom) in the primitive,

because they believe that these qualities have disappeared from contemporary urban life"

(Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 230). Historical re-creation does not exist in a vacuum. It is a

voluntary response to imposed modern reality (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 233).

> Reenacting is not a predetermined effect of some historical or social
> situation. It is a pleasure structure, a voluntary creation shared by those
> who for whatever reason feel a resonance with any of the significances
> reenacting might have - resonances with their personalities, personal
> histories, identities. For some it is a political statement, for others an
> affirmation of cultural identity, a complex and intriguing game, an
> opportunity to go camping and get drunk with friends, an alternative to a
> dreary existence, a 'thing to do' in a social set, or a fascinating window on
> a world they know from books and photographs but have never
> participated in as an experienced reality. (R. Turner, 1990, p. 130)

There is a growing importance of leisure in American culture, and this is reflected

in the growth of voluntary hobbyist groups (Erisman, 1998, p. 6). These leisure activities

can become the focus "for our thoughts, energies, hopes, desires, and expenditures of

time and money" (Belk & Costa, 1998, p. 219). These groups fulfill a number of needs in

individuals' lives, such as "something to do when not at work." They can also "teach

skills, enhance self-esteem, or just be fun and relaxing" (Erisman, 1998, p. 7). They,

however, go far beyond these seemingly trivial purposes. Historical re-enactment is

jointly enacted, "using a special time, place, and clothing in a setting removed from

quotidian existence and fostering a sense of passionate community" (Belk & Costa, 1998,

p. 219).

Involvement in historical reenactment creates alternate realities and identities for

those involved in this imaginative activity. Old materials, old knowledge systems, old

beliefs systems are transformed into new realities. An extensive vocabulary of meanings

are attributed to symbolic behavior and action "devised by borrowing from well-supplied warehouses of official ritual, symbolism, and moral exhortation - religion and princely pomp, folklore and freemasonry (itself an earlier invented tradition of great symbolic force)" (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983, p. 6).

In an article on Civil War reenactors, Strauss used visual analysis and emergent patterns were identified and translated into profiles. Four different categories of reenactor were identified and personality traits attached to each category based on the visual analysis of photographs. The four categories are; hardcore, progressive, mainstream, and farb. Farb was described as being an acronym of the phrase, "far be it from me to criticize your impression; however…" The categories descend in perceived levels of authenticity and prestige. Not only were the categories assigned certain levels of authenticity but also judgments were made about the personalities of those depicted in the images (Strauss, 2002).

Strauss (2002) limits his study to the American Civil War reeanacting, whereas Miller (1998) studied a variety of groups involved in historical re-enactment. Both scholars look at how involvement in historical re-enactment becomes more than a search for historical accuracy. For many, it is a search for a more meaningful paradigm of conviction and purpose in our time of fragmented self-absorption (Allred, 1996).

Historical reenactment is an expensive hobby because the material culture is usually handmade. For modern mountain men the objective, in becoming a part of such a community of fellow believers, is to acquire the right stuff (Belk & Costa, 1998). Their relationship to their possessions is not one of commodity fetishism, of owning for the

sake of owning. Instead, the relationship is deeply contextualized in the knowledge and use of the objects, embedded in the sense of themselves as creative individuals (Hall, 1994).

A continuing challenge for reenactors, and those that analyze them, is sorting out authentic aspects of an impression from idiosyncratic personal interpretations of the past (Strauss, 2002). The desire to present living history comes from an interest in historical events and a sense of connection with the culture being portrayed (McClure, 1994).

Material Culture

Material culture is a

> [m]anifestation of culture through material productions. And the study of material culture is the study of material to understand culture, to discover beliefs – the values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions – of a particular community or society at a given time. The underlying premise is that human-made objects reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, the beliefs of the individuals who commissioned, fabricated, purchased, or used them, and, by extension, the beliefs of the larger society to which these individuals belonged. Material culture is thus object-based branch of cultural anthropology or cultural history. (Prown, 2000, p. 11)

While anthropology is the study of humans (Turnbaugh, Jurmain, Nelson, & Kilgore, 1999) and human cultures, the study of material culture frequently falls under the auspices of archaeology. Archaeology is defined by Turnbaugh, Jurmain, Nelson. and Kilgore, in *Understanding Physical Anthropology and Archaeology*, (1999) as, "the study of earlier cultures and lifeways by anthropologists who specialize in the scientific recovery, analysis, and interpretation of the material remains of past societies" (p. 9).

What then do you do when the culture in question is not in the past, but is current and accessible? What then do you do when you do not dig in the ground, but rather inquire of the object's owner? The question is especially current when the objective of the study is not to create a typology of objects but to study the history and emotive textual content of material culture.

Material objects, artifacts, will become historical objects. They are purposefully created to be experienced within a context of the culture (Prown, 2000). We can look at them, turn them over in our hands, feel the smoothness of the surface, and see the incised lines and swirls of motifs. But what do they "mean?" Cultural forms become a physical entities that "record the shape and imprint of otherwise more abstract, conceptual, or even metaphysical aspects of that culture that they quite literally embody" (Haltman, 2000, p. 1). The objects, that make up material culture, can provide new ways of "perceiving the past and understanding the present" (Mayo, 1984, p. 4).

You can look at an object and discern its use, and possibly its meaning, by how the creator made it out of the raw materials (V. Turner, 1982b). A spoon is a spoon is a spoon. A spoon will all allow you to, more or less effectively, eat soup or ice cream. It is up to the historian, the anthropologist, and the archaeologist to place that spoon in its cultural context.

> [T]he cultural assumptions, modes, beliefs, and technologies of its creators
> … cannot be isolated from that context. It is for the historian of material
> culture to read the meanings of the objects and, by placing them in
> context, to decipher their message. The intelligent assembly of artifacts
> can make a vital contribution to the ordering of reality (Mayo, 1984).

A spoon has a purpose, for example, to eat ice cream. What about artifacts whose purpose and meaning are not obvious, or even partially revealed, to the viewer? "As artifacts they are created primarily to be interpreted, so that their audiences or users may come to an understanding of the symbolism involved in their creation" (Gailey, 1989, p. 150). Artifacts are a method of communication "through visible and tangible qualities such as form, color, texture, size, and so forth; but the 'message' is greatly enhanced and expanded when the objects are recognized as being culturally specific symbols to be decoded and set in their proper celebratory context" (V. Turner, 1982b, p. 15). When these artifacts are symbols of a ritual, they become powerful and "are seriously effective" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 16).

The symbols of ritual are understood to "have layers of meaning and multiple, simultaneous referents. Thus social analysts must unpack the meanings, examine the laminations, and follow the ramifications, for the full meaning of socially important symbols is not clear from their surface" (Rothenbuhler, 1998, p. 16). Tangible objects can take on meaning to both individuals and to the larger culture. The values they represent are embodied in the physical artifact (D'Andrade, 1984).

While, for some, the objects involved in historical reenactments may never be more than physical objects, to others they are powerful symbols of connection to a community, and to status within that community (R. Turner, 1990). The acquisition, glorification, and reproduction of period material culture is one of the binding elements of the reenacting hobby (Strauss, 2002).

Summary

To the reenactor, artifacts are objects "that embody the world of the past." They can create an illusion of a real-time historical setting so strong that to some individuals it seems the modern world disappears, and for a moment, the reenactor is transported back in time (R. Turner, 1990, p. 126). The individual, who participates in historical reenactments, often spends a large amount of time and money in obtaining or making the objects needed to create the correct atmosphere of a historical reality (Erisman, 1998). But why? What draws them so strongly that they create both the social culture and the material culture?

Scholars who have studied the SCA (Cramer, 2005; Erisman, 1998) have explained the history and basic workings of the group. They also began to look at the motivations of the individuals who participate. The reenactors seek to replace the familiar traditions with invented traditions that fulfill their unmet need for community. Scholars studying living history groups other than the SCA, such as the Civil War and Mountain man groups, have dealt with underlying politics and material culture consumption patterns (Belk & Costa, 1998; Miller, 1980; R. Turner, 1990). In my study, I looked at the blending of community, the negotiated authenticity, and the material culture so as to reveal the values of the culture. Individuals form alternative selves within these fantastic and imagined histories, which are expressed through material culture.

Chapter Three

Method

The purpose of this study is to understand how an invented community constructs

symbolic meaning in material objects and value systems. By looking at how participants

value authenticity, connection to community, and degree of nostalgia for an idealized

past, I learned how material objects become symbolic texts and how participants perform

their fantasized version of history.

Traditionally, ethnographers have gone off to study the Other as a "requisite rite

of passage" (Messerschmidt, 1981, p. 3). I studied a group of people, a culture of which I

am a part. I looked beyond a single research method, ethnography, to incorporate another

method, grounded theory, in order to gain a balance between subjectivity and objectivity.

This insider status raises both concerns and benefits which are addressed later in this

chapter. In order to alleviate bias, I introduced a triangulation of methods. In addition to

ethnographic methods and grounded theory methods, I also used the texts and writings of

the participants in email listservs as sources of data.

In order to better define the methods used in this research project, I needed to

understand the difference between the results of the process and the mechanics of the

process itself. The term "ethnography" is used interchangeably for both the methods used

to collect data and the analysis and writing about that data (Wolcott, 1999, p. 41).

Since my study is ethnographic in nature, I began by forming the research questions:

1. What are the participant's views on authenticity and are there any values attached to authenticity?

2. What is the participant's connection to the imagined and invented community?

3. Does the participant hold a nostalgic view of history?

4. How is the system of meaning that gives "value" to objects constructed?

5. What kind of community is created when participants actively seek historical fantasy?

6. What are the "things" that become valued?

Ethnography

Keesing (1981), in his general cultural anthropology textbook, defines ethnography as the "process of recording and interpreting another people's way of life" (p. 5). Ethnographic researchers attempt to understand the socially constructed meaning systems within a culture. These meanings are negotiated between individuals in the interactions of daily life. Understanding the process of constructing meaning is frequently at the heart of all qualitative research (Creswell, 2003). Cultural interpretation is the main concern of ethnography. The researcher looks for context or connections between things. The process of interpretation, and writing about these cultural meanings, is what is called ethnography (Keesing, 1981).

Many other disciplines, such as sociology and folklore, use ethnographic methods (Rapport & Overing, 2000). Using 'thick description,' the ethnographer creates a literary work that provides a unique insight into a culture based on participatory knowledge. The concept of 'thick description' comes from the work of Clifford Geertz (Rapport & Overing, 2000). In writing an ethnographic work, the author becomes the narrator for another culture. This entails a responsibility to describe with richness the lives and living of others. This work informs the reader about the conduct and judgment of a culture (Van Maanen, 1988)

Ethnography encompasses a wide range of activities that are used by anthropologists and other scholars. A basic assumption of ethnography is that one will travel to someplace else, even if one is studying a local group. There is an element of "going" to some place, to the field.

Keesing (1981) defines fieldwork as "intimate participation in a community and observation of modes of behavior and the organization of social life" (p. 5). Since I am a member of the community in question, the first part of that definition was satisfied. It is the second part of that definition, "observation of modes of behavior" that constitutes the greater part of my method. Interpretation of the data gained through ethnographic methods comes during and after observations. The interpretation is the core of ethnography.

Grounded Theory

Interpretive social science relies less on statistical analysis and more on qualitative analytical interpretations based on participants' points of view. This has been referred to as the "naturalist" (Loker, 1993), interpretive, or hermeneutic approach. With this approach, the researcher does not usually start with a predetermined theory for predicting behavior but rather lets the data lead her to new avenues of inquiry and possibly new theories of behavior.

This interpretive inquiry paradigm stresses a holistic context (Hamilton, 1993). The cultural context is stressed in order to generate an understanding of human behavior. Rather than the homeostatic data found in positivism, holders of this paradigm stress that each cultural system is unique and requires an individualized approach to inquiry.

The concept of grounded theory, or the "discovery of theory from data," was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 1). Another term for this type of theory development is the "constant comparative method" (Boeije, 2002, p. 391). This interpretive method can be used to find the social processes and common patterns of behavior in a culture. Grounded theory is an adaptive process that takes direction and shape from the interaction of the researcher and the studied culture (McCallin, 2003). The main goal of a researcher, engaged in grounded theory, is to generalize "emergent conceptualizations into integrated patterns, which are denoted by categories and their properties" (Glaser, 2002, p. 2).

H. Russell Bernard (2002) describes grounded theory method in the following

manner:

1. Produce transcripts of interviews and read through a small sample of text.
2. Identify potential **analytic categories** – that is, potential **themes** – that arise.
3. As the categories emerge, pull all the data from those categories together and compare them.
4. Think about how categories are linked together.
5. Use the relations among categories to build theoretical models, constantly checking the models against the data – particularly against negative cases.
6. Present the results of the analysis using **exemplars**, that is, quotes from interviews that illuminate the theory. (p. 463)

In the case of this research study, this method of obtaining grounded theory used

theoretical sampling. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define theoretical sampling as the:

> [p]rocess of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst
> jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to
> collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it
> emerges. (p. 45)

Theoretical sampling is different from selective sampling which is the

"identification of populations and settings prior to data collection" (Drauker, Martsolf,

Ross, & Rusk, 2007, pp. 1137-8). To H. Russell Bernard (2002), it is the difference

between individual data and cultural data. If you are investigating the "attributes of

individuals in a population," you are dealing with individual data to evaluate a population

parameter and you would use probability sampling. But as Bernard puts it, "Cultural data

require experts" (p. 142).

In this current study, the experts are the Knights and other Peers that I used as sources of data. Bernard calls theoretical nonprobability sampling "purposive or judgment sampling" (2002, p. 182). When choosing individuals, it is more important to recruit those who can "shed more light on, refute or confirm emerging theoretical ideas" (Parahoo, 2009, p. 6). I started with the experts that I knew who introduced me to others that I was able to use as sources of data.

Role of the Researcher

It is my role, as the researcher to interpret the texts, words, and actions presented by the cultural participants (Creswell, 2003). I bring to this work a lifetime of observations and a slew of graduate level courses in ethnographic methods. Any interpretations that I make and write as analysis will necessarily be shaped by my background and experience. I was fully involved with participants as a researcher and also as a member of the group. This inevitably caused conflict and some limitations to my study, especially in light of the fact that my children accompanied me on most of my trips to the field. There were times that I needed to be a mother and not a researcher. Children like to be fed fairly regularly, and having the children meant I could not leave camp at night to pursue the study.

What I do bring to the role of researcher is a unique awareness of the tension between being a researcher while also being a member of the group. Activities that previously had been done purely for enjoyment were examined more analytically. My relationships within the group also came into play as I sought individuals to interview.

Friends and acquaintances were interviewed or became sources of access to others to interview.

Data Collection Procedures

The group studied was the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA). It reenacts the time period from roughly 800 to 1600 A.D. Members of the SCA, or *Scadians*, gather periodically for tournaments, feasts, ithras[3], or mock wars. Scadians who show excellence in the *artes martial*, and also display the qualities of courtesy and chivalry, can be awarded the rank of "Knight" by the current "King."

Data Sources. This study collected data from several sources. The first was through field observation and in-person interviews. The second source of data was from a survey emailed to participants solicited from the listserv used by SCA Knights all over the world. A third source of data was the email archives of the kingdom listserv used by those living in Calontir dating back to 1998. Each of these data sources will be discussed below.

Field observation and interviews. In order to develop rapport with the informant, a certain level of trust must be reached. There are no set methods for developing rapport with informants. It can begin with observations of behavior and emulating that behavior if the situation warrants. I took notes in a journal with details of setting, weather, time of day and descriptions of the actions of the participants.

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[3] An University of Ithra is an educational program in An Tir where the focus is on classes on a variety of topics. The purpose is to obtain a certificate of mastery showing that you have taken a basic level of coursework. Other kingdoms have similar types of groups.

The process I used was fluid and flexible, allowing me to adapt to new situations. For instance, my second interview was with someone I had originally met in a rather negative light. This individual woke us up in the middle of the night with his overly loud behavior. I made it a point to introduce myself to him in the morning. We were able to establish a relationship that ended in his willingness to be interviewed. Rapport is important because it engenders trust between the informant and the researcher. This helps to facilitate the process of gaining information (Spradley, 1979). Because courtesy is a very important value to the participants of the SCA, this Knight was most willing to amend his behavior.

The nature of the SCA is such that there is no permanent locale in which to conduct research on the group. Members meet at various types of gatherings, from informal potlucks to extensive camping events. Some of the larger events can last longer than a single weekend. Two examples of these are the large inter-kingdom wars known as Estrella, held in Arizona in February, and Pennsic, held in Pennsylvania in August. Members often travel thousands of miles to attend big events and stay for a week or more. These events are usually held in campgrounds or fairgrounds and necessitate setting up temporary housing. This constant vagabondage creates interesting situations and unique challenges.

I attended six weekend camping events in three states (Washington, Oregon, and California) which afforded the opportunity to observe behaviors, both ritual and spontaneous. Activities that took place at these events usually involved performance of ritual, both planned and unplanned. It was possible to see a variety of interactions as

individuals performed their roles. I was present for several Knighting ceremonies during the course of my study.

When I attended the events in Kingdom of the West (Northern California), I was met by Vera, the daughter of a previous colleague of mine at Washington State University. She was very familiar with the local participants and was able to introduce me to others. I also took it upon myself to talk to participants, taking pains to overcome my somewhat shy and reticent nature. I relied on one person while in California. Whereas, in my home territory, I was much more comfortable and had a much larger network of support.

As of this writing, there are just over 31,000 paid members including over 1,600 Knights in the SCA. Since they are spread across the world, it would be impossible to interview all of them in order to collect data. I attended six weekend events from June 2006 to August 2006. In my initial plans, I thought it possible to interview up to six individuals, if not more, during the course of each weekend. What I found was that participants were very occupied by their activities at the event, and it was difficult to get a significant amount of time devoted to interviews. This caused a change in my method, and I interviewed the remaining participants at various locations, such as their homes (Portland, Oregon), over the course of the autumn of 2006.

My first interview was with Duke Master Frederick of Holland[4], who was at the original Berkley "Garden Party" in 1966 from which the SCA grew. It seemed fitting that I begin with him. I had traveled to California to attend the Kingdom of the West's June

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[4] None of the participants interviewed for this study chose to remain anonymous, although that option was given during the consent process.

Crown. This is a tournament that is held in order to determine, by combat, the next King and Queen. At this event, I also interviewed Sir Colin.

My third and fourth interviews were conducted at an event called West-An Tir War, held in Yreka, California in over the Fourth of July weekend of 2006. This event alternates yearly between Oregon and California locations[5]. Earl Sir Obadiah was with a group of fighters that had just come off the war field. They were relaxing at a picnic table. I approached the group, and Earl Sir Obadiah was more than happy to answer my questions, as well as introduce me to Sir Stephen, who only had "two minutes" to spare before he left the event.

At this point, I had been traveling and camping with my two children for two weeks. We returned north to the Kingdom of An Tir to complete my interviews. My fifth interview was with Viscount Sir Rustam whom I knew through my friend, Viscountess Nadezdha. She was squired to Sir Rustam. My relationship with Nadezdha was that of student to Pelican, meaning that she was teaching me about the service and volunteering side of the SCA. I interviewed Viscount Sir Rustam at the July Coronation, the event where the new King and Queen are invested. My next interview was held at Tryggvy's War. I had known Baron Sir William Percival for many years, dating back to his tenure as Baron of Terra Pomaria (Salem, Oregon). He had also fought in a Principality Coronet the previous year with me as his Consort. If he had won, we would have reigned as Prince and Princess of the Principality of the Summits.

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[5] This has changed since I originally wrote this. It now has a semi-permanent location on the coast of Oregon near Gold Beach.

My seventh interview was with Baron Sir Arnsbjorn[6]. I was introduced to him by Graf Sir Berek, a Knight and past King of An Tir that I had known for many years. At the time of our interview, Arnsbjorn was a squire and was Knighted later in the summer of 2006 and is currently serving as Baron of Stromgard (Southwestern Washington). By this time, it had become apparent that getting interviews of any length at events would be very difficult. People were just too busy, so I adjusted my tactics. I contacted participants at events and then made arrangements to interview elsewhere.

At the "Picnic in the Park," Portland, Oregon, I had intended to interview Master Conchobar, a member of the Order of the Laurel, but his event schedule prevented it. I interviewed Earl Sir Edward Ian, Sir Olin, and Jarl Sir Ulfred. I was unable to complete my interview with Jarl Sir Ulfred, so made arrangements to meet with him later at his home.

It took approximately two years to transcribe and analyze the interviews. It became clear that I needed to be able to follow-up on some of the lines of questioning. For instance, in the original interviews, I asked the following questions:

> What are your most private or personal objects?
> What do your special objects, taken as a whole, mean to you?

I found that the information I got back was a bit vague because the questions were a bit broad. Being short on time and not able to do the in-depth interviews that I had previously completed, I undertook a survey using the email listserv of the Known World Chivalry. This listserv is only used by Knights and Masters of Arms in the SCA.

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[6] Arnsbjorn was a Squire at the time of our interview.

Viscount Rustam posted to the list that I was doing a study on the Chivalry in the SCA

and asked for volunteers willing to fill out a survey. Seven individuals completed and

returned the survey.

Instead of the previous line of questioning, I asked the following questions:

How important is authenticity to you? To the SCA?
What kinds of objects gain value in the SCA?
How does authenticity affect the value of an object?
Are there any particular SCA-related items that have great value to you?
Why do they have this value?
How did you acquire the objects that you value?
What do these objects mean to you when you are not at an SCA event?
How do you store or display your important SCA possessions when at
events? When not at events?
What would it mean to not have these objects?
What do your special SCA objects, taken as a whole, mean to you?
Do you think the value of these objects is readily apparent to others? In the
SCA? Outside of the SCA?

This had several advantages. First, I was able to get opinions from a wider

spectrum of kingdoms. This would help eliminate any bias that might have been

introduced by limiting myself to a specific region, the Western United States. Another

benefit was that it was much faster than trying to pin an individual down at an already

busy event. The interviewee could take their time and construct a reasoned response to

my questions. The disadvantage of this type of data collection is that I couldn't

immediately follow up on a line of questioning. I also found that some of the answers

were rather short, where if I was interviewing in person I probably could have obtained a

more in-depth answer.

I found that the interviews that I conducted at the homes of the participants

yielded the most useful data. This is probably a result of not having time constraints and

the subjects feeling more comfortable in their own surroundings. If I was to continue on

this course of study, I would try to schedule interviews in similar surroundings.

Table 1.

Events Attended During the Summer of 2006

Name of Event	Location of Event	Date of Event
Summits Summer Investiture	Otis, Oregon	June 16-18, 2006
West June Crown	Santa Rosa, California	June 23-25, 2006
An Tir West War	Yreka, California	June 30 – July 2, 2006
July Coronation	Port Gamble, Washington	July 14-16, 2006
Tryggvy's War	Lebanon, Oregon	July 28-30, 2006
Lebus	Albany, Oregon	August 11-13, 2006
Long and Short of It	Gervais, Oregon	August 24-26, 2006
September Crown	Bellingham, Washington	September 1-4, 2006
Acorn War	Gervais, Oregon	September 8-10, 2006
Summits Fall Coronet	Trail, Oregon	September 15-17, 2006

At the events I attended, I had my own space in which to conduct my interviews. I

had my own "encampment"[7] and was able to extend the proper hospitality expected in the

SCA. I was also able to visit other encampments to interview participants.

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[7] These events are generally held in rural areas with participants camping for the duration of the event. This necessitates the acquisition of camping equipment. Since the goal is to recreate an historical period, modern camping equipment is not ideal. The goal of members, to varying degrees, is to acquire as much medieval-looking equipment as possible. This begins with the pavilion, often a large and elaborately decorated canvas structure. These pavilions are furnished with bed, carpets, and clothes storage.

While attending the SCA events, during my observation phase, I was able to witness investitures taking place. This triangulation of methods enables me to cross-check emerging patterns and follow-up on new information as needed. For instance, after watching the coronation of the King Amalric and Queen Caia, I was able to ask further questions about some of the symbolism and objects used in the ceremony. This illustrated some of the differences between individually-prized objects and those considered "State symbols."

Interview questions and format. The goals of ethnographic questions are to elicit information from the informant that furthers the researcher's knowledge of a particular culture. I used a pre-determined set of questions but allowed the individual to guide the interview into areas of concern to them. For instance, when Sir Olin was talking about the clothes that were made for his Knighting, I could follow up with questions about who helped do the sewing and how their participation influenced him. I then returned to the pre-determined questions. There was an explicit purpose to the interview -- I wanted the informants to repeat themselves and to elicit information in such a way as to verify previous information. An example of this is when I had Ulfred talk about how

The process of acquisition of the historical camping gear is expensive and rarely accomplished quickly. Most people are constantly upgrading their equipment to something even more historically accurate. These items can be purchased or are frequently made by the participant.

Over the last ten years of participation I have accumulated a pavilion, a day shade, and much of the smaller comfort-providing objects needed to camp. SCA camping is not at all like "modern" camping. The goal is not to lighten your load or make your burden smaller. Frequently, participants use trailers to haul all the necessary gear to events.

people's behavior changed when symbols of rank were worn. He followed up with
several anecdotes illustrating the behavior.

I actively sought the words (such as *woozles*[8]) used within that culture by
listening to participants talk to each other. I used my questions to find out how the culture
is structured (Spradley, 1979). For instance, I began each interview with questions to
establish the person's history in the SCA. Then I asked them what a typical event might
be in order to learn more about how they interact with the culture. This gave a broad
overview of how time is spent in the SCA at an event, which might be different for each
participant. My questions attempted to locate each person that I was interviewing within
the power hierarchy of the SCA. I then moved into more specific questions as to their
value systems and material culture. I ended each interview with an opportunity for the
interviewee to add anything they felt was important. See Appendix One for the first set of
interview questions and Appendix Two for the second set of Interview questions.

Data collection from email archives. During the month of February 2007, I
downloaded the Kingdom of Calontir[9] email listserv archives for the years 1997 to 2005.
I chose these dates as the archives seemed to be the most complete. Calontir was chosen
because its archives were available online and publicly accessible. The archives are
available at <http://listserv.unl.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A0=CALONTIR>. The process was
tedious, as I had to select each month individually, read each email, and decide if the
content was of interest. If it was, I copied the text from the webpage and pasted it into a

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[8] "Woozles" is a term made up by Mistress Kathlin used to designate any shiny objects
which may or may not be useful. For instance, bead necklaces and small pottery cups
could be woozles.
[9] Part of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and part of Arkansas.

Word document. I was fairly liberal in the content that I extracted at this point. I figured

that it would be easier to cull out extraneous information than to go back and try to find

something later.

       Credibility of findings. Since I am an active participant in the Society, I had to

ensure that objectivity was maintained, as much as possible, during data collection. Using

various techniques to cross-reference information enabled a more objective picture to

emerge. I interviewed 15 people, both in person and by online survey, all of whom had

been in the SCA for extended periods of time, most for over 20 years. One of the

interviewees was in attendance at the original SCA event in 1966.

       I chose the interviewees because of their rank (Knight, Count, etc.) which

assumes a certain competency and knowledge of the organization. In almost all cases, I

either knew the person before the interview or was introduced to them by someone I

knew. In the case of the emailed survey, some of the respondents were people that I knew

already, such as Master Korwyn and Aveloc, while the majority were as yet unknown to

me. This is also how I received a copy of Michael Cramer's own dissertation on the SCA,

which I will reference later. As a final step, Lord Jenaro Taro, a long time participant of

the SCA, read portions of the results and analysis to offer criticisms and further input.

       In order to add another layer of description to the study, I downloaded the

archives of SCA listserv email groups from the Midwestern region of the United States.

This helped to prevent a Western regional bias as my on-site participation was limited to

the West coast states. I ran text searches on key concepts that emerged from the

interviews to find relevant conversations on the email listservs. I then used that data to

supplement the concepts and categories emerging from in-person interviews. This enabled me to confirm information that was revealed in the interviews. The listserv data was not transcribed since the data was written by SCA participants themselves. There is a possibility that I may have missed some data, but since I was looking for corroboration, and not new information, I felt that this was an acceptable risk.

Observer bias and limitations. There are several ways in which bias might have been introduced into this study. I was not able to collect data in every possible location or with the entire population. There is a phenomenon called "inter-kingdom anthropology" that talks about differences in law and custom between the kingdoms. These differences can be small such as whether a person bows to the empty Royal throne or not, or they can be larger issues, such as how many times a year a new King and Queen are selected. Any problems arising from these differences are often shrugged off as "inter-kingdom anthropology." The data I collected was possibly skewed towards the attitudes and beliefs of the Knights and participants in the western part of the United States. This regional difference is one of reasons I chose to use a Midwestern listserv as one of my sources of data. This would allow me to cross-check to identify any regionally based differences or to confirm that those differences did not exist.

Data analysis. Harry Wolcott (1994) breaks the process of data analysis into three parts: description, analysis, and interpretation. He defines these as:

> *Description* addresses the question, "What is going on here?" Data consist of observations made by the researcher and/ or reported to the researcher by others.

Analysis addresses the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them – in short, how things work. In terms of stated objectives, analysis also may be employed evaluatively to address questions of why a system is not working or how it might be made to work "better."

Interpretation addresses processual questions of meanings and contexts: "How does it all mean?" "What is to be made of it all?" (p. 12)

To begin my data analysis the first set of interviews were transcribed and coded. To this data set, I added the email archives, and later, the second set of email interviews. Once I had all of these gathered together, I began to sift through the data, looking for word or phrases that related to value systems and material culture. I put these into a two-column table format. The first column had the quoted material, and the second column had the codes.

I divided the data from the three sources (in-person interviews, online interviews, and email archives) into two main themes: Living the Imagined History (IH) and Material Culture (MC). While I will list a few of the categories and the resulting codes here, they will be described in richer detail in the following chapter, and can be found in their entirety in Appendix Three.

IH: Living the Imagined History – This is what the SCA is and how it works
    IHEntry: Entry to Culture
    IHEntryTime: Amount of time in the SCA
    IHEntryHook: The Hook, or why I came back
    IHEntryNost: Nostalgia

As I went through the transcribed interviews and email archives, I looked for phrases and words that spoke to either the value system of the culture or the value of

objects used in that culture. The following example shows both the quote from the email archives and the coding used. The codes used are those to identify both how the individual entered the culture and also identified a discussion of clothing.

> I've always dressed medieval, one day I realized I   IHEntryHook
> was standing in a group dressed like me and I   MCAltRealCloth
> followed them. Jeefrs

Not all of the threads of conversations were used in the results discussions (i.e. discussions of "the Dream[10]" or discussion of fringe groups in the SCA). Both of these topics are areas where future research could be done.

I began with over 10,000 pages of emails and transcribed interviews. It took me nearly a year to comb through the emails to find all references to values systems or material culture. Once I began coding, many of the extraneous long conversations such as those about fealty (which while interesting was not germane to this dissertation) fell away. I found a richness of detail in the categories that remained; mainly, what values influenced the material culture and how does the material culture gain value. The following chapter is a synthesis of results and a discussion of what I found in the data.

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[10] This is a highly personal ideal of what an individual thinks the SCA should be, where that is the liminal moment when the past becomes a sensual embodiment or the SCA as a perfect ideal towards which to strive.

Chapter Four

The "Current Middle Ages" Life of Things

"It's our village."
Jarl Ulfred (personal communication, October 14, 2006)

The purpose of this study is to understand how an invented community imbues material objects with symbolic meaning. This portion of the dissertation is an exploration of the ways that the members of the Society for Creative Anachronism define their community and value the objects that make up their material culture. This chapter is broken into two parts. I will first discuss how cultural values are interpreted by the actors involved. Then I will discuss the way in which material culture is acquired and valued within the SCA.

By looking at how current SCA participants value authenticity[11], connection to community, and nostalgia for an idealized past, I learned how material objects become symbolic texts and how participants use these objects to perform their fantasized version of history. Erisman (1998) says of the SCA that, "their practices tend to set them apart from the military re-enactment hobbyist groups, which tend to focus on specific incidents such as battles rather than on the more general ambiance of an historical era" (p. 6). This ambiance is created by the material culture.

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[11] Authenticity, in this context, is the attempt to recreate period materials and processes in material culture.

An emotive and evocative spirit inspires many to participate in the SCA. At the same time, historical accuracy in their material culture is important to a large segment of the society. The search for authenticity is more actively sought in the objects than it is in behavior or cultural structure.

Living the Imagined History

Michael Cramer (2005), who completed his dissertation on performance in the SCA and was also a King of the East, divides the history of the SCA into three phases:

> [t]he early formative period, a middle period of expansion as regional differences developed, and the current period marked by large inter-kingdom events. (p. 46)

According to Cramer (2005), the first phase began rather amorphously in the mid-to-late 1960s and ended with the formation of the Kingdom of the Middle[12] in 1969. This period established some of the protocols, and social conflicts, which informed much of the growth and political strife for the next several decades. The essence of this contestation is between those who argue for a central rule of the corporate Board of Directors (the BOD) and those who argue the rule, "The King's Word is Law." These issues are still abroad in the SCA today. Duke James Greyhelm tells of an early incident establishing this precedent of "King's Word is Law."

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[12] The Kingdom of the Middle is also known as the Midrealm and is made up of the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and portions of Kentucky, Iowa, and the province of Ontario, Canada.

> This all reminds me of something....
> Scene: The meeting after the FIRST overnight tournament in the SCA.
> Place: Lord Randall of Hightower's home high on Twin Peaks in SF.
> Date: some time in 1969 (?)
> After listening to the comments of the populace and officers comments on
> the wisdom of holding tournaments outside of the immediate Bay Area,
> King Cariadoc of the West announces that a decision will be made. A
> voice from the populace asks "When do we vote?" Cariadoc slams his
> dagger pommel (better than a gavel) onto the table and says fiercely "The
> KING votes!" Silence from the populace. Friggen awesome. (J. Early,
> personal communication, March 25, 2010)

The second phase of the SCA was marked by expansion of regional differences and the addition of more kingdoms. Over time, these individual kingdoms developed their own customs and laws leading to what is called "inter-kingdom anthropology." The third phase, beginning in the 1990s, is marked by the rise of the large inter-kingdom wars such as Estrella in Atenveldt (Arizona) and Lilies War in Calontir[13]. Also marked in the third phase is the rise of the Internet and an easing of communications within the SCA.

The SCA formally dates its origin to 1966 in Berkeley, California, although two of the original creators, David Thewlis (known as Duke Siegfried von Hoflichskeit) and Ken de Maiffe (known as Duke Fulk de Wyvern), met sometime around 1960 when stationed in Germany. They taught themselves about medieval armor and sword fighting. When they came back to the United States, they met Diana Paxson who was studying medieval history at the University of California, Berkeley. They continued to work on aspects of medieval fighting, constructing swords and shields out of wood.

Near the end of the school year, when Ms. Paxson was about to graduate, these early innovators wanted to hold a "Last Tournament" based on a Victorian vision of the

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[13] Parts of Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Fayetteville, Arkansas

Middle Ages that took place in Scotland in 1839. Flyers were made and posted

throughout the campus.

The following is the text of that original flyer.

Be it known to all
Who may be lovers of
Chivalry
That there will be held on the first of May
12:00 to 6:00 P.M.
an
International Tournament
For that it is Spring
All Knights are summoned to defend in single combat the claims of
Their ladies to the title of "fairest," signified by the crown which will
Be awarded to him who the Judges deem fights most bravely. And for
The increase of joy to both them who fight and they who watch, there will
be
Both singing, and dance.

(please reply)
2219 Oregon St
Berkeley, Calif.
845-4340

All guests are encouraged to
Wear the dress of some age
Of Christendom, Outre-Mer,
Or faerie, in which swords were
Used. (Keyes, 1980, p. 2)

As evidenced by the flyer, the early events did not distinguish between fictional

fantasy worlds, such as those of Tolkien, and of actual history. There was an element of

play involved that survives to the current day. Diana Paxson is credited with doing two

things for this first event that set the atmosphere for the succeeding generations of

participants. First, she insisted that everyone wear a costume of sorts. This fully

participatory aspect of the early SCA was different from the Renaissance Fairs that are

more audience-oriented. Secondly, she included broader cultural elements such as food and dancing that set the stage for the SCA to become more than a martial sports club (Keyes, 1980).

Everyone who attended wore costumes, and the men fought for the opportunity to crown their lady, "Queen for the day." The costumes were repurposed or constructed by the participants with a wide range of skill and attention to historical accuracy. While the original participants did not plan to continue beyond that first event, now known as the Garden Party, they found that what they had created took on a life of its own (Keyes, 1980). Officially, this established the beginning of the SCA, and time is marked from this date. "Anno Societatus" (AS), or "year of the society." It is also designated by AS I, AS II, AS III in Roman numerals. May Day is the anniversary of the SCA and corresponds with the pagan celebration of Beltane.

The participants of the Garden Party met again at Midsummer and once again held a tournament. At the end of that tournament, 24 people marched up Telegraph Avenue to protest the 20th century. It was the 1960s, after all. This established a trend of events being held during the quarters and cross-quarters of the pagan and Catholic calendars.

In his dissertation, Cramer (2005) states that, "[t]he visual image most SCA fighters wanted to project was what they themselves recognized as historical, and this led them to adopt an aesthetic taken from comic books, children's novels, movies, and fantasy art" (p. 48). This early construction of 'pastness' established a manner of appropriating portions of history, and sometimes fantasy fiction, and reinterpreting it to

become something new and useable to the participants. The early innovators drew upon

many different lines of text to construct meaning within the context of their play. This

postmodern tendency drew upon simulation and interpretation to construct alternate lines

of reality.

The participants began to hold fairly regular tournaments, and the SCA was

launched. Marion Zimmer Bradley made the name up on the spot when she needed to

reserve a park for the second tournament. The "group was trying to recreate the ways of

the middle ages as it could have been, which would certainly be considered an

anachronism in twentieth century Berkeley, and the goal was creativity" (Keyes, 1980, p.

2).

Prominent among the early innovators were individuals who would later become

famous fantasy and science fiction writers. The woman who was a main organizer of the

Garden Party was Diana Paxson, author of the *Westria* series, known in the SCA as

Diana Listmaker. Others were Marion Zimmer Bradley, known as Elfrida of Greenwalls

author of the *Mists of Avalon*, and Poul Anderson, known as Bela of Eastmarch author of

Brain Wave (Erisman, 1998).

The early years saw a distinct connection between the science fiction/ fantasy

literature, the film industries, and the SCA. At the 1967 Westercon, a science fiction

convention in Los Angeles, California, author Harlan Ellison competed in an SCA-

sponsored tourney. Ellison was dating Grace Lee Whitney (Yeoman Rand of the original

Star Trek television series) at the time (Keyes, 1980).

A major event in SCA history was the 1968 Worldcon Science Fiction Convention in Berkeley. That year, Gene Roddenberry was given a special award for his work on *Star Trek*. In attendance were 1430 people. An SCA publication, *A Handbook for the (Current) Middle Ages*, was offered for sale, and a tournament was held. For some at the conference, this was their first exposure to the SCA, and they took what they learned along with the Handbook back to their home regions and established branches Some of these branches were as far away as the east coast (Cramer, 2005).

There are individuals who have been playing in the SCA since the beginning. Many more joined shortly after the first Garden Party. Membership has grown into the many thousands worldwide. Families have grown up with children and grandchildren being raised in the Society. This multi-generational aspect allows the creation and imprinting of cultural patterns. Time spent in the SCA also creates expertise in the Society. Thus, all of the individuals who were interviewed have attained the rank of Peer. Some have sat on the Thrones of the Kingdom of An Tir or Kingdom of the West.

Geography and Governing in the SCA: the Knowne World. The "Knowne World" is divided into kingdoms, each headed by a King and Queen chosen every six months[14] by armed combat, in a contest called a Crown Tournament. There are currently nineteen kingdoms worldwide. The first kingdom formed was the Kingdom of the West, then the Kingdom of the East, and thirdly, the Kingdom of the Middle (the Midrealm).

Within kingdoms, the land is further divided into smaller units. One unit, the Principality, is a large designated territory headed by a Prince and Princess who are also

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[14] In the Kingdom of the West, Crown Tournaments are held every four months.

chosen every six months by armed combat in a Coronet Tournament. Principalities are generally units of land that may some day become their own kingdom. For example, the most recently formed kingdom, Gleann Abhann was once a Principality in the Kingdom of Meridies. The King and Queen cannot travel to all events held within the Kingdom, so the Prince and Princess of each Principality act on their behalf. This allows more people to see the Royalty and to participate in the medieval atmosphere and ritual. The Prince and Princess are also called the Coronet, as opposed to the King and Queen who, collectively, are the Crown. Most of the other kingdoms of the SCA have arisen from within the original three kingdoms.

The Kingdom of An Tir started out as a Principality of the West. It became a kingdom in 1981. It encompasses the Pacific Northwest, including the American states of Oregon, Washington, and northern Idaho, and the Canadian Provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories. The Kingdom of An Tir now has three Principalities; the Summits, Avaca, and Tir Righ. The Principality of Avacal has been discussing forming its own kingdom sometime in the near future. It can take longer to travel to events within An Tir than to travel from An Tir to events in Atenveldt (Arizona).

Smaller than the Principalities are the landed Baronies. A Baron and Baroness who are appointed by the Crown head this type of geographical unit. The boundaries of Baronies are usually held at county lines, corresponding with modern cartography. Smaller geographical units are Shires, which are autonomous collectives headed by

Seneschals who are elected into office, and Freeholds or Cantons, which are subsidiary units of Baronies.

Figure 1. The author and Sir Gustav[15] as the Prince and Princess of the Principality of the Summits in the Kingdom of An Tir. (author's collection)

Those individuals who are heads of Baronies are called Landed Barons and Baronesses to distinguish them from the Court Baronies given as rewards for services to

[15] Gustav is shown here wearing his red Squire's belt. He was later Knighted in 2010.

the Crown. The Crown appoints landed Barons and Baronesses after a polling of opinion in the Barony. There are usually several couples "running for office." The Crown takes the population's opinion into consideration but, ultimately, may appoint whomever they chose. The normal term is for three years, with options for renewal. If a population of a Barony is dissatisfied with the performance of their Baron and Baroness, they may call for a confidence polling. This can cause friction and factionalization. One cannot escape politics even in escapist past times.

Events in the SCA. The ephemeral nature of participation in the SCA means that there are few[16] permanent locations for activities. Members meet for short periods of time, either a full day for a feast or longer periods for camping over weekends. This can be at campgrounds, community halls, fairgrounds, or just about anywhere large enough to host an event. Sometimes events are even held at hotels with conference facilities.

Activities at events vary widely. Some events have themes, such as Crusader or Viking, and some are more general in nature. Most tournament season events, in An Tir, take place from Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. The type of activities depends on the kind of event. Some kingdom level events, such as those where the new King and Queen are chosen, can be very focused on a single purpose. It is at kingdom level events that the Peers[17] gather to discuss Peerage candidates and other policy issues. These

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[16] There a few locations that have been used repeatedly for events that have become more or less permanent event sites. Clinton War (Washington) and Quad War (Saskatchewan) are privately owned lands that have had purpose built structures such as showers, privies and Warfield battlements. Some publicly held lands, such as state parks, can be used year after year but have few SCA-purpose built structures.

[17] "Peers" are individuals who have attained the ranks of "peerage" which means that they have sat a throne at least once or have been made a member of one of the polling

meetings can take up a large part of the event that is not dedicated to the Crown Tournament.

Smaller, more local, events can hold championship competitions in such areas as archery, rapier, or heavy armored combat. Alternatively, the event may have no focus other than a war or arts and sciences gathering. There are many possible combinations of activities such that each event is unique. In the following excerpts, the participants discuss how they spend their time at events.

Master Conchobar whose full SCA name is Ollamh Conchobar Clarsair (pronounced Olov Conor Clarsheer) has a persona of an Irish harpist from the time period of about 1150 A.D. He belongs to the Peerage Orders of both Laurel (Artisan) and Pelican (Service).

> Master Conchobar:
> These days it's a lot more meetings, things like that. Normally, … we'd get there on Friday afternoon or evening. … And then on Saturday it depends. If it's a local event there will be Court, there will be tournament. If it's a Crown event, kingdom wide one, there will be peerage meetings on Saturday … Then there would be Court around noon and if it's Crown there will be the Crown tournament or if it's a Coronation event there will be the seven-hour Court (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Earl Sir Edward Ian Anderson is a Polish Hussar of the 16th century. He was the King of Caid in A.S. XXI (1986) and was Knighted in A.S. XVIII (1984). He is also a member of the Order of the Laurel.

> Earl Sir Edward Ian:
> I get up and feed my horses because I am also doing equestrian activities very strongly now. Most of my events are horse related now. I will then

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Orders (Chivalry, Laurel, Pelican). The polling Orders each have a specialty and membership indicates a certain level of mastery; Chivalry in heavy armored combat, Laurel the arts and sciences, and Pelican excellence in service.

get my own breakfast, help my lady set up the camp or clean up the camp from the night before take a couple hang over pills and find out when court is and find out what activities are going for the day. I will usually spend a half an hour to an hour with my squires that are there going over any issues they have or go over things they want to talk about and if they need help on anything I'll try to help them on those things (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

Sir Olin Ulfredsson is a member of the Ulfredsheim household. He is a Norseman of the 9th or 10th century and is a member of the Order of Chivalry, the Knights of the SCA.

Sir Olin:
Spending time with friends enjoying their company, whether there's any fighting which is my primary focus (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

Figure 2. Scene from a war. (Author's collection)

Rank and royalty in the Society for Creative Anachronism. In the real Middle Ages, heredity usually determined who ruled a country. In the SCA, the right to rule as King and Queen is determined by contest of arms. Twice or three times a year participants gather to determine who will become the next King and Queen by holding a tournament between armored fighters. The winners of a tournament reign for four or six months before turning the kingdom over to the next set of rulers at a Coronation ceremony. From the time between the tournament and their Coronation, the winners are called the Crown Prince and Princess, again reflecting but not recreating hereditary royalty. Some of the duties of the Crowns and Coronets are holding Court where awards can be given, entertainments made, and laws read into the record. Additional duties include traveling through their kingdoms to give out awards and to meet with their populace. This is called a Royal Progress.

The SCA mimics medieval society in that it is structured and hierarchical (Society for Creative Anachronism, 2005). All who participate in the SCA are assumed to be of noble and gentle birth and are called "my lord" or "my lady." It is said that there are no peasants in the SCA, although some people do adopt peasant personas. There are various levels of commitment to this hierarchy, with some individuals completely ignoring it. While this type of behavior is frowned upon, it is rarely sanctioned.

There exists a ranking of Kings, Queens, Dukes, Duchesses, Barons, Baronesses, Lords, and Ladies called the Order of Precedence. Individuals can advance in rank through award and recognition by the King and Queen. While all are considered of noble and gentle birth, there does exist a cultural structure that has recreated feudal hierarchy.

An individual may rise in rank based on ability (usually martial)[18] and drive. The Order of Precedence gives a listing of the awards received by members of the SCA. The King and Queen are respectively numbered one and two. As an individual receives more awards they move up in rank.

This ranking is not considered a "reward" for a certain behavior but rather "recognition." It is almost inevitable that what one individual considers recognition another considers a reward or, in the parlance of the SCA, a "cookie." A common center of discord is this viewpoint discrepancy, recognition or cookie. Some think that the current system encourages behavior designed for achievement of reward, others place more emphasis on the behavior as a reward in itself.

There are several levels of awards and ranks achievable in the SCA. While it seems that every branch has some sort of award or "brownie point" to give out, there are a few that are common across all groups and kingdoms. Some awards are considered *armigerous* which entitle the bearer to "unique and suitable arms" (SCA, 2006). The first is the Award of Arms (AOA) which allows the person to bear the title of "Lady" or "Lord." This award is given when a person is recognized for participating by (but not limited to) developing a persona, volunteering to work at events, or learning any of the martial arts such as heavy armored fighting, archery, or rapier combat.

The next level of awards is the grant level award. There are several offered at this level, and each kingdom has their own version. In An Tir, excellence in the arts and sciences is recognized by the Order of the Jambe de Lion, excellence in service is the

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[18] Rank based on martial skill is not gender specific, although there are far fewer female Knights than male.

Order of the Goutte de Sange, excellence in archery is the Order of the Grey Goose Shaft, excellence in equestrian is Order de Cheval et Lion, excellence in rapier is the Order of the White Scarf (SCA, 2006).

The Coronets can give out certain awards in the name of the Crown, such as the Award of Arms (AOA) but not grant level awards such as the Goutte de Sange (for service) and the Jambe de Lion (for arts and sciences). Individuals can write to the Crown or Coronet to recommend others for a particular award. The Crown or Coronet's whim sometimes decides whether someone gets recognized by awards, but it is usually considered a good thing to recognize people for the work that they do as fighters, volunteers, and craftsmen.

The next higher level is the Peerages. Membership carries a Patent of Arms and is awarded by the Crown to those who have demonstrated qualities of nobility (peer-like qualities or "PLQs") and outstanding achievement in the arts and sciences (Laurel), service (Pelican), or armored combat (Chivalry). The appellation used for the peerage is different from the previous levels. The most common is Master/Mistress, but designations such as Dame, Companion and others are also used (SCA, 2006). A Patent of Arms allows the bearer to display their arms with a crest (a helm above the arms) and standard (a pair of figures to either side of the arms holding them up).

The members of the Peerage Order of Chivalry are called Knights, again reflecting a desire to mirror history. As in the past, so too, are the Knights of the SCA given livery and regalia during their investiture. Knights are in fealty to the King and

Queen and are expected to perform duties for the King. If one is a Knight, "Sir" can be used as a designation for that person whether male or female.

Another rank higher than the Peerages is the Royal Peerage. These individuals have won a Crown or Coronet Tournament and have reigned at least once. Those who have reigned once as King or Queen are styled a Count and Countess. Those who have reigned as King or Queen more than once are styled as Duke or Duchess. Those who have reigned as Prince or Princess are styled as Viscount or Viscountess, no matter how many times they have reigned.

There's a saying among the royalty in the SCA, "you exist because they believe." This willingness to believe is key to creating the atmosphere. While each participant brings their own preconceived notions of what is medieval, the amalgam of all these viewpoints creates the ambiance and cultural cohesion. During the time of their tenure, Royalty becomes the living symbols of the collective desire of participants to create another reality. To the participants of the SCA, the King and Queen are as much royalty as any of Europe's crowned heads, at least for six months when the next set of Royalty are Crowned.

Jarl Sir Ulfred Drømmefell is the head of the Ulfredsheim household and was Knighted in A.S. XIII (1978). He was the 15th and 21st (last) Prince[19] of An Tir and the 3rd King of An Tir. In the following excerpt, he discusses behavior that shows how Royalty is treated in at least a facsimile of medieval deference. This type of behavior is learned as modern sensibilities tend to a differing egalitarianism.

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[19] Before An Tir was a kingdom, it was a Crown Principality of the Kingdom of the West.

Jarl Sir Ulfred:
They explained things were going to get going but they were waiting for
the Prince to wake up. Nothing was going to happen until the Prince woke
up and was ready to come out. Nobody was going to go wake the Prince
up. This was very important to them (personal communication, October
14, 2006).

When a King confers the Accolade of Knighthood on a participant in the SCA, it

is attendant with ritual and meaning to the culture. There is an awareness of the duality of

reality and fantasy within the game they play. Even within this fantastical use of ritual,

deep meaning and significance is given to it. Duke Master Frederick of Holland was one

of the original attendees of the Garden Party. He became a Master of Arms[20] in A.S. XIII

(1978) and was King of the West in A.S. XV (1981).

Duke Master Frederick:
When a king gives someone an award of arms, they have an award of
arms, that and three bucks will get you a cup of coffee, it is a real award of
arms, the Knighthood is a real Knighthood (personal communication, June
24, 2006).

Whether this is an act of *suspension of disbelief* or an act of *profound belief* is

probably up to the individual, but as a culture, it has been decided to accept rank as

reality. However, as noted, outside of the culture, rank "and three bucks will get you a

cup of coffee."

Barbarrossa:
Only the Crown has the One-True-Way TM. . .. . .. and that is for half a
year. . . . .if we all show up to play (Barbarrossa, January 2003).

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[20] Masters of Arms are not required to swear fealty to the Crown.

Reasons to enter the culture and stay. During the birth of the SCA, fantasy and

science fiction played a large role in shaping both the environment surrounding the

emerging group and also the generation that produced it. The students who started the

SCA were readers of the books J.R.R. Tolkien's, *Lord of the Rings* and Robert Heinlein's

(1961) *A Stranger in a Strange Land*. The literary tastes of the students could be

"interpreted as a vignette of hippy orientation – anti-materialism, dependence on love as a

modus operandi, sympathy for minority groups, subjectivism, enjoyment of fantasy, and

emphasis on the immediacy of experience" (Gottsdanker & Pidgeon, 1969, p. 383). It is

the last two points, the enjoyment of fantasy and immediacy of experience, that led to the

success of the fantastical use of history and myth to build a culture meant to be

experienced and not just observed.

When asked why they participate in the SCA, Scadians have responded with

varying reasons:

1. Love of history; "[t]he chance to study and experience history from a wildly different perspective than books could give me" (H.R. Jones, Feb 26, 1995) [21],
2. Romanticism; "I came into the SCA to be Ivanhoe" (G. Chamberlin, Dec. 19, 1995),
3. Community; "What hooked me was the acceptance given to me because I wanted to try" (C. de Howland, Dec 22, 1995).

Many of the participants consider the SCA to be a metaphor for family; others

find it to be an outlet for creative energies. Like any hobby group, the SCA seeks new

members to share the experience. There are a number of ways that the SCA brings in new

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[21] These references come from Stefan's Floregium, an electronic bulletin board. Retrieved, May 27, 2008 from http://www.florilegium.org/files/SCA-SOCIOLOGY/SCA-reasons-msg.html.

participants. The Internet is widely used as both a recruiting and a communication tool. The main SCA website, www.sca.org, has a large amount of information for new participants. Many participants are employed in high technology fields, making the Internet a logical recruitment tool. Social media, such as Facebook, Yahoo! Groups, and Livejournal, has been widely used.

Other methods include outreach efforts in which members go into schools and other public places in order to demonstrate aspects of medieval life. These events are called demonstrations or "demos" and are oriented to a public, non-SCA, audience. Scadians have demonstrated medieval life skills in a variety of places; elementary schools, Boy Scout lodges, farmer's markets, and at medieval-themed movie premieres. The Corvallis, Oregon, SCA group was invited by a movie theater to entertain the crowd standing in line to see the opening of the film, *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*. Outside, several armored fighters sparred while inside the theater SCA participants danced and did needlework. They invited the public to dance with them. The Oregon State University SCA group also has a demonstration at the annual Mom's Day Faire. There are a huge number of passers-by and a favorite activity is "Whack-a-Knight." This lets members of the public take a good swing at an armored fighter with a rattan sword. This is very popular with the kids. Again, there is dancing and "demos" of domestic arts.

Another method of entry to the SCA is being "born into it." As mentioned earlier, enough time has elapsed since the inception of the group that members have raised children, and even grandchildren, within the Society. Those who have been in the SCA

for a long period of time become the "elders," tasked with passing on the culture to the next generation, be they born into the SCA or recruited through various means.

I started participating, or "playing," in the SCA in 2000, after a divorce and a move to a new state with two small children. I had a master of arts degree in apparel history and had heard of the SCA during my undergraduate years. At first, my participation was simple escapism, "grown-up" time. As my children got older, they began to participate more, as did I. Over the course of writing this dissertation, I twice became Princess of the Summits, a Principality in the Kingdom of An Tir. This gave me what is known as a Royal Peerage, and I was given the title of "Viscountess." Having reigned during the course of the study allowed me to observe Peerage meetings, and to observe reigning Royalty as they conducted Court, and to conduct Court myself.

These types of subcultures do not always have a wide appeal to the larger modern culture, so finding them can take effort. Barcan (2004) states that, "[a]lienation from nature and the authentic self, the loss of the sacred, the destruction of traditional ways of life, and the drabness of life in industrial cities are all key modern themes" (p. 64). The person looking for a group such as the SCA seeks to replace what they feel is missing from modern society. Frequently the seeker does not know what they seek, only that they have a vague dissatisfaction. Because the culture is largely invented and only loosely based on history, the individual can bring to it what they choose. What they find once there also varies according to the individual's needs. One instance of a person mentioning actively looking for a group such as the SCA is the following:

Barnes:

> I seem to be the only one so far that actively looked for a group like this. I first got interested in the Middle Ages through D&D. Once I found out about chivalry I was hooked. The thoughts and ideals where [sic] right in line with my personal beliefs and made me feel right at home (Barnes, 2003).

Every new person who begins to participate in the SCA becomes, in many respects, an anthropologist. They enter a foreign world with its own rules and patterns of behavior, far different from those in the reality-based modern world. This process of learning a new culture is called enculturation (Keesing and Keesing, 1971 p. 338). This can be a daunting process for an individual. If there is no positive reinforcement of *why* they should stay, the individual will drift away to other pursuits.

A viable culture creates *group cohesion,* or "we-ness," that encourages members to continue to participate (Fine and Holyfield, 1996, p. 22). The reason people stay in leisure groups is that they get something out of the exchange that exceeds the time and effort needed to participate in the group. "The emotional investment and social identity inherent in voluntary organizations have a power that transcends the ostensibly voluntary character and raises the exit costs" (Fine and Holyfield, 1996, p. 24). These individuals choose to belong to the SCA, although they could do the same activities outside of the SCA. Participants come to see themselves defined by their participation in the SCA to varying degrees.

The concept of community identity, and the individual's connection to the community of choice, influences such questions as, "who am I?" Hummon (1986) defined community identity as, "an interpretation of self that uses community – specifically, a form of settlement – as a locus of attachment or an image of self-

characterization" (p. 3). When an individual identifies with a community, they self-

identify as a type of person drawn from a "public shared imagery" (Hummon, 1986, p. 9).

Individuals search for communities that will give them a sense of self and place that

meshes with their own. As this excerpt from the Calontir archives illustrates, some

participants were actively seeking a place that reinforced their notions of self:

> Kenneth The Dark:
> Well that is tough to quantify. But I would have to say that I never really
> felt comfortable anywhere else. It seems that no other group I tried really
> exemplified all the aspects that I was looking for. Here I can easily voice
> my thoughts and beliefs among others that share them. I would say that
> what brought me was the need to be among my own kind, and what keeps
> me is the same thing (Steenrod, 2003).

Durkheim (1984), in *The Division of Labor in Society*, talks about the social

bonds between individuals in a culture. He states that, "[s]ociety, for its part, certainly

requires from each of its members, so long as they remain part of it, a uniformity of

beliefs and practices" (p. 105). This is especially true of cultures based on voluntary

participation. Not everyone who attends an SCA event continues to participate after the

initial exposure. Those that stay in, almost always talk about some emotional connection

being made early in their SCA experience. What this "hook" is varies among participants.

For some it is the fighting, some mention the food, and others talk about some

transporting moment when history felt real. Nearly everyone has a story of what caught

their imagination and prompted them to explore the culture further; some stay many

decades. For nearly everyone, it is the finding of kindred spirits, of *finding a home*, that

keeps them playing in the SCA.

The social bond arises out of the sense of *communitas*, or social anti-structure, created by shared experiences and emotions. *Random House Webster's Dictionary* listed the definition of communitas as, "the sense of sharing and intimacy that develops among persons who experience liminality as a group" (2001, p. 414). Liminality is further defined as, "the transitional period or phase of a rite of passage, during which the participant lacks social status or rank, remains anonymous, shows obedience and humility, and follows prescribed forms of conduct, dress, etc" (*Random House Webster*, 2001, p. 1115). This is a fairly narrow reading of Van Gennep without any input from more recent works.

For the purpose of this study, I look to Wallace's (2006) definition of liminality as, "a set of experiences which are outside, and significantly different from, those we experience in our everyday milieu" (p. 220). Wallace goes on to define communitas as, "a more or less undifferentiated community of equals in which individuals commune with each other in a relatively unstructured and egalitarian way" (p. 220). "[C]ommunitas arises when individuals step out of their everyday life and immerse themselves in anti-structure (Sharpe, 2005, p. 256). An imagined history, set in make-believe times, is about as anti-structure as one can get. The following words illustrate how participants find something in the SCA that seems to be lacking in the modern world. While they may not have been a part of the community yet, they recognized a difference between their everyday lives and the way things were done in the SCA.

Jarl Ulfred:
You show up and people were very welcoming. They knew you were new

but they wanted to come up and talk to you (personal communication, Oct 14, 2006).

This sense of community is discussed by Obst and White (2007) in their article, "Choosing to belong: The influence of choice on social identification and psychological sense of community." They define elements in a psychological theory for a sense of community:

"feeling of belonging and identification … of being a part of a community … must be rewarding for the individual members … sense of shared history and identification with the community, and refers to the bonds developed over time through positive interaction with other community members" (p. 78).

It is this last point, the "bonds developed over time," that is commonly cited as a strong attractant to members of the SCA when they discuss friendships and a sense of community. This will be discussed in another section of this chapter. There are many reasons given for being initially attracted to the SCA, and a few of them will be discussed below. The following are excerpts of responses from interviews after I asked the question, "How did you get started in the SCA?"

The first set of excerpts illustrates a romantic attachment to the notion of Knights and damsels, often influenced by film, literature, and popular culture. It is the "idea" of the SCA that attracts them at a very emotional level. They have grown up watching movies and reading books that feed into this meme and provide a rich context for inserting themselves into a romantic narrative. The SCA provides a place where the participants can create this romantic narrative for themselves by donning armor and

medieval clothing and physically inhabiting the space. They can *be* Robin Hood and Maid Marion. They can *be* an archer at Crecy or Acre.

Sir Paul of Somerton began his involvement in the early years of the Principality of An Tir and was instrumental in the formation of the Principality of the Summits. He was an early mentor of Viscount Sir Abu Nur Rustam ibn Abdallah in the Shire of Glyn Dyfn.

> Sir Paul:
> When I was 10 years old and living in Albany, Oregon, my parents took me up to Salem to the Spring Arts Festival. Towards the end of our time there I was off wandering on my own in a corner of it I saw Knights in armor battling it out. A ten year old boy sees Knights in armor, that's it. It's all over at that point. … I sat there around the campfire, people were singing songs, telling stories, swapping jokes, that's when I fell in love with it. The mythology we create within it (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

For some the previous exposure to fantasy role-playing games supports the romantic narrative provided by film and literature. *Dungeons and Dragons* was a very popular game with Scadians, with almost universal participation. It acted almost as bridge between the passive mediums of film and literature and the participatory nature of the SCA because of the role-playing aspect of these games.

> Earl Sir Edward Ian:
> I was at some friends' house that were playing some medieval basically dungeons and dragons. They were talking about going to this crown tournament and I go, "Could I go?" and they said "sure." We ended driving 16 hours up into central Canada, the last 40 miles down this dirt road. We took a turn past this waterfall to a lake and here was this medieval encampment. It was the second crown tournament of An Tir. … watched this and went, 'I want to do that' (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

This following excerpt is from the Calontir listserv email list and shows another person attracted by the romance of the SCA. This person also lists previous exposure to fantasy literature.

> Mouse:
> I got in by accident. I was a big fan of the Dragonlance books and found other like-minded souls in college. DJ asked me if I wanted to go to this thing kinda [sic] like a renn [sic] faire, so I grabbed a sleeping bag, a pair of tights and a horrible ruffled silk shirt. I didn't know it was an org., and I don't think I heard the term SCA till late afternoon. One boisterous auction, followed by a killer feast, a torchlight tourney and a wild post revel and I was hooked (Pronia, 2003).

The romanticism that feeds much of the desire to participate in the SCA is often begun at an early age by reading fantasy and historic novels. The first Garden Party was greatly influenced by Tolkien's works, and this influence can still be seen in the number of participants who have read the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Even movies can influence the culture, with some movies, such as Monty Python's *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *The Princess Bride,* being said to be "required watching" for all newcomers.

> Jenna:
> Predisposing factors: Read Robin Hood and King Arthur stories as a child, Tolkien as a teen, played D&D[22] in college (Jenna, March 2003).

> Duncan MacTorquil:
> I thought it was so cool that there really was a group that did what I had wanted to do since reading a kid's copy of Le' Morte d'Arthur in 2nd grade (MacTorquil, 2003).

> Morley:

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[22] *Dungeons and Dragons*

> Fascinated with the period since I was knee high to a grasshopper. I obsessed about Knights the way other kids obsessed about dinosaurs (Morley, 2003).

This romanticism influences the behavior participants want to see in the SCA. Reaching for ideals is a widespread and common theme. It is as if the individual finds meaning in the pursuit of something greater than themselves, such as chivalry and honor. "In everyday language, the term 'honour' and its various derivations have acquired archaic and sometimes ironic overtones." Blok goes on to describe that lingering vestiges of honor are found in "men of groups" where "rank and esteem are largely matters of sheer physical strength" (Blok, 1981, p. 435). In the SCA, honor and chivalry are part and parcel of the hero narrative.

The hero is one of the longest running narratives in western culture (Boon, 2005, p. 201). Sullivan and Venter (2005) define heroes as "persons (dead or alive, contemporary or historic, known or unknown) who possess a skill, trait, or position that inspires an individual to imitate or strive to attain goals" (p. 104). Participants in the SCA find a place in which they themselves can be the hero of myth and legend, building their own word-fame.

The SCA is based on a romanticized version of history. This emphasis on romance can often draw people in to participate. The expression of romance becomes a part of the participatory theater that creates much of the medieval atmosphere. From small gestures of courtesy towards strangers, to larger gestures such as a fighter asking to fight for a lady's honor in a tournament, these expressions combine, with the more material objects, to enhance the medieval experience for the participants.

Performative gestures become symbols acted out by the participants. Such acts of "manners" belong to a by-gone age, an age of civilization that has been lost in these modern times. This association with history gives the small gestures of courtesy greater meaning to the participants. These romantic gestures become symbolic of the desire to play-act within their fantasized history.

> Erzebet:
> A 'favor tourney' was held. I had turned my head to talk to a kid I knew with a coworker and missed the explanation for it. When I'd turned back around, there was a very young, very good looking, long haired, green eyed young man kneeling at my feet, helm in hand, asking to fight for my honor. What can I say. . .. Romanticism at its best, and I was lost to it. I still am (Orwig, 2003).

This type of performance illustrates several of the key themes throughout the SCA's cultural values: honor, romance, and chivalry. In the above episode, the young man becomes the hero on his epic quest to prove himself worthy. He sets out on what Joseph Campbell (1949, p. 31) calls the "hero-task." He is become Parsifal, or whoever he has created in his mind, and is "profoundly conceived and solemnly undertaken" (Campbell (1949, p. 31).

Baron Sir Arnsbjorn Tiernanson Cu Righ is currently the Baron of Stromgard (Clark and Skamania Counties, Washington), a Barony in An Tir. He was Knighted shortly after this interview. In his first exposure to the SCA, he was given a level of trust that he may not have had in the "modern world."

> Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
> Friend and I went to an event. It was War College at Scappoose [Oregon]. Master Mischka saw us walk in, invited us into his camp. He gave us $400

to go buy beer and we came back and been here ever since (personal communication, August 28, 2006).

Viscount Sir Abu Nur Rustam ibn Abdallah[23] has an early 15th century Persian persona. He has been involved in the SCA since he was 15 years old and was one of the founding members of the Shire of Glyn Dyfn in the Kingdom of An Tir. He was Knighted by King Gunnar in 1992, then lived for a time in the Kingdom of Caid (Southern California), before returning to An Tir. He fought in, and won, the Summits Principality Coronet in An Tir in September of 2009 with me as his Consort. When asked about fighting for an Inspiration, he replied:

> Viscount Sir Rustam:
> In her attendance at the side of the field I find joy and focus. I feel that she understands the mental demands of this game, and performs that difficult task of being attentive without requiring my attention. Knowing her ability and devotion, I feel that I can strive for victory without fearing the possible consequences of winning a Coronet or Crown.
>
> This accounts for the moments on and around the fighting field. In truth my inspiration does much more than that for me. Like an army in the field, there are matters of supply and support. Her acknowledgment of the value of my fighting gives it a place in the scheduling pressures of everyday life. Wanting to advance her honor, I feel more motivated to practice and to keep my equipment in good working order (personal communication, 2009).

But more than helping with the logistics of getting a fighter on the field and ready to fight, the Inspiration in an expression of the romantic beginnings of the SCA.

> Sir Rustam:

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[23] In the interest of full disclosure, we will be married this upcoming spring.

Fighting to advance the honor of one's inspiration reaches back to the early roots of SCA tradition. In theory, it is this that makes our fighting noble rather than it just being an exercise in supporting our own egos. I believe that there is also independent value in the development of our martial art and in the "living research" aspects of fighting in the SCA (personal communication, 2009).

This concept of fighting for the honor of the Inspiration goes back to the original Garden Party. Inspiration is not gender based, as female fighters have male Inspirations. The notion of the Inspiration plays directly into the romanticism that drives much of the emotional connection to the SCA.

Duncan MacTorquil:
What got me to stay was that I had found a place where their [sic] were real Lords and Ladies, Honor and Chivalry reigned, A King and Queen sat the throne, and it was possible for a small town gawky kid from Northwest Missouri to fight for the honor of a lady against Knights in shining armour (MacTorquil, 2003).

For others, the love of history is mentioned as a draw to the SCA. "Love of history and the interesting people you meet keeps me in. –Tace" (Tace of Foxele, 2003). For many people, there is a pre-existing love of history. For others, it develops from time spent around fellow participants interested in studying history. To the reenactor, history is not merely a set of facts but a lived in experience. It is what Vanessa Agnew (2004) calls, "body-based discourse in which the past is reanimated through physical and psychological experience" (p. 330).

Inserting themselves into history, the participants of the SCA leverage lived in experience, if only within the illusory world they create. But this illusion is no less real to the participants than any story told by authors a millennium dead and gone. Every

historical reenactor performs their own version of history that is highly personal to them. This situates them within a personal script, highlighting what may be of value to the individual, whether it be the martial arts, the domestic arts, or some other example of the detail of daily life and material culture.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> Here again somebody that always strived to, he [Duke Steingrim] was very much into history, very much the historian he could relay lots of historical tidbits of information and just a great person to be listening to his stories. He's a story teller he loves to talk about his experiences in the SCA we have those who are very good at keeping our oral history of our own organizational alive (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

> Jo:
> But, if you stay in for any length of time, it does spark an interest in historical study (Johanne, 2000).

> Báine:
> I grew up in Northern California and kept hearing about these *crazy* people in the Bay Area that wore funny clothes and played with swords. Investigating a little further, I found out that they were researching an historical period that I had always enjoyed reading about, both fictional and non fictional (Báine, 2003).

Most participants agree that while there may be other reasons, the main objective is to have fun. This goes back to the term used by participants to describe what they do. They "play" in the SCA. "How long have you been playing," is the same question as, "how long have you been in the SCA?"

For Victor Turner (1982a) play is "betwixt-and-between" (p. 234). Participants can leave their everyday lives and enter a fantasy of their choosing. This fantasy is self-directed and evolving, as individual's create their own story. Playing can "garner license for everyone participating" (Abrahams, 1977, p. 101). This play becomes a personal

narrative that brings individual meaning to the experiences found in the SCA. Play is separate from ritual in that it is free-flowing and adaptive. This makes the experience intensely personal and immediate.

The act of dressing up in costume, or "garb," again plays into the fun aspect of the SCA. It ties in with the fantasy of assuming a different role than one has in modern life. This directly impacts the behavior of the individual, as play-acting takes conscious effort to maintain while at an event. The use of costumes helps participants maintain that effort, and even when the individual slips into a modern mindset, the costumes can help retain the visual medieval atmosphere. Clothing becomes a language, serving as a conduit of the symbols of social perception (Kaiser, 1985).

> Jeefrs:
> I've always dressed medieval, one day I realized I was standing in a group dressed like me and I followed them (Jeefrs, 2003).

The practice of doing and making "stuff" attracts many people. The time spent in preparing and creating the objects is a major draw. Many participants can learn new skills by taking classes or apprenticing themselves to masters of a craft. It can take years to acquire the skills necessary to become proficient in any art form. But the pursuit of these skills is valued, both for the sheer joy of learning, and for the ability to create historically correct objects. This creativity is a synthesis between the passions and emotional needs being met by the culture and the material goods made within the culture. There is a visceral and sensual learning about history by remaking the goods of a past culture.

> Pronia:
> What keeps me going? the [sic] chance to learn really neat A&S[24] stuff
> and the feeling of being part of a community where people still care about
> each other (Pronia, 2003).

Time spent carding, dyeing, spinning wool, and weaving fabric, fabric that will then be made into clothing to be worn by family and friends, connects the individual to past culture in a very intimate manner. Spending evenings with pen and ink doing calligraphy by the light of a few candles can transport a person back to a time before modern conveniences made such things quaint and unvalued. The process of creating the material culture then becomes part of the experiences that become individual history.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> I enjoy that [the SCA] has created a venue for the other activities like
> experimenting with blacksmithing or woodworking, carving, and
> illumination, those types of things (personal communication, October 14,
> 2006).

Earl Sir Obadiah the Obstreperous was Knighted in AS XXIII[25] and reigned as King of the West in AS XXIX.[26]

> Earl Sir Obadiah:
> I do silverwork, I do calligraphy, I do illumination, I've carved wood, I've
> built medieval structures, I've made pavilions. You make your own armor;
> I've built my own helmets. All those things I probably wouldn't have
> done. I probably never would have worked iron into a blade, or pounded a
> flat piece of metal iron into a helmet (personal communication, July1,
> 2006).

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[24] Arts and Sciences
[25] 1 May 1988 C.E. to 30 April 1989 C.E
[26] 1995 C.E.

Persona: This is who I pretend I am. In the mediated world of the SCA, the participants live in a world of social encounters. Part of the process of creating the atmosphere is the persona, the alternate personality that the individual plays while in the SCA. Very few people maintain this fiction for the entire event. The persona seems to be more a starting place, or anchor, to the creation of the artifacts for the SCA. The persona is most often only as deep as the clothes that symbolize the mediated medievalism. There is very little dissonance displayed when a Scadian dressed as an elegant Elizabethan gentleman of the 16th century converses with a Scadian dressed as a shaggy Norseman of the 11th century.

The various kingdoms have developed their own personalities over time, just as individuals adopt a particular historical time period. In An Tir, there are many Vikings, and other northern cultures, depicted by the participants. In part, this is because the clothing of that time period suits the cool and wet climate in the Pacific Northwest. Although there is a fair percentage of the population in the Northwest with Scandanavian backgrounds, it was not cited as a reason to have a Norse persona. More importantly to the participants, the Norse persona speaks to heroic and mythic yearnings of the participants. When something is deemed to be very good beyond the normal, it is called "epic." Sagas and stories are written and told around the campfires, bringing more "word fame" to the participants. Featherstone (1995) calls this narrative self-representation in which "[w]e describe a person as displaying character or personality who achieves a high degree of consistency of conduct; in effect he seeks to impose a form on his life by seeking to some higher purpose rather than merely letting his life drift capriciously" (p.

60). In the SCA, the heroic is the goal, strived for through the deeds that build word-fame. It is a combined journey of deed and goal.

One might wonder just how the participant arrives at their choice of persona and whether there is any deeper meaning to the expression through dress. Sometimes there is no higher goal or purpose to the choice of persona, but merely chance. Baron Sir Arnsbjorn was camping with a group having Viking personas. He adopted a persona that fit with the social group to which he belonged.

> Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
> My wife and I decided to have Viking personas at the beginning. I was given my name by Ulfred on my first day. He named me Arnsbjorn. I've kept it since that day. I went and found the saga it was in. And it was a Norse saga (personal communication, August 28, 2006).

Even when individuals do not have an extensive encampment that reflects their personas, some individuals still spend time and effort obtaining particular objects that may never be brought to an event. In this case, the participant wanted a persona that reflected a certain lifestyle. This has been called the "organization of experience" (Goffman, 1974, p. 10). Viscount Sir Rustam assembled the material culture appropriate to the "princely" Persian living in the field as portrayed in miniatures of the era. When asked how he chose his persona he answered:

Figure 3. Viscount Sir Rustam walking off the battlefield. (author's collection)

Viscount Sir Rustam:

Because the miniatures were really cool. At the time I chose my persona in An Tir I really admired the whole Viking thing, I didn't want to be just another Viking. There seemed to be plenty of Vikings. So I kind of wanted a more field oriented culture. Something different. When I saw the miniatures, it was perfect. There was visual resource which is what I'd really rather do than read a bunch of books. The princely lifestyle was all about living in the field (personal communication, July 15, 2006).

The desire to create this persona changes, even within the individual, over time. Sir Colin, Knighted in 2001, talks about the persona disappearing as he gains experiences of his own in the SCA. The frame that originally existed in the context of an original persona, can morph and change over time, as the persona "frame" disappears and the individual "frame" emerges with its own experiences, memories, and relationships. The adoption of a persona can influence how a person behaves at events, even while the individual knows that this is play-acting and not reality. It borders on reality, skimming the edges for the participant.

> Sir Colin:
> Well you know if you had asked me that question 15 years ago I would have given you a detailed story but these days – it's funny – you start in the SCA and I think at least once upon a time when persona was important which maybe it still is someplace and I still like it as a concept – you start in the SCA and you start with this idea that you will make this great character with this great back-story that you will play when you go to "play" this game. And if you spend enough time in the SCA the name you have chosen takes on its own life because there is history (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

In the following list, the interviewees talk about people that they admire. When they speak of admiring a particular trait in a person, this reflects how they also wish to be seen. When someone describes another person positively as being "honorable," and an "honest man," we assume that those are the very traits valued in the culture. (Goffman, 1959; Taylor, 2002)

1. Extremely knowledgeable
2. Very strong sense of honor
3. Almost in every case you can absolutely count on them doing the right thing

4.   For emphasizing entirely different aspects of the warrior code and different approaches to the SCA
5.   For his passion and mind, brilliant mind
6.   Passion for history
7.   He's a good and honest man
8.   A wonderful fighter
9.   Drove me very hard to get better faster. He was just far enough ahead of me that kept me working harder striving to be better all the time

These traits also relate back to the hero narrative. Everyone strives to release the hero within which the modern world is perceived to keep shackled to a cubicle.

From fantasized history comes a sense of community. In summary, there is a great individual diversity of personal meaning within the SCA. While there are general themes, the individual always seems to have a unique slant on it. Individuals each bring the wealth of their own history to the creation of the community. Mayo (2000) says that, "Questions of culture and identity (however each of these is defined) relate to some of the most fundamental issues for communities, how they see themselves, how they analyze their situations and whether and how they come to envisage the possibilities for change" (p. 5).

Individuals have the freedom to explore their own desires and histories within the context of the SCA. Special participatory events, such as festivals and faires, have been linked to the "development of a sense of worth, confidence, identity, and pride amongst communities of interest" (Mayo, 2000, p. 142). Each of the individual threads of interest that draws a person to participate combines to create the cohesive whole that is the community.

Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
It's a family thing. My best friends are in SCA. I think it's just the camaraderie that makes it special (personal communication, August 28, 2006).

Jarl Sir Ulfred:
It basically created an extended family (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Master Conchobar:
Actually I think more than anything it's become pretty much a social thing (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

The participants are aware that they are playing at fantasy, yet they often find more meaning in the fantasy than in real life. All of a person's experiences are filtered through their own identity and notions of self. If the individual is not relating to the modern realities around them, they may seek connection elsewhere or *elsewhen*. However, it is this very modernity that makes it possible to construct such a privileged space and time as to allow the delving into fantastical lifestyles and expressions of self.

Kaz:
So in creating ever more intricate and involving activities outside the realm of an increasingly unfulfilling mundane life, we are in essence creating something that brings LIFE back into our existence, and in doing so, we bring with it all the attending negatives… . And in doing so you release the drama and excitement and intrigue and joy and pain that makes life worth living again (these things do not exist in cubicles and cannot be experienced via fax or email) (Verkmastare, 2003).

As discussed, creating community and a sense of belonging is a shared goal of the participants of the SCA. In fact, many of the activities and material culture are either consciously, or unconsciously, defined by their place in creating this community. "We identify ourselves as people of a certain type, quality, or value; we also identify ourselves

with others or significant objects, forging a sense of belonging and attachment"

(Hummon, 1986, p. 4). It is the sense of community, and place in that community, that

gives value to both the people and things in the culture. Participants find, in the SCA,

something that they frequently lack outside of this cultural structure. They create a

mediated history and mythology to give richness to the experience. Community

"expresses a way of life, an idea of what life is worth living for" (de Grazia, 1964, p.

226).

> Sir Olin:
> SCA for me provides a sense of community I feel we don't have in today's
> world. A purist would say it's middle ages as they should be (personal
> communication, October 1, 2006).

> Hauser:
> A sense of community, which is a basic human need. In the fragmentation
> and chaos of modern life, where people don't know their next door
> neighbor, the SCA (at least in Calontir) emotionally recreates the small
> town where most people know each other and know how they fit into the
> group. Here we can lower or [sic] emotional barriers to a degree and allow
> ourselves to be less wary of fellow humans (Hauser, 2002).

> Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
> The feeling of safety, community. My son has been playing all day. All I
> have to do is turn around to find him. I know he's safe when he's in with
> the group of friends I have (personal communication, August 28, 2006).

From the time that a person arrives at the entrance to an event, pays their fee, and

moves to their space, they transition from modern person to medieval persona. The

person that they are in the modern world may feel alienated. This persona that they

become is part of a community that gathers periodically to pursue common interests.

This community is perhaps best expressed during Crown Tournaments in An Tir. These high-stakes martial games offer the opportunity to show the best or worst behavior. In the SCA, there are no referees for the martial contests. Each participant decides whether or not a blow was good or bad. Because of this, most participants will usually perform honorably and not try to win "at all costs." An Tir's Crown Tournament can have over 100 entrants and last the better part of a day. The combatants can range in skill, from newly authorized fighters, to extremely skillful fighters who have won tournaments more than once.

An Tir Crown tournaments begin with a procession of the fighters and their Inspirations. They will approach the King and Queen to be introduced before standing on either side of the field. Knights and Masters of Arms will stand on one side and the unbelted[27] fighters will stand on the other. When everyone has processed in, the King will often move some unbelted fighters to the Chivalry (the Knights) side so as to even up the numbers. Then, one by one, the unbelted fighters will challenge a member of the Chivalry to meet them in the first round of the tournament. Most often in An Tir, Crown Tournaments are double elimination, meaning that once a fighter has lost twice, they are out of the competition.

Eventually, there will be two fighters left to proceed to the final round, which will be a two-out-of-three competition. Before this last round of fighting, each fighter and their Inspiration will gather together a group of people, often friends and family, to process into the list field again. This time, they are frequently heralded with their

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[27] "Unbelted" means they are not Knights or Masters of Arms and not members of the Chivalry.

accomplishments, feats of derring-do, and many fine words speaking to the value of their Inspirations. The combatants themselves will often speak words of high praise about their opponent. The crowds watching will cheer and wait intently for the fighting to commence. This is not from gladiatorial blood-lust, but they are expecting to see the best quality of fighting and best displays of honor and chivalry.

Spectators crowd around the field. The Chivalry sit along the outskirts of the list field in order to better witness the fighting. It is felt that they ensure that the fighting is fair. The fighting begins, when it ends there are new Heirs to the Throne. The crowds witnessing the tournament are the community that gives life to the notion of Royalty.

> Sir Colin:
> Ragnor is my king, Isabeau is my queen and in some sense that is very real
> to me at least when I am here (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

> Sir Olin:
> Being a Knight to me means is about service to my Crown it is about the
> intangibles of the game we play it's about being responsible for everyone
> who sees what you do. It's about being responsible for your own actions
> (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

These rituals, the Crown Tournament for a Kingdom and the Coronet Tournament for a Principality, are rituals that help to bind the community together. While not all participants in the SCA follow the comings and goings of the Royalty, for many, and certainly for the Chivalry, they are a central unifying theme.

Material Culture

  Setting the stage. While the SCA is organized around modern geographical

boundaries, there is no permanent geographic locus. Participants gather for temporary

events that can last an afternoon or extend to several weeks. The most common time for

an SCA event is a weekend, with participants arriving on Friday and leaving on Sunday.

The first day is usually devoted to set-up of encampments, with some people arriving

early, at the first opening of the gate or "troll booth." Encampments are considered

bounded space. These can be as small as a modern camping tent and folding camp chair

or as extensive as structures recreating a Norse village. The level to which an individual

has a "period encampment" depends on choice and economic ability.

  In the temporary villages, that are the backdrop to the SCA event, there is both

public space and private space. Public spaces include the market, the "list" or war field

where armored combat takes place, locations for classes, and any lanes or roads. Private

space is that which is appropriated for the individuals or small groups. Use of these two

spaces is different, and the level of authenticity varies here as much as in any other aspect

of the SCA.

  It is in the public space where most ceremony and ritual takes place. This could be

the crowning of a King and Queen, the competition between armored combatants, or the

Knighting of an individual. These occurrences are open to all Scadians in attendance. The

ceremony that happens here is mostly performance in support of the goals of the culture.

  Private space is analogous to a person's home. If ceremony happens here it is

usually between individuals. This could be a Knight taking a squire, a person joining a

household, or a sponsor taking a page. While any of these rituals can happen in the public

sphere if the individuals are of high rank, they are more usually confined and intimate.

> Jenna:
> If I can get the idea across, I find it significant that many kingdoms use
> their Royal Pavilions as backdrops for the thrones, or as formal reception
> areas where the royalty can greet and schmooze other royalty -- one of
> those formal parlours with white carpets where the children aren't allowed
> to go. In Calontir, our RP is the Front Porch. We puppy-pile there, we nap
> there, we drink there. If people drop by, be they Royalty, the sorts of
> people who out-rank Royalty, or just people who are lost, we yell at them
> to come in, sit down, have some of whatever we're drinking or eating. If
> they're not Royalty (and maybe even if they are), we waller on them
> (Jenna, August 2000).

How individuals use the space in their private encampments varies widely. For

some, it's a small modern dome tent and a cooler for their food and drink. Other people

form collectives, called "households." These can range from informal groups of people

who tend to camp together, to large more formally-structured entities. One of these

entities, Ulfredsheim, is a fairly large household. The head of the group is Jarl Sir Ulfred,

interviewed elsewhere. Below is a part of an interview I did with one of the members,

describing the main feature of their encampment, the tent they call Brockhalla.

> Master Conchobar:
> Brockhalla. It means Hall of the Badger. That's Ulfred's nickname. His
> nickname is Badgerman. … The new version is quite a bit bigger and
> modular. So we're going to split it up. Instead of being carried around as
> one big thing that somebody has to haul around and put it up. It will be 5
> pieces as many people show up it gets bigger or smaller as needed. It's
> kind of a new idea, it's also decentralizing a bit. We could have two of
> them set up. … As far as Ulfredshiem camping in general, everybody sets
> up around Brockhalla, we'll set up a kitchen in the back away from the
> entrance. Brockhalla will face view the entrance. People coming in and
> out. It's a fairly large room. We bring a gate. A little wooden gate that

marks entrance area. Normally we'll have a big gathering area in front of Brockhalla because if there is a party going on people will mill around or somebody wants to do fight practice. We usually got a fair amount of room. 100 foot by 100 foot is not unusual (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Here is the man himself, Jarl[28] Sir Ulfred talking about his encampment.

Jarl Sir Ulfred:
The current encampment is fairly organic in that there is no plan in how it is set up. It changes depending on the event and who is there. It sort of reflects what I said about the society in general, with Ulfredsheim, it's more about what culture people are interested in and really want to invest their money and time in. That's great and that's what they do. The people that are in the group find that attractive so they want to have, they don't want to show up and just throw up a mundane tent because they feel that is not true to the spirit. So there's an underlying spirit you try to invest in the material goods that creates what you are there for. Otherwise you might as well just go camping. It's less overhead and easier to do (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Whether a person chooses to have an authentically historical encampment can change over time. Some people start out with modern equipage, then move to a more period style, and then back again, as their needs change. It takes a major investment of time and money to create an historical atmosphere by acquiring the proper material goods. For some people, that is not the central goal of their participation. When people value other things, it can influence their time and money investment. The following interview shows Sir Colin, who used to have a more period encampment, but now uses more modern equipment so as to be able to focus on other aspects, such as spending time with his friends.

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[28] A Jarl is a Scandinavian term meaning roughly the equivalent of the English Count.

Sir Colin:
Well…once upon a time we camped, not this particular we but a different we that I was part of camped with a pavilion and a much more period encampment … [now] we want to camp in a way that makes it easy for us to be in the SCA so right now we are camping 4 rows back from the eric with modern tents, we have our fire, we cook, we are not making too much effort to fit into the pageantry because it is easier and it lets us be here and be able to go and have fun and that is more important to us right now (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

Viscount Sir Rustam is very much into the martial side of the Society. His focus is almost entirely fighting while at events, although he spends time and money outside of events to research and acquire the objects that are appropriate to his persona.

Viscount Sir Rustam:
On the positive side, I keep my camping very simple. I like to be able to load up in less than hour and unload in less than that. I don't have a kitchen. These days I'm making a little bit of money, and I can go eat at merchant's row for a couple hot meals and that's even better. The fact that I have a mundane tent is a matter of economics (personal communication, July 15, 2006).

Equestrian activities are not very common in An Tir, although there is a growing interest. Participation in this activity can greatly influence the choice to have a period encampment. Earl Sir Edward Ian talked about how participating in equestrian activities impacts the authenticity of his encampment.

Earl Sir Edward Ian:
We because we are doing horses we have short-changed our encampment. It's too hard on my lady. It's too hard on me to take care of the horses, try to set up the camp, and do all that. So what we have is a modern two-horse horse trailer with living quarters in it. It has a bed. It's like a big gypsy wagon. We pull into camp, put the awning out, put the chairs out, fire up the heater and we're set for the night after we set up the stalls (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

The elaborateness of an individual's encampment can change from event to event. Why this changes can vary depending on the individual and many other factors such as distance to the event, weather, and lately, cost of fuel. There are some events where more effort may be put into making the encampment very elaborate and very historically correct. These often occur at Crown level events, more effort may be put into making the encampments elaborate and historically correct. Sometimes, a participant may travel light and not bring the large period pavilion instead choosing a small light modern tent. Frequently, areas will be reserved for those camping in period encampments, with modern tents relegated to the outskirts of a site. In the following quote, Sir Obadiah talks about using a modern tent even though he does have a period encampment.

> Earl Sir Obadiah:
> Really I've just run up and am sleeping on ground tonight. I do have a period encampment. I have a 14th century pavilion that I set up and a cinched rope bed and carpets on the floor, hanging lanterns (personal communication, July1, 2006).

Duke Frederick is one of the earliest participants still playing. He has been very influential over the years, especially in material culture. He designed a style of day shade that has been widely adopted throughout the Society. It has become commonplace in the SCA although there is scant historical evidence for its design. This is mainly due to its stability in many kinds of weather. I once sat in his encampment during a February downpour in Arizona. Other than a fine mist coming through the cloth, the structure held against the wind and water.

> Duke Master Frederick:
> Basically what we have got here is living room area and kitchen under the
> BC[29], first time it was put up, I had a twin peak pavilion behind it and
> from across the field it looked like a Klingon battlecruiser (personal
> communication, June 24, 2006).

There is a common joke in the SCA that your gear expands to take up all available space in your vehicle. In fact, there is a particular term for larger vehicles that can haul a lot of gear, a "tourney vehicle or wagon." These are usually pick-up trucks, vans, or sport utility vehicles. They are highly prized because you can haul more stuff. There is a running conversation about what people would do if they won the lottery. Two things are very common: buy land to hold SCA events on and buy a bigger vehicle.

> Duke Master Frederick:
> Gear expands with time and with space available, though I think I finally
> outgrew my gear and no I don't own an 18 wheeler ... But I set up for
> comfort, for show, in order to offer hospitality, people can come in under
> the sun shade, they are not in our private bedroom … it allows me to be a
> good host, offer hospitality and without impacting private lives (personal
> communication, June 24, 2006).

Sometimes, an encampment is based squarely on the historical persona the person chooses to recreate. Individuals can spend great amounts of time and money to acquire the materials needed to do this as accurately as possible.

> Sir Olin:
> We have an 18 foot round yurt. They're called ghers, my wife's persona is
> Magyar, and technically the precursor to early Hungarians. Our personas
> are from central Russia area of 9th century. It's all about justifying our
> personas, justifying our furniture. We have the gher; inside we have a
> Norse bed because my persona came from Sweden to the Russian
> mainland (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

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[29] A "BC" is a type of day shade awning.

The encampment provides a private space on which to act, a canvas on which to create. The same is true for the public spaces. The space becomes a sensual and sensory extension of the persona. The clothing worn within this space allows the participant to step more fully into the skin of the historical persona.

Clothing. Clothing is among some of the most personal items an individual will own. The clothing worn in the SCA is usually based on the persona an individual develops as part of their participation. It creates a rich material culture as most is usually made specifically for the individual and is highly personalized

In An Tir, the calendar year is divided into two basic seasons: summer or "Tourney" season and winter or "Feast" season. During the summer, most events will be overnight or weekend-long events. During the winter, single day events frequently will feature a medieval-themed feast. Individuals will have different clothes for both seasons. Here in the Pacific Northwest, the summer weather can be unpredictably cool, so clothing tends to be made of durable and warm natural fibers.

Wool and linen are the most common fabrics used by Scadians and perform well in adverse weather conditions. They are also considered more authentic because they would have been widespread in the historical periods covered by the SCA. Modern man-made fabrics are sometimes used because they are cheaper and easier to launder. For instance, if you wanted to recreate the silk cut velvets used in 16th century Venice, you could easily pay hundreds of dollars per yard. Similar fabrics are available in modern fibers are cheaper and considered acceptable substitutions.

The general time period portrayed in the SCA is pre-seventeenth century Europe.

There are a small percentage of participants who study and re-enact other cultures, such

as Middle Eastern, Steppes Nomads, Chinese, and Japanese. The culture and time chosen

by the individual rests directly on their own interests. Some Kingdoms have more

emphasis on particular cultures and time periods. As mentioned, the Kingdom of An Tir

has a large number of Norse and Nomadic Steppes "personas," perhaps, as discussed,

because of the often cold and wet weather. I think there is also a certain amount of

romanticism surrounding the Norse and Viking cultures. There is a common joke in the

SCA about someone who is looking for a friend and when asked to describe them, says

that their friend is "that guy that looks like a Viking with long hair and a beard." The joke

being that this seemingly describes half of the male population of An Tir.

While setting up encampments it is common to remain in modern clothes,

although you will see a very high frequency of SCA-related screen printed t-shirts. Once

the encampment is set-up, the participants change into their costumes or "garb." It is not

until the camp is set up, and they change clothes, that the transformation from modern to

medieval persona happens. This preparation of the body to perform their mediated history

can demark the change from modern person to historical persona.

If the individual is not wearing medieval clothing, yet needs to interact in some

official capacity, it creates a negative experience as shown by the following interview.

> Althea:
> You are sitting here in a t-shirt. There are a few other people in modern
> clothes. Does that influence how you interact with people?

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> Yeah. If you might notice, I didn't really want to be in the middle of
> things, I hung around the edges. I'm very self-conscious about not being in
> dress when you are at a dress event. Some people don't seem to be so
> much (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

In the SCA, when one is not dressed in historical clothing, one is called, "naked." By putting on clothing of the past times, the participant is indicating that they are ready to leave the modern world and enter the fantastical realm of invented history. Modern clothes are not shed, per se, as they are non-existent in the context of historical viewpoints. It is by putting on the historical clothing, or "garb," that the participant becomes real.

Participants often have several different outfits in a range of fineness. The winter months are when the exquisite clothing comes out, especially at the winter coronation event called Twelfth Night. Individuals will spend many months working on new clothes, embroidering, sewing on pearls, appliquéing, and smocking. Twelfth Night is the closest An Tir comes to an historical recreation of a medieval court, with its milling nobles dressed to impress and show off wealth.

Rarely someone will come onto the scene with a complete kit of historically accurate clothing. Two such people that I have met are Adele de Fontane and Francis Darby. Adele made a full recreation of Tudor women's clothes. Francis looked like he could have stepped from an Elizabethan portrait. Both of these individuals started with some basic sewing skills but have continued to learn and to create ever-more-authentic historical clothing.

Figure 4. Adele de Fontane in her first attempt at making SCA garb. (Author's collection)

The range of sewing skill varies greatly when people first join the SCA. Classes on different sewing techniques (such as Norse stitches and seams and Elizabethan blackwork) are offered at events or as standalone happenings, such as stitch-n-bitch sessions. Courses tend to be hands-on and experiential as opposed to lecture formats. In addition to classes, individuals can contract as apprentices with a Laurel in order to learn a particular skill such as armoring, bookmaking, or clothing construction of a particular period. Many people are largely self-taught but benefit from seeing the items that others have made.

The costumes worn by participants are often sewn by hand, down to the last stitch. Figures 5 and 6 are illustrations of two examples, sewn by the author and worn by her children. They were hand sewn and embellished using historically accurate methods. While there are no extant garments showing similar embellishments, designs inspired by the Oseburg grave ship and the Mammen embroideries were used. The base fabric is wool, with wool appliqués, coins, pearls and semi-precious stones. This type of creative use of historical clothing is common in the SCA.
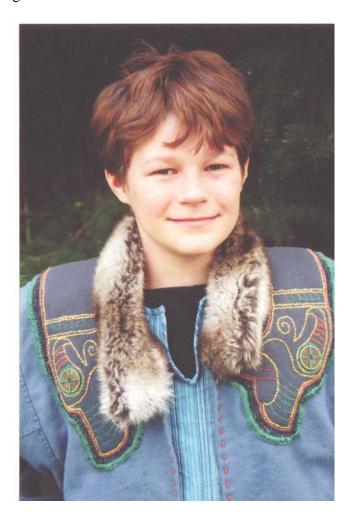
Figure 5. Coat with appliqué and embroidery based on wood carving on the Oseburg burial ship. (Author's collection)

Figure 6. Coat showing appliqué based on embroidery found on the Mammen cloak. (Author's collection)

As in medieval times, the value of the garment is to be found in the materials and in the sewing ability that brings those materials together. This is also true of the Kingdom of the West, as shown by this discussion with Earl Obadiah.

> Earl Sir Obadiah:
> I have exquisite court garb as well as scruffy stuff for wearing around camp when you get out of armor. I have silks and velvets with beaded pearls and beaded pieces of amber, and chains of gold, pieces of fine works of clothing that are worth hundreds and hundreds of dollars. Beaded real pearls, it's real stuff, I have hand-card-woven trim for my Viking tunic (personal communication, July 1, 2006).

Clothing is among some of the most personal items that participants can own. Often, it is the only historical items they might have with their completely modern

camping gear. Most people start out simply and learn how to sew their own garb or get

someone else to do it for them. Those who have been playing for a while frequently

lament about the poor quality in their early garb.

Clothing can be a visual clue as to the position of a person in a society, but it can

be ambiguous. Clothing, for the most part, is not restricted, or subject to sumptuary laws

within the SCA. Regalia, however, has particular meaning and is restricted to individuals

of specific ranks. For instance, only Knights can wear white belts.

Having visual clues, in the form of regalia or other markers, is important so that

participants can avoid mistakes in their performance. For instance, not acknowledging

garbed royalty by bowing, or otherwise showing deference, is considered a *faux pas*.

Adherence to formality can vary from kingdom to kingdom, and even within a kingdom,

however.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> For somebody wearing a coronet you bow to the coronet, not because you
> know them or even not knowing what the coronet is for, but because they
> are wearing it they have to be somebody … One night, Friday night or
> Saturday night, the weather was nicer then, we did that and it was vastly
> different when you are dressed in all the symbols of rank. Then when we
> walked down the lane of the merchant's row, as you would walk, just so
> many more people would stop and give you a bow or a nod (personal
> communication, October 14, 2006).

What a person wears depends on many factors. There is a very wide variety of

authenticity and craftsmanship in historical clothing (R. Turner, 1990, p. 128). Some

individuals meet the minimum standards required which is "an attempt at pre-17th century

clothing." Other participants research specific time periods and locations in order to

reproduce, as closely as possible, the material culture. There are no hard and fast rules

like those in some other re-enactment groups, such as those for American Civil War or

English Civil War. As long as it passes the "fifteen-foot rule,"[30] it is acceptable. One only

needs to attempt a historical authenticity rather than accomplish it. Since the goal in the

SCA is to participate, as opposed to perform for the public as in Renaissance Fairs or

Civil War re-enactments, it is considered more important for people to learn by doing.

The journey to authenticity may be long for some and non-existent for others.

While some within the Society value authenticity, over time traditions have

developed that are not based on historical precedent. One of these is the extensive use and

wearing of amber. Elfreda is an example of an individual who uses the new SCA tradition

of wearing amber; she does this to promote a more complete and accurate impression.

She wants to look the part of a "jarl's wife." While this interpreted impression is not

based on historical artifact, it becomes part of the "creative correctness" that makes up a

large part of SCA costuming. It is acceptable in the context of achieving the right look.

The following discussion talks of this adopted use of amber.

> Baroness Elfreda:
> I try to dress appropriately for a jarl's wife. I have large bronze brooches. I
> own a lot of amber. … I think I read they never found any woman's burial
> with more than one amber necklace. … That's SCA, not historically
> correct (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

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[30] The fifteen-foot rule is when the garments look appropriate to the time period when
standing fifteen feet away.

Clothing can also be a place to show skill. A simple t-tunic is adequate within the context of the SCA. However, more technically difficult garments can act as a showcase for one's skill at research and also in needlecraft. The act of research and creation of a historically and technically accurate piece of clothing can be part of the heroic journey.

The garment, so painstakingly made, is not a commodity and thereby has the potential to be a luxury item. Like all luxury items, possession is a marker of status in a society. These clothes then become a sign to the observer about who the wearer is, and what kind of status, and hence power, they have in the SCA.

Clothes, which show a high degree of artistry and complexity imply a high status, or SCA rank, in the wearer. The value given to a particular garment increases when it is made to commemorate a particular event, such as the Knighting garments made for Sir Olin.

Sir Olin:
This tunic for example has a huge amount of value. It's the tunic I was Knighted in. Most of the clothes I was Knighted in have a huge amount of value to me because of the love and hard work that went into it. Not just my wife, but the many other people. I was put on vigil at 12th Night and I chose to step up as a Knight at Ursalmus which is 2 weeks later. I had a full new wardrobe about 2 outfits and a coat and a hat and leggings and pants and over and under tunics and all in that two-week time frame. My wife stayed up for two days straight finishing off the couching on all the beasties on my tunic here. It means a great deal to me (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

The photograph below is Sir Olin on the day of his Knighting, dressed in the clothes made for him by his wife and friends. You can see that there is appliqué and embroidery on the upper chest of the outer tunic and embroidered trim along the wrist

cuffs of the undershirt. The wrapped garters, called wickelbanders, are cardwoven by hand. He is wearing hand-turned shoes and a fur-trimmed cap.

Figure 7. Sir Olin in his Knighting clothes (Laura-Baker Olin)

For others, clothing is just that, and no special emphasis is put on it. You can't walk around naked, and since you have to make an attempt, you put clothing on. That does not necessarily mean that the person does not value authenticity, in general, but sometimes an individual's clothing is just a thing to utilize because it is required by

tradition and cultural mores, whether modern or historical. Some participants have very

practical reasons for their choice in clothes, such as is illustrated by these excerpts:

> Sir Colin:
> I wear what I wear because a previous girlfriend could sew really well and
> made it for me – that's the truth (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

> Duke Master Frederick:
> Umm – it's just a tunic you know. Gotta wear something – at my age at
> any rate I'm not going to go around naked (personal communication, June
> 24, 2006).

Value of medieval things. Most things have value, whether one defines that

value as economic or otherwise. Appadurai (1996) says, "economic exchange creates

value" (p. 3). Simmel (1978) comes to the same conclusion and further states that, value

is subjective, and not inherent in the object. It is the relationship that the person has with

the *thing* that gives the *thing* its value. Exchange can mean, "to give and receive

reciprocally" (*Random House Webster*, 2001, p. 675). Economic exchange "implies

shared standards of value" (Keesing and Keesing, 1971, p. 254) and doesn't always mean

the exchange of currency for an item or material good. My focus, here, is not on the basic

economics of exchange or monetary values but, rather, on the cultural values and

emotional ties that people have to the things in their lives.

I found that the material culture that makes up a large part of the cultural

expression in the SCA comes from a variety of sources, from purpose-made to second-

hand purchase. How the objects enter the culture influences how those objects are valued.

Objects enter the SCA material culture in a number of ways, and the value given an

object in the SCA can change over time. The following is my analysis of valuation during

the acquisition process. Below, the acquisition values are listed from highest value to

lowest:

> 1. A person makes things to give them away (favors, jewelry).
> 2. A person purchases things to give away (gifts, trinkets).
> 3. A person makes things for their own use. (armor, clothing).
> 4. A person purchases things for their own use (camp gear).

The highest value items are those that the person makes to give away. Gifts are an

important part of the material culture in the SCA. As much is made by hand, it is an

intimate act to create something to give to another person. There are many reasons why

this type of gifting occurs. When a person is preparing to step up into the role of King or

Queen, they frequently receive gifts of clothing and personal items. This helps to give the

Royal person the outer expression of wealth and dignity expected in royalty. When an

individual says, "take this gift that I made for you," it creates a bond. It shows that the

receiver is worthy of the efforts of the giver. This value is increased even more when the

item is made to commemorate a particular event such as a Knighting.

Things that had been reserved for personal use can gain in value when given

away. This is called "gifting" and can occur in many types of situations: such as when

someone does something nice for someone else or as an award for some kind of

performance, such as story telling or musical performance. When I was Princess, I would

carry small trinkets, like bracelets and rings, for just this purpose.

When objects are acquired by way of gifting, more value is ascribed to those

objects. The following excerpt describes the acquisition of an item through gifting, which

gives it an exceptionally high personal value in this culture.

> Sir Colin:
> Telling the story of Sith's Golden Hair for the assembled royalty at Rowany Festival in Australia right after I had stepped down as Bard of the West which was probably the single best performance of that story that I have given in my entire life and the crowd was amazed and I received much praise and my queen gave me an arm band to remember that day by that I keep with me still. … It's not what it is made of – it's who it came from and why. It could be plastic (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

Viscount Sir Rustam discusses a dagger and sword he acquired, one through purchase and one through gifting. Outwardly, there is little difference between a dagger and a sword, both being long thin pieces of metal with one or more cutting edges and a handle of some sort. The dagger is a practical "thing" he purchased. The sword, a gift from his Knight, "symbolizes my Knighthood." There is a different attachment to the objects, one is a "thing" and one is a "symbol."

> Viscount Sir Rustam:
> The sword Korwyn gave me. It symbolizes my Knighthood, his faith in me, and our friendship. … He had it made by Sir Blackhand to specifications that my lady of the time knew was the kind of sword that was right for my persona. … It's not something you can find anywhere (personal communication, July 15, 2006).

The next objects in value are those that are purchased to give away. Again, the act of gifting increases the value of an object. These items can be bought at a thrift store or made by artisans. Any object can be invested with meaning when given to commemorate an event. A Knight might buy a new white belt for a squire soon to be Knighted. That white belt will come to symbolize the relationship of the new Knight to their mentor Knight and to the Crown.

Items that a person makes for themselves, such as armor or clothing, are next in value. Becoming a craftsperson skilled enough to produce objects takes time and effort. When those skills are used to create an object, it invests that object with value even if the purpose of that object is to be hit repeatedly with heavy sticks as in the case of armor.

The lowest value items are those a person purchases to use themselves, frequently utilitarian items such as cups or mugs to use at feasts. Objects that are purchased for utilitarian reasons are usually confined to the space of commodity or *thing*. The relationship with the object is practical and pragmatic. How those objects are viewed influences the actor's discussion of those objects. In the excerpt, below from the Calontir list archives, the utilitarian aspects are the central theme of the acquisition, which in this case was from thrift stores, garage sales, and auctions.

> Liriel:
> Can I throw in Thrift Stores? Over the years between the two and an
> occasional auction I have made a lot of finds. One item I don't think has
> been mentioned is fabric. Bundles of fabric show up at sales (I once found
> 6 yards of silk for $1) but also curtains, they can contain a *lot* of fabric
> (Kinsey, 1997).

Finding goods at bargain prices becomes a performance that is sometimes told in narratives and stories to those not fortunate enough to participate in the shopping experience. Fabric that is useful, in the context of medieval recreation, can be expensive. The previous correspondent goes so far as to mention that she found inexpensive fabric at these venues. Fabric is important to the culture as it allows the creation of the garments that provide a medieval flavor to events. Participants will travel distances to go to fabric stores such as the Pendleton Woolen Mill outlet in Washougal, Washington and Mill End

Fabrics in Milwaukie, Oregon. It is not unheard of for participants to come from southern Oregon or eastern Washington to shop at these stores.

Clothing is only one part of the general atmosphere of a medieval themed event. As discussed, the camp-living space, even though temporary, can be extremely elaborate. This constructed space is bounded and is an extension of the participant's home. Just how much effort is put into the living space varies widely among participants. Acquisition again plays a large part in how the objects that reside in this living space are valued.

The purchases by the following correspondent were made at a garage sale. The price of the objects is included in the discussion. The description of how the participant plans to use the item is not consistent with modern camping. A "satin-covered down-filled" comforter is not commonly seen in modern camping situations, nor are the carpets used as flooring.

> Kateryn de Develyn:
> I got two nifty items at different garage sales: A satin-covered down-filled "queen-sized" comforter for $4. A large 6 x 8 ft persian [*sic*] rug for $4
> The comforter is really nice if it turns chilly, and feels neat, and most importantly - looks real spiffy in your tent. The rug goes in the tent or out under the shade-fly. Very nice on the bare feet in either location. Also looks real spiffy in the tent. Provides a nice place to sit for those without chairs. And just a little extra cushioning for those sleeping on the ground (Hense, 1997).

The following correspondent also expresses a preference for wooden items as being "indestructible" and a "good insulator." This shows a value for durable items that can resist damage from frequent packing, transportation, and unpacking for camping events.

Morgan:
Some of the good items are blankets and wooden eating gear. I prefer wood for camping because it is darned near indestructible and a good insulator. Blankets are always useful, even for use as ground covers and sit-upons and padding under a sleeping bag (Hablutzel, 1997).

Morgan speaks about items as being disposable because they are "cheap." In the next excerpt, the items were cheap to acquire, and therefore they have little value, other than as utilitarian items used to create atmosphere and provide comfort.

Alban:
I once saw a well-seasoned cast iron dutch (sic) oven go for sale at a farm auction; does this count? Along with the usual range of incredibly cheap and therefore why-worry-if- they're lost-at-the-event things like silverware, plates, and other cheap cooking and eating things (Alban, 1997).

Many items are discussed as having multiple functions. The multi-functionality is often coupled with being inexpensive. Below the correspondent gives the price to us proudly, as if they have counted coup and come out the winner. In this case, the item's value comes from being inexpensive, a badge of honor for finding such a luxury item for three dollars. Such finds are often discussed with pride at events. Information is exchanged as to where bargains could be found. Emails touting the latest fabric sale, whether online or at the local fabric shop, are exchanged.

Mikalz:
I found about eight foot of white sheep-hide fun fur. [It] had been used as a cover for a couch in a dorm. I sleep under it, hide my bed under it, use it to sit on, even wear the darn thing in cold weather! Cost me three dollars! (Shew, Feb 1997).

Sometimes participants will barter for goods. There are a large number of

individuals who have some craft or artisan skill. These skills have additional value when

they can be used to create something in exchange for another object. In the following

case, a weaver is looking for someone to make a sunshade.

> Luzia do Valongo:
> Greetings, I am interested in a possible trade of some of my handwoven
> fabric for someone to build a sun fly for me. If you are interested and have
> had some experience building sun flies, please get in touch with me
> privately and we'll see if we can work out some details (do Valongo,
> 2005).

Atmosphere. Value is given to objects that help create the atmosphere that can

transport a person through sensation. It is the total effect of the accumulated historical

things, the whole impression, that has value. The accumulation can also be a display of

wealth, which again goes back to a medieval attitude of creating the pomp in courtly

pursuits.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> I value people's objects that are a distinct attempt to create something to
> add to the atmosphere. One of my SCA sons has a very absolutely
> beautiful Viking gear. He has very elaborately decorated Viking boxes and
> some that are not so elaborate but very true reproductions of found
> artifacts. He has some wonderful jewelry that is reproduction jewelry of
> things. Those objects don't have symbolic significance, they have
> historical significance in that they are the things that having those, when I
> talk about transporting moments, all the objects around you help to
> transport you there (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Victor Turner (1982a) describes the space created for these transporting moments

as liminoid phenomena. This marginal space and time becomes transformed from profane

to sacred and is performed in "privileged spaces and times, set off from the periods and

areas reserved for work, food, and sleep" (V. Turner 1986, p. 25). The temporal

displacement sends a *frisson* down through the participant and reflexive emotion takes

over. They become part of some other place, some other time. When everything comes

together, when there are no visible traces of modern life, the participant often talks about

a "transportation" into an altered reality. Here, we have one such occurrence.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> As we drive up there's this six-foot-four Viking fellow with a real metal
> cap helm, real chainmail with a real axe over his shoulder, with a real
> drinking horn in his hand and a big kite shield slung over his shoulder and
> he came walking out to the car because he knew Dublin so Dublin waved
> and he came walking out with this big smile and a "Heilsa!" and just
> welcomed us instantly as brothers and was just bigger than life. … He
> bought some land. It was raw land just 5 acres and we went down and
> cleared out blackberry brambles and he brought in hay bales and bought
> some cedar fencing and he built this structure and put his long tent up on it
> and basically reproducing a Viking house structure. … It was in the
> middle of his property there was nothing modern around in the core area
> where we had it. We had this wonderful little hall you could go in.
> Everything was lit by torches, and candles, we were doing activities that
> transported you to the Middle Ages. Some people were digging a big pit to
> lay the fire to roast the pig for three days before they served it up at the
> wedding feast. Throwing axes or spears. Or doing the combat,
> tournaments, the arts and crafts that otherwise might be doing
> woodworking, woodcarving and a whole host of other things. He was
> about the moment. He wanted that authentic transport-you-to-some-other-
> place-and-time-other-than-today and he managed to create that and sort of
> showed what could be done without having to go to extreme lengths to do
> it (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

In the following story, the battlefield itself becomes part of the material culture,

along with the arrows and other armaments. The chaos that is battle is brought home to

the participant in a "transporting" situation where the participant actually felt as if they

were part of a historical battle. It was the total, the sum of the parts, which became the

valued expression of the material culture.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> They had brought in backhoes and built real fortifications. They built these burms and then trenches on the outside. . . . They were square like a Roman fortifications with big gates. You had a couple very large armies, several hundred folks on a side. They were using ballista, bows and arrows, and all. You felt like you so much were in a real medieval war. … You'd have the assault and you'd battle back. When you died, you'd fall down there and when there was a break you'd move back to a resurrection point in the middle of the fort and they go off somewhere outside. There would be these lulls while the dead were cleared from the field. The assault would come again. Just the arrows zipping over head, you had that adrenalin rush like it was real. The way it was ran you felt like, it gave you a taste of how horrible it would actually be in one. You couldn't really say that it was a lot to do with your particular prowess over anybody else's it was being lucky enough to not be shot in the side of the head when you were looking over there (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

When everything comes together, the sights, the sounds, the smells, it transports

you to somewhere, *somewhen,* else. Jarl Ulfred's wife, Baroness Elfreda, tells of walking

the battlefield after the battle looking for Ulfred, and feeling this liminal state, of being

transported to a past where the battle was real, not knowing if her husband was dead or

alive. This is the state that is elusive and sought after. This essential transportation delves

back into the emotional aspects of what attracts individuals to participate in the SCA. It

distills the entire sensual experience of sights, sounds, smells, and textures into a single

point of pure being in the moment, even if that moment is a fantastical illusion of

invented history. Elfreda knew her husband was safe, but there was an awareness of what

the historical reality would have been like.

Seeking the continuance of the liminal feelings, the participants often bring the

material goods into their homes. It is more the rule than the exception for a home of a

Scadian to have some visual evidence of participation in the SCA. This can be framed

award charters on the wall, armor stacked in the corner, or unfinished sewing projects in

a basket by the favorite chair.

Authenticity. There is a constant debate between the legitimate need for

authenticity and the use of authenticity merely as a weapon in a status/power play. The

decision as to whether authenticity is important to the individual relates directly to the

purpose of participation. Again, clothing can be used as a symbol of power, allowing the

observer to know how the wearer fits within the social structure. It takes time and skill to

produce authentic material culture. You can go to thrift shops and get something

"adequate" but sometimes adequate is not enough for an individual. Authenticity can be

used to indicate status.

> Duncan MacIntyre:
> There are two rules that I apply for my own things. One is the ten-foot
> rule. Do I look authentic from ten foot away with no glaring modern
> materials or objects? The second is the medieval guy rule. If you put me in
> a line up with people actually from my time period would a medieval guy
> from my time period pick me out as looking strange or out of place? …
> That seems to me to be a rare consideration among many members of the
> SCA. I think that if people would pay more attention to looking their part
> they wouldn't have to rely so much on regalia and titles. It can be done and
> it can be done without spending a fortune. That is what should be
> "Creative" about our society (Miller & Miller, 1998).

But then, what is authentic? If one were to stick to a strict interpretation of the

word, then nothing used by participants would be authentic, because they are not using

the material culture produced during the actual historical time period. To be authentic

would be to require the use of what surely would be considered archaeological artifacts.

Thus the term "authenticity" becomes a culturally mediated term. That, however, does

not mean it is uncontested territory. Nothing lights up an SCA email listserv quicker than

a debate on the merits and the restrictions of "authenticity."

> Pettet:
> I don't think we should be so dismissive of criticism regarding our lack of
> authenticity. I am in favor of being as inclusive and accessible as possible,
> but this does not mean that we should not strive for a minimum level of
> historical accuracy in our efforts at recreation. And, it is my opinion that
> we fall short of this minimum level (Pettet, 2000).

The following exchange on the Calontir list is just one example of such a debate.

Neither side is wrong, as they look at the question through a post-modern lens of personal

expectations over-laid upon the cultural expectations.

> Hannah:
> Of course the goal of SCA events *should* be to authenticate period
> traditions as closely as possible--else, why are we there? (Morrow, 1997).

To which came this reply:

> Pav:
> Hmmph, I guess I'm doing it wrong then. I go to events to enjoy myself
> and my friends. I make an effort to do it in a SCA sanction[ed] style, but
> will not have a bad time for the sake of authenticity. I'm there for the
> people (Byers, 1997).

So we see here a contestation in the place and value of authenticity versus

enjoyment perceived by one person. This is a frequent conversation. Because authenticity

takes time, money, and skill that not everyone possesses it can be a barrier to

participation. The SCA can be situated between the Civil War reenactors, who require

absolute authenticity, and some of the Live Action Role Playing (LARP) groups, who

don't require any sort of authenticity.

The value of authenticity can change over time for a person in the SCA. When

Viscount Sir Rustam started in the SCA, his persona was a dark elf assassin. He was 15

years old at the time. As he grew older, he moved towards a more authentic appearance

and persona.

> Viscount Sir Rustam:
> That not where I'm at anymore but that's what I was excited about when I
> got in (personal communication, July 15, 2006).

Viscount Sir Rustam values authenticity in material culture, although he

frequently camps in a modern tent. He talks about authenticity and its role in how he

views 'his stuff.' For him, the purpose of the objects is to lend an authenticity to his

game, even if he doesn't actually use the items at an event, for instance the desire for a

Persian saddle. Here, it is the *idea of a thing* that is valued.

> Viscount Sir Rustam:
> I have a fetish for equipage. … I like the idea of "Here's my persona, what
> kind of stuff did they have?" I'd like the correct Persian saddle; I don't
> expect to have the correct Persian horse, mind you. But I would like to
> have the proper equipment for the persona (personal communication, July
> 15, 2006).

Although authenticity is valued in the SCA, it is not required. What *is* required is

an "attempt" and a willingness to learn.

Symbolic meanings of objects in the SCA. During the life of a thing, it will gain and lose value, meaning, and symbolism. Sometimes a sword is just a sword. At other times, a sword is a priceless symbol of friendship or achievement. After an item is acquired, the value can change for a number of reasons. An object can become a gift, a symbol, or part of the accretion that creates medieval atmosphere.

As long as any group of people agrees on its meaning, an object can become a symbol (Liungman, 1991). However, just because a thing has meaning, does not make it a symbol. Some things simply "denote the objects to which they are attached" (Jung, 1964, p. 20). The Nike swoosh, the MacDonald's arch, and the initials USA do not mean anything other than to point to the object. These are signs. Symbols take on a richer more nuanced life that extends beyond the physicality of a thing.

In the SCA, there are several types of object-symbols. The following list illustrates the range of these types.

1. Personal to the individual, may not involve other people (Something authentic to persona such as a Persian saddle).
2. Personal to the individual but representing a relationship to another individual (Squire's belt).
3. Personal to the individual but representing a relationship to an ideal (Knight's belt).
4. Cultural, representing a relationship to an ideal (the Crowns and Coronets, Sword of State).

These symbols are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For instance, a Knight's belt can be a symbol representing both a relationship with a person and a relationship with an ideal.

Sometimes the gift giving isn't for a specific occasion, but as an emulation of the

largesse given out by medieval nobility. Recall the scene in *Lord of the Rings* where

Pippin is given livery of the city of Minis Tirith; this gift giving begins to delve into the

realm of symbolism as the act of giving shows charity, one of the components of

chivalry. Some participants in the SCA use this kind of gift-giving to enhance their

medieval role, in the case of Sir Obadiah that of a Knight bestowing gifts on his retainers,

his squires.

> Earl Sir Obadiah:
> There's another weird thing no one else will probably mention. It's a squire's gifts; when starting up I gave each of my squires a pair of gauntlets. [31] When I had these first young men, I gave them a tunic for Christmas. I would make sure they had a nice tunic for Christmas every year (personal communication, July1, 2006).

There are several types of regalia in the SCA. Regalia is usually used to

symbolize rank and status in the SCA. It can be worn of different parts of the body.

1. Worn on the head (Crown, Coronet, AOA circlet[32]).
2. Worn around the neck (Knight's chain, Peerage medallion).
3. Worn on the waist (Knight's belt, Squire belt, Apprentice's belt).
4. Worn over the shoulder (Master of Arms baldric).
5. Worn on the feet (Knight's spurs)

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[31] Gauntlets are specialized armored gloves for heavy combat fighting.
[32] An Award of Arms (AOA) circlet can vary according to kingdom and custom. In An Tir, an AOA circlet is most often about 1.2 inch wide of a metal band that can have surface decoration such as engraving.

Figure 8. Prince of the Summits Coronet (Author's collection)

The following is an explanation of the kinds, and meaning of regalia, according to Society rules. The regalia worn on the head are most often society-wide symbols of those who are currently ruling or have in the past ruled a kingdom or principality. Kings and Queens wear Crowns, while Princes and Princesses wear Coronets. Made of precious metals, these Crowns and Coronets are valued into the thousands of dollars.

The Knight's chain, and the Peerage medallion, is meant to be worn around the neck. The Knight's chain is a symbol of fealty to the Crown and can be made of lamp chain purchased at the hardware store or made of hand-forged links. A Peerage medallion can be made of a variety of metals and other materials but will bear the symbols of the appropriate Order: a pelican in its piety or a laurel wreath. The medallions have no

Society-wide symbolism, such as the Knight's chain, other than identification as a member of the Order.

The wearing of a white belt is reserved to Knights alone and can be made of any persona-appropriate material. The most common material used to make the Knight's belt is white leather. While not a period practice, it has been adopted Society-wide as a symbol of Knighthood.

Master and Mistresses of Arms, are those who have chosen to not swear fealty to the Crown. They wear a white baldric across the chest. Again, they can be made of any person-appropriate material.

Spurs are worn by Knights as a symbol of Chivalry and as a harkening back to medieval Knights when they made up the cavalry. While there is no Society-wide symbolism for the spurs, they are often given to a new Knight along with the story of those who have previously worn them. When regalia or other objects are passed from one person to another, they can begin to acquire special significance that directly stems from relationships.

> Sir Olin:
> Regalia-wise I passed my chain on my chain was given to my squire brother Octamasades I passed it on to my squire brother Sir Frederick who was Knighted about a year and half after I was. My belt was given to me by Sir Torfin from around his waist. It was his personal belt he had with hand cast replica plaques and the whole bit. The spurs I have, one came from Sir Tiernan and one came from Jarl Wilam and they mean a great deal to me. I am probably the only Knight who wears mismatched spurs. And they are drastically mismatched. One is a horse head and one old style Norse prick spur. I wear them proudly because of where they came from. They both helped me tremendously on my road to Knighthood (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

Objects can begin with individuals and then extend to become significant to a group of people. These objects take on the role of relic, something semi-sacred, imbued with powers beyond ordinary objects. They can be inspired by the literature of the period and medieval artifacts.

> Jarl Sir Ulfred:
> Another being Dak's oath ring which is a large arm band, solid silver, very ornate. Torgul made it. I don't know if it was an actual find it's based on or it's just from the sagas. They talked about swearing an oath on the oath ring. That was another one of the relics that Dak holds and they (sic) still do (personal communication, October 14, 2006).

Figure 9. Sir Olin's Knighting with Jarl Dak holding the Oath Ring (Laura Olin-Baker)

When Sir Olin was Knighted, he had only a two weeks' notice. He talks about the clothes that were made not just by his wife, Baroness Khalja, but many others. These concerted efforts by his friends give the clothing a powerful symbolism to him. They are a work of love and a sign of approval of his elevation to Knighthood.

> Sir Olin:
> Most of the clothes I was Knighted in have a huge amount of value to me because of the love and hard work that went into it. Not just my wife but the many other people (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

In the following interview, Duke Master Frederick of Holland talks about the objects that mean the most to him. He acknowledges that the *things* could be replaced, showing little attachment to the actual items. He knows that he could go to Pennsic and buy new things but that some are irreplaceable because of who made them.

> Duke Master Frederick:
> The thing that would be impossible to replace would be the ducal coronet, pretty much everything else I could replace by spending money. This would be something that, because the person who made the county coronet, I just attached strawberry leaves[33] to the county coronet, the person who made the county coronet was my next door neighbor when I lived in Buffalo, NY, her first attempt at doing silver work and charged nothing for it essentially the cost of the silver. The strawberry leaves themselves were made by Duke Henrick. The whole would be impossible to replace (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

Nearly every respondent I talked to described a relationship within SCA in the context of acquiring the regalia of Knighthood. The relationship of Knight to squire was most often mentioned. Also, in addition to the squire's Knight, are others who have

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[33] Dukes and Duchesses use the symbols of strawberry leaves on their coronets to indicate rank.

helped in one way or another on the road to Knighthood. Both of the following comments

discuss the material objects that are symbols of relationships between Knights and

squires.

> Earl Sir Obadiah:
> Probably my Knight's chain. It actually came back to me. I gifted it to Sir
> Colbert who was my squire when he was Knighted and he could no longer
> do the SCA he made sure it came back. Because he knew it was precious,
> he knew it needed to be back here. I may pass it on as well, again
> (personal communication, July1, 2006).

> Sir Colin:
> The belt. The belt is both the reminder that I am a Knight of the West and
> my token of being the Knight of the West and it also carries with it the
> memory of my Knight and the image of him standing there holding it with
> a smile the day I was Knighted. He was very proud of me – it was a big
> deal (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

> Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
> My Knight's belt was given to me by my former squire brother, Kjartan,
> who is now a Knight also. He's told me when I came up in Knight's
> council that he would stand up and say that day he Knighted me he
> wouldn't wear his belt anymore. He didn't. He gave it to me, now I have it
> (personal communication, August 28, 2006).

Sir Arnsbjorn had recently been Knighted when I interviewed him. He talked

about his squire's belt as a symbol of the relationship that he had with his Knight. Giving

up his squire's belt during the Knighting ceremony marked a transition in the relationship

from one of master-student to peer-peer. His Knight's chain was made up of links from

other Knights' chains; some links were handmade, and others, simple lamp chain. It is the

combination of the parts that create the value in this item. The final item he talked about

is the first piece of clothing that his wife made him.

> Baron Sir Arnsbjorn:
> One thing. I have this shirt that my wife hates. It was the very first shirt
> she made for me. It's mildewy, it has bacon grease on it. She keeps trying
> to get me to throw it away. But it's the very first thing made for me. I will
> have that until the day it falls off my body (personal communication,
> August 28, 2006).

Lamp chain is a common material used for making Knight's chains, which are gold necklaces only worn by Knights. While lamp chain is prosaic, and of little value, when transformed by SCA inheritance into a symbol, it can acquire great value. This acquired history is the process by which an item attains value in the culture. The belt, chain, and spurs make up the regalia of the Knight. Each one of these is ripe with symbolism, gained over time, as the individual forges relationships with fellow Knights, and others, in the culture.

There are many reasons why people wear the regalia associated with their rank. Most people do not wear all the possible regalia that they own at any given time. The most common time to wear regalia is in more formal occasions such as court, or when attending a Crown level event. The wearing of regalia is a contested area. There is a tension between the reasons that people wear the regalia and the expected behavior of others towards them while they are wearing it.

> Nogy:
> But I like being a peer, and I like decking out when appropriate - it is one
> of the few benefits that go along with the responsibilities of peerages.
> Being able to step out almost anywhere in the Known World and have
> people be able to recognize because of your regalia what you have worked
> hard for years is cool. But I don't expect people to fall all over themselves
> because of the medallion or the cloak - that's not fun (Nogy, 2000).

While the wearing of regalia is encouraged for a number of reasons, it is contested because the individual's purpose for wearing it may be suspect. A viewer might wonder why they wear the regalia, whether to produce the persona correct appearance, or for some desire for the respect implied.

> Nazir:
> I have witnessed people wearing regalia, because it is as much a part of their garb as their tunic is. I have witnessed people wearing regalia because it was appropriate to the occasion. I have also witnessed people wearing regalia because they didn't think they would get any respect without it (Jarvis, 2000).

Different kingdoms have varying rules or traditions regarding the type of regalia which can be worn. One of the more common types of regalia is the circlet, generally a circular piece of metal that can range from a narrow band to the elaborate crowns worn on the heads of royalty. The following exchange discusses these differences, again referred to as 'interkingdom anthropology.'

> Elasait:
> I have been told, but have not confirmed it by looking at their laws, that in Atenveldt, _only_ royalty, royal peers, and barons/esses may wear metal of any sort on their heads. And apparently in An Tir, they have something they call "peerage circlets" which are often given in the same way we give medallions, and which sound, from descriptions, like mini-coronets with the emblem of the particular peerage order on the front. So every place has different laws and/or customs, and sometimes customs are stronger than laws (Beaty-Schraer, 2000).

Participants can own several versions of the same type of regalia. Viscount Sir Rustam owns several different belts, chains, and spurs. Regalia can lend itself to creating the atmosphere that is the goal of many in the SCA. Some participants like to participate

in the pageantry, and theatrical aspects, of performance. The regalia can help to place the

participant into the frame of historical context. It becomes an apparatus of imagination,

imbued with special meaning through display and the behavior inspired by wearing it.

> Jenna:
> I myself like the regalia and ceremony that goes with rank, it adds to the
> ambiance. There's a tension between adding to the pageantry for others
> (even if at a bit of inconvenience to yourself), and going overboard and
> looking like a pompous ass. Everyone has their own comfort level, I know
> peers who won't wear medallions except maybe to Coronations, and I
> know peers that I suspect sleep in their regalia. And we all know huscarls
> who have gotten their medallions tattooed to their bodies (Jenna, January
> 2000).

Women in the SCA frequently wear veils, if it is appropriate to their persona.

While participants may debate why an individual chooses to wear the symbols of their

office, sometimes, the reason is just plain practical: to keep their veil in place.

> Tangwen:
> And then of course there are the women who wear theirs for another
> reason entirely (and I've heard this commented on by more than one hat-
> wearing female person of my acquaintance).”I need it to keep my veil on."
> I admire practicality (Wilson, 2000).

The wearing of visible regalia can influence the behavior of others. There is an

acknowledgement of “on” and “off” duty for royalty and peers that is signaled by

wearing, or not wearing, crowns or coronets. Before the individual puts on the trappings

of office behavior can be somewhat casual. Once the crown is on the head of royalty

everyone acknowledges that the role has been assumed and acts accordingly.

This choice, as to whether to wear regalia or not, is individual. When a peer, or

royalty, wish to remain somewhat anonymous, they can go “stealth” by not wearing

insignia or other artifacts of their office. Lacking visual cues to behavior, individuals who

may not know the royalty or peer may not know how to behave.

> Somers:
> It has been my experience within the society that those who 'HAVE' these
> types of visible regalia <whether they wear them or not> are very gracious
> when people do not know the proper title to address them by. Perhaps it is
> a point of "chivalry" that those in the higher orders have gleaned by long
> association in the society, they are not quick to take offense (Somers,
> 1998).

The Knight's white belt is probably the most widely known and recognized piece

of regalia. While even circlets and crowns can be confusing, there is no mistaking the

white belt. However, even this well-accepted item can be contested territory.

> Miller:
> I, personally, don't like belts. It seems to me that other objects are better
> and more period in place of this system. I do have a yellow belt that I wear
> out of respect for Dame Joan. There are no period examples of belt use to
> show rank. However there are period examples of ways to show rank.
> Particularly for Knights. Spurs and chains are far more period, for all time
> periods, and yet the belt seems to be what most people identify with SCA
> Knighthood. I rarely talk about this because I have found that many in the
> Society have attached such a sacred meaning to the belt system (Miller,
> 1998).

Many of these traditions began very early in the history of the SCA. Some are

based on historical models, such as the Knight's spurs. Others, such as the white belt for

Knights, are based on Victorian constructs of pseudo-medieval history.

Duke Master Frederick:
Actually a lot of it, I mean the white belt, gold chain, that's out of Thomas the Rhymer, Ballad of Thomas the Rhymer[34]. It's an out of period ballad about Thomas the Rhymer and how the king says I give you a belt and chain, Thomas says what do I need with your belt and chain and plays his harp and sings songs and basically tears the king to pieces emotionally, the king says I give up, I give up (personal communication, June 24, 2006).

For other individuals, the symbols don't have as much meaning. The differences appear to be very personal. The person may wear the symbols of their office, but they have no special value to that individual.

Viscount Sir Rustam:
The symbols don't mean that much to me. It's like with fealty, I don't panic if I haven't managed to swear fealty to the King when they stepped up. Because with me it goes without saying. When I became a Knight I knew I'd be in fealty to the King of my kingdom whether I've gotten up to swear to or not. The oath is there for me whether I've formally gone through with this particular King (personal communication, July 15, 2006).

Objects of nostalgia. Sir Paul no longer "plays" in the SCA. I wanted to interview him to get the perspective of one who left the SCA. His home seemed not that much different than any other SCA home I had ever visited. When I entered, a large banner bearing his heraldry was displayed in the stairway leading up to his main living area. His award scrolls and armor were also prominently displayed. He had been out of the SCA for almost ten years because of a romantic relationship breaking up.

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[34] Kipling, Rudyard. "The Last Rhyme of True Thomas."
The King has called for priest and cup,
 The King has taken spur and blade
To dub True Thomas a belted Knight,
 And all for the sake o' the songs he made.
(Kipling, 1994, p. 389)

There is such an attachment to the items, and the ideas behind them, that they are retained even after a participant no longer plays in the SCA. The flip side of acquiring objects and of objects gaining value and emotional content is the loss of those objects. Just as acquisition and symbolism can vary across the spectrum, so can feelings towards the loss of objects. He had not disposed of the objects of the culture even though he was no longer a part of that culture.

> Sir Paul:
> Which amuses me. Because for the longest time the helm and gauntlets were stuck in the tourney chest. I would occasionally have friends from work who would drop by and they would want to handle this stuff. I would have to clear all this stuff off the top of the tourney chest and dig it out. I finally got tired of doing that all the time so I just left them out. Initially just set them on the table because there's nothing else sitting on the table at the time. … I haven't quite figured out what I want to do with it. The fabrics and stakes and poles are somewhere in the attic. Most of the garb is still in the attic. I probably can't get into a lot of it anymore. You noticed the banners hanging around. I never really got rid of the stuff, part of it was because I left it hurt. I had the notion that I would heal up, lick my wounds and heal up and then come back and play. But I've never since felt inclined to do so (personal communication, October 1, 2006).

So even when the individual is no longer active in the SCA, they still surround themselves with the material culture because of the memories and associations it brings to mind. It is these associations that give value to the objects of nostalgia. What I found was that the objects were not so much nostalgic, as they were symbols of current and past relationships. Once the person entered the SCA, they began to create their bonds to others in the Society. Then, the material culture acquired in the course of building those relationships, in turn became valuable.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Like many a neophyte anthropologist, I grasped my methods as a tightly as a baby blanket as I headed out into the scary world of the 'field.' I explored my new world, sometimes successfully and sometimes less so. Deegan and Hill (1991) state that, the "dissertation process is a liminal journey, a passage characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, and crisis in which the student self is abandoned and a new professional self claims a world of power, authority, maturity, and responsibility" (p. 322). While only time will tell about any change in maturity and responsibility on the part of this doctoral student, I can attest to the accuracy of ambiguity and crisis. There were changes in my methods, and the task took far longer than I had anticipated.

In my introduction to this dissertation, I stated that the purpose of this study was to understand how an invented community (the SCA) constructs symbolic meaning in material objects and value systems. What I found was a rich cultural context of community and family, surrounded by crafted objects deeply imbued with personal meaning. The SCA extends beyond the standard frames of a subculture to encompass a lifestyle based on the enjoyment of historical fantasy and immediacy of mythical experience. The SCA is meant to be lived, not just observed.

To the participants of the SCA, the modern world is seen to lack some quality that is found in the subculture. Once they find the SCA, participants make a conscious choice

to continue, or not. Even though participation in the SCA is considered play, it is serious play in that it takes a certain amount of effort. Participants must acquire the material goods, such as clothing and the other gear, necessary to present an historical appearance. They must travel, sometimes great distances, to go to events. For all the effort that goes into participation, those that stay in the subculture, get something positive from it. If they do not get a positive emotional or social reward, then they leave. Many participants define their self-identity by their participation in the SCA. They are Scadians and a part of a community.

The most common reasons for joining the SCA were a desire for community, romanticism for an imagined past, and a love of history. Nearly everyone cites the finding of kindred spirits, of family, for keeping them participating in the SCA. The SCA community is negotiated in the signs and symbols that become attached to cultural values. These cultural values have developed over time to reflect the romanticism and nostalgia of the participants themselves. The SCA, as a culture, becomes a reflection of what the individuals hold to be important. Creating community and a sense of belonging are shared goals of the participants of the SCA. In fact, many of the activities and material culture are either consciously, or unconsciously, defined by their place in this community, such as the martial contest of a Crown Tourney or the inherited legacy of a Knight's chain.

Individuals join a community that will give them an heroic sense of self. Threads of historical and mythic interest draw participants to create a cohesive community that allows them to express and manifest those concepts. These traits also relate back to the

hero narrative. When an individual enters the culture, they enter into a very liminal state, one of change from modern person to medieval persona. They are assumed to be of noble birth and are expected to behave with courtesy and honor. These social concepts are felt to be stretched thin in the modern world. What one makes of oneself while in the SCA is entirely up to the individual. There are a wide range of opportunities from martial training, to artistic development, to historical research.

The concept of the Inspiration is an expression of the romantic beginnings of the SCA. This romanticism influences the behavior participants want to see in the SCA. The desire of reaching for ideals not found in the modern world is a widespread and common theme. The individual finds meaning in the pursuit of something greater than themselves such as chivalry and honor. The concept of the Inspiration also elevates the role of competition from a selfish desire to win at all costs. Instead, what is desired is a performance that will bring both the combatant, and their Inspiration, honor.

This emphasis on romance both draws people into the community, as well as becomes a part of the participatory theater that creates much of the medieval atmosphere. Expressions of romantic notions combine with the material objects to enhance the medieval experience for the participants. This can be banners floating in the wind, a lady giving a fighter her favor to wear for the day, or a fighter saluting their Inspiration before a bout in a tourney.

The rituals of Crown Tournament for a kingdom, the Coronet Tournament for a Principality, and the resulting Coronations are rituals that help to bind the community

together. While not all participants in the SCA are involved with Royalty, for many they are a central unifying theme of reciprocal obligation.

A predisposition to fantasy leads many people to the SCA. Once there, they find a rich culture that provides the framework for them to perform a better version of themselves. This can be expressed during martial tournaments. As there are no referees judging the contest, it is up to the combatants to decide if they have been struck with a blow that delivers the appropriate amount of power. Combatants must temper their desire to win with their commitment to fair-play, honesty, and chivalry. This is also seen in several other customs pertaining to combat, such as turning a kneeling opponent so that they do not have to face into the sun while continuing the fight or dropping their own shield after having rendered one of their opponent's arms inoperable[35]. In all these cases, the combatant has the opportunity to demonstrate, through action, their ideals of honorable and chivalrous behavior. To do less, risks cheapening of achievement and loss of respect from ones peers. Tournament combat becomes an ideal place to demonstrate ones heroic ideals.

The SCA is based on a fantasized version of history. Some participants mention a love of history as a reason for joining, or staying, with the SCA. For many, this is pre-existing. For others, it develops as they are able to visually and sensorily immerse themselves in the sights and sounds of a lived-in experience. History emerges from the pages of the textbook and is reinterpreted to become something new and useable to the

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[35] In SCA fighting, a sword blow must strike with a certain amount of force to be considered effective. A blow to the arm results in the loss of use of that arm. A blow to the leg results in having to continue the fight while kneeling. Blows elsewhere are considered to be "killing blows" and end the fight.

participants. This situates them within a personal script, highlighting what may be of value to the individual, whether it be the martial arts, the domestic arts of daily living, or the creation of material culture.

Performative gestures, such as saluting their Inspiration or the Crown, become symbolic relics. Such acts remember an age of manners that no longer exists. This association with fantasized history gives the small gestures of courtesy greater meaning to participants. Previous exposure to historical/ fantasy movies and literature provides a rich visual context for inserting themselves into an historic narrative. The SCA provides a place where the participants can create this narrative for themselves

The SCA is an all-volunteer group, with a handful of paid positions in the corporate headquarters in Milpitas, California. It can be a huge task to hold events, especially the large inter-kingdom wars that can draw multiple thousands of people for up to three weeks at a time. Even so, many participants agree that they are in the SCA for fun, and frequently say, "If you aren't having fun, you are doing it wrong." It is escapist fun based in historical trappings. It is the "idea" of the SCA that attracts them at a very emotional level.

The play becomes a personal narrative where a person can become a King, or a Knight, or a Princess. Play is separate from ritual in that it is free-flowing and adaptive. This makes the experience intensely personal and immediate. This play is also serious because, as Royalty, you can influence others' experiences, either positively or negatively. There is a saying among the Royalty of the SCA, "you exist because they believe." This willingness to believe is key to creating the medieval atmosphere. While

each participant brings their own preconceived notions of what is medieval, the amalgam of all these viewpoints creates the ambiance and cultural cohesion.

Putting on a costume plays into the illusionary aspect of the SCA. When one puts on the clothing from an historical period, the participant assumes a different role than they have in modern life. The use of costumes helps participants maintain that role, and even when the individual slips into a modern mindset, the costumes can help retain the visual medieval atmosphere.

Participants must make an attempt at dressing in a pre-17th century manner. In this way, everyone is exposed to SCA material culture at their first event. The clothing they wear may be borrowed or bought at a thrift store, but at least an effort is made. This effort gives the participant an investment from the very beginning. Once they begin to participate, they see how others do things and they can begin to learn how to make stuff themselves. This becomes part of the socialization process.

Participants create the material culture in order to enhance the atmosphere they seek in their mediated performance of history. As an individual begins to create the personal narrative, they accumulate the material culture that lends to the medieval atmosphere. This material culture then gains value, as it becomes imbued with the emotional contexts provided by the performance and embodied history. The material culture becomes signs and symbols, perceived in a context rich with emotional meaning. In the SCA, what might to outside eyes appear to be but a length of old lamp chain may instead be a priceless relic that is symbolic of many meaningful relationships. Objects, such as Knight's belts, are passed from person to person, gaining a genealogy and story

all their own. Ritual objects, such as a Knight's regalia, can become greatly valued. These objects can come to have great meaning to a person. That person is part of a community, a culture with a way of life. Born of traditions of the past, this invented culture still reflects the desires of modern people, and those people have things.

Some objects start their material lives as symbols such as regalia. This culturally-understood symbolic language can extend beyond the sign that says, "this white belt indicates a Knight," to a symbol with deep personal significance to the bearer and perhaps others as well. The most highly prized objects of all are those that symbolized a strong relationship, frequently bolstered by a history of ownership through a succession of people.

Authenticity is a mediated notion and a method for creating the atmosphere of medievalism in which the participants in the SCA enact their fantastical history. Historical accuracy in material, process, and use are important, since authenticity is more actively sought in the objects than it is in behavior or cultural structure. Using period methods to create a material object connects the individual to the past in a very visceral manner.

To the modern person, the acquisition of an object is simple, you take a small plastic credit card to the mall, and you get what you need. However, when you grow the plants to dye the wool, which you have washed and carded and spun, then weave it into a length of fabric, which you then hand sew into a garment, you create a bond not only to the past, but to the person who ultimately uses the object. While not all Scadians go to these lengths, they make an effort that imbues an object with value. Authenticity is

valued as a skill that has been developed over time showing mastery of a craft. Wearing authentic reproductions that were made for you, by someone else, speaks of the regard between the participants.

Within this culture, material objects gain value in the culture in a number of ways, level of authenticity being just one. Objects that were made to be given away often have the highest value. Items that contribute to the medieval atmosphere are considered valuable regardless of where they are acquired. Greater authenticity requires more skill and time to create. The more authentic an item is, the more valuable the item is considered.

This culture started as a fantastical rendering of a Victorian-influenced ideal of Knightly and courtly virtue. It has become a culture which is vibrant with symbolic and material meanings. The SCA is not rooted in place, however, as one of the SCA participants said, "It's our village." This village is in a state of liminality which is actively sought by the participants. This is a changing conception of culture, not one based on location, but one based on shared beliefs and desires. Material culture, when connected to ideology, such as that in the SCA, can be a powerful force for creating, and maintaining, communitas.

Implications

A broader and more critical perspective on educational leisure pursuits, and their role in a complex social and cultural world, provides further insight into new ways to provide meaningful educative experiences. Immersion in the settings of the SCA, while

admittedly pseudo-historical, frequently inspires an individual to seek more information, and knowledge, about history. By adding an element of fun, of play, into what has been, to most school children, a dreary exercise in the memorization of historical facts and figures, the SCA brings history to the individual in an approachable and enjoyable manner. Through the use of public demonstrations in such places as farmer's markets and civic festivals, the members of the SCA brings history to those who don't seek it out.

It is more important to look outward from a culture, making points about human behavior using the SCA as a lens, rather than focusing on the SCA as a bounded institution. As American culture becomes increasingly fragmented, with place-bound community becoming a thing of the past, it is important to understand how humans adapt. One method of adaptive behavior is the construction of communities around beliefs, hobbies, or vocations. The SCA is one such example. In it, a vibrant culture has emerged through a conscious effort to create community.

In my research I looked at how value systems influenced the value given to objects within the culture. Using ethnographic and grounded theory methods, I looked at individuals' connection to community, and the importance of personal relationships, to creating a richly textured material culture. The SCA does not fully replace the modern world, as participants must rely on their modern resources to fund their medieval culture. Romanticism, community, and heroic ideals cannot be purchased at Walmart. Members of the SCA have instead created their own subculture in which their modern resources can be used to create what is most valuable to them. What does it say about our modern world, that individuals must seek such richness of meaning in fantastical play?

Future Research

Further research should examine other medievalist groups, especially those established by individuals who have left the SCA for some reason. There are a range of groups, from Western martial arts groups to other enacted-history medieval groups. Leadership styles and effectiveness of creating community could be examined and compared with the SCA.

There is still much that can be discovered and studied in the world of historical reenactment and other subcultures where costumes are used. One thread that I found interesting, but was not central to this study, was gender issues in the martial arts context. Further examinations using critical or feminist theory would be useful to prize out how gender is placed in the mediated world of medieval martial sports.

Another costume-oriented pursuit is Steampunk, which is a subgenre of science fiction and speculative fiction owing much to Jules Verne. The technology of Steampunk is exemplified by old-fashioned steam engines and mechanical solutions powered by spring-propelled gadgetry. The material culture is created by re-envisioning modern objects in a pseudo-Victorian style. It is a recent trend that Steampunk has become an alternative past time among some Scadians. It would be interesting to follow that subculture to see how it develops differently from the SCA. Does that subculture have a comparable richness of personal meaning and generational investment?

"Well, here at last, dear friends, on the shores of the Sea comes the end of our fellowship in Middle-earth. Go in Peace! I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil" (Tolkien, 2004, p. 1030).

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APPENDICES

Appendix One

First set of Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me the story of how you got involved in the SCA? How long have you been involved in the SCA?
2. Can you tell me what the Society for Creative Anachronism means to you? What are the basic sets of beliefs in the SCA?
3. What is a typical day like for you at an event?
4. Who are five people who have been most influential in your SCA life? Why?
5. Who are five people who admire the most in your SCA life? Why?
6. Who are five people, not involved in the SCA, that have influenced your life? Why?
7. What are the five most important events in your SCA life? Why?
8. What are five things that you like about the SCA?
9. What would you change about the SCA, if you could?
10. What would it mean to you if modern life disappeared and there was only the SCA?
11. What would happen if all of your stuff, your awards, everything you have gained in the SCA disappeared?
12. Are you the only one from your family that is involved in the SCA? What do they think about your involvement?
13. Do you have an SCA-family? Can you describe it? Does your SCA-family provide something your modern family does not?
14. Do you have a specific group of people that you camp with at events? Why? Is this group considered part of the mainstream of the SCA?
15. Can you describe your encampment? Why do you choose to set it up this way?
16. Can your describe your clothing? Why do you choose to wear these clothes? Where do you get your clothes? Are your clothes considered typical of the SCA?
17. Are there any particular SCA-related items that have great value to you? Why do they have this value?
18. How did you acquire the objects?
19. What would it mean to not have these objects?
20. What are your most private or personal objects?
21. What do your special objects, taken as a whole, mean to you?
22. Can you tell me what you do in the SCA that you don't do outside the SCA?

Appendix Two

Second Set of Interview Questions

1. Can you please give me your modern name, age, location and occupation?
2. Can you please give me your SCA location, name and title?
3. How did you get your name and title?
4. How long have you been involved in the SCA?
5. Can you tell me the story of how you got involved in the SCA?
6. What was it that kept you coming back to the SCA?
7. What is the average time spent per month on SCA-related activities?
8. What is a typical day like for you at a Crown tourney event? War event?
9. What would you like to see happen at an event?
10. Do you have a SCA-family? Can you describe it?
11. Does your SCA-family provide something your modern family does not?
12. Do you have a specific group of people that you camp with at events? Why do you camp with them?
13. Who are five people who have been influential in your SCA life? Why?
14. What are the five most important events in your SCA life? Why?
15. Do you participate in any non-SCA reenactment or medieval-themed activities?
16. If so, what are they and how do they enrich your life or fill gaps that the SCA misses?
17. If you have an inspiration/consort in the SCA, how do you view that relationship?
18. What would it mean to you if modern life disappeared and there was only the SCA?
19. Can you describe a ritual in the SCA?
20. Is ritual important to the SCA?
21. How do you define your relationship to the Crown of your kingdom?
22. How do you define your relationship to SCA, Inc.?
23. Can you tell me what the SCA means to you? Has that changed over time?
24. What are the core beliefs in the SCA?
25. Who determines what cultural values are important in the SCA?
26. How have the values of the SCA changed over time?
27. How important are the values of the SCA to you?
28. What are five things that you like about the SCA?
29. What would you change about the SCA, if you could?
30. What is one word that describes the SCA?
31. What do you believe are the duties of an SCA Knight?
32. How do you define SCA combat?

33. How do you think others define SCA combat?
34. How do you define SCA Knighthood?
35. How do you think others view Knights?
36. What did you learn between the time you decided you wanted to pursue Knighthood and when you were Knighted?
37. Is there anything that you have learned since becoming a Knight that you did not anticipate before becoming a Knight?
38. How did your participation in the SCA change after you became Knighted?
39. Did you have a vigil and could you please describe it? What wisdom was passed on to you there?
40. Do you have squires and how do you define your relationship with those squires?
41. Can you describe your encampment and why you choose to set it up that way?
42. Can you describe your garb and why you choose to wear it?
43. How important is authenticity to you? To the SCA?
44. What kinds of objects gain value in the SCA?
45. How does authenticity affect the value of an object?
46. Are there any particular SCA-related items that have great value to you? Why do they have this value?
47. How did you acquire the objects that you value?
48. What do these objects mean to you when you are not at an SCA event?
49. How do you store or display your important SCA possessions when at events? When not at events?
50. What would it mean to not have these objects?
51. What do your special SCA objects, taken as a whole, mean to you?
52. Do you think the value of these objects is readily apparent to others? In the SCA? Outside of the SCA?
53. How do you view non-personal objects like kingdom regalia? (i.e. Sword of State, the Crowns, etc.)
54. Is there anything you want to add to the conversation?

Appendix Three

Codebook

MC: Material Culture
       MCAcq: Acquisition
       MCAcqGift: Gift
       MCAcqAward: Award or prize
       MCAcqPurch: Purchase
       MCValue: Value
       MCValueIn: Intrinsic – the item is valuable
       MCValueEx: Extrinsic – something happens to make the item valuable
       MCValWhole: Value as a whole
       MCMeaning: Meaning
       MCMeaningIn:Intrinsic – this is what I think the item means
       MCMeaningEx: Extrinsic - this is what the SCA thinks the items means
       MCFood: Food
       MCAltReal: Use of material objects to create an altered reality
       MCAltRealCam: Camping and housing
       MCAltRealPers: Personal Item
       MCAltRealCloth: Clothing
       MCAltRealSym: Regalia, or Symbols of status
       MCAltRealLoss: Loss of objects
       MCAltRealCer: Ceremony and ritual
       MCAltRealCost: Cost of being in the SCA
       MCAltRealTime: Time spent on SCA

IH: Living the Imagined History – This is what the SCA is and how it works
       IHEntry: Entry to Culture
       IHEntryTime: Amount of time in the SCA
       IHEntryHook: The Hook, or why I came back
       IHEntryNost: Nostalgia
       IHEntryModern: Modern world lacks something
       IHEv: Events
       IHMA: Martial Arts
       IHGroups: Groups
       IHGroupsRoy: Royalty
       IHGroPeer: Peers

IHGroupsPeerKni Knights
IHGroupsFring: Fringe groups
IHCer: Ceremony and ritual
IHCerBuf: Buffet
IHPers: Persona – This is who I pretend I am
IHTrav: Travel
IHArts: Arts and craftsmanship
IHOther: Other recreation groups
IHReal Real vs. fantasy
IHRecogn: Recognition and awards
IHOnly: Don't do outside SCA
IHCarry: Carries over to Modern

WV: Worldview – This is how things work in my world. Paradigm.
WVForm: Formation
WVFormEH: Early History
MCAltRealSym: Changes to Original worldview
WVFormInfl: Modern or historical influences on SCA
WVBel: Beliefs – This is what I believe to be true and influences my actions.
WVBelPers: Personal meaning of SCA - this is what the SCA means to me
WVBelPersHist: Love of History
WVBelPersGarb: I like dressing up
WVBelPurp: Purpose of the SCA
WVBelPurpCorp: SCA as modern corporation
WVBelPurpPlay: SCA as play, fun
WVBelPurpCreat: SCA as creative outlet
WVBelPurpOth: SCA as other reality
WVBelPurpHob: SCA as hobby or educational organization
WVVal: Values – This is what is important to me.
WVValOth: What I value in other people
WVPow: Power
WVPowLea: Attitudes towards leaders
WVPowLow: Attitudes towards lower status
WVTranVal: Transmission of values
WVTrans: Transgression
WVDre: The Dream – a liminal state of transportation to the Past.
WVIde: Ideals
WVIdeChi: Chivalry
WVIdeHon: Honor
WVIdeCourt: Courtesy
WVIdeRom: Romance
WVIdeWel: Welcoming to newcomers

WVIdeSer: Service
WVIdeCour: Courage
WVIdeNob:Nobility
WVAut:Authenticity
WVComm: Sense of community
WVFri: Friendship/ Society
WVMis: Acceptance for misfits
WVSaf: Feeling of safety
WVPol: Politics
WVFam: Family
WVHis: Love of history
WVBeh: Behavior – This is how I act.
WvEti: Social etiquette
WVTra: Tradition - This is the way my culture does things.
WVTraAcq: Acquisition
WVTraTra: Transmission
WVTraCha: Change
WVTraSpe: Specific traditions
WVTraLaw: Law

Id: Identity – This is who I am.
IdSelf: Self
IdMe: Being a better me

Loss:: Loss of SCA
LossMod: Loss of modern world

Neg: Negative attitudes towards the SCA

Appendix Four

IRB Documents

OSU
Oregon State
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board _ Office of Research Integrity
Oregon State University, 312 Kerr Administration Building, Corvallis, Oregon 97331-2140
Tel 541-737-4933 | Fax 541-737-3093 | http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/humansubjects.htm
IRB@oregonstate.edu

TO: Elaine Pedersen
        Design and Human Environment

IRB #: 4252 – Meaning in Systems and Material Objects: Society for Creative Anachronism (Student
        Researcher: Althea Turner)

Level of Review: Expedited

Expiration Date: 3-30-10

Approved Number of Participants: 50

The referenced project was reviewed under the guidelines of Oregon State University's Institutional
Review Board (IRB). The IRB has **approved** the:

(X) Initial Application   ( ) Continuing Review   ( ) Project Revision
with a (if applicable): ( ) Waiver of documentation of Informed Consent   ( ) Waiver of Consent

A copy of this information will be provided to the full IRB committee.

- **CONSENT FORM:** All participants must receive the IRB-stamped informed consent document. If
  the consent is in a format that could not have stamp placement (i.e. web site language, email
  language, etc), then the language must be **exactly** as the IRB approved it.
- **PROJECT REVISION REQUEST:** Any changes to the approved protocol (e.g. protocol,
  informed consent form(s), testing instrument(s), research staff, recruitment material, or increase in
  the number of participants) must be submitted for approval before implementation.
- **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Must be reported within three days of occurrence. This includes any
  outcome that is not expected, routine and that result in bodily injury and/or psychological,
  emotional, or physical harm or stress.
- **CONTINUING REVIEW:** A courtesy notice will be sent to remind researchers to complete the
  continuing review form to renew this project, however – it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure
  that continuing review occurs prior to the expiration date. Material must be submitted with adequate
  time for the office to process paperwork. If there is a lapse in approval, suspension of all activity
  including data analysis, will occur.
- **DEVIATION/EXCEPTIONS:** Any departure from the approved protocol must be reported within
  10 business days of occurrence or when discovered.

Forms are available at: http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/humansubjects.htm.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Human Protections Administrator at
IRB@oregonstate.edu or by phone at (541) 737-8008.

Elisa Espinoza   Date: 3-31-09
_____
Elisa Espinoza
IRB Human Protections Administrator

DSU
Iregon State
UNIVERSITY

Design and Human Environment Department
Oregon State University, Milam 224, Corvallis, Oregon 97331
Tel 541-737-3796 | Fax 541-737-0993 |dheoffice@oregonstate.edu   http://www.hhs.oregonstate.edu/dhe/index.html

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Material objects and meaning systems: the Society for Creative Anachronism
Principal Investigator: Elaine Pedersen, Ph.D.
                        Design and Human Environment
                        Oregon State University
Co-Investigator(s):   Althea Turner
                        Design and Human Environment
                        Oregon State University

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are being invited to take part in a research study designed to understand how an invented community constructs symbolic meaning in material objects and value systems. By looking at how participants value authenticity, connection to community, and degree of nostalgia for an idealized past, we can learn about how material objects become symbolic texts and how participants perform their fantasized version of history. We are studying this because it will contribute to our understanding of how people value objects and construct meaning systems.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

This consent form gives you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask any questions about the research, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered, you can decide if you want to be in this study or not.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

You are being invited to take part in this study because you are a member of the Society of Creative Anachronism.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

You will be interviewed, during which we will ask you questions about the objects you value, and any meaning that are attached to those objects. Your answers will be recorded on audiotape if you consent.

___   I agree to be audiotaped.
___   I do NOT agree to be audiotaped.

You have the right to end the interview at any time. The purpose of the audiotapes is to facilitate the information collection. The tapes will be destroyed after the study is ended. If you wish to remain anonymous, you may do so while still being able to contribute your viewpoint to this study.

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last for approximately one to two hours.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THIS STUDY?

There are no fore-seeable risks associated with the study.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

We do not know if you will benefit from being in this study. However, we hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study because we can better understand the material culture of the SCA.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will not be paid for being in this research study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. To help protect your confidentiality, we will keep all files in a secure and locked location.

If the results of this project are published your identity will not be made public, unless specific permission is given to do so.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THE STUDY?

If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. You are free to skip any interview questions that you would prefer not to answer. If you choose to withdraw from this project before it ends, the researchers may keep information collected about you and this information may be included in study reports.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:

Althea Turner	Elaine Pedersen
4153 Dwight Dr S	224 Milam Hall
Salem, OR 97302	Oregon State University
	Corvallis, OR 97331
(541) 207-7043	(541) 737-0984
turnera@onid.orst.edu	pedersee@oregonstate.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator, at (541) 737-4933 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu.

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

_____   _____
(Signature of Participant)   (Date)