

THE MAKING OF A PRINCESS: THE ROLE OF RITUAL IN CREATING
COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY IN THE SOCIETY
FOR CREATIVE ANACHRONISM

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of English
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2017

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Title: The Making of a Princess: The Role of Ritual in Creating Community and Identity in the Society for Creative Anachronism

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Degree awarded September 2017.

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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September 2017

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Every weekend in the Society for Creative Anachronism, people from the far reaches of the globe leave behind the structures of their everyday lives, dress themselves in clothing from the Middle Ages, and construct medieval personae. Within a pastiche of fantastical and historical influences, participants create the “Middle Ages as they should have been,” a liminal space where they experience a temporary *communitas*. Through their participation in informal rituals and formal ceremonies, they celebrate each other’s successes and create a community—a utopia—in which courtesy and honor are the shared core values. In addition, through their performances, people access their creative potential and explore issues of identity. When the weekend is over, the participants return to their modern lives, and—for many—a residue of their temporary creative adaptation persists and contributes to a transformation of their person. Using my insight as a participant observer, this dissertation focuses on some of the elements that contribute to the process of community creation and personal transformation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Martha Bayless who saw potential in my topic and in me and agreed to be my adviser in my darkest hour. In addition, special thanks are due to Aletta Biersack who opened my mind to the value of the counter-cultural roots of the SCA and shepherded me through the dissertation process when my adviser was out of the country. I would also like to thank those who gave me direction when I lost my course: Sharon Sherman, Lara Bovilsky, Dan Wojcik, John Baumann and Dianne Dugaw. Thanks also go to my dissertation-writing cohort for their valuable input and positive feedback, especially Rose who turned my quantitative data into graphs that helped me better understand. Finally, this investigation would not have been possible without the support and participation of my friends in the Society for Creative Anachronism, but especially Sir William Geoffrey the Rogue for sharing his wealth of knowledge, the queens and princesses who shared their experiences and thoughts, and Duchess Mary Grace of Gatland, Dame Johanna Trewpeny, Lady Sigríðr in Ráðspaka, and Lord Brandubh de Santini who gave freely of their time for interviews.

For my mother and father who started me down the path to the dream
and for my husband and children who accompanied me there.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1966, in a final fling before graduation, a UC Berkeley medieval history student named Diana Paxson¹ and her like-minded friends decided to throw a themed party, which was inspired by the “Last Tournament,” a Scottish event in 1839 where the Earl of Eglinton re-created a tournament described in Sir Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. In her fanzine, Paxson described Eglinton’s tournament. She wrote:

[T]he Earl of Eglanton (sic), a high-minded young nobleman, complete with castle, serfs, and a head full of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, decided to dramatize the values of the Middle Ages, which were Scott's and his own answer to the problems of the Industrial Revolution, by having a tournament. Costumes were prepared, banners were sewn, and the springs of the London hansom cabs broken by the weight of men in armor being born (sic) to practice. It was the social event of the year.²

The college students hung fliers encouraging participants to come in costume and fight with wooden swords for the right to crown their lady “fairest.” The posters, addressed to “all who may be lovers of chivalry,” advertised a single combat style of fighting and promised singing and dancing for “the increase of joy to both them who fight and they who watch” (see figure 1). The party was a success, and the participants had so much fun they decided to hold a second tournament. The organizers of the second gathering reserved a site at a local park because Diana’s backyard, where the first tournament had been held, had been crowded. They needed a name for the park reservation, so the

¹ Diana Paxson later chose the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) name Diana Listmaker. As anonymity is one factor that allows people to engage in fantastic play, which I discuss in Chapter I, other than this initial reference—which discusses a time before the existence of the SCA—I used Society names for all the informants if the individuals had chosen persona names. For copyright reasons, photo credits include the photographers’ modern names in addition to their SCA names.

² Diana Paxson, “The Last Tournament” in NIEKAS 16 (1966), 30 Jan. 2016, <history.westkingdom.org>.

Society for Creative Anachronism, the SCA, was born.³

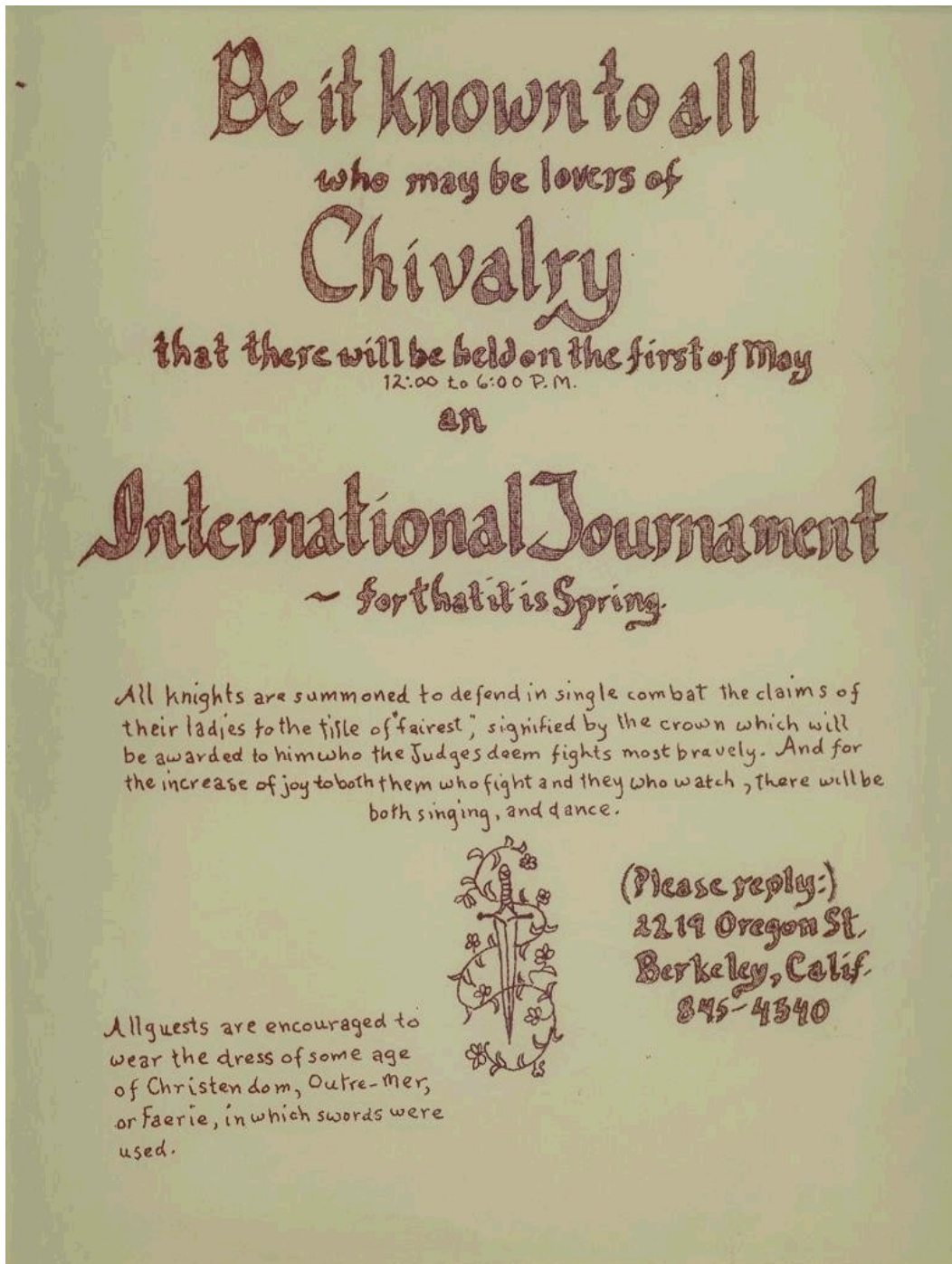


Figure 1. First Party Invitation. The West Kingdom History Website was created and is maintained by Hirsch von Henford, <history.westkingdom.org/Year1/FirstTournament>.

³ Ken Mayer and William R. Keyes, "Second Tournament," *The History of the Kingdom of the West* Vol. 1. 1980, 30 Jan. 2016, <history.westkingdom.org>.

In the fifty years that followed, what began as a fantasy-inspired fête became an international, non-profit educational organization that focuses on recreating the arts and skills of pre-seventeenth-century Europe. Through creating a *persona*—a person who could have actually existed in the Middle Ages—and participating with many aspects of medieval culture, individuals in the SCA engage in experiential learning and the benefits of educational play.⁴ This hands-on process leads participants to make discoveries about history and themselves. At the same time, according to Vanessa Agnew, participants are performing cultural work. In fact, she conjectures that such reenactment may be a “gesture of utopianism,” an engagement with the past to promote understanding in the present.⁵ Agnew sees the re-enactment experience as transformational for the re-enactor. So it is with the Society for Creative Anachronism where people learn by doing, build community, and discover themselves. I examine this process of self-discovery through the frame of *liminality*, a period of in-betweenness.⁶ In a broad sense, participants in the SCA stand at a threshold between their public selves in the modern world⁷ and their ideal

⁴ David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model recognizes that people who actively reflect on concrete experiences can conceptualize abstract ideas, which they can test through active experimentation; this experimentation is also a concrete experience and therefore continues the cycle of learning by doing (David Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2015).

⁵ Vanessa Agnew, “Introduction: What is Reenactment?” *Criticism* 46.3, Wayne State UP (2004): 327-339.

⁶ The term liminality was coined by Arnold van Gennep in 1906 and rediscovered by Victor Turner in 1963. Van Gennep identified universal patterns in the transitions of identity for participants in any society. He focused on rites of passage as a special kind of transition. Within the rites of passage, Van Gennep found three stages: separation, transition, and incorporation. He identified the transitional stage as liminal. Turner used Van Gennep’s observations of pattern, which had been applied to specific ritual in a specific society, to apply to broader society and to one’s sense of identity. Van Gennep’s and Turner’s ideas have been important in the field of folklore ever since and have been used by other disciplines to explain large-scale societal changes. Bjorn Thomassen offers a good account of the history of liminality in “The Uses and Meanings of Liminality” *International Political Anthropology*, 2.1 (2009): 5-27.

selves in a pseudo-historical world. Participants at events pass through a gate into a liminal space, leaving behind their pre-liminal status, and gain access to their creative forces and untapped potential. Through their participation in informal rituals and formal ceremonies, they create a community—a social collective—in which courtesy and honor are the shared core values. When the event is over and a participant returns to his or her daily life, a residue of the temporary creative adaptation persists and contributes to a transformation of the contemporary person. This dissertation focuses on some of the elements that contribute to the process of community creation and personal transformation.

This living history lab, which is the SCA, claims participants on five continents.

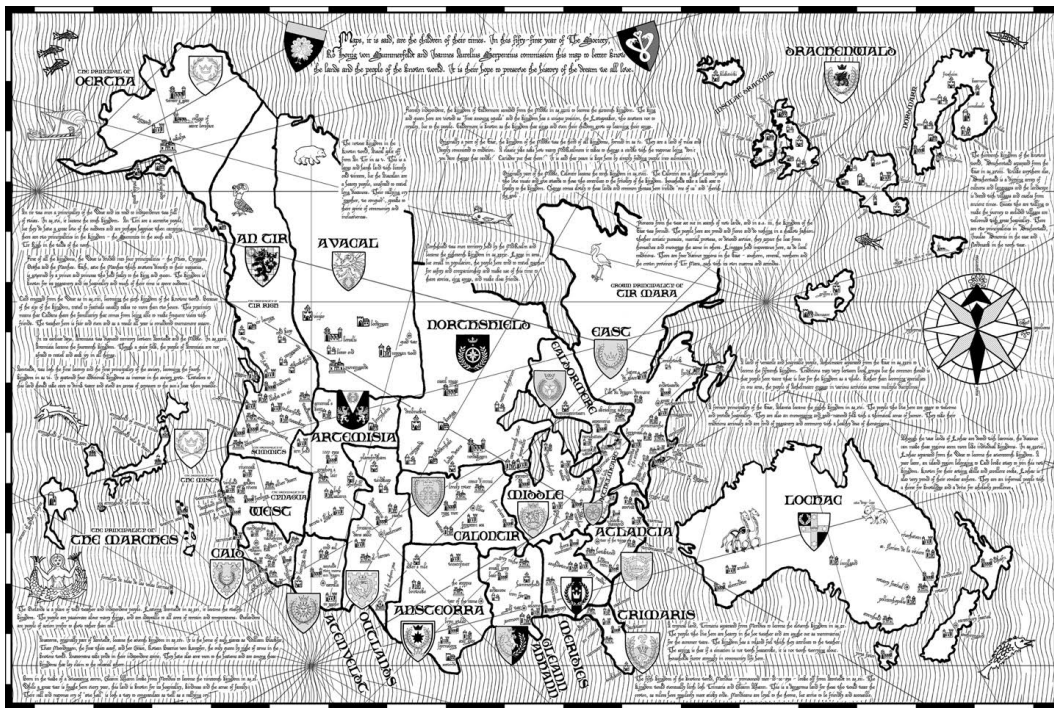


Figure 2. The Dream Atlas is the Known World Map as of 2016 (AS 51) drawn by cartographer Christiana Crane/mka Chris Hill. The map was inspired by the fourteenth-

⁷ The term modern with a lower case “m” will be used in this paper to refer to the present world. It is not a reference to Modernism. In the SCA, the term *modern* has replaced the term *mundane*, which was formerly used to describe people’s lived-world lives.

century Catalan Atlas and was created as an East Kingdom fundraiser for Their Highnesses Prince Ioannes and Princess Honig.

SCAdians, as SCA members refer to themselves, call this area the Known World (see figure 2). It includes twenty kingdoms, generally delineated by geography and state or national borders. A King and Queen rule each kingdom, which is divided into progressively smaller areas including principalities, baronies, shires, and cantons.⁸ Each of these domains has a cadre of participants and lesser rulers, but the King's word is law; all are answerable to it. Altogether, as of 2005, more than 100,000 people gather at disparate events dressed in clothing of the Middle Ages to learn and practice arts like calligraphy, cooking, armoring, metalworking, needlework, archery and other martial skills.⁹

Though the organization has grown beyond the wildest imaginings of the first participants, that ur-party established several crucial elements that have shaped the nature of the SCA. According to an early participant known as Sir Robert of Dunharrow, KSCA, O.L., O.P.:¹⁰

⁸ In 2012, the SCA ruled that same-sex couples could enter the Royal List at the discretion of the current Crown (Corpora IV.B.1) 19. On May 15, 2016 in the Kingdom of Northshield, the first same-sex pair won a Crown Tournament; Duke Hrodir Vigageirr Toreson championed Master Yehudah ben Yitzhak. Just as same-gendered fighter inspiration pairs are acceptable in the SCA—and would not have been in the Middle Ages—women can and have fought for male inspirations. In 1991, Duchess Rowen Beatrice von Kampfir became the first Queen by her own hand in the SCA. In 2012, Princess Mari Alexander, who won the Cynagua Coronet Tournament, was invested as sovereign Princess along with her Prince-Consort.

⁹ Michael Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance: The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages*, cites the Society for Creative Anachronism's Seneschal's announcement at Estrella War in 2005 as the source for the estimate of people participating in the SCA worldwide, 173.

¹⁰ Sir is a title bestowed on Knights of the Society, KSCA; they are members of the Order of Chivalry. Other peerage titles include Master, Mistress, or Dame. These titles are used by Knights; Masters in the Order of Chivalry—these are knights who cannot swear oaths of fealty, usually for religious reasons; and members of other peerages such as the Order of the Laurel (O.L.)—recognized for their contributions to the Arts and Sciences; the Order of the Pelican (O.P.)—recognized for their service; and the Masters of Defense (M.oD.)—recognized for their martial skill with rapier and cut and thrust. I will use peerage titles

Diana made 2 key decisions in organizing the First Tourney. One was requiring some attempt at period garb.¹¹ This made it an all-participant event; no one was a spectator, the way it is at Ren (sic) Faire and the like. The second was arranging for period music and dance, including a broader cultural element, setting the course for a recreation of a whole culture, not a mere martial arts club.¹²

The second tourney continued the customs of the first party, and these became the first traditions of the SCA, i.e. everyone makes an attempt to “wear the dress of some age of Christendom, Outre-Mer,¹³ or Faerie, in which swords were used”¹⁴ (see figure 1); chivalry and pageantry are prized; and victors are chosen by single combat and awarded the crown.

Many of the SCA’s most important rituals and traditions spring from these conventions. Chapters I and II consider the central tenets of the Society for Creative Anachronism through a social constructivist lens. With the turbulence of the 1960s and a spike in social movements as the frame, I briefly explore the history of the SCA as a response to the social pressures of the day and argue that the second decade of the twenty-first century echoes many of the same concerns of the ‘60s. I examine several factors that contributed to the construction of the SCA’s collective identity in its early years and that continue to shape it now. I discuss the SCA’s capacity to serve as an

when known in order to indicate the credibility of the perspective being recounted. Members are inducted into their respective orders after demonstration of a high degree of skill. Such mastery usually requires years of committed work; peers are considered to be the height of excellence in their areas of focus.

¹¹ Garb is the general term for the dress of SCA participants, regardless of the time period being represented.

¹² Ken Mayer and William R. Keyes, “Annotations,” *West Kingdom History*, <history.westkingdom.org>.

¹³ The modern term outre-mer, spelled with a hyphen, means overseas in French. Paxson’s outre-mer likely had a double meaning, both overseas and in reference to the Crusader states established after the First Crusade, which included the County of Edessa, the Principality of Antioch, the County of Tripoli, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem (see Appendix figure 1).

¹⁴ Dress is an integral concept in the construction of personal identity and sense of community in the SCA. Chapter III discusses how dress works to convey values and confirm community. It also explores how dress serves a marker of identity performance.

intentional community and the degree to which it functions like a utopia. My analysis highlights how the choices individuals make in their performance of articulated community values within the liminal space of an SCA event impacts both the social collective and the degree to which the individual internalizes the embraced fictional identity and feels transformed.

According to the SCA's Newcomer's Portal, people who become involved in the SCA participate initially because they share a love of history, but they stay for the sense of camaraderie and friendship. In the Information Age when social media has supplanted face-to-face interaction, Society members frequently cite their personal relationships and sense of belonging to a community as reasons for continuing to participate. One SCA participant described the importance of his Society interactions. "You have a connection with people. You get to see them face-to-face and share knowledge with them. I think that's so important especially nowadays where people lose that close connection."¹⁵ SCA events create a liminal space in which participants deviate from the digital norm that is ubiquitous in the developed twenty-first-century world and find validation through personal interactions that often affirm them as individuals independent of their lived-world status.

In addition to the perceived lack of personal community in their daily lives, many SCAdians note that displays of personal integrity are also missing from their day-to-day world. In personal interviews, Society members spoke frequently about the principles cultivated by participation in the SCA—for example courtesy, hospitality,¹⁶ honor, and an

¹⁵ Avery Krouse, "Society for Creative Anachronism Newcomer's Portal," *SCA* (1995) <welcome.sca.org>.

esprit de corps—and they discussed how the performance of these ideals on the weekend carried over to their non-SCA lives. Just as Mark Girouard examines the role these romanticized chivalric values played in shaping the character of the modern English gentleman in *The Return to Camelot*, I explore how engaging in the service-minded culture of the SCA alters the subjectivity of the participants. Understanding how the personal values of former SCA queens and princesses compare with their public performance of the SCA's espoused values provides a framework for examining the structures of the Society including its rituals and participants' persona creation and for considering the SCA as an *intentional community*, people that experience “a call to action that is personal and communal, bringing together the needs of the individual with those of other individuals, reestablishing the bonds that connect human beings but in a particular fashion.”¹⁷

Chapter II examines the responses of eighteen queens and princesses to Shalom Schwartz's twenty-one-item Portrait Values Questionnaire, which is designed to measure the value orientation on ten basic human values (see Appendix figure 2). I used this questionnaire to see to what degree the value priorities of these queens and princesses align with the romanticized ideal of chivalric virtue and how they compare with Schwartz's expressed cross-cultural standards.¹⁸ In addition, to emphasize the utopic

¹⁶ The concept of hospitality is so important in the SCA that they have a special officer, the chatelaine, who is devoted to welcoming first time participants. In fact, most chapters of the SCA maintain loaner clothing for people who want to join in but are materially unprepared to do so.

¹⁷ Susan Love Brown, *Intentional Community: An Anthropological Perspective* (New York: State UP, 2002) 5.

¹⁸ Shalom H Schwartz designed the cross-cultural questionnaire to assess respondents' self-identified values as compared with behavior. The survey identifies ten values: power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, and achievement. Schwartz asserts that the pattern of relations of conflict and congruity values can be represented in a circular structure. The more closely the values are related, the more similar their underlying motivations. The structure contrasts self-

potential of SCA events and highlight the effect of environment on the expression of personal values, I point out the similarities between the romanticized ideal of chivalric virtues and the basic human values identified by Schwartz.

In Chapter III, using Erving Goffman's performance theory, which is extended by G.P. Stone to include appearance, and the ideas advanced by J.B. Eicher with regard to the connection between appearance and the development of self, I explore the impact that specialized clothing plays in the creation of a persona and the effect that the persona has on the contemporary conception of self. I apply semiotics to discuss what garb signifies to participants and how different interpretations of the SCA's cultural norms create friction. I probe why many SCA participants, both men and women, describe their medieval garb as freeing them from current gender and beauty standards; they assert that garb allows them to express their inner ideal. Medieval attire, a material display of SCA culture, also contributes to the creation of a liminal experience, which affects both the individual and the community. Using the idea that communities are relational rather than absolute—that is, communities are identified by what their members have in common with one another that distinguishes them from the members of other groups, rather than by a physical boundary (as suggested by Anthony P. Cohen in *The Symbolic Construction of Community*), I detail how the performative act of dressing one's persona affects community boundaries and how resistance to the strictures implicit in period re-enactment groups help define the SCA community.

In an on-line discussion commenting on the thirtieth anniversary of the first party, some first-party participants reminisced about their first costumes' inspirations, which

enhancement with self-transcendence and openness to change with conservatism (Shalom H. Schwartz, "A Proposal for Measuring Value Orientations across Nations," *Questionnaire Development Package of the European Social Survey*, ESS ERIC, 2003).

included among others Queen Lucy from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis; Lady Eowyn of Rohan from *The Lord of the Rings* by J. R. R. Tolkien; and a hobbit also inspired by Tolkien.¹⁹ Clearly, historical accuracy was not central to their clothing choices or to the party itself, which was essentially a parody of the romanticized re-enactment by Eglinton. For example, the invocation given to the fighters was an excerpt from *Winnie the Pooh* spoken in Latin. The party-goers were celebrating the fanciful and rejecting reality. The first flier's description of acceptable attire, which included the fantastic, whimsical, and historical, epitomizes one of the central points of contention for Society members, that of historical accuracy. The SCA is recognizably not a re-enactment group. Despite an articulated sense of pressure to increase the authenticity of clothing and the medieval experience as a whole, the SCA remains fanciful in comparison to hard-core medieval re-enactment. This element of creativity in the SCA allows for greater latitude in persona play and, therefore, greater opportunity for personal transformation. It defines the SCA community.

A full discussion of community boundaries necessitates an examination of internal boundaries as delineated by rites and ritual spaces. Chapter IV looks at the physical construction of ritual space. In addition, it considers the performative nature of the rites and rituals of court—including individual recognition and oath giving—their creation, their historical or literary antecedents, and their role in reinforcing community ties. One of the multivalent meanings of ritual considered by Jean and John Comaroff in the introduction of *Modernity and Its Malcontents* is ritual's ability to contest power. Ritual in the SCA can function in a similar way. In a specific example, I examine the

¹⁹ Mayer and Keyes, "The First Tournament Annotations."

Coronation ceremony of King Havordh Aettarhani, KSCA, and Queen Mary Grace of Gatland, O.P. to illustrate how ceremony builds a sense of community, re-inscribes a social structure, and articulates and reinforces community values.

The *awarding of arms*, when an individual is raised to the station of Lord or Lady²⁰ is almost always a surprise to the recipients and, as such, cannot be anticipated or prepared for. However, other elevations of rank are generally known in advance. In Chapter V, using Arnold van Gennep's ideas from *Rites of Passage* and Victor Turner's expansion on the concept of *liminality*—that ambiguous space in which an individual has been separated from others but has not been reincorporated in the community—I investigate the process of two specific ceremonies and their impact on the individuals and their personas and the larger Society group. Richard Schechner's ideas about performance theory provide a tool to analyze two case studies. I draw from observational notes and personal interviews to consider the interplay between identity creation, identity performance, physical boundaries, community boundaries, ritual spaces, and ritual performance. One of the case studies I examine is the awarding of arms. This elevation recognizes committed participation in the SCA and entitles nobles to wear metal circlets on their heads embellished by a stone, so they are recognizable even by those who were not present for the ceremony.²¹ Their names are recorded in the *Order of Precedence* (OP), which is a record of the sequence of rank in the SCA based on a person's highest

²⁰ In the SCA, a foundational premise is that everyone represents some level of noble birth but has not necessarily earned a title of advanced station, like Lord, Sir, or Princess. Lord is the first level of rank elevation. Knights and Masters at arms claim the title Sir or Dame. Only the ruler of a principality, who is victorious in a coronet tournament, may claim the title of Princess.

²¹ On average, participants are recognized for their committed play within three years. However, it is not uncommon to find individuals who have been a part of the SCA for a very long time who have been overlooked for elevation to Lord or Lady because people assume the recognition has already been earned.

achievements. Any other awards an individual receives will also be recorded in the OP as will their *arms*, a heraldic device by which individuals can be recognized. One of the responsibilities of the recipient of an Award of Arms is to register unique and suitable arms. Through personal interviews with Sigríðr in Ráðspaka, a relative newcomer, I explore her experiences and personal growth from her first event through her elevation to Lady and discuss the impact the Award of Arms had on her. The other case study is the elevation to the Order of the Pelican of Dame Johanna Trewpeny.²² Through these examples, I investigate how personas are created and negotiated in the social context of the Society for Creative Anachronism. By looking at several rituals, which participants perceive as central to the conduct of the “game,”²³ I hope to reveal the transformational power that persona creation has on the Society person’s identity and the contemporary person’s identity, and, by extension, draw conclusions about the function such groups play in our world.

In much the same way as I investigate the rituals in Chapter V, I turn an eye on my own experience as the thirty-ninth Princess of the Summits, an area stretching from Salem, Oregon to the northern border of California in Chapter VI (see figure 3).

²² When individuals are being recognized for extraordinary contributions of service to the Society, scholarship or craft in the arts, or mastery of martial skills, they are invited to join the ranks of peers: Pelicans, Laurels, Knights or Masters of Defense, respectively. These ceremonies are extensive and often include a period of contemplation, a vigil.

²³ Members of the Society for Creative Anachronism often acknowledge the ahistorical nature of the Society by calling what they do “the game” or “the dream.” In the most formal official setting, Court, it is customary for the Crown or Coronet to address the populace with regard to first time participants, *newcomers*, and thank them for helping bring new energy, which allows the dream to continue. Likewise, the organizers of the particular event, *event stewards*, are publically thanked; their efforts are acknowledge for having created an environment that allowed the rest of the participants to experience the dream.

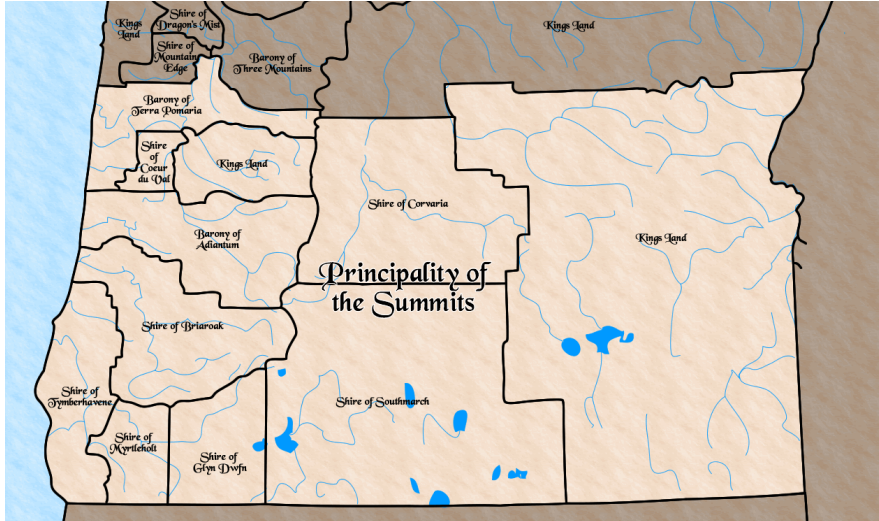


Figure 3. Map of Oregon with the Principality of the Summits highlighted with the exception of Kings Land, which should be excluded. Source: Rafeneuton. "Map of the Summits." Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc., 24 Apr. 2009. <www.antir.sca.org>. Accessed 23 Feb. 2016.

In this highly reflexive chapter, I adopt a style described by Norman Denzin as auto-ethnographic, which eschews the “objective outsider convention of writing.”²⁴ I am a participant. In my auto-ethnography, I examine the construction of my identity as a princess. Using notes from the journal I maintained during my reign, I narrate my physical and psychological transformation and my performance as a princess. I explore the physical and community boundaries unique to royalty, the performance of ritual required by virtue of my royal station, and the ritual spaces of royalty. I also examine how, following the conclusion of my reign, my contemporary world provided an inversion of the role normally provided by the Society, i.e. the stresses of bureaucracy, politics and performance associated with being a sitting royal were relieved by stepping away from participation in the SCA and solely focusing on the less demanding realities of daily life. The auto-ethnographic nature of much of this chapter allows me to examine

²⁴ C. S. Ellis and A. Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Research as Subject," *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2000).

what Deborah Reed-Danahay describes as “both the politics and poetics of representation.”²⁵ Through my experience, I probe the conception of self-hood, identity, and representation. As a royal insider, I have a rare perspective on the Society for Creative Anachronism. In addition to my experience, this chapter considers the experiences of past princesses of the Summits as shared in personal interviews. Their accounts provide additional perspectives and context for my own observations.

The popularity of fantasy, whether that of a pretty princess waiting to be rescued by her Arthurian knight or fighting alongside him as he wields a Jedi knight’s light saber, may speak to some aspect of human psychology, some unmet desire or need. For some, the Society for Creative Anachronism provides a social hobby, a chance to indulge in historical play with friends. In the SCA, the principles of experiential learning are embraced: everyone is a participant, everyone’s failure is reframed as interaction—i.e. the process is more important than the product, everyone can seek out challenges and succeed, everyone learns by doing, and that learning is fun.²⁶ For others, the SCA offers an additional element of personal fulfillment, an opportunity for self-actualization, as individuals incorporate the best of their idealized personas into their daily identity. From the moment SCA participants sign the legal waivers at *gate*—the entry point for an SCA event where fees are collected and waivers are signed—they enter a liminal space; there, play is integral to the conception of self. In such an environment, the choices individuals make in constructing their identities and performing those choices transport and

²⁵ Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the Self and the Social* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).

²⁶ Daniel O’Keefe (dokeefe), “thx @DZoneMoe for this thoughtful recap. Here’s the slide 4 those learning principles,” 21 Jul. 2015, Tweet.

transform them. By locating itself in a historical context, the SCA bridges the gap between fantasy and reality, making both more accessible. This dissertation applies the concept of liminality to the experiences of participants in a narrow band of the Society for Creative Anachronism's culture and is situated within the Kingdom of An Tir and largely within the borders of the Summits. I have not begun to explore the regional differences that occur among kingdoms or the variations in their traditions; that is work for another day. However, I hope I provide insight into the importance of play in our learning and self-development and the important role the SCA plays in the lives of participants.

Literature Review

This dissertation, which adds to a short list of other scholarly works about the SCA, employs several theoretical positions (performance, ritual, and cognitive appraisal) as an interdisciplinary framework for understanding how the Society for Creative Anachronism functions as a critique of modernity's industrialization and social fragmentation while still embracing the ideals of individualism and equality. I interpret the participation and performance of individuals as active resistance to the most isolating elements of modernity. One part of that resistance is the creation of a *persona*, or medieval identity, which is achieved through participants' performances of their impressions of medieval people with a special emphasis on courtesy. Several scholars have addressed aspects of SCA performance and identity.

Michael Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance*, provides a detailed examination of the SCA through the lens of theatrical performance. He also concludes that participation in the SCA is an effort by participants to "change their own personal

world and themselves.”²⁷ But ultimately, rather than being an act of resistance, Cramer views the SCA as supporting the power structures of the contemporary world. He suggests that SCA events work as a sort of safety valve, “a temporary release of tension that serves society as a whole by siphoning off that discontent and allowing SCA members to continue to function within the strictures of the contemporary world . . .”.

Zane Gardener Lee, *Social Identities Within the Society for Creative Anachronism*, echoes Cramer’s more escapist ideas of the SCA when Lee investigates the impact of real world factors like job prestige and family relationships have on an individual’s SCA identity. He conjectures that dissatisfaction in one’s employment and community involvement, excluding one’s family, leads to a greater commitment to one’s SCA participation and satisfaction. His ideas are contradicted by Andrew Rodwell, *Anti-Modern Performance in the Society for Creative Anachronism*, who comes to a different conclusion.

The chief difference I have from Cramer and Lee is that I interpret participants’ actions as more purposeful. Rather than merely providing a haven from modern anxieties, I assert that participants channel new understandings of themselves and their power—gained by performing their SCA personas—into their real-world identities, where they can change their lived world. Though initial SCA participation is frequently marked by the ludic misrule identified by Cramer, eventually the rich and immersive environment of SCA events—particularly during martial combat and royal court—creates opportunities that shape identity.

²⁷ Michael Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance: The Society for Creative Anachronism and the Current Middle Ages* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc a subsidiary of Rowan & Littlefield, 2010) 174.

Similar to my own view, Andrew Rodwell, looks at the SCA as anti-modern performance. He eloquently articulates how the SCA both employs and resists modernity in its construction. Rodwell considers issues of identity in terms of authenticity of personal experience, arguing that in the SCA “the ‘dream’ is that of a place where people can perform their ‘true selves.’”²⁸ Rodwell identifies the performed self as the signifier and the essential self as the signified. Though I generally agree with Rodwell, I argue that the SCA persona is more of an ideal self than a true self. The conscious choices that people make in constructing their persona allow them to select from the vast array of identities and traits to form their ideal, seemingly embracing modern individualism. However, the use of the medieval persona—which remains flexible—and symbolic devices, like a personal coat of arms, asserts identity in an anti-modern manner.

In addition to the way individuals perform their SCA identity, SCA groups form as intentional communities. Recognizing the importance of community in the experience of re-enactment groups, Wendy Erisman, *Forward Into the Past: The Poetics and Politics of Community in Two Historical Re-Creation Groups*, looks at community as an active social construction rather than a geographic location. She identifies these associations as “voluntary communities” and connects the increase in leisure pursuits with the growing variety of associations people can have outside of traditional civic associations.²⁹ This attention to leisure and theories of leisure are addressed in Cary Lenehan’s *Post Modern Medievalism: A Sociological Study of the Society for Creative Anachronism*. In particular, Lenehan focuses on leisure taste utilizing Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, the

²⁸ Andrew Rodwell, *Anti-Modern Performance in The Society for Creative Anachronism* (Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 1998) 1.

²⁹ Wendy Erisman, *Forward Into the Past: The Poetics and Politics of Community in Two Historical Re-Creation Groups* (Austin: University of Texas, 1998) 3.

subtext of which is that the SCA appeals to and is accessible by a homogeneous, educated class with cultural orientation toward reading and game play. Lenehan suggests that rather than an escape from the lived-world, the SCA provides a complementary lifestyle that encourages personal associations to cross between them.

Though addressing Renaissance Faire communities rather than the SCA, Jennifer Gunnels' *Let the Car Burn, We're Going to the Faire: History, Performance, Community and Identity within the Renaissance Festival* also explores issues of identity and community. Renaissance festivals and the SCA both were generated in the 1960s in reaction to the modern world environment. Both groups share a romanticized and flexible interpretation of the past, which is distinct from performed living history groups. However, the chief difference between the SCA and Renaissance Faire communities is in the degree of participation. Gunnels uses three case studies to examine how skilled performance by faire actors encourages the visitor to feel included and transported and builds a sense of community that makes it possible for the spectator-participant to engage in identity play. However, participation is not required; the Renaissance faire offers individuals the possibility to just be a spectator.

In contrast, the SCA requires that everyone make some attempt and participation, beginning with dress. It is that willingness to participate, that commitment to the ritual of dressing in non-modern clothes, that signals that individuals are open to transformative experiences. In analyzing the role re-created medieval court plays in the conception of self, I apply ritual theory, including both the performance aspects of the rites themselves as well as their social function. One important consideration in my application of ritual theory is the concept of liminality. While drawing on Arnold van Gennep's and Victor

Turner's classical ideas of liminality and Turner's revision of liminality to include the liminoid, I employ a conception of SCA events as permanent liminal zones, much like the liminal zones associated with tourism spaces. Though the tourists are not in a permanent state of liminality, the zones remain liminal for any who enter. Clare Foster and Scott McCabe, "The role of liminality in residential activity camps," apply the same interpretation of liminal space in their discussion of residential activity camps as I do in discussing SCA events.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSTRUCT OF CHIVALRY, THEN AND NOW

WHAT DOES THE SCA VALUE?

Our world was born in the welter of war – not in the heat of battle, but in the longing to lift up others. I have heard it told how the dream awoke, and here is the tale. On that first of fields on the first of days, before the coming of kings and kingdoms, before buffets, belts or chains, all who carried arms had taken on the name of knight. All but one. The herald, David, being young, had called himself a squire. Siegfried von Hoflichkeit saw this squire; how he stood his ground when all around him others fell before his sword. The first to fight upon this first of fields, Siegfried saw the scything down of David’s foes, and longed to lift him up. And setting him upon his knees, he raised him up, and named him knight. And as Sir David rose, the tune was set; the greatest deed of arms that day, that laid the seeds of all to come, was not the laying low of foes, but the lifting up of comrades. As that first gathering led to another, and that to still another, and as the host assembled there grew, and came to know the notion of kingship and nobility, that simple act shaped all. It taught us that merit was earned, and merit, earned, is recognized. It taught us to make ourselves--and others--better by our deeds. These are central tenets of the world you enter now. - Sir Antonio Cavaliere Sangomano, Knight of the SCA³⁰

The History of Chivalry

The way the Society for Creative Anachronism interprets and performs the Romantic³¹ ideals of chivalry provides insight into key values of the intentional community as a whole and into the longevity of the social movement that is the SCA. To appreciate the significance of the elements of chivalry emphasized by the Earl of Eglinton—whose 1839 tournament inspired the creation of the SCA—and the SCA, it is important to understand that historical chivalry and idealized chivalric virtues shaped and

³⁰ “Preface,” *The Handbook of An Tir* (2016)
<www.antir.sca.org/Pubs/ATH/may_2016_final1_antir_handbook.pdf>.

³¹ The Romantic era began in the late eighteenth century as a reaction to the Age of Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. It elevated a select medieval aesthetic, which prized nature and glorified the past. Our conception of chivalry and chivalric virtues is largely drawn for the re-imagined medieval embraced by the Romantics. Romanticism, which began in Germany and England, eventually contributed to nationalist movements (M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* Tenth Edition, Boston: Wadsworth, 2012) 283-284.

reinforced each other. What follows is an exploration of the historical development of chivalry and the evolution, translation, and re-imagination of chivalric values as performed by English gentlemen in Eglinton's time and, more recently, as conceived by participants—both men and women—in the Society for Creative Anachronism. In the SCA, interpretations of historical chivalric values recorded in medieval literature form the framework for a culture that blends the controlled violence of combat with the practice of courtesy, honor, and service. The continual re-interpretation of the chivalric code throughout time speaks to the roles such a code plays in society; the code reflects the needs of each society in its time. The college students that threw the ludic, medieval-themed party that led to the creation of the SCA needed an escape from the politics and reality of the 1960s. In contrast to the real and brutal combat in Vietnam, participants in the party seized on the romantic idea of knights fighting honorably for the opportunity to crown their ladies "fairest."³² Ultimately, their interpretation of the chivalric virtues serves as a focus for positive action by creating an intentional community where the participants recognize and admire nobility of character and conduct—both on and off the field of combat—and are transported and sometimes transformed by the experience.

Despite the romantic ideal associated with it, the legacy of knighthood owes its success, in part, to the military advantage gained by mounted warriors. In his quest for the origins of chivalry in *Medieval Chivalry*, Richard Kaeuper identifies the emergence of an elite warrior function as the first of three phases in chivalry's development. The might of mounted warriors fit well into the burgeoning feudal society, where a lord

³² Though updated over the years, the text was originally written by Siobhan Medhbh O'Roarke, "What is the SCA?" *Society for Creative Anachronism*, <socsen.sca.org/what-is-the-sca>.

protected his people in exchange for their services. The oaths that vassals gave to their lord resembled earlier Germanic warrior societies in which a strong chieftain would maintain a household of warriors, his *comitatus*, by an exchange of oaths. Though the concept of chivalry is not well defined in Kaeuper's first period, which lasts until the eleventh-century, he connects an increase in ransoming opponents to the rising status of the mounted warriors. He writes, "Some warriors were coming to think of themselves as part of an elite group."³³ Also, he notes the beginning of religious influence on other aspects of what will become the chivalric virtues. For example, Kaeuper describes how military campaigns sought "divine valorization of combat."³⁴

By the eleventh century, warriors were conceived as one of the three estates: the clergy, the warriors, and the laborers. The warrior's obligation expanded from an oath to a single lord to one which embraced service to all of society, including the Church. When Pope Eugene III called for fighters to respond to the fall of Edessa in 1144, knights mortgaged their properties to fight in the Second Crusade.³⁵ As knights became "the strong right arm of the priesthood,"³⁶ the Church increased its influence, power, and land-holdings. Military order knights—like the Knights Templar—were freed from secular allegiance and became increasingly integrated into Church society as important Church

³³ Richard Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2016) 79.

³⁴ Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* 79-80.

³⁵ The Church held many of these mortgages and granted special dispensations. For example, Crusaders gained temporary clerical status, which meant that while away on the crusade. Knights didn't have to pay taxes, or pay off any debts, or incur interest on their debts ("Privileges Granted by Eugene III, *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of History*, University of Pennsylvania Dept. of History 1894, pp.12-3, Newberry Call Number F30.67, Newberry Digital Collections for the Classroom, <http://dcc.newberry.org/collections/the-crusades-motivations-administration-and-cultural-influence#christian-devotion-and-reward-in-the-crusades>).

³⁶ Maurice Hugh Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005) 49.

officers.³⁷ The Church emphasized the virtues necessary for Crusaders who were enacting the Church's justice: faith, prowess, and courage. But as knights returned home from the Crusades, the warrior ethos of chivalry transitioned from a focus on killing to a more controlled peacetime code, one that emphasized martial sport, idealized manners, and more courtly behavior.³⁸ Twelfth-century poet Chrétien de Troyes contributed to the reformation of knighthood through his literature. He emphasized "service in just causes . . . rather than mere lust or vainglory,"³⁹ a concept epitomized by the character of Lancelot, one of the quintessential Arthurian knights. Chivalry came to represent the virtues embodied in the Arthurian legends.⁴⁰

The term chivalry, as we think about it, is a fusion of martial, aristocratic, and Christian elements.⁴¹ Three significant texts influence the development of the concept of chivalry, one of which is the anonymous poem *Ordene de Chevalerie* written sometime before 1250. In it, a captive knight from the Third Crusade—in exchange for his freedom—instructs Saladin in the process of becoming a knight. With one key exception, the ritual described in the *Ordene de Chevalerie* is very much like a ceremony described in a record of a ceremonial knighting, which took place in 1128 when Geoffrey the Fair

³⁷ Keen, *Chivalry* 50.

³⁸ The focus of the First Crusade became the capture of Jerusalem. In 1099, crusaders attacked the city and massacred many of the inhabitants, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian alike.

³⁹ Kaeuper, *Medieval Chivalry* 156.

⁴⁰ In *Medieval Chivalry*, Kaeuper attempts to remove the influences of the Romantic Age that shape our modern sense of chivalry by studying primary accounts of knights or their biographers and material artifacts like wax seals and tomb effigies. In this way, Kaeuper claims to have an unvarnished picture of chivalry, its roots and development. However, Kaeuper acknowledges that a romantic lens still affects a twenty-first century reading of the medieval texts.

⁴¹ In *Chivalry*, Keen attempts to trace the history of chivalry beyond the romances of Chrétien de Troyes 16.

of Anjou was knighted by King Henry I of England the night before Geoffrey was to wed Henry's daughter and heir, Matilda.⁴² That text describes the Count of Anjou as emerging from his ceremonial bath and being "dressed in a linen undershirt, putting on a robe woven with gold and a surcoat of a rich purple hue . . . his stocking were of silk, and on his feet he wore shoes with little golden lions on them."⁴³ In *Ordene de Chevalerie*, the ritual in the poem describes the bath and clothing, but this time a symbolic meaning is articulated.

[T]his is a bath of courtesy and bounty . . . and should recall to you the baptism of the child, for you must come out of it as clean of sin as the infant from the font . . . he dressed him in a white robe, signifying the cleanness of the body; over that he threw a scarlet cloak to remind him of the knight's duty to be ready to shed his blood at need in defence (sic) of God's church . . . Last, he girded him with the sword, whose two sharp edges are to remind the new knight that justice and loyalty must go together . . . There should have followed one more thing, the *collée*, a light blow from the hand of him who had girded the new knight, but this Hugh, as Saladin's prisoner would not give . . .⁴⁴

The ritual described in the text adds loyalty, justice, and spiritual and physical cleanliness to the virtues of faith, prowess, and courage. The text not only expands the catalogue of virtues necessary for a knight and provides religious symbolism, but also secularizes the ritual of knighthood by removing the making of a knight from the Church.

From the oath of service knights offered the Church, scholars connect chivalry to feudalism and vassalage or an oath of fealty. By the mid-thirteenth century, the concept of chivalry was beginning to be widely secularized, and manuals on chivalry provided

⁴² John of Marmoutier records the event. He describes among other processes, the ritual bath; he mentions it as a long-established custom (Matthew Strickland, *Henry the Young King, 1155-1183*, New Haven: Yale UP, 2016) 82-3.

⁴³ Marmoutier qtd in Strickland, *Henry the Young King* 83.

⁴⁴ Keen, *Chivalry* 7.

instruction in knighthood. The second important text, *The Libre del Ordre de Cavayleria* (*The Book of the Order of Chivalry*), written by Ramón Lull, adds the concept of nobility to the previous virtues of chivalry.⁴⁵ Lull's knights had to bear themselves nobly, be well spoken, come from good lineage, have sufficient means—franchise—to appear knightly and to demonstrate hospitality or largesse; they had to be hardy and not idle or lecherous. His knights were bound in obligation to their earthly kings, paralleling their obligation to the Church. They were officers of the court and had to conduct themselves with wisdom, honesty, honor, loyalty, humility, charity, courtesy, as well as courage. The French romance *Lancelot* significantly influenced Lull.⁴⁶ Therefore, even in the Middle Ages, popular culture shaped the construction of the idea of chivalry.

The third text was the *Libre de Chevalerie* (*The Book of Chivalry*) written by Geoffrey de Charny, a fourteenth-century French knight.⁴⁷ Charny's work emphasizes the idea that worth is determined by achievement and that distinction earned in war is superior to that won in the joust or the tourney. But the warrior ethos is tempered by the influence of courtly love, which can be seen in Charny's ideal knight who can sing and dance, fights to maintain his honor, and seeks renown in order to honor his lady. Discretion and loyalty are key values. Charny's knight demonstrates moderation; for example, Charny writes that a knight can enjoy good wine if it is offered, but he should

⁴⁵ Lull tells the story of a squire, on his way to be knighted. He encounters a hermit in a forest; the hermit, a knight himself, questions the squire about knighthood. Realizing that the squire does not understand the true nature and purpose of knighthood, the hermit teaches the squire and presents him with a book from which to instruct others ("Ramón Lull, "The Book of the Order of Chivalry," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Online*, <www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/middleages/topic_1/lull.htm>).

⁴⁶ Keen, *Chivalry* 11.

⁴⁷ Keen, *Chivalry* 6.

be disciplined enough not to overindulge. Charny's knight should be good, valorous, wise, strong, humble, handsome, honorable, and—in a return to the origins of chivalry—both a great fighter and, most importantly, faithful. Charny saw chivalry as a means to salvation.⁴⁸ Among others, these three texts shaped the concept of chivalry, which mixed martial prowess with religious faithfulness, moral virtue, noble bearing, and courtly manners.⁴⁹ It is this chivalric ideal that is echoed in Scott's work and that was enacted by Eglinton.

The Romanticizing of Chivalry

The Society for Creative Anachronism took its inspiration from the Earl of Eglinton's 1839 re-creation of the grand tournament that was romanticized in Sir Walter Scott's works—especially *Ivanhoe*. Scott, a sickly child, spent hours reading aloud to his mother. Some of his earliest notions of chivalry drew on the legendary warriors from Homer's epics. But rather than focus on their martial successes, his mother emphasized the worth and generosity of those heroes.⁵⁰ As he grew older, Scott read Edmund Spenser's works; he memorized many passages. Several of the epigrams in *Ivanhoe* are from Spenser. In his teen years, Scott added Italian tales and stories from the Highlands to his creative pool. In his early twenties, Scott wrote to a friend about his interest in Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and the romances of Chrétien de Troyes.⁵¹ It is clear

⁴⁸ Keen, *Chivalry* 14.

⁴⁹ Richard Kaeper identifies five knights whose accounts he uses to establish what he calls the “chivalric mentalité” (29). He asserts that one can derive the essential chivalric mindset, stripped of the filters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through these accounts. As his sources he includes William Marshal, Geoffrey de Charny, Thomas Mallory, Robert Bruce, and Pero Niño.

⁵⁰ Margaret Remy explores the development of Sir Walter Scott's ideas on chivalry in her thesis *The Chivalric Ideal in the Work of Sir Walter Scott*, diss., Butler University, 1938.

⁵¹ Remy, *The Chivalric Ideal in the Work of Sir Walter Scott* 9-11.

that Scott had centuries of heroic models from which to draw for his own rendition of the chivalric ideal. Scott's *Ivanhoe* was the culmination of these influences.

The chivalric ideals romanticized in Sir Walter Scott's works, especially in *Ivanhoe*, served as the model for the Earl of Eglinton's 1839 re-creation of the grand tournament, which was supposed to be in celebration of the one-year anniversary of Queen Victoria's coronation. The young and wealthy Earl of Eglinton held the tournament at his castle in Ayrshire, in southwest Scotland. He described the tournament as a stand against the Industrial Age; having perceived a shift in the values of his society, he responded by creating a tournament.⁵² He said of his tournament, "I am aware that it was a very humble imitation of the scenes which my imagination had portrayed, but I have, at least, done something towards the revival of chivalry."⁵³ In his effort to resist the forces of industrialization, Eglinton faithfully enacted an idealized construct of medieval chivalry and its requisite tournament, not an actual historical event; Eglinton's tournament, with its fairy-tale paradigm, served as the model for the first party of the SCA.

Eglinton commissioned the creation of pavilions, banners, costumes, decorations and tents for a feast and ball. Aristocratic gentlemen applied and were selected to be

⁵² The Industrial Revolution impacted the status quo of social class. In the tension generated by industrialization, it is possible that Eglinton wanted to negotiate the divide by associating himself with the ideals of purity, nobility, moral conduct, and gallantry, thereby deflecting criticism of his privileged status by distancing himself from the corruption which Alfred Lord Tennyson identifies as the cause of the downfall of the Round Table. Jean and John Comaroff point out that rituals like Eglinton's re-enactment are politically complex and can be simultaneously "revelatory and resistant, sometimes accommodating, sometimes positively reactionary." Often such ritual reflects a level of ambiguity "seeking at once to contest and affirm aspects of the dominant order(s)" (*Modernity and Its Malcontents*, Eds Jean and John Comaroff, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) xxiii.

⁵³ James Aikman, *An Account of the Tournament at Eglinton* (Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, Carver, and Gilder, 1899).

knights, though the antique armor that could be found had to be reworked to fit the men's larger frames of the time. On the day of the tournament, forty knights and their entourages were to pick up their ladies and ride to the tournament or list field to be presented.⁵⁴ Despite his planning and the dress rehearsals, Eglinton could not have anticipated the two factors that ruined the tournament: the crowds and the weather. Crowds of spectators flooded the area.⁵⁵ Four thousand were expected but more than 100,000 showed up, blocking the parade route and overwhelming the nearby town, which had only a single hotel. Torrential rains destroyed the tents and canopied seating areas and flooded the road, essentially trapping many, who had no shelter. In a description of that ill-fated day, which one of the founders of the SCA cites as the source of her own party, Countess Diana Listmaker, O.L. O.P., quips that the disastrous day was the "end of the Romantic period in England."⁵⁶ However, evidence points to the contrary. A contemporary of Eglinton, James Aikman, wrote about the event. In his account of the tournament, one of the participating knights said:

⁵⁴ In the High Middle Ages, the list field was a staked line behind which squires would wait with additional lances during a tournament's preliminary jousting. Later in the tournament, the armed infantry would stand in the list area. Home base was behind the lists and in front of the viewing stands for spectators, which were also behind the list field (David Crouch, *Tournament*, London: Hambledon and London, 2005). In the SCA, the list field is the area of combat often referred to in the Pacific Northwest region as the *eric*. Fighters and sometimes their consorts, must check in at the list table where a record of all combatants in each particular tournament is kept. In Crown and Coronet tournaments, fighters' arms (heraldic devices) are painted on miniature boards shaped like shields. These are displayed to indicate who will be fighting and in which field—the fields are often named by a heraldic color or metal like azure (blue) or argent (silver). A shield board begins right side up. After a defeat, the shield board is hung upside down; this is referenced as *being dirty*, as one must fall down to simulate a death and possibly get dirty. A second defeat eliminates the shield board from display since most tournaments are conducted as *double-elimination* combat, which means two losses and a fighter is out of the tournament.

⁵⁵ In more recent history, similar unexpected masses gathered at Woodstock, which has been described as the nexus for the counterculture generation by Corey Kilgannon, "3 Days of Peace and Music, 40 Years Later," *The New York Times* 17 Mar. 2009: Arts.

⁵⁶ Diana Paxson, 1966, qtd. in "The Last Tournament," <historywestkingdom.org/Year1>.

Whatever opinion may be formed of the success of the Tournament, as an imitation of ancient manners and customs, we heard only one feeling of admiration expressed at the gorgeousness of the whole scene, considered only as a pageant. Even on Wednesday, when the procession was seen to the greatest possible disadvantage, the dullest eye glistened with delight as the lengthy and stately train swept into the marshalled lists.⁵⁷

In fact, Eglinton's tournament, a deliberate act of Romanticism, paved the way for the sort of medieval martial spectacle seen today in the Society for Creative Anachronism, which can be viewed as a critical response to modern culture.

The Beginnings of the Society for Creative Anachronism

In that tourney, Eglinton funded—at great personal expense—the re-enactment of a medieval joust as he imagined it to be, essentially inventing tradition. Eglinton's tournament serves as an example of Eric Hobsbawm's claim that during periods in which “rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns,” the re-purposing of tradition occurs more frequently.⁵⁸ That description matches well with the conditions at play in the world when the SCA's “first event” was held. It was 1966. America was at war in Vietnam, nuclear weapons were being tested in Nevada, and civil unrest stirred in Watts and elsewhere. In that milieu, a group of costumed collegians marched up Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California singing “Greensleeves” and protesting the twentieth century. Earlier, they had attended a themed party where “all who may be lovers of chivalry” (see figure 1) gathered in a parodic⁵⁹ celebration of the

⁵⁷ James Aikman, *An Account of the Tournament at Eglinton* 10.

⁵⁸ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Canto-Cambridge UP, 1992) 12.

⁵⁹ Parody, in this instance, is used for comic effect and not as a tool of criticism of the ideals, but as a critique of the very volatile and violent environment. This same environment gave rise to the Renaissance Faire, which began in California at virtually the same moment. For a full discussion of the Renn Faire, read

Romantic ideals of chivalry promoted by Sir Walter Scott,⁶⁰ virtues of “loyalty, honor, generosity, courtesy, courage, truthfulness, ability to keep one’s word, magnanimity, frankness, [and] unselfishness.”⁶¹ These party-goers would later found the SCA. Their choice of archaic language on the party flier and the purposeful inversion of serious ceremony at the party, demonstrated their resistance to the ugliness of the Modern Age by way of echoing the Victorian Earl of Eglinton’s grand tournament.

Ironically, their ludic re-enactment of Eglinton’s tournament provided the core traditions for what would become the more serious non-profit educational historical re-creation group known as the Society for Creative Anachronism. In discussions with the first party participants, they disclosed that by throwing that first party, they were being very apolitical. A number of them had been invited to take place in May Day—International Workers’ Day—parades, but they just wanted to have fun. They had no intention of creating a movement. As Baron Hirsch von Henford, O.L., O.P. said:

The founders of the SCA seriously planned a one-off event for what is now called ‘The First Event.’ This was not something people envisioned becoming a world-wide organization . . . The fact that it continued showed how much people loved the idea, and needed an organization of the nature of the SCA.⁶²

Von Henford’s identification of the SCA as a sort of movement is apt. In his *Dynamic Utopia*, Robert Schehr outlines the elements of both Intentional Communities (IC) and

Well Met: Renaissance Faires and the American Counterculture by Rachel Lee Rubin (New York: New York UP, 2012).

⁶⁰ In fact, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the term chivalry was at its height in popularity and usage in 1832, just a dozen years after the publication of Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., “Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books” (*Science*, 2010, n. pag., accessed 7 Feb. 2016).

⁶¹ Margaret E. Remy, *The Chivalric Ideal in the Work of Sir Walter Scott* 9-11.

⁶² Hirsh von Henford, <history.westkingdom.org/50Year>.

New Social Movements (NSM). Using the definition that an *intentional community* is a community that has formed “by a mutual choice . . . to affirm common aspect[s] of ideology or lifestyle” and who shares some resources and makes some expenditures from a shared fund, the Society for Creative Anachronism is an intentional community.⁶³ In addition, Schehr extends the power of some ICs by identifying them as *New Social Movements*, movements focused on issues related to human rights.⁶⁴ He details how intentional communities use the context of ritual and references to tradition to rearticulate traditional values in order to create community. He adds that rather than dismissing such “nostalgic utopia,” sociologists should recognize the power of juxtaposition, that is the idea that invented history can “conjure images of a more egalitarian past,” which serves as a type of resistance to contemporary conditions.⁶⁵ Eglinton was resisting the influences of the Industrial Revolution, which were villainizing and replacing the aristocracy with the new industrial class. Ultimately, the SCA was a response to the post-industrial economy that was rooted in inequality. Given the declared resistance to the changes and challenges of their times by Eglinton and the SCA founders, the “invention” or re-imagination of tradition should be viewed as an indicator of societal problems that weren’t being addressed in other ways. These new traditions allow contemporary people to unite, using history as a legitimator of their society. In other words, part of the draw and power of the SCA is its ability to create a sense of community and equality among the participants.

⁶³ Robert Schehr uses Patrick Conover’s distinctions between commune, intentional community and collective, Notes, *Dynamic Utopia* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997) 23-4.

⁶⁴ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 44.

⁶⁵ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 134.

Utopic Resistance, Not Escapism

Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* is the literary analog to the contemporary SCA in that it is simultaneously "'no place' (*ou topos*) and [a] 'good place' (*eu topos*)."⁶⁶ Every weekend a good place springs to life in a city park, community hall, or farmer's field. SCA participants affirm their bonds with each other and celebrate their community; then—leaving the grounds better than they found them⁶⁷—the mini-utopia disappears. Society members recognize that the ephemeral reality—free from the economic demands of daily life—makes it possible to take the time to engage with people differently, to emphasize the chivalric values. A former princess of the Summits, Suvia filia Hereberti, O.L., said, "The fact that the SCA is a fantasy world gives us the freedom to tout these values, but in the real world you have to put food on the table and pay the rent."⁶⁸ That said, the point that the SCA is primarily a weekend reality does not negate its place as a social movement or its potential to stimulate transformation. Schehr points out that the juxtaposition of contemporary social conditions with actual or re-imagined traditions, which "conjure images of a more egalitarian past, serve as potential wells of inspiration for resistance."⁶⁹ More understood that the value in the idea of utopia was in its ability to encourage people to see an alternate possibility. Schehr points out that "utopic imaginings always seem to have one foot in [everyday] reality, with the other suspended

⁶⁶ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 139.

⁶⁷ The "leave no trace" mentality is a staple of SCA practice. In fact, there are numerous examples of SCA members working hard to reclaim a city or state park property to use for an event. The improvements make the land so desirable that the area becomes profitable for the owner and the SCA loses the space because it becomes popular for other groups or becomes too expensive to rent.

⁶⁸ Suvia filia Hereberti, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 12 Mar. 2016.

⁶⁹ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 134.

(never sedimented) somewhere over the possible.”⁷⁰ The SCA has one foot grounded in historical reality and the other foot hovering over creative possibility. The weekend experiences promote alternate visions, which participants can draw on in their daily lives in contemporary society.

Pro-social Values Distilled by Royal Duty

Unlike classical criticism of intentional communities, which identifies participants as withdrawing from society and seeking escape from reality, I argue that intentional communities developed with a shared positive vision—like the SCA—can effect change through transforming the participants.⁷¹ The idealized values of chivalry correspond with many of the core values identified by Shalom Schwartz in his European Social Survey.⁷² Originally, I wondered whether the outwardly expressed values of SCA participants would be reflected in their personal values as measured by Schwartz’s Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ). Eighteen royal women—two Queens of An Tir, one Duchess⁷³ of the West, and fifteen Princesses of the Summits⁷⁴—completed the survey. Each demonstrated a positive association with the pro-social values indicated on Shalom Schwartz’s twenty-one-question Portrait Value Questionnaire. Unfortunately, as I do not

⁷⁰ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 141.

⁷¹ In his 1962 publication *Theory of Collective Behavior*, Neil Smelser examines collective behavior through a structural-functionalist lens. He identifies six conditions that are conducive to collective action. These include: structural conduciveness, i.e. the opportunities for protest; structural strains, the actual causes of grievance; generalized beliefs, the ideologies shared by participants; precipitating factors, i.e. an incident that ignites protest; leadership and communication to direct and coordinate; and the operation of social control, which is the way that the establishment reacts.

⁷² Shalom Schwartz developed the Portrait Values Questionnaire to aid social scientists in understanding basic values. The results have proven to be consistent across cultures.

⁷³ The title of Duchess is granted to women who have served as Queen two or more times.

⁷⁴ A Princess of the Summits is the co-ruler of the region that stretching from Salem to the border of northern California in the Kingdom of An Tir.

have data from before they participated in the SCA, it's impossible to say the degree to which their participation in the SCA and especially as royals shaped their values, if at all. One explanation for the results may be that individuals whose values are consonant with those emphasized by the core values that Schwartz identifies as benevolence and universalism are drawn to participate in the SCA. It might be possible to determine the degree of influence the SCA has on an individual's values by doing a longitudinal study with a baseline survey of early participants followed by later surveys, using the level of participation as a variable. Despite the lack of starting point data and based largely on my personal experience and reflections—first as a participant, then as a member, and finally as a Princess of the Summits—I found that the greater the intensity of play the less hedonistic and self-interested I was and the more my actions and attitude prioritized others. Serving as Princess definitely heightened my performance of pro-social behavior, which I will discuss in Chapter VI.

Schwartz's PVQ data examines the roots of value relations—which values are in congruence and which are in conflict with each other; this helps researchers understand the motivations of respondents. Schwartz identifies four quadrants (see figure 4) made up of the ten cross-cultural core values: Self-enhancement (achievement and power), Openness to change (hedonism, stimulation, self-direction), Self-transcendence (universalism, benevolence), and Conservation (security, conformity, tradition).

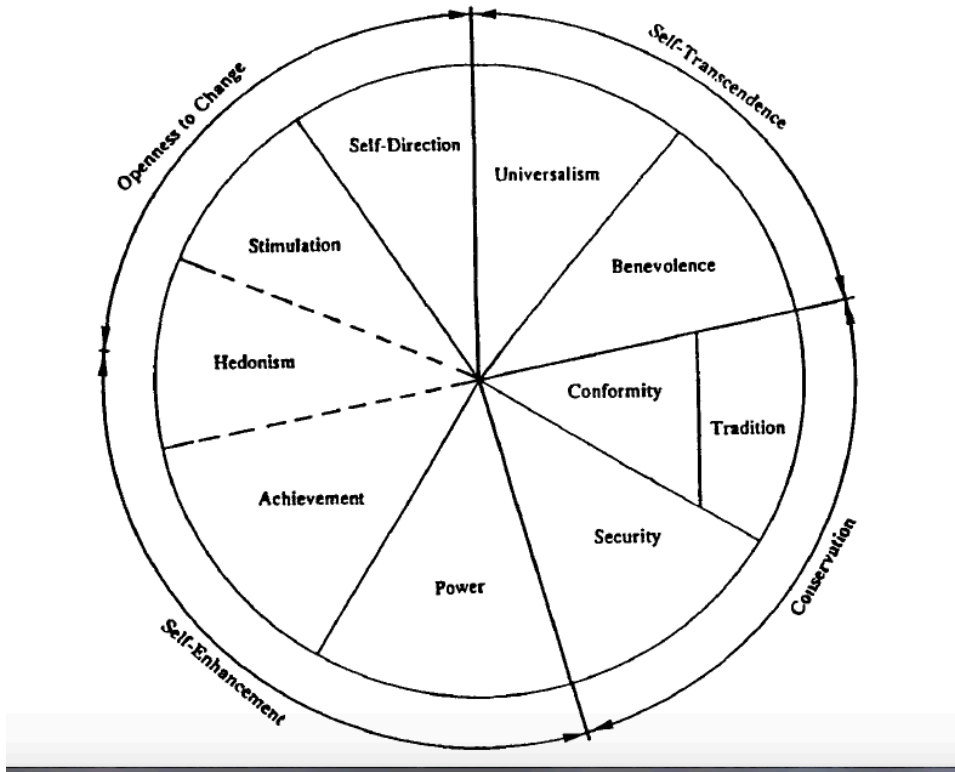


Figure 4. The Schwartz PVQ quadrants are represented in opposition on Schwartz’ theoretical model of relations among motivational types of values. From “Are There Universal Aspects in the Structure and Contents of Human Values?” Shalom H. Schwartz. *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 50, No. 4 (1994) 24.

He includes descriptors for each core value (see figure 5). For example, for *benevolence*—which he defines as “preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact”—Schwartz lists “mature love, true friendship, meaning in life, responsible, loyal, honest, helpful, forgiving and a spiritual life.” He defines *universalism* as “understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature” and includes the words and phrases “broadminded, wisdom, social justice, equality, a world at peace, a world of beauty, unity with nature, protecting the environment” as pertaining to the concept.⁷⁵ Together, these

⁷⁵ Shalom H Schwartz, “A Proposal for Measuring Value Orientations across Nations,” in European Social Survey, <www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core_ess_questionnaire/ESS_core_questionnaire_human_values.pdf>.

two collective values—benevolence and universalism—form the self-transcendence quadrant. Three chivalric values—honesty, loyalty, and faithfulness or a spiritual life--are expressly included in this quadrant of self-transcendence.

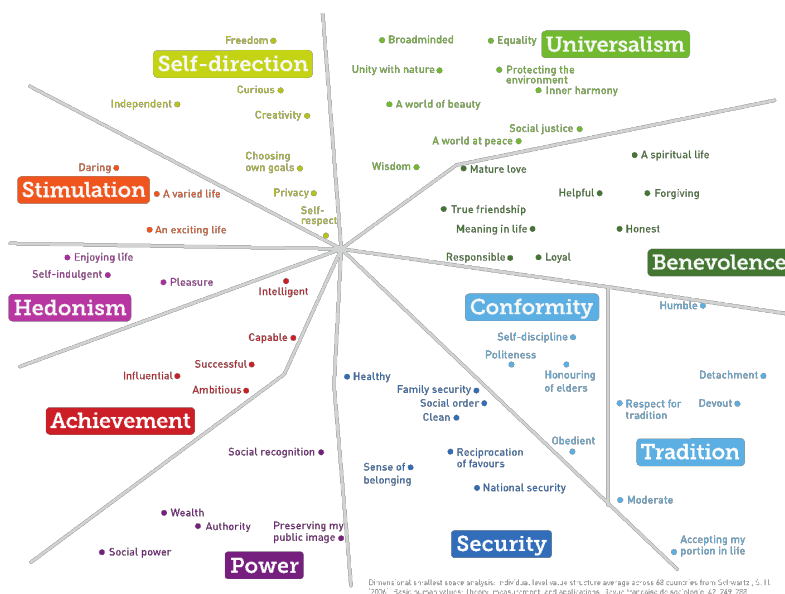


Figure 5. Adapted from Schwartz’ Two-Dimensional Smallest Space Analysis: Individual Level Value Structure Averaged Across 68 Countries. Shalom H. Schwartz. *Revue Française de Sociologie* (2006).

Schwartz divides the four quadrants even further identifying the self-enhancement and conservation blocks as being motivated by anxiety-based values (see figure 6). In other words, people who prioritized the values in these quadrants were motivated by fear; they wanted to prevent any kind of loss to themselves and prioritized protecting themselves against potential threats. Their value priority helps them “cope with anxiety due to uncertainty in the social and physical world.”⁷⁶ In the SCA, the only chivalric virtue that could be associated with achievement and power is prowess: extreme skill or

⁷⁶ Shalom Schwartz, “An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values,” *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* (01 Dec. 2012): 13-4.

expertise. Prowess is at the heart of admission to the varied peerages, which I will discuss later in the chapter, and continues to be a place of contention.⁷⁷

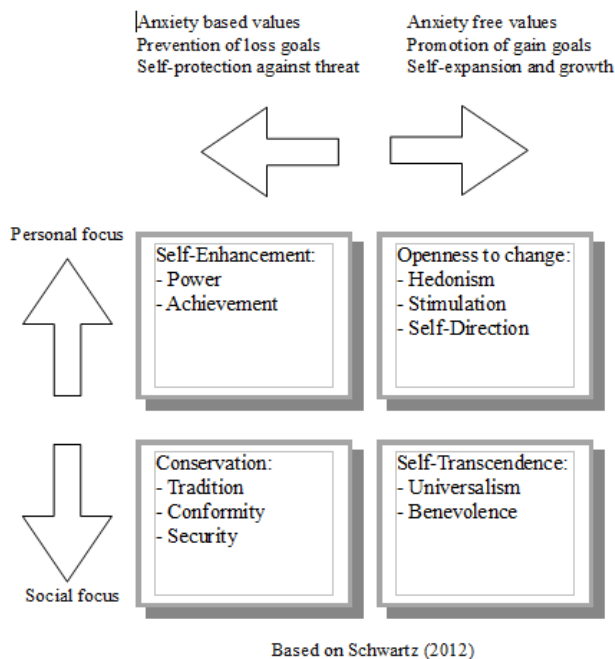


Figure 6. Distinction between anxiety-based and anxiety-free values. Based on Schwartz, (2012). *Relationship Between Cynical Hostility and Values from Educational Perspective- Preliminary Research* (Mar 2016) <www.researchgate.net/figure/301518341_fig1_Fig-1-Distinction-between-anxiety-based-and-anxiety-free-values-Based-on-Schwartz>.

The other two blocks identified by Schwartz are motivated by anxiety-free values. In other words, people prioritize self-expansion and promotion of gain instead of fear of loss. The people who prioritize these values escape the paralysis of anxiety by meeting social standards and affirming their own sense of competence. Almost all of my respondents placed solidly in the anxiety-free values side, which is openness to change and self-transcendence (see figure 7).

⁷⁷ The term peerage refers to the collective peers: Knights, Masters of Arms, Masters of Defense, Laurels, Pelicans, or Royal Peers. Royal peerage is earned as a result of combat. The others have less clear standards for admission.

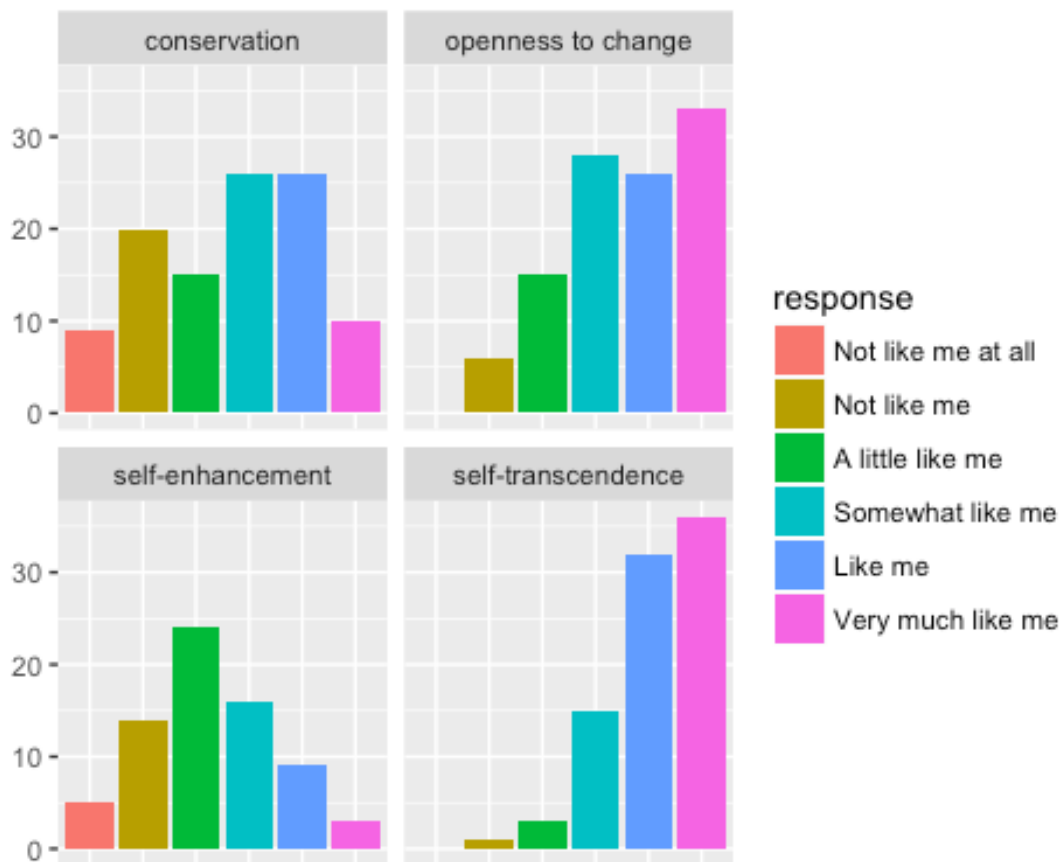


Figure 7. Aggregated values data the bars represent a percentage.

Schwartz’s quadrants were also divided into personal focus (power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction) in contrast to values with a social focus (benevolence, universalism, tradition, conformity, security). Unsurprising to me, because of their commitment to service as former royals, all but one of the respondents leaned much more heavily toward the pro-social focus of universalism and benevolence than the personal focus. Benevolence and universalism are grounded in a concern for the welfare of others. These ideas are expressed as the chivalric virtues of generosity and courtesy. The surveyed queens and princesses most closely identified with those values in the self-transcendence quadrant (see figure 8).

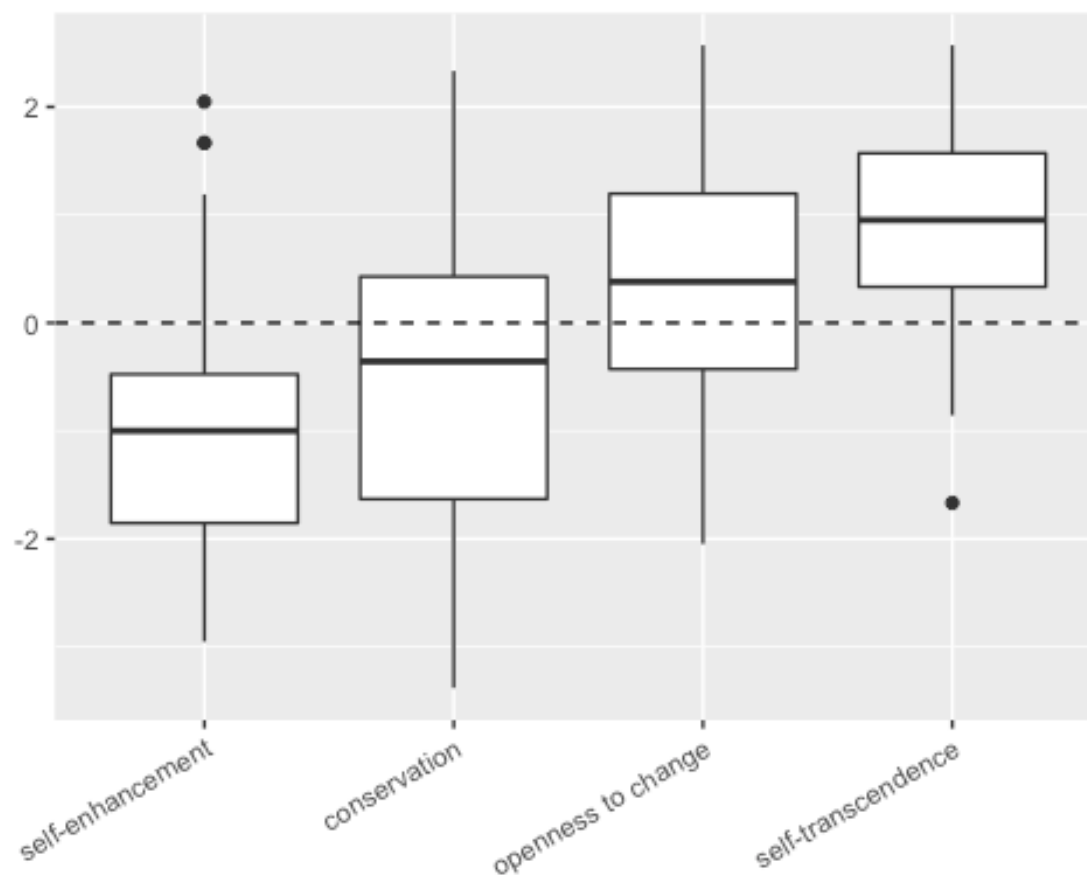


Figure 8. Scaled values data. Subtracting each participant's average response from all of her answers removes any participant's scale differences. The plot shows which questions or values participants rated high vs. low relative to the rest of their responses. The dashed line shows where an "average" question or value would be. Higher than the dashed line means participants said it's "like me" more than average; lower means it's less than average.

In fact, like most cross-cultural groups, the SCA participants in my study prioritized the values of benevolence, universalism, and self-direction.⁷⁸ "Benevolence and universalism are particularly important when group members must relate to those with whom they do not readily identify."⁷⁹ Benevolence provides the internalized

⁷⁸ Quite notably, stimulation—"the requirement to legitimize inborn needs to attain pleasure"—which usually ranks ninth, ranked fourth among my PVQ respondents.

⁷⁹ Shalom Schwartz, "An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values" 15.

motivation for cooperative social relations. It normally ranks first among the values while universalism, which aids with positive social relations, ranks second. In my sample, self-direction—often-ranked third according to Schwartz—took the second spot, displacing universalism. Self-direction is a value that helps the individual express him/herself creatively without undermining the values of benevolence. “Behavior based on these values is intrinsically motivated. It satisfies individual needs without harming others. Hence it rarely threatens positive social relations.”⁸⁰ In a group like the SCA, where participants come from a wide variety of geographic locations and economic and social strata, the emphasis on chivalric ideals—like courtesy—reinforces the pro-social values of benevolence and universalism.

Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral Displays of SCA Values

Participants in the Society for Creative Anachronism hold courtesy in such esteem that nearly all of the respondents to my survey identified it as one of the values promoted by the SCA. This unanimity demonstrates the importance of courtesy to Society members. In fact, special recognition is given to Society members who exceed the already elevated standard of courtesy characteristic of SCA participants. In the Kingdom of An Tir, that recognition is called the Honor of the Belated Rose, which is an award that entitles the recipient to wear a special favor, the Queen’s Rose (see figure 9).⁸¹

⁸⁰ Schwartz, “An Overview” 15.

⁸¹ A favor is a token, usually a ribbon or badge, which indicates someone’s love or support of some person or cause. According to Lady Diane de Arden, two types of favors seem to have been common in the Middle Ages, love favors and largesse. Love tokens given to men by women included “rings, sleeves, belts, banners, broaches veils, gloves, [and] handkerchiefs . . . The handkerchief, glove, and sleeve remained popular well into the Renaissance” (“Overview of Medieval and SCA Favors <www.oocities.org/dyanearden/favors.pdf>). De Arden references Andreas Capellanus’ *De Amore* when she describes the sorts of favors men gifted to women. She wrote that a woman could accept from her lover “a handkerchief, a fillet for the hair, a breastpin, a mirror, a girdle, a purse, a tassel, sleeves, gloves, a ring,



Figure 9. The Honor of the Belated Rose. Recipients of the Honor of the Belated Rose are permitted to display its likeness on all manner of objects including jewelry, belt tokens, or banners. When the person is named, they are presented with a token bearing the image.

After consulting with former queens—who form the Order of the Rose—and princesses—who form the Ladies of Valorous Estates—the Queen grants the Honor of the Belated Rose to the named individual.⁸² The Honor of the Belated Rose is described in the *An Tir Handbook* and is widely recognized as a badge of courtesy. In the Summits, a similar recognition exists; it is called the Belated Barberry and is awarded by the Princess for extreme gallantry.⁸³

The virtues of courtesy and honor are so closely associated with SCA participation that they are identified as Society values by Verena of Laurelin, O.P., O.L.,

little dishes, a flag . . . or any small gift which is useful for personal care or is pleasing to look at” (“Overview of Favors”). In the SCA, favors are used to indicate a myriad of relationships including as consort for a single tournament, no romantic interest required.

⁸² In 1972, Duchess Verena of Laurelin and her then husband Duke James Greyhelm created the Order of the Rose to confirm the importance of the queen in her own right.

⁸³ The Order of the Belated Barberry is described in the *An Tir Order of Precedence for the Principality of the Summits*.

one of the creators of the Order of the Rose and a long-time player who has twice been Queen of the first kingdom, the Kingdom of the West. She said that people in the modern world seem “to value money, status, and connections to important people more than the SCA values [of courtesy and honor].”⁸⁴ Bjarnheðinn Hamarsson, KSCA, O.L., suggests that the SCA is one remedy to a perceived absence of courtesy in the real world.

The Society for Creative Anachronism gives me a place to go where I can kind of live those same values I learned as a kid in the Boy Scouts.⁸⁵ Bravery, and chivalry, and courtesy, and honor . . . it just invades your whole life so that no matter where you’re at, you still carry a little bit of that knightly virtue with you. Those types of things just really help in society if people are more polite, and a lot of that is really easy to do after spending a weekend around people who are going out of their way to be honorable and to be charitable toward each other.⁸⁶

Hamarsson makes the point that by performing chivalrously on the weekend, it is easier to act similarly in the everyday world; he felt that these chivalric values were internalized. A former princess of the Summits, Telisia Brutusdottir, O.P., echoed this sentiment when she said:

Because of the SCA, I think I try harder to uphold the ideals of chivalry, integrity, [and] courtesy in my modern life. They have always been important to me, but they seemed to be lacking in most of the rest of the world, until I got into the SCA and discovered many other people also try to uphold these ideals.⁸⁷

SCA participants not only internalize the noble values, but some consciously perform them in the real world. Duchess Verena said, “I treat people in the modern world as I

⁸⁴ Verena of Laurelin, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 26 Jan. 2016.

⁸⁵ The Scout Law says, “A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent” (*Boy Scouts of America*). These qualities echo the Romantic virtues, which is unsurprising given that Robert Baden-Powell--who was born in 1857--founded the Scouting movement.

⁸⁶ “Society for Creative Anachronism: Portrait 02” *Youtube*, Agamemnon Film Studio (2013).

⁸⁷ Telisia Brutusdottir, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 16 Jan 2016.

expect to treat and be treated by SCA people. This means I have more pleasant experiences than I think I would otherwise.”⁸⁸ In essence, Verena is acknowledging an effect on her own behavior and crediting the more positive interactions with others, outside of the SCA, on the residual influence of her chivalric conduct toward these outsiders.

The importance of courtesy is emphasized in the SCA in many of its official publications; the performance of courtesy is multifaceted. For example, generosity is one kind of courtesy. In the *An Tir Handbook*, a guide to the SCA in the Kingdom of An Tir, Edward Ross, KSCA, O.P., O.L., discusses the ten commandments of the Code of Chivalry as recorded by the French medieval historian Leo Gautier. There, in addition to the obligations of faith, courage, loyalty, honesty, and prowess, Gautier lists generosity in giving. Ross explains his interpretation of this element of the code. “Giving of one’s time, kindness, or even a helpful hand, without the expectation of anything in return, is the key to giving generously.”⁸⁹ The idea of lending a helping hand is associated with courtesy. Service is key to an all-volunteer organization and is one of the pillars of the SCA.⁹⁰ Individuals are often recognized publically for their service and can be granted awards acknowledging their contributions; such recognition can include elevation within

⁸⁸ Verena of Laurelin, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 26 Jan 2016.

⁸⁹ Edward Ross, “Customs, Etiquette, and Playing the Game,” *An Tir Handbook* 3rd edition, May XXXIII (1998) <www.antir.sca.org/Pubs/ATH/7courtmanners.php>.

⁹⁰ In discussing becoming a member of the Order of Chivalry, Jarl Styrkarr Jarlsskald describes the importance of being recognized as a pillar of chivalry and service (*An Tir Handbook*, 2016, <www.antir.sca.org/Pubs/ATH/may_2016_final1_antir_handbook.pdf>).

the SCA to an elite status, that of Pelican, a symbol of self-sacrifice for the benefit of others.⁹¹

Also connected with the idea of generosity is that of hospitality. The Society places a premium on making newcomers feel welcome and appreciated. There is a sanctioned officer, called the Chatelaine, whose job is to serve as a sort of Welcome Wagon for the SCA, but most Society members make a point of performing their generosity or hospitality to newcomers. Hosokawa Gentarou Masahiro—who at the time of this dissertation’s first draft had only been playing a few months—blogs about his experiences in the SCA. He writes, “I generally believe the organization as a whole is one of robust hospitality and generosity.”⁹² He describes the friendliness of the people in his branch and their encouragement. Throughout his blog, he details the training and support of the knights. In describing two knights in particular he wrote, “[They] are arguably two of the nicest people I know. Both are exemplars of hospitality and generosity, offering up their homes and time when I have asked for help with armoring, sewing and other tasks.”⁹³ The general prevalence of hospitality and generosity is amplified in the Society as a whole, and becomes further magnified in the iconic and romanticized knight.

Society Knights Epitomize Chivalric Virtues of Courtesy, Generosity & Honor

Despite the Society’s farcical beginnings—by this I mean that the first party tournament included some absurd features, such as invoking the tournament with a

⁹¹ According to medieval bestiaries, the Pelican will pierce its own breast to revive its young with its life’s blood. The heraldic symbol for members of the Order of the Pelican in the Society is a Pelican in her piety, which means that she is piercing her breast and blood is dripping down to her young.

⁹² Hosokawa Gentarou Masahior, “The Hospitality and Generosity of the SCA,” accessed 20 Feb. 2016, <sengokusamurai.wordpress.com/2015/12/07/the-hospitality-and-generosity-of-the-sca> Web log.

⁹³ Hosokawa Gentarou Masahior.

selection taken from *Winnie the Pooh* but translated into and performed in Latin—Eglinton’s and Walter Scott’s sense of chivalry reached its prime in the SCA and in the Knights of the Society. As with the medieval manuals for instructing would-be knights, chivalry is described in *Facets of Knighthood*, which is a collection of essays on the history and values of chivalry for the edification of would-be SCA knights.⁹⁴ The virtues emphasized by the anthology include prowess, courage, honesty, honor, loyalty, generosity, faith, courtesy, and franchise. In his essay on chivalric virtues, “Of the Vertues that Apperteyne to Chyvalry,” Garick von Kopke, KSCA, O.P., describes the medieval meaning of each virtue and its application in the SCA. For his discussion, Garick also draws on two of the period sources cited by British medieval historian Maurice Keen: Lull’s book and the anonymous poem. In his essay, Garick describes two threats to courtesy in the SCA: “thoughtlessness and reaction to discourtesy, real or perceived.” He recommends that Society members guard against speaking without thinking since careless words can have unintended and negative consequences. The most common example of discourtesy in the SCA is criticism of people’s attire. People who are just beginning in the SCA frequently wear what they imagine is medieval-ish clothing or medieval-themed Halloween costumes. Unthoughtful and unkind discussion of their clothing’s authenticity is hurtful and one of the most frequently reported reasons for newcomers not returning. I will address dressing one’s persona and authenticity in Chapter III. In general, Society members take a dim view of such public discourtesy.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Cormac the Traveller mka Peter Martin, Ed. *Facets of Knighthood* (Albuquerque: The Outlaw Press, 1996).

⁹⁵ In an on-line discussion of SCA garb entitled “Snarking Confessions,” Lady Julienne de Lion writes: “[W]e should all remember that in the 'knowne world handbook' it states that if you wish to wear a bikini

Though more rare, discourtesy can also appear in combat. Garick von Koepe links courtesy and generosity when he identifies what he considers a “vital part of the virtue of generosity . . . [G]iving the benefit of the doubt to your opponent.”⁹⁶ Garick’s interpretation of generosity is seen through the lens of honor in SCA combat.⁹⁷ In SCA fighting, combatants perform their honor with every strike of an opponent’s weapon because the recipient of a weapon’s blow decides whether the hit would have been a killing shot or merely a wound. Combatants are on their honor to call a received shot accurately; this is described as acknowledgment of blows in the *Marshal’s Handbook*, a rulebook for all SCA combat-related concerns.⁹⁸ When one fighter doubts the lethality of a strike, he or she is encouraged to discuss the exchange with the other fighter. Garick points out that a knight should not defame his opponent by accusing him of improper blow calling. By this, Garick means that if an SCA fighter believes he has struck his opponent with enough force to be considered lethal and his opponent doesn’t seem to acknowledge the contact, the fighter who delivered the blow should not assume that the recipient is purposely ignoring the contact; to do so would be discourteous. However, fighters who appear to slough off blows as if they did not strike are privately and derisively deemed rhino hides, having armor as thick as a rhinoceros’ hide. Nevertheless,

made of beer tabs and sit around getting drunk all weekend that is your right. [T]here is supposed to be room for everybody in the sca, it is a hobby. [H]aving said that, [I] have snarked, with friends in private, which is really sad since my garb is certainly worth being snarked at (and probably has been =)) [I] feel bad about doing it and have vowed to myself and to my husband never to do it again. [V]ivat [A]nsteorra, julienne (Society for Creative Anachronism SCA listserv, 19 July 2001, accessed 10 Sept. 2017).

⁹⁶ Count Sir Garick von Koepe mka John Chamberlain, “Of the Vertues that Apperteyne to Chyvalry,” *Facets of Knighthood* (Albuquerque: The Outlaw Press, 1996).

⁹⁷ In the SCA, heavy martial combat involves opponents striking each other with rattan weapons.

⁹⁸ “Marshal’s Handbook,” *Society for Creative Anachronism* (2015) <www.sca.org/officers/marshal/docs/marshal_handbook.pdf>.

during the fight, it would be dishonorable of any opponent to openly impugn another's honor for not having accurately gauged a shot, but it is acceptable to ask for clarification about individual strikes—for example, asking whether a shot seemed too weak to cause damage. Occasionally fighters will ask for a gauging blow, when an opponent smites freely in order for the recipient to assess the force potential of the other fighter. In that way, a hit delivered at a fighter's maximum strength, but that seems light in comparison to other fighters' strikes, might still be recognized by the recipient as deadly. At other times, fighters seeking information will consult with a marshal, an authorized observer in the zone of combat whose express duty is to monitor the situation for safety. With the exception of a clear violation of the conventions of combat, marshals in the Kingdom of An Tir do not make the final determination of victory, but when asked they can offer information about what they observed.⁹⁹ These conversations are viewed positively by onlookers and are sometimes affirmed with cheers.

Likewise, from a recipient's perspective, Garick recommends that if a shot is good enough to cause a fighter to question its deadly force, then it was at least close. Garick writes, "It is more knightly to interpret the blow generously to your opponent, [i.e. treat such a strike as lethal], and take it than to search for a reason not to."¹⁰⁰ Occasionally, the blow shirking behavior is so obvious or consistent that a member of the Order of Chivalry, an SCA knight, will address the issue with the fighter. So-called rhino fighters must work hard to overcome this reputation. Very often, the priorities of these fighters are misaligned with those of the Society as a whole. These fighters are likely focused on

⁹⁹ In other parts of the Known World, conventions of combat differ, and marshals play a more active role in deciding the outcome of combat.

¹⁰⁰ Count Sir Garick von Kopke, "Of the Vertues that Apperteyne to Chyvalry."

self-enhancement through achievement and power. In fact, they may have to lean to the extreme of *taking light*—acknowledging as fatal a blow that probably would not be recognized by other fighters as lethal—in order to overcome the ignominy. In other words, fighters display and perform their honor and are informally assessed based on how they receive blows in comparison to how both the spectators and their opponents perceive them. Both their courtesy and their honor are at stake. Prioritizing the wants and needs of another, whether a fighter or a newcomer, contributes to the overall feeling of welcome at SCA events and is consistent with the values included in Schwartz’ self-transcendence quadrant.

In addition to accurate calling of lethal blows, fighters demonstrate their honor by acknowledging lesser “injuries.” For example, fighters struck in the upper leg must limit their mobility by fighting from their knees. Likewise, fighters struck in their arms must lose the benefit of that arm. In the SCA, the typical fighting style for heavy combat is shield and sword. If a shield arm is hit, the shield is dropped and the hand is deemed worthless. If a sword arm is struck, fighters may switch their weapons to the remaining hand, a courtesy granted to them by their opponent.¹⁰¹ Frequently knights and highly skilled fighters will mirror the disadvantage of their opponents, willingly fighting from their knees or giving up their shield. Such courtesy is met with great approval from onlookers; they call out “Huzzah!” Giving up a tactical advantage results in an increased risk to the fighter who does so and would, therefore, be inadvisable in real life and death combat. However, in a nod to a more romantic view of chivalry, the convention is widely

¹⁰¹ The courtesy of allowing an opponent to adjust to another hand has become the standard and most fighters do not even recognize the courtesy as such. If the fighter who is making a weapon’s hand switch thanks the other fighter, he or she is often acknowledging the inconvenience of the time it takes to re-equip, not the courtesy of allowing the switch itself.

used in SCA tournament combat. Meeting an opponent in such a way is an opportunity for fighters to perform chivalric combat and is a socially-focused tradition; that is to say, fighters who give up their advantage do so out of conformity to a culture of courtesy and equality.

For fighters, finding a balance between self-transcendence and self-enhancement is especially tricky for several reasons. First, the Society's rulers are chosen by combat. Without vigilance, the desire to become a ruler can overthrow one's honor. In addition, Garick von Koepke notes that for a Society knight, prowess is essential. No matter how noble of bearing or honorable, without considerable martial skill no one will become a knight. Such an expectation is consonant with the roots of the word chivalry.¹⁰² So fighters who wish to become knights must be viewed as skillful and can mistakenly prioritize victory over honorable defeat. Balancing displays of prowess with those of generosity, courtesy, and honor—especially in tournament combat—is difficult.

In the Principality of the Summits, the height of honorable combat is recognized at each Coronet tournament—the tournament in which the next prince is chosen—by awarding a fighter the Shield of Chivalry. For the next six months, that fighter bears a highly visible symbol of honorable combat and the fighter's name as well as the name of the fighter's inspiration is added to a roll of previous recipients. All their names are read aloud before the beginning of the Coronet tournament. In this way, a fighter who did not

¹⁰² In the Middle Ages, knights were esteemed because they were lethal. Accounts when foot soldiers or archers defeated mounted soldiers, as at Agincourt, are rare and notable. The romanticized ideal of behavior did not figure into the conduct of knights prior to the influence of courtly manners, and even that modified behavior is not what the Romantics idealized. Thomas Asbridge provides an example of the less honorable but more effective behavior of the chivalry in his biography of William Marshal *The Greatest Knight*. It chronicles Marshal's deceptive tactics such as feigning non-participation in a tournament battle only to ride in later to claim an advantage over fighters who were then exhausted. So, in the earliest historical reality, chivalry relied on martial skill and cunning.

win the Coronet tournament may still gain word fame. While seeking such identification is an example of the achievement value—which ranked eighth of the ten values in my PVQ results—in receiving the Shield of Chivalry, the fighter’s achievement is pro-social; the fighter is motivated to invest in this self-enhancing behavior because it contributes to the Society’s goals of elevated, performed honor and courtesy. The routine performance of these values transforms individual participants and shapes the community.

Community Is the Reason to Play

The thrill of combat and noble behavior is only part of the draw of the SCA; people stay, intentionally, for the sense of community. The late eighteenth century French philosopher Charles Fourier identified twelve passions that would lead to a unified humanity: the five senses; four “group passions,” which included friendship, love, a family feeling, and ambition; and three distributive passions—for planning, for change, and for unity.¹⁰³ The SCA addresses each of these passions and provides opportunity for their fullest expression. Of all of them, the chief reason people cite for continuing to participate in the SCA is the sense of belonging and the personal relationships. Friendships formed in the SCA are sometimes described as familial bonds and evoke declarations of loyalty. A former princess of the Summits, Diana de Winterton speculates that the decreased presence of intact nuclear and extended families in the modern world encourages SCA family creation. “The SCA is the family we choose. It is easy to value people you choose as family in the same manner you would family you are born with, perhaps even more.”¹⁰⁴ SCA families form small communities within the Society and

¹⁰³ In *Dynamic Utopia*, Robert Schehr discusses the history of utopia and examines the influence Fourier had on intentional communities, socialism, and communism.

participants perform their affiliations in a variety of ways including fighting as a war unit, camping together, sharing food or creating a communal kitchen, or identifying as a group with a name or *badge*.¹⁰⁵ The family groups can range from a smaller community like The Honey Badgers—a small circle of rapier fighters who practice, camp, and fight together—to a larger collective like the Summits’ Army, which identifies itself as the Blue Crush and fights wearing special blue and white tabards. The Blue Crush has grown in prominence¹⁰⁶ under the guidance of Viscount William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA, and his five rather imposing squires.¹⁰⁷ The squire brothers formed a very successful war unit, and others flocked to join them. A fighter’s degree of loyalty to the Blue Crush varies; unsurprisingly, some of the most loyal are the Warlord’s squires. Some communities are loosely affiliated by geography. For example at An Tir West War, the Barony of Adiantum¹⁰⁸ allocates space for all participants from the Barony to camp together, regardless of other household affiliations. No one is required, but all are invited. Not only does the camaraderie fostered by the SCA create a sense of place during SCA events, but it also supports participants in their daily lives. The SCA community—often connected by Facebook when not at events—serves as a resource for advice on a myriad of issues ranging from free-time entertainment to health, advertises employment

¹⁰⁴ Diana de Winterton, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 18 Jan 2016.

¹⁰⁵ A badge is “an armorial emblem used to mark your belongings or to denote a household or other organization (guild, etc.) within the SCA. It is usually simpler (fewer items/colors on the badge) than a device (or arms) unless your device is extremely simple” (Hirsch von Henford, “An Unofficial Glossary of Terms As Used in the SCA,” 2015, <goldenstag.net/MiscSCA/glossary>).

¹⁰⁶ The Blue Crush received an Award of Arms from King Styrkarr Jarlsskald.

¹⁰⁷ Historically, squires were young noblemen who learned from and served a knight before becoming knighted themselves. Squires in the SCA play a similar role. A squire expresses fealty to his or her knight and in turn, the knight instructs the squire and advocates for him or her with other Chivalry. Frequently, squires in the SCA wear a red leather belt to identify their relationship with a knight.

¹⁰⁸ The Barony of Adiantum is located in Eugene, Oregon.

opportunities and encourages individuals who are interviewing for employment, and addresses spiritual and emotional concerns. In this way, the intentional community that gathers on weekends extends its influence into the weekday and, as demonstrated by the types of comments on people's posts, continues to have a transformational impact on participants; the expectation of courteous conduct remains heightened.

The Middle Ages As They Should Have Been

Of equal importance with the idealized medieval virtues that the Society for Creative Anachronism embraces are those practices which they chose not to emulate: religious bigotry, sexism, and classism. Instead of dividing people, the SCA strives for greater inclusion; the SCA recreates “the Middle Ages as they should have been.”¹⁰⁹ In the current modern-world environment, which emphasizes religious disunity, the SCA offers a safe space. For this reason specifically, religion is generally absent from the rituals and ceremonies of the SCA. The official policy on religion is included in the governing documents.

Having no wish to recreate the religious conflicts of the period under study, the Society shall neither establish nor prohibit any system of belief among its members. No one shall perform any religious or magical ceremony at a Society event (or in association with the name of the Society) in such a way as to imply that the ceremony is authorized, sponsored, or promulgated by the Society or to force anyone at a Society event, by direct or indirect pressure, to observe or join the ceremony. However, this provision is in no way intended to discourage the study of historical belief systems and their effects on the development of Western culture.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Society members frequently describe the SCA as recreating the Middle Ages as they should have been. Jordan G. Teicher reflects that usage in his article “Recreating the Middle Ages as They Should Have Been” *Slate.com* 21 Apr. 2015.

¹¹⁰ *Organizational Handbook: Including Corpora, the By-Laws, and the Articles of Incorporation* (Revised 17 Aug. 2015) <www.sca.org/docs/pdf/govdocs.pdf>.

In other words, though an individual may adopt a Crusader persona, the religious intolerance associated with the historical person would not be accepted.

Likewise, though women would not have fought in the Middle Ages—with a few notable exceptions like Joan of Arc—no such injunction exists in the SCA. The history of the Kingdom of the West—the first kingdom—recounts some early setbacks for women and combat, which may reflect in the relatively few numbers of female fighters, female knights, and sovereigns who ruled “by their own hand”—which means that they won the tournament that made them queen or princess—but the tide is definitely turning.¹¹¹ Of the more than 2000 Knights in the SCA, forty-eight of them are women, slightly more than 2%, and of those female knights, twenty-nine—59%—were knighted in the last seventeen years, whereas only eighteen were knighted in the whole of the thirty-five prior years.¹¹² Though still nowhere near the participation rate of male combatants, female fighter numbers continue to grow. By some estimates, currently women make up around 5% of all fighters and the number of women fighters continues to increase steadily. This is a similar percentage to the number of female CEOs in Fortune 500 companies. At the time of this dissertation, “The SCA Women Fighters” Facebook page, created in 2013 for SCA fighters who are female-identified, has 864 members.¹¹³ The descriptor for the

¹¹¹ The West Kingdom online history (<<http://history.westkingdom.org/Year1/SecondCoronation.htm>>) includes an interesting discussion of women and combat. At least one woman, Nora, fought at the first Coronation Tournament in April 1967. An Olympic caliber fencer, she had fought rapier at a previous event but wanted to be included in the regular combat. In the annotated discussion, Stefan de Lorraine describes the day and Nora’s decision to fight “like everyone else” as “[t]he most important watershed of this tourney.” When Nora was struck by Henrik of Havn, she complained that he should not have hit her so hard since she was a girl. Wilhlem von Schlüssel said, “This set back women fighting in the SCA about six years.”

¹¹² As of 8/7/2017, when Sir Beatrix Kreigstribler was knighted in the Kingdom of Aethelmearc, the number of female knights climbed to forty-eight.

group claims its purpose is “to connect with each other, share experiences, advice, armoring ideas, tactics, and mutual support.” No such club of fighting women would have been possible in the Middle Ages and demonstrates how the historically male power structure is being contested. Nevertheless, while sexism is not idolized and efforts are made to reduce its influence, the path to royal title is based off fighting and fighters are overwhelmingly male. As such, the majority of rulers in their own right continues to be male.

In addition to the religious and gender divides in the Middle Ages, the most obvious difference was economic. Three distinct classes existed: peasants, nobility, and clergy; the majority of people were peasants. People’s stations were generally fixed and determined their life experiences. Generally, one was born into his or her social class and improved only by marrying up. While royalty remained fairly static, the divisions within the nobility became slightly more fluid with the success of the merchant class. In Chapter III, I explain how sumptuary laws were used to mark people of different classes by prohibiting them from wearing certain clothing. In today’s developed world, the markers of class are not prescribed—as they were in the past—but they still exist. Some sociologists identify class using three measures: income, education, and heredity.¹¹⁴ In the SCA, there are no hereditary titles, thereby eliminating that element of class that was so pervasive in the Middle Ages. Class differences are minimized in the SCA by the

¹¹³ During the drafting of this dissertation, the page name changed from SCA Women Fighters to SCA Women & Gender Minority Fighters, which reflects a policy to transgender and gender non-binary fighters as well. The SCA is broadly accepting of differences in gender, sexual orientation, and complex familial constructs.

¹¹⁴ Rod Graham, a sociology professor at Rhode Island College, identified a spectrum of class in the United States by applying these factors. His divisions include Blue-Bloods, Upper Class, Upper Middle Class, Middle Class, Lower Middle Class (or Working Class), Poverty (*Quora* 25, June 2012).

practice that everyone's persona—the member's created identity—is assumed to be a member of the nobility. In other words, one's rank or standing in the SCA is not a direct reflection of one's lived-world profession or economic standing; there are no peasants in the SCA. However, SCA participants with greater means may have greater ability to fund larger purchases like highly decorative helms or period pavilions, and some camping spaces are designated for period-only camping,¹¹⁵ thereby creating a slightly tiered camping system. However, on the whole, people advance on the basis of demonstrated merit; in this way, SCAdians experience equal opportunity.¹¹⁶

The final factor of modern class distinction is education.¹¹⁷ According to the 2010 SCA Census, the SCA is comprised of a highly educated base. Forty-one percent of respondents to the census claimed to have some college or an Associates degree, and 53% had a college degree or higher; by way of comparison, only 27% of the general US population have a Bachelor's degree or higher. When 94% of respondents have had some level of college education, no significant educational division exists among SCA participants. Some might argue that the non-college educated individuals would represent the peasants who don't appear in the SCA, and see that as an example of classism. However, I suggest that the divide is one of interest, not access. There are most definitely individuals without a college education in the SCA. And, importantly, they play no less a

¹¹⁵ The term period-only camping refers to areas designated for camping where no modern conveniences like coolers or tents are visible.

¹¹⁶ According to the 2010 Census, SCAdians have a bit more disposable income than the US household average. However, that has not been my personal observation; I have seen that many participants are living paycheck to paycheck; some are on financial assistance through military disability benefits. *Core Key Findings*, SCA Census (2010, retrieved 11 July 2011) < www.sca.org/scacensus2010>.

role in the community. Part of the benefit of inventing personas is that individuals can create themselves as they wish to be perceived, well-educated or not.

The Shortcomings of the Society

Despite mitigating the worst elements of the Middle Ages and minimizing the economic distinctions and gender discrimination of the modern age, the SCA falls short of utopia. According to the 2010 SCA Census, 95% of respondents identified as Caucasian while only slightly more than 72% of the US population identifies as such. The limited racial diversity in the SCA is certainly an area for concern and further exploration, but is outside of the scope of this dissertation. Though free of many divisions, the SCA re-inscribes borders between people in other ways. One system of segregation is through its peerage system. Peerages are groups of individuals in the Society who have been recognized as exemplars in service, arts and sciences, or martial domains. Induction to a peerage recognizes an individual's prowess in a given area. Currently, there are five peerage groups: Royal peers, Knights, Laurels, Pelicans, and Masters of Defense (M.oD.).¹¹⁸ The M.oD. is the newest peerage, created in May 2015, and was not uniformly embraced. According to the 2010 Census, "there was significant support for peerage level recognition," but what form that recognition would take was a point of contention. Many thought that the rapier and cut-and-thrust fighters should be included in the already existing Order of Chivalry (rattan fighters), though members of the Chivalry were split on the matter. Some people thought another omnibus peerage

¹¹⁸ Royal peers are current and past kings, queens, princes, and princesses. Knights are recognized for their combat capability, usually on a tournament field. Laurels are recognized for their excellence in the recreation of medieval arts and sciences. In the earliest years of the SCA, some Laurels were awarded for their service to the Society. However, the Order of the Pelican specifically recognizes service. Masters of Defense are recognized for their prowess in rapier or cut-and-thrust.

should be created in recognition of rapier, cut-and-thrust, equestrian, and archery skills; the latter two are currently excluded from the peerage track. The creation of the Masters of Defense peerage increased the number of martial peerage paths, which some argue was already martial-heavy since royal peers become peers through combat. They argue that the three pillars of the Society—dedication to service, artistic skill, and martial prowess—have been disrupted by the addition of the M.oD. and would be even more so if the additional omnibus peerage were to be created. Hence, the very peerages themselves are points of contention inside the Society.

In addition to the division within the society over which peerages should exist, the process of elevating individuals to peerages introduces the possibility of disharmony. All but the royal peerage are *polling orders*, which means that the King and Queen consult with the members of the order for recommendations as to who should join. Sovereigns can elevate anyone they deem worthy, even over the objection of the peers in the order, but it is not often done and can be very hard for the new peer to fit into the order to which he or she was elevated. Generally, each peerage order meets four times a year to identify potential candidates; some host on-line discussions before the meetings. Often a Knight, Laurel, or Pelican will take a squire, student apprentice, or protégé, respectively, to shepherd through the process to peerage. In this way, their peer can speak for the candidates during peerage meetings and guide them down the peerage path by helping them respond to criticism or observations raised during the peerage meetings that the would-be candidate would otherwise not know. As there is no empirical standard of knightly chivalry or artisan skill or measure of service, admission is uncertain and personal conflicts between peers and candidates can arise.

The final point of division with regard to peerages is the pre-eminence of Royal Peers. The Royal peerage is given greater distinction than the other peerages in the Order of Precedence (OP).¹¹⁹ Since not all lands have principalities associated with them, some participants resent taking a place in line behind a person they consider a lesser fighter but who has a higher standing in the OP because he or she has ruled as prince or princess. Though I have not surveyed a population to support this claim, I believe that such research would show that disgruntled participants who denigrate the position of prince and princess would score quite highly on the PVQ for power and achievement; such individuals would be personally focused and act on anxiety-based values since they feel that their rightful place in the ranking has been taken from them. Future work in this area may lead to greater insights about individual participants' motivation for playing in the Society.

Intentionally Seeking Community

Just as the Earl of Eglinton rejected the influence of the Industrial Age by reaching out to Sir Walter Scott's mythic ideal of chivalry, so the founders of the Society for Creative Anachronism, in response to their environment, reached out to Eglinton's reconstruction of the chivalric virtues. Their one-off party was a response to the violence in their society. Over the years, gradually, the SCA has become an intentional community where identity construction and engagement with individual interests and activities has created a space for people to resist the norms of a dominant culture that has become digitally knowledgeable and globally connected, but that is increasingly devoid of face-

¹¹⁹ The Order of Precedence (OP) is a list on which awards and achievements are recorded and individuals are ranked in relation to each other. Similar to the highly structured society of the Middle Ages with clear ranking, the OP—no periods—creates its own hierarchy. The abbreviation should not be confused with the Order of the Pelican designated as O.P.

to-face interaction and the skills and craftsmanship of making items. Robert Schehr argues that intentional communities provide a “persistent example of alternative constructions of public and private space, and political, economic, and cultural relations” and that the ICs example serves as a “sort of counter memory.”¹²⁰ This chapter has detailed the SCA’s persistent example of pro-social values like courtesy and honor. These values shape attitudes and motivate behavior.¹²¹ In that shaping, there is room for transformation that sometimes extends beyond the SCA community and reaches into the daily lives of participants. I will explore the elements of ritual and dress that contribute to change, in Chapters V and III respectively. German philosopher Ernst Bloch believed that humanity has an innate ability to seek a better life. His ideas, referred to as the utopian principle, focus on expectation, hope, and possibility. He argues that a “utopian consciousness is necessary, not as a diversion from the pressing difficulties characteristic of life, but as a necessary filter through which to contemplate one’s immediate situation.”¹²² Bloch’s analysis implies the possibility of transformation by contrasting the utopian consciousness with the mindset of daily life. The SCA offers an alternate ethos to juxtapose with our mundane existence.

¹²⁰ Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 134.

¹²¹ Participants who violate the norms or laws of the SCA are subject to various sanctions including banishment. The Code of Conduct expressly calls for participants to treat each other with respect and civility (*SCA Sanction Guide* Edition 1.01, Jan. 2014, <www.sca.org/docs/pdf/SanctionGuide.pdf>).

¹²² Schehr, *Dynamic Utopia* 148.

CHAPTER III

‘FOR THE APPAREL OFT PROCLAIMS THE MAN’ (OR WOMAN)

DRESSING ONE’S PERSONA

My garb¹²³ is a gift I give to myself. . . . Pulling clothes on that I have invested with attention and thought gives me confidence. It gives me courage. Courage to be louder, more direct, more brave, more me. The clothes I have to wear for work, those are an imposition. The clothes I have picked out for SCA are the reflections of the inner me, or sometimes the me I want to be, if only for a time. Garb, past a certain level, is freedom.
– HL Felix Avor aka Skamp Widegrin¹²⁴

In 1956, Erving Goffman wrote *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. In it, he explored everyday human interaction through the analogy of theatrical performance. He asserted that people try to control the impression they make just as actors perform a role; both respond to their audience and make adjustments. Clothing is one of the most obvious ways people choose to present themselves; that performance is viewed and responded to by others in ways that either affirm the performer’s self concept or not. Since it is natural for people to want to be accepted, they adjust their performance—either behavior or clothing—accordingly. In this way, *social identity*—a person’s sense of who they are based on their group memberships—is constructed through a series of

¹²³ Garb is the Society for Creative Anachronism’s generic term for costume.

¹²⁴ HL denotes His Lordship or Her Ladyship. These are titles that recognize significant contributions in any of the three pillars of the Society: arts and science, service, or martial. Such a denotation is often an indication to a player that he or she is on the path to peerage. Augmentation of arms are announced in court and recipients receive medallions: a Goutte de Sang (Drop of Blood) medallion for service, a Jambe de Lion (Leg of the Lion) medallion for arts and sciences, or one of several martial medallions including the Hasta Leonis for war combat and the Gray Goose Shaft for archery. Other than the epigraphs, I opted to only include titles reflective of the Society’s peerages: O.L. for Order of the Laurel, for skill in the arts and sciences; O.P. for Order of the Pelican, for devoted service to the Society, M.oD. for Masters of Defense, recognizing skill in rapier or cut and thrust; KSCA or Knight of the Society for Creative Anachronism also known as the Order of Chivalry. Likewise, I have noted royal peerages: the title Duke or Duchess means the individual has ruled a kingdom two or more times, Count or Countess has ruled a kingdom once, and Viscount or Viscountess has ruled a principality—possibly countless times. Between the time of this draft and the final dissertation, Felix was elevated to the Order of the Pelican.

coded communications.¹²⁵ Therefore, clothing—to some degree—dictates identity. In medieval Europe, most countries had some form of sumptuary laws, rules that dictated choice of food, clothing, shoes and hairstyles.¹²⁶ The laws served several functions, one of which was to control the emerging wealthy merchant class. Through the limitations on clothing, members of the aristocratic class could quickly identify members of different classes, securing “a stable connection between appearance and entitlement.”¹²⁷ Clothing, therefore, was a performance of position and identity and a tool of social control.

Clothing is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Society for Creative Anachronism. In the Society, people initially dress in costume because it's a requirement; everyone must participate. When people change their outward appearance by putting on SCA garb, it disrupts their real world identities and feels like play. It is tantalizing because it feels transgressive.¹²⁸ As their participation increases and individuals develop their SCA personas, they construct an SCA identity, which can be completely independent from most of the factors of their lived-world identities. They have the opportunity to enact an ideal self and that has the potential to be transformational. In the

¹²⁵ In his social identity theory, Henry Tajfel proposed that the groups to which people belonged were an important source of pride and self-esteem (Sam McLeod, “Social Identity Theory,” *Simply Psychology*, 2008).

¹²⁶ Jamie C. Gordon, “Another Look, Sumptuary Law in Medieval Europe,” *Camelot Collection* (2012), accessed 10 Apr. 2016, <www.camelotcollection.weebly.com/another-look-sumptuary-laws-in-medieval-europe.html>.

¹²⁷ Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).

¹²⁸ In *Forming Bodies: Interrogating Transgressive Dress Practices*, Tasha Maree Dangerfield Smith discusses dress as a practice in which one presents a constructed identity that can mark the wearer as desirable, normal or deviant. She examines the power in crafting one's identity (MFA Thesis Massey University, Wellington, 2015).

SCA, dress¹²⁹ plays a critical role in the Society's self-perception—which has changed over the years—in the creation of an individual's medieval persona, in the formation of identity, and in the conception of self.¹³⁰ Dress is one communication tool that signifies the freedom to choose one's identity; it is a coded performance. Dress positions the body and identity within the social and cultural space of the Society for Creative Anachronism. However, the coded messages of SCA dress, like fashion, are highly dependent on context.¹³¹ In other words, the meaning of garb depends on many factors including the identity of the wearer, the occasion, the place, and the time.¹³² What an article of clothing meant in the Middle Ages is not necessarily what it means today in the SCA. A nuanced interpretation of the messages of SCA dress depends on familiarity with SCA culture. Semiotics can provide insight into how the material expression of SCA dress relates to the values of the Society and how it contests the medieval power structure and modern gender politics.

The Cultural Expectation of Garb

The requirement that everyone participate by making some attempt at wearing pre-seventeenth century clothing differentiates the SCA from Renaissance Faires, where the participant actors are costumed and the spectating audience is generally not. The cultural roots for participation stem from the first event flier's directive that everyone

¹²⁹ Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher provide a definition for *dress* and the rationale for choosing it over such terms as *clothing*, *adornment*, or *costume* ("Dress and Identity," *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 10.1, SAGE, 1992).

¹³⁰ *Self* is the singular agent whereas one's *identity* incorporates experiences in interaction with other people and representative agents (Peter Weinreich, "Identity Structure Analysis," *Analyzing Identity, Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts*, New York: Routledge, 2003) 49-50.

¹³¹ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) 8.

¹³² Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* 8.

makes an attempt to come in some sort of costume.¹³³ In fact, many SCA chapters often bring loaner clothing to events in case newcomers arrive unprepared to dress for the occasion.¹³⁴ The requirement that everyone participate communicates a value of inclusion; it implies that fundamentally, there is no “us/them” scenario in the SCA. Even if this message isn't completely understood by newcomers, at the very least the requirement communicates that participants must be willing to take small risks and engage in imaginative and costumed play.

In the same way that participation makes the SCA different from the Renaissance Faire,¹³⁵ the lack of required authenticity separates the SCA from historic re-enactors like Regia Anglorum, whose members are given a 108-page authenticity guide. Though the Library of Congress includes the Society for Creative Anachronism under the subject heading Historical Re-enactment Groups, any SCA member would assert that the categorization isn't quite accurate. *SCAdians*, as regularly participating members of the SCA refer to themselves, would emphasize that they don't re-enact history as much as they re-create it; this semantic detail is crucially important for two reasons. It helps delineate the boundary between the SCA and painstakingly authentic historical re-enactment groups like the Civil War re-enactors who staged the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg or the European living history group Regia Anglorum, and it highlights the creative element that helps the SCA function as a new social movement while distinguishing it from Live Action Role Players, *LARPer*s, who take their

¹³³ For an expanded discussion of the first party and conventions of attire, see the introduction.

¹³⁴ This service is referred to as Gold Key and draws its name from the keys worn on the chatelaine, a set of short chains attached by a belt to the mistress of a castle.

¹³⁵ At Renaissance Faires only the actors are required to wear costumes, though many spectators and audience members also dress for the occasion.

inspiration from fantasy and role-playing games like *Dungeon and Dragons*. As one Society member notes, “There are no fireballs in the SCA.”¹³⁶ On a continuum with pure fantasy on one end and exact historical replication on the other, the current SCA, as a whole, leans to the historical side of the mid-point.¹³⁷ However, though there are members who pursue and achieve high levels of historical authenticity,¹³⁸ many Society members adhere to the motto: “The Middle Ages as they should have been,” which leaves ample room for creative and anachronistic elements.¹³⁹

Sumptuary Laws in the SCA and the Impact on the Individual

Even to the relative newcomer, garb serves to visually signal a common bond among SCA participants. People who are not in garb are immediately recognizable as spectators or visitors and, by contrast, those who are in costume are part of the in-group; in this way dress serves as a unifier. However, greater familiarity with SCA culture reveals how different aspects of dress are used officially to mark status and royal hierarchy and restrict behavior. Though there are very few official limitations on personal presentation, there are some. The entire Society observes certain conventions with regard

¹³⁶ Ernie Evans, “SCA combines martial arts, history,” *The Union* [Nevada County, CA] 25 July 2013.

¹³⁷ The first party specifically included invitations to dress in more fantastical clothing than historical. In more recent decades, the mission to be an educational resource for pre-seventeenth century history has placed greater emphasis on historical accuracy.

¹³⁸ Commitment to authenticity in the development of one's persona is recognized in the Society by admission into the Order of the Carp. According to the *Handbook of An Tir*, “In China, the carp is a symbol of perseverance in the face of adversity . . . the original token was an broidered patch 2” x 2” in size, to replicate in miniature the mandarin squares worn by Chinese government and military officials at the end of the SCA period . . . The embroidered patch was later replaced by a square metal token displaying a copper carp leaping over stylized copper waves against a brass background” (*The An Tir Handbook*, 2016, <www.antir.sca.org/Pubs/ATH/may_2016_final1_antir_handbook.pdf>) 152.

¹³⁹ Steven Muhlberger discusses the internal struggle between historical authenticity and Society customs in his article “The Middle Ages as They Were, or As They Should Have Been?” which was delivered at a conference “The Middle Ages in Contemporary Popular Culture” at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario (Mar. 1996).

to *circlets*, metal bands denoting rank that are worn like crowns. *The An Tir Handbook* lists all the regalia and sumptuary laws for the Kingdom of An Tir. For the most part, the fancier the head piece, the higher the rank. The handbook includes specific advice on the subject of circlets:

The variety and splendor of the various styles of circlets worn in An Tir and throughout the Known World are such that you need to be very careful [when wearing one] that you do not presume to a higher rank unknowingly. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that circlets . . . be less than an inch wide, not vary in height in any way, and have no protuberances above the top edge of the band. Any further designs (excluding those heraldic elements which denote rank), stones, or metals is (sic) left up to the taste of the wearer, but bear in mind that fancier generally denotes higher rank. As a general guide, those without an Award of Arms may wear a simple, undecorated metal circlet. Those with an Award of Arms may add a single stone and/or a small amount of engraving to the circlet. Those with an award, which conveys a Grant of Arms, may add several stones and more engraving to their circlet.¹⁴⁰

The specifics allow former kings and queens who have ruled more than once to wear circlets embellished with strawberry leaves.



Figure 10. Ducal Coronet adorned with strawberry leaf motif, 2017, <royal.lochac.sca.org>.

¹⁴⁰ “Customs, Etiquette, and Playing the Game: Regalia and Sumptuary Laws, or ‘Who Gets to Wear What?’” *The An Tir Handbook* 3rd Edition, An Tir Culture Wiki (28 Nov. 2010).

Those who have been king or queen only once may wear crenelated circlets. Former princes and princesses also may wear crenelated circlets, but by custom in An Tir, the protuberances are not in the shape of battlements.



Figure 11. Country Coronet with Battlements. Crenelated coronets that are not embattled have a contour with projections in some areas and a narrow margin in others, like a stylized mountain range, <www.heralds.westkingdom.org>.

Landed barons and baronesses, those who are serving a specific area currently wear the circlets of their barony and court barons and baronesses may wear pearls on their circlets. For the individual, circlets and coronets demonstrate achievement and the reward of hard work. Because coronets are unique to each wearer—no two are the same—participants can demonstrate their individuality. The Society's limitations on circlets and coronets imitate the power structure of historical monarchies, which adds to the overall tone of events. And, recognition or *positive distinctiveness*—the motivation to strive for a positive self-concept—encourages continued participation.¹⁴¹ In addition, circlets and coronets showcase some of the Society's principle values: equality and service. In an all-volunteer organization, service is essential. Almost all the peerages¹⁴² are achieved

¹⁴¹ Henri Tajfel and John Turner included the idea of positive distinctiveness in their social identity theory.

through hard work and some component of related service. A less obvious correlation exists with the concept of equality because, on its face, the limited availability of circlets and coronets would seem to mark difference, but the underlying message is that—unlike hereditary monarchies—everyone can achieve elite status. In short, circlets and coronets allow people to recognize others' status—an element that for most is significant to their participation—and contribute to the overall culture of the SCA.

The official SCA sumptuary conventions seem clear, but the unofficial culture of an area or subgroup can exert a force that contravenes the rules. The result is that sometimes people who are entitled to symbols of rank are criticized for their choice of adornment. When Aleire de Paris received her Award of Arms, making her a noble lady, she was entitled to wear a fancier circlet. On her Facebook page, she posted a picture of one she wanted to purchase and received mixed responses, largely because it was not a solid band and had variations in width that might be read as protuberances. Some peers told her the circlet was fine as the variations were minor and were not “pompous.” Others advised her that it could be misconstrued as a viscounty circlet, befitting a former princess. In the end, after being told that while technically fine the circlet would likely be scrutinized, Aleire did not buy it.¹⁴³ The mixed messages she received illustrate the confusion over how to interpret the symbolic language of dress. That uncertainty lies at the root of why Aleire sought consultation in the first place despite the circlet fitting the vision she had for her persona and her personal taste. Perhaps, because of her status as a relatively new player—having only started playing seven months earlier—the mere

¹⁴² Peerage is the collective term that refers to groups of individuals in the Society who have been recognized as exemplars in service, arts and sciences, or martial domains. Greater discussion of this idea can be found in Chapter II.

¹⁴³ Aleire de Paris, Personal communication, 15 Apr. 2015.

suggestion of scrutiny by other Society members served as a moderating force and prevented the full expression of her SCA identity.

Even long-time SCA members experience the pressure to comply with unofficial expectations. Keith the Wanderer, a former prince of the Summits who grew up in the SCA, experienced the coercive force with regard to his viscount circlet. The only real sumptuary distinction in the SCA with regard to viscount circlets is to avoid wearing a ducal or county circlet, and therefore claiming false rank. Depending on the kingdom, viscount circlets come with a variety of points, sometimes with pearls. Some kingdoms limit height; others do not. The height seems to be culturally determined. In Atenveldt, there are a lot of tall viscounty circlets, in An Tir far fewer. The general feeling in An Tir is that a “taller than normal” circlet is a way of pretending to a higher rank than one has achieved.¹⁴⁴ Keith the Wanderer commissioned a viscount circlet for himself and his inspiration, his mother. The circlets were styled after the Summits' Tanist¹⁴⁵ Coronet, a three-pointed crown. The only instructions Keith gave to the artist were to make the two circlets similar in size and to include a grail as part of the decoration as the grail represents the Summits. When he and his mother received their viscounty circlets, they were “very, very large.”¹⁴⁶ Though his circlet complied with sumptuary law, Keith nevertheless experienced varied reactions:

¹⁴⁴ I attribute much of the discussion of unofficial culture to conversations with William Geoffrey the Rogue who is highly knowledgeable about both official and unofficial culture within the Principality of the Summits and the Kingdom of An Tir. He has been in the SCA for decades, has served as Prince of the Summits four times, is a Knight of the Society, and—at the time of writing—is serving as the Warlord of An Tir.

¹⁴⁵ The Tanist is the male victor in the Coronet Tournament who will next be the sovereign ruler of the Summits.

¹⁴⁶ Keith the Wanderer, Personal communication, 11 Oct. 2016.

There were many people who liked it or said they loved it. As time went by, more people said it was obnoxiously huge and very ugly; a few eluded to me not wearing it any more [and] some told me it had been a year and to put it in the closet since I gave the artist a year of good wear.¹⁴⁷

Ultimately, Keith the Wanderer made a new viscount circlet himself. His first circlet complied with the official regulations, but the unofficial culture interpreted the size of the circlet as being overly large and, therefore, as performing an act of arrogance or compensation, neither of which is positive.

In addition to circlets, certain articles of clothing demonstrate status and are reserved from general use. For example, Members of the Order of Chivalry—knights—are the only ones allowed to wear white belts, heavy gold chains, and spurs. Masters at Arms—the knights who do not choose to swear oaths of fealty—wear white baldrics and may also wear spurs. Masters of Defense wear a badge of their order suspended from a white collar. Many squires wear a red belt to indicate their relationship with a knight, but the red belt color is not prohibited for others, though anyone who wears one should be prepared to be asked for the name of his or her knight. Some apprentices and protégés—students of Laurels and Pelicans, respectively—wear colored belts to indicate their relationships, but those belt colors are not strictly restricted. Members of the Order of the Laurel and the Order of the Pelican wear a badge of their order, often as a medallion on a necklace; in An Tir the badge is frequently worn on a circlet. Members of the Order of the Pelican may also wear a cap of maintenance, though this is not common in An Tir. The Handbook states, “It is considered extremely poor manners to wear jewelry, headgear, or any other articles which might lead others to think you hold a higher rank

¹⁴⁷ Keith the Wanderer, Personal communication, 11 Oct. 2016.

than you actually do.”¹⁴⁸ In essence, the handbook is making clear that dress communicates not only status, but also—through expression of good manners—courtesy, one of the principle values of the SCA.

Because the limitations are unique to the SCA culture, newcomers frequently run afoul of the expectations; they have not been instructed in the language of clothing unique to the Society. The most frequent violations are from relatively new players who wear colored belts that may be interpreted by Society members as claiming allegiances or rank to which they are not entitled. People are gently educated and, in the case of white belts, required to change. In the SCA, when it comes to the white belt, there is no distinction between the signifier and the signified; only knights wear the white belt. The white belt then is a sign of chivalric virtues combined with martial prowess valued by the SCA. The prohibition on wearing a white belt unless one is a knight did create an opportunity for a legend in the making. The story is that two dukes—both of whom are knights—had been scuba diving a few miles down the road from an event and spontaneously decided to attend. Since they did not have any of their garb, they visited the event's Gold Key and had a little fun with the volunteers. Duke Havordh Aettarbani created a white belt from a scarf, which prompted the Gold Key helpers to explain that only knights can wear white belts. Havordh Aettarbani posts, “Nothing like telling Gold Key helpers, ‘No, really I can wear a white belt.’”¹⁴⁹ The post prompted many reactions including Gwen MacAuslane's. “The explanation for the white belt was priceless!”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ “Customs, Etiquette, and Playing the Game: Regalia and Sumptuary Laws, or ‘Who Gets to Wear What?’” *The An Tir Handbook* 3rd Edition, An Tir Culture Wiki (28 Nov. 2010).

¹⁴⁹ Havordh Aettarbani, *Facebook* post, 09 July 2016.

¹⁵⁰ Gwen MacAuslane, *Facebook* post, 10 July 2016.

One of the expectations of knights is that they make themselves identifiable by their white belts. When the pictures of the two knights were shared, only Havordh Aettarbani had on the white belt, which prompted another knight, Ogedei Bahadur, to inquire why Duke Skeggi Newcombe didn't have a white belt on too. It is a cultural expectation that a knight's regalia should be displayed or at least carried on one's person. According to a former prince of the Summits William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA:

[Being a knight] is a job as well as a status rank. The belt identifies the knight from others, the chain is the symbol of a knight's oath to the crown and the spurs are mostly vestigial, as a nod to the mounted history of the knight. While spurs are often left off, a belt and chain should not be left.¹⁵¹

Kith Von Atzinger posted a humorous jibe, "Stealth Skeggi."¹⁵² But, in fact, a king could interpret that lack of display as a violation of a knight's oath and could require penance. The punishment would depend on the severity of the infraction. "Often [the penance] will just be a bit of good-natured teasing or being sent to fetch beer."¹⁵³ Though these two knights were obviously not purposely failing to acknowledge their rank and oaths, failure to display the belt and chain can be perceived as either an act of humility or one of deception. Thus official culture, which restricts the white belt to knights alone, interacts with unofficial culture, which requires a knight to announce himself by wearing the belt and to affirm his oath of fealty by wearing the chain. Clothing communicates these expectations and others to those within the group and is integral to the culture of the Society.

¹⁵¹ William Geoffrey the Rogue, Personal communication, 11 Oct. 2016.

¹⁵² Kith Von Atzinger, *Facebook* post, 10 July 2016.

¹⁵³ William Geoffrey the Rogue, Personal communication, 11 Oct. 2016.

Historical Authenticity Versus Culture of Fantasy and the Impact on Persona

While designations of rank would have been appropriate in the truly stratified societies of medieval Europe, they can be thought to mar the Society's efforts to create an inclusive community. Such is the struggle of the dualism of a society that is both fantastical and historical. That division is most keenly experienced in the authenticity of dress. SCA garb should signify acceptance by a community of people who will be nice to and respect individuals for how they play and not who they are in the lived-world. But, the evolution of the SCA, from a party attended by elves and hobbits to a historical recreation organization, has created strife. As the Society has matured, the expectation of historical accuracy has increased. Adherence to authentic fabrics, design, and construction offers one way to develop one's SCA persona, and the Society—as a whole—values authenticity. Authenticity translates directly to both the wearer's experience and the other participants' evaluation of garb. Rose Atherton describes the importance of authenticity for her own experience:

Authenticity is somewhat important to me especially because I see my garb as clothing, not a costume. I don't want to wear a modern bra or have [garb] be just an outer layer. Things tend to work better when worn as an entire ensemble. The fabric . . . and the construction methods are absolutely integral to the silhouette and functionality of the garments. I also never feel fully dressed or fully immersed in the game without appropriate headgear. Very few things make me feel more genteel or refined than veils.¹⁵⁴

Since the materials needed for authentic garb often require having disposable income and time, to which one's real-world economic situation may limit access, the lines between economic disparity in the lived-world world and social standing in the SCA may become

¹⁵⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Rose Atherton, "Dress and its role in the SCA." *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

blurred. Aife inghean ui Callieg calls attention to the economic challenges of authentic garb: “I prefer to use period materials whenever possible. However, as a poor undergrad, I cannot usually afford to buy non-synthetic materials.”¹⁵⁵ Feradach Mac Tralin mec Domongairt describes the inadvertent effect of the disparity of access to authentic materials:

For me, period garb is how I signal that I am a high class, respectable Scadian. This isn't to say that I've felt that people looked down on me for less period garb, or that I've looked down on people for their garb, but there is definitely a stronger feeling of respectability towards those who dress well.¹⁵⁶

At the heart of Feradach's comment is the idea that dress sends a message to others about the importance of material authenticity and its relationship to status in the Society.

In addition to the desire for authentic materials, period construction techniques are valued. For greatest authenticity, some people will hand sew all the seams in their garb. However, for some, the appearance of an authenticity is enough, and they will hand finish only the seams that will be visible. Still others machine stitch everything in keeping with the *ten-foot rule*, which means that from ten feet away the clothing looks *period*—like something that could have existed in the time period covered in the SCA. Nim of Myrtleholdt recounted trying and—based on criticism she received—failing to adapt some “period-ish clothing” to wear at one of her earliest events. Since then, she said, “I've relied upon store-bought pieces and sewn gifts from others rather than trying to adapt anything myself again.” Even so, she continues, “I'm slowly learning that I can

¹⁵⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aife inghean ui Callieg, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

¹⁵⁶ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Feradach Mac Tralin mec Domongairt, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

play my own way and am trying to embrace the 'close enough' approach."¹⁵⁷ The differences in emphasis on authenticity reflect the range of acceptable engagement within the Society and illustrate how different expectations might lead to conflict.

While uncharitable critiques of garb are too common, they are not frequent. Unfortunately, the hurt they engender persists long after the comments have been spoken because the criticism undermines both the recipient's sense of self and his or her constructed identity and because such comments are a betrayal of the implicit promise of acceptance signified by wearing garb in the first place. Duversa of Movilla mentioned that in twenty-two years she received one very rude comment, but it so impacted her that she has been loathe to ask for assistance with garb ever since.¹⁵⁸ More often than not, the criticisms are directed at newer players who are just beginning to wear period garb. A former princess of the Summits, Diana de Winterton, recalled the experience of the critique of her first dress:

My first dress that I did all by myself was completely fantasy, but I felt really pretty in it (a rare thing back then) and I got chewed out by an old matronly lady who felt it her duty to make certain the shy, ignorant 18 year old knew what was expected of her. Luckily I had the presence of mind to ask, during the diatribe about how awful my dress was, what I could do to make it more period. She was completely caught off guard. I do still remember the moment when I stuffed the dress to the bottom of the trashcan.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Nim of Myrtleholdt, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 04 Oct. 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Duversa of Movilla, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 11 Oct. 2016.

¹⁵⁹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Diana de Winterton, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 11 Oct. 2016.

It is possible that the anonymity of persona emboldens people to make cruel comments. But it is more likely that the comments are thoughtless rather than mean-spirited. Diana speculates on why people criticize:

Some want their SCA experience to be completely medieval and will do everything they can to correct everyone. Some have learned something recently and think they are being helpful or encouraging the new person to learn something and up their game (just going about it wrong). Others are just downright bossy and feel they are entitled. Then there are others who don't realize that a simple comment can be hurtful.

Whether unintentional or purposeful, the critique of authenticity demonstrates the dissonance created by the duality of the SCA's history: the SCA's embrace of fantasy and its mission as an educational non-profit organization. It is impossible to satisfy the expectations of a culture that is unclear about its conventions.

Historical Authenticity Versus Culture of Fantasy and the Impact on Community

The varied expectations and performances of period attire continue to create strain that has occasionally threatened SCA communities. Insistence on authenticity, or the lack thereof, divides people within the SCA. Anthony P. Cohen explains how community boundaries are defined by what is rejected, what is contained within, and what is assimilated into a group's notion of its own boundaries.¹⁶⁰ By Cohen's analysis—for an outsider—dress is a readily identifiable and relatively simple boundary delineating the SCA from the daily world. However, from the inside, the boundaries are much more complex. Most mainstream participants are initially assimilated into a somewhat casual view of acceptable dress. On the whole, people can wear anything that seems to be an attempt at non-modern attire. For example, most people begin by wearing a simple T-tunic, which can instantly convert any pair of pants and t-shirt into some attempt at *garb*,

¹⁶⁰ Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester, UK: E. Horwood, 1985).

the generic term for SCA clothing.¹⁶¹ The general expectation is that the greater people's involvement, the more authentic their attire should become until it meets a standard often referred to as the ten-foot rule. A former prince of the Summits, Aaron Duncan, KSCA, likens the increasing quality of garb to leveling up in a video game. "Every time you get a new piece, it's more authentic than the last, achievement unlocked The more and more achievements I unlock the higher my score feels, and the higher my score the better at the game I am doing."¹⁶² Aaron Duncan's comment illustrates the impact of dress on his sense of self and his SCA identity.

Many participants in the SCA have greater expectations of authenticity for peers—Knights, Laurels, Pelicans, Masters of Defense¹⁶³ and especially for sitting royals—than they have for themselves. Godwyn Reynard explains the emphasis on active monarchs being well attired this way: "Sitting royalty . . . as some of the most visible people in our society . . . should be seen as setting an example even in their 'everyday garb.'"¹⁶⁴ So important is the authentic appearance of the royals that the populace—those who are being ruled—work to ensure that its royal peers are dressed well. Clothing is frequently made for individuals who are or will be serving as monarchs. Often, when a Coronet or Crown tourney is won and the next rulers are chosen, a team of volunteers

¹⁶¹ The name "T-tunic" comes from the garment's resemblance to the letter "T" when laid out on a flat surface. As one of the easiest pieces of garb to make, it is commonly seen as people's first garb. Most theories of historically correct tunics are based on the Bocksten Bog find, a corpse in the bog was found in 1936, fully clothed. Some cloth had deteriorated, but a lot was still there, including a full wool tunic. (Gwennie, The Garb Index, *Garbindex.com*, 16 May 2016).

¹⁶² Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aaron Duncan, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

¹⁶³ The Orders of Chivalry (knights), the Laurel, the Pelican, and Masters of Defense represent the non-royals pillars of the Society. People often aspire to be added to their ranks.

¹⁶⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Godwyn Reynard, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

will design an outfit for the Investiture or Coronation day. In some cases, multiple outfits will be designed over the course of the reign, including specific dress for the final court of a reign. The emphasis on the authentic appearance of the royals can be understood by applying the idea of a social front as proposed by Goffman. He identified appearance as one of the elements in a social front where public behavior can be viewed as performance, and he viewed the interaction between people as presentation and as construction of identity or *face*.¹⁶⁵ By dressing royals in authentic persona-appropriate garb, participants are contributing to the creation of an environment that reinforces their own identities as nobles in a medieval world. In a way, the construction of the authentic royal face generates a feedback loop that engenders the idealized chivalric behavior that is key to the SCA's culture and increases historical authenticity in general.

The conventional SCA view holds that two extremes exist with regard to clothing authenticity: the *fringies* and the *costume Nazis*. These polar opposites demonstrate the tension between fantasy and history; in some ways they embody the Society's past and its future. The founders' original intention was to reform their contemporary world by encouraging unregulated self-expression thereby modifying their subjectivity through selected medieval virtues. More recently, the Society has moved in the direction of historical re-enactment, which reflects a different Society goal. Within the SCA, the term *fringies* refers to those participants who frequently identify as pirates or fantastical characters like wizards and faeries while *costume Nazis* refers to players who are committed to absolute authenticity.¹⁶⁶ While the latter is spoken of derisively, they are

¹⁶⁵ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959) 19.

still admired for their skill and often participate in the elite royal structure because their craft in re-creating authentic period clothing makes them invaluable to the royalty and the Society as a whole. Their efforts contribute to the historical legitimization necessary to fulfill the educational mission of the SCA. However, the use of a term like Nazi, with such negative connotations, indicates the general resistance by the common SCA player to absolute authenticity or, at least, to the attitude that authenticity takes priority over all other aspects. The differentiation and variety that gives rise to stereotypes like *fringie* or *costume Nazi* can lead to the marginalization of one and the elevation of the other. Within the Society, the *costume Nazis* are more frequently elevated.

On the other hand, the *fringies* chafe at the strictures of authenticity. Their garb choices hew much more truly to the fantastical origins of the first SCA event. In addition, their reputation as non-conformists in relation to the current SCA culture places them both figuratively and sometimes literally at the edge of the Society. They have been at various times either contained within or rejected by the mainstream SCA. In the Kingdom of An Tir in an area referred to as the Summits (see figure 3),¹⁶⁷ the differences in costume and attitude actually caused a schism that took more than a decade to begin to repair. The details of the rift story depend on who tells it, but everyone agrees on the essential facts. An event known as Egil Skallagrimson Memorial Tournament, Egils for short—held over Memorial Day weekend—became so popular that it outgrew its site. Attendees were asked to pre-register for the event. When more people registered than the

¹⁶⁶ Even within this group, there is variation. Some members are committed to historical accuracy in all ways; others blend authenticity with SCA culture. For example, it is quite common to find SCA Viking women wearing strands of amber and glass bead stretched between their turtle broaches. However, the research is uncertain whether this was a common historical practice.

¹⁶⁷ The Principality of the Summits consists of an area that stretches from Salem, Oregon to the northern border of California.

space allowed, some people were refused entrance at the gate. The perception among the pirate community is that more of them were denied access than the more medieval SCA players. It is impossible to know whether the exclusions were disproportionately applied to participants with pirate and fantasy personas. However, their costume would have been identifiably different from other dress. As a result of this perceived ostracization, the pirates created their own Memorial Day event, known as The Gathering;¹⁶⁸ it ran for a decade, during which time attendance at Egil Skallagrimson Memorial Tournament suffered.

The early years of separation coincided with the success of the pop culture hit *The Pirates of the Caribbean The Curse of the Black Pearl*; this—combined with a sense of rebellion against the politics of the SCA—contributed to a rise in the popularity of pirate groups, who embraced their pirate attire and promoted how they were different from the SCA. They hoped to escape the internal and authenticity politics that they felt drove them out in the first place. In an attempt to create a more democratic and egalitarian community, the pirates rejected the narrowed expectations for dress and the designations of rank; circlets and white belts had no meaning at these events. People in all manner of dress, from winged fairies and fantastical beasts to kilted or nearly nude men—not to mention eye-patch wearing pirates—spent their days in play. People participated in treasure hunts and boffer¹⁶⁹ fighting, sat and talked with friends, shopped at merchants,

¹⁶⁸ The Gathering was a non-sanctioned event, which meant it was outside of the rules that govern the SCA. Participants viewed themselves as free from the politics that had driven them from the Society. In the early years, the pirate gatherings were extremely ludic with widespread alcohol consumption and bawdy behavior. Costumes included both the fanciful and the popular, like faeries and Captain Jack Sparrow. Performances by fire dancers and belly dancers signaled the end of family-friendly hours; after which, minor children were expected to be put to bed or, at least, remain in personal encampments. The after-hours behavior at pirate events is much more openly ludic and hedonistic than most SCA events.

recovered from the previous night's celebrations, or made preparations for the evening's festivities. Participants gathered at the end of the day to watch fire performances, which became the highlight of events instead of martial competitions and courts. Once the fire performances were over, children were expected to go to bed so that adults could play. Pirate events featured more ludic and carnivalesque endeavors including belly dancing, drumming circles, drinking, and carousing. Pirate events were focused on fun and community, but generally had little to do with medieval re-creation. Nevertheless, SCA players who were considered elite in the Society's mainstream would sometimes attend pirate events. Upon encountering other peers, they would inevitably comment about "slumming," indicating that playing with the pirates was deemed as lowbrow entertainment. However, the pirates seemed to embrace the slight and would comment conspiratorially to recognizable SCA royalty that they would "keep their little secret." The pirate personas—complete with Jack Sparrow-esque eyeliner and garb—were reinforced by the schism and maximized their oppositional role in the face of the elite hierarchy of the SCA; they emphasized their freedom of expression over tradition.

However, with the success and growth of the pirate events came the need for the very sort of institutional organization that gave rise to the schism in the first place. Though authentic costume was not the point of contention, pirate camps were. At some events, individuals and groups with ship-themed camps got premium camping spaces along the *boardwalk*, a row of wooden planks meant to simulate a dock. These spots were near to the merchants and at the heart of activity. Also, depending on the location, favored camping areas were claimed by the same group every year. These preferences

¹⁶⁹ Boffers are foam covered toy weapons.

echoed the special spaces allocated in SCA camping for period encampments. Additionally, as the pirate events grew, the need for regulation also increased. A constabulary—official representatives of the authority running the event—kept the peace and maintained fire watch; on occasion, people who were not following rules were asked to leave. The rebels had become the institution. There is still a rich pirate culture and pirate focused events continue, but in recent years—because of a combination of purposeful outreach to the pirates, the end of The Gathering, and the positive experiences of those players who participate in both cultures—pirates have begun to return to the SCA and Egils. Their participation serves as a reminder that the Society values an inclusive community; the tolerance of a degree of heterodoxy is necessary for an organization that maintains as its goal self-directed personal reform. Nevertheless, for the most part, the pirates continue to camp on the outskirts of the meadow at Egils—the central area where SCA royalty and period encampments are placed—and rarely participate in official business such as attending court.¹⁷⁰ So, while the pirate personas are contained within the larger body of the SCA once more, they remain on the fringe.

Dress and Identity

Regardless of whether participants are pirates, royals, or something in between, the clothes that they wear are central to their SCA identity and potentially transformational to their sense of self. Susan Crane wrote: “Clothing, not skin, is the frontier of self.”¹⁷¹ In 1965, Gregory Stone connected the idea of performed appearance

¹⁷⁰ Period tents and pirate ships are extensions of persona performance and are displayed by both the pirates and SCAdians. Period encampments are outside the scope of this study, but would offer a rich opportunity for discussing historical authenticity versus SCA culture.

¹⁷¹ Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 6.

with the development of self. He asserted that dress is an important aspect to socialization; he noted that children—especially girls—are afforded opportunity to dress in costumes as a part of their socialization, but adults rarely have public opportunities. Instead, they participate in fantastical socialization mostly in private.¹⁷² Implicit in the understanding of performed appearance is the necessity of audience. Appearance is “a means of enabling, sustaining, facilitating, and bounding the creation of discourse.”¹⁷³ If no audience exists, no one can validate the wearer's self. On the other hand, if the audience's response to the clothing-wearer affirms the wearer's self-concept, then the self is corroborated. Anja Snihova shared an example of her dress evoking an unexpected but affirming response.

In AS XXVI¹⁷⁴ my first full-on researched houppelande¹⁷⁵ got finished right before 12th Night . . . It was 26 yards of upholstery-weight fabric, not counting linings and trims. 12th Night that year happened to be in a Masonic Temple that had marble floors and stairs . . . the several feet of fabric on the floor wasn't tangling my feet or having to be manipulated around things because it all slid beautifully on the marble . . . The really fun bit came when I needed to go down the stairs.¹⁷⁶ Everyone was in full court garb, pointy metal in all directions and more in chains and

¹⁷² G.P. Stone, “Appearance and the Self” in *Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order* (New York: John Wiley, 1965).

¹⁷³ “Stone, G.P 1962/1995” in *Fashion, Festivals, Pop Culture* (03 May 2016, retrieved 16 May 2016) <www.granolagradschoolandgoffman.wordpress.com/2016/05/03/stone-g-p-19621995-appearance-and-the-self/>.

¹⁷⁴ The Society for Creative Anachronism uses May 1, 1966 as the beginning date for their calendar year. The acronym A.S. stands for Anno Societatus, or the year of the Society. Therefore, AS XXVI is the 26th year of the Society's existence.

¹⁷⁵ A houppelande is a long, full body outer garment with flaring sleeves worn by both men and women in the late Middle Ages. What distinguishes the houppelande from other surcotes is the volume of fabric in the lower part of the gown. It is worn belted under the bust with a fabric belt. Van Eyck's “The Aldolphini Wedding” shows a woman wearing a houppelande (*Rosalie's Medieval Woman*, 2012, <www.rosaliegilbert.com>).

¹⁷⁶ Twelfth Night marks the Coronation of the new King and Queen of An Tir. It is held in January. By SCA tradition, people wear their most expensive finery for Twelfth Night because it is held indoors where weather and mud cannot spoil velvets, lace, and delicate footwear.

medallions all around.¹⁷⁷ I started down one flight of stairs and, as I went, realized that I was getting bowed to and folks were clearing out of my way. Then, as I turned to go down the next flight of stairs I looked up behind me. The last of the train of the dress was just turning the previous corner and I was taking up 3/4 of a *very* wide stairway! Conspicuous consumption High Medieval style!¹⁷⁸

Anja recalled the experience as extremely pleasant. Positive reinforcement from the audience encourages the garb wearer to continue and strengthens his or her commitment to the persona. In this way, the self—which is produced theatrically through self-presentation and audience response—reinforces one's identity.

Armor, as specialized garb, plays a similar role in presenting a fighter's unique identity. Since SCA fighters wear full helmets for combat, their faces can be obscured. Having recognizable armor is important because when SCA knights talk about potential candidates for elevation to the Order of Chivalry, those being discussed are often described by their armor and shield's appearance. In a strange twist on the idea of unique identity several of Sir William Geoffrey the Rogue's squires asked to create *surcoats*, garments worn over armor, like his. It is important to note that William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA, is a very tall and solid man. Many of his squires are likewise large men. Even without the tunic, William Geoffrey the Rogue would be immediately identifiable because of his height. However, in addition, he wears a distinctive, lengthy, black tunic with black and white feather-like additions at the hem and on the sleeves' cuffs; he resembles a black and white phoenix. Three of his squires created replicas of the tunic and first wore them at a Coronet tourney. After William Geoffrey presented himself to

¹⁷⁷ "Pointy metal," "chains and medallions" are references to royalty, knights, and peers, respectively.

¹⁷⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Anja Snihova, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

the King, each squire followed and introduced himself. The King did a double take at seeing the many copies. William Geoffrey the Rogue received some gentle ribbing, but the King's comments revealed admiration for the many liveried squires and affirmed William Geoffrey's efforts to fulfill his obligation as a knight to help his squires. Rather than diminishing William Geoffrey's uniqueness, the replica surcoats expanded his word fame and increased the visibility of his squires too. "I love cruising along with all the surcoats, it's an imposing sight. It also allows other knights to come to me right away to ask about a squire they've been observing."¹⁷⁹

Though some knights do dress their squires in house livery so they can be identified as belonging to their knight, William Geoffrey the Rogue purposely never made a requirement for such a surcoat because he knows that it requires a lot of work. The squires wanted to dress like William Geoffrey the Rogue; perhaps they were imagining themselves to be like their knight. Stone said that acting out a role requires dressing in costume. He argued that by committing to wearing costumes, participants symbolically leave themselves behind, so that they can proceed. "Costume, therefore, is a kind of magical instrument."¹⁸⁰ It allows the wearer to undergo both a physical and psychological metamorphosis. Keterlin von dem Drachen, O.L., emphasizes that it is the clothing that triggers the psychological transformation more than just having chosen a persona.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ William Geoffrey the Rogue, Personal communication, 11 Oct. 2016.

¹⁸⁰ G.P. Stone, "Appearance and the Self" 237.

¹⁸¹ A persona is "the character assumed by an SCA member. This may involve anything from adopting a name to developing a full history for a person born and raised at some specific place and time in the period covered by the SCA" (Hirsch von Henford's "An Unofficial Glossary of Terms As Used in the SCA," <goldenstag.net/MiscSCA/glossary>, 2015). One's dress is the outward express of the persona or adopted identity.

For me, it's not about the persona, but the garb that helps one create the headspace that supports the experience. It's similar to the age-old practice of starting the creation of sacred space with special clothing that continues to this day with people dressing up for church. The process of dressing for the event is the final step of putting myself in the alternate time and place. Some folks put on a persona like a sweater; me I put on the garb in place of a persona.¹⁸²

Through the development of persona and dress, the SCA provides an opportunity for role-playing and an exploration of identity, which can lead to personal transformation.

Joanne Eicher expanded the idea of a socially constructed identity to include the concept of multiple selves.¹⁸³ She divided dress and the self into three parts or levels and examined how each part was communicated through dress. The public self is the person that everyone knows. Only close friends and family know the private self, and even fewer people—only the most intimate partners—know the secret self. Rose Atherton confirmed her experience of this divide in the lived-world. “I have struggled with the conflict between clothing that is me and clothing that isn't. I fell into a trap, modernly, of having a ‘teacher wardrobe’ of clothes I didn't particularly like but they were practical for work.”¹⁸⁴ Rose's conflict represents the partition between the public self, which may be an identity constructed for and by others, and the private self. Rotrude Halbblind describes the same conflict, but in the context of the SCA.

I have been playing SCA since I was just over five years old. So the wearing of garb is not a strange thing to me. It's just part of how I immerse myself in the world. I feel quite uncomfortable when I am on site in my real world clothes; for some reason it feels wrong, like playing rock music

¹⁸² Temperance Trewelove, comment by Keterlin von dem Drachen, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

¹⁸³ J.B. Eicher, “Future Dress and the Self,” Melbourne: Victoria College (1982) <journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0887302X9701500404>.

¹⁸⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Rose Atherton, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

at a medieval feast.¹⁸⁵

Eicher asserts that the secret self is often communicated through costume and may or may not be shared with others. She suggested that anonymity could create a situation where the public communication of the secret costume-wearing self would be less of a risk. This anonymity is precisely the environment in which the SCA developed.¹⁸⁶ In fact, Laurencia des Jardins reported initially recognizing and identifying participants solely by their dress. Laurencia recalled using descriptions of garb instead of names:

Early on in my participation, I could only start to identify people by their garb—the garb they wore frequently—especially those from other branches that I didn't see as often. A beautiful gown, a cloak with a certain design, heraldic representations for sure; particular belt favors, like a certain knight's Pikachu. I remember recognizing and mentally referring to one gentleman as "stripey (sic) pants" until I learned his name.¹⁸⁷

Such anonymity creates the opportunity to explore identities and possibly investigate their secret selves.

Sometimes individuals who expose their secret selves through play, and are affirmed in those identities, discover that they want to maintain some of the elements of that identity in the performance of their public selves. In studying why individuals dress in costume, Kimberly Miller developed a "Dressing for Fun and Fantasy" questionnaire and applied Eicher's conception of the public, private, and secret selves.¹⁸⁸ Miller's study

¹⁸⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Rotrude Halfblind, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

¹⁸⁶ From its inception, people in the SCA mostly only used persona names; until recently, very few people were identified by their real-world names. Only with the advent of Facebook has the SCA persona been unmasked. In order to resist this intrusion on their anonymity, some people maintain two Facebook profiles, one for their SCA persona and the other for their everyday identity.

¹⁸⁷ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Laurencia des Jardins, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 02 Oct. 2016.

included a broad range of groups where costume wearing is expected.¹⁸⁹ She concludes that fantasy plays an important function by “reflecting current concerns . . . providing self-relevant information . . . and stimulating decision making.”¹⁹⁰ Marcello Fornarius shared one example that is particularly indicative of costume serving a self-revelatory function. Marcello, whose biological sex is female, explains:

[C]hoosing a masculine persona was part of my gender expression, and having been accepted in that persona has encouraged me to expand the variety of gender expressions I use in mundane life – as I move forward with a gender transition.¹⁹¹

Marcello's clothing and male-gendered performance at SCA events allowed for a conception of selfhood beyond the confines of the individual body. In Marcello's situation, his secret self could be expressed in the relative anonymity of the SCA. The favorable reactions he experienced there supported him in the construction of a new real-world identity. His experience and Miller's results demonstrate how participation in wearing garb can convert fantasy into active identity construction.

Dress and the Conception of Self

Given the Romantic ideals that “elaborate a range of distinctions between men's and women's social comportment, duties, and rights that gender the concepts of identity,”¹⁹² one might expect the limitations of this socialization process on performed

¹⁸⁸ Kimberly Miller, “Gender Comparisons Within Reenactment Costume: Theoretical Interpretations” in *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 27.1 (Sept. 1998): 35-61.

¹⁸⁹ The organizations Kimberly Miller surveyed included the Society for Creative Anachronism, English Country Dancers, Morris Dancers, Scottish Country Dancers, Buckskinners (or Fur traders), Science Fiction Convention attendees, and Historical Re-enactors (including Civil War re-enactors, re-enactors at a living history museum, and French and Indian War [British] re-enactors).

¹⁹⁰ Kimberly Miller, “Gender Comparisons . . .” 38.

¹⁹¹ Marcello Fornarius, Personal communication, 06 July 2016.

¹⁹² Susan Crane, *Gender and Romance in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1994) 17.

gender roles to be magnified in the SCA. That was Miller's conclusion; she surmised that re-enactment groups attract people who are looking for "reinforcement of traditional gender roles."¹⁹³ After all, the SCA was established on the values drawn from the medieval romances, which highlight gender difference to establish masculine identity. But reading gender through a binary lens restricts the possibilities for a fuller identity. For example, when masculinity is established and defined by contrasting it with femininity, while making room for feminine traits to be integrated into the masculine, the definition of masculinity is enlarged beyond the limitations of medieval romance literature and modern world gender politics.¹⁹⁴ Perhaps it is this expanded role that the SCA offers men and not an opportunity to simply re-inscribe masculine hegemony as some have argued.¹⁹⁵ In the first tournament, self-proclaimed knights fought for the right to crown their lady with the title of "fairest." On the surface, it would seem that women are figured as passive in contrast to male action. However, that interpretation should be complicated by the parodic treatment of the first tournament. The actual effect of the SCA on gender performance is likewise complicated;¹⁹⁶ the ahistorical—creative and anachronistic—aspects of the SCA actually expand the gender role spectrum for all. Garb, the material expression of SCA culture, can simultaneously call attention to the

¹⁹³ Miller. "Gender Comparisons . . ." 55.

¹⁹⁴ Susan Crane *Gender and Romance* 19.

¹⁹⁵ Chelsea Lewis, "Anachronistic Masculinity: Performing Medieval (sic) Masculinity in the Contemporary Context" (29 May 2010) retrieved 26 Apr. 2015, <www.Anthropologyandcoffeewordpress.com>.

¹⁹⁶ Judith Butler expands the idea of gender through an analysis of gender performance and gender performativity. If gender is performed, it is like acting or taking on a role. This is somewhat different from the idea of gender performativity. If gender is performative, then no one is a gender from the start. Performativity then produces a series of effects that give an impression of being a man or woman. Butler identifies the subversive potential in performativity of gender in *Bodies that Matter*, Routledge (1993).

feminine while erasing distinctions between men and women. Aife inghean ui Callieg captured the duality of garb when she said:

[W]hile I feel beautiful and graceful in my traditionally female clothing, I actually feel the most feminine in my fighting garb. There is something about wearing traditionally masculine clothes that makes me aware of my inherent femininity.

The expanded clothing options offered by participation in the SCA allow men and women to play with their conception of self.

Like Stone, Miller connected fantasy play with differences in the socialization process of men and women. In the modern world, as in the Romantic era from which the SCA drew its inspiration, the acceptable range for male identified performance, especially with regard to dress, is limited. Yet, the SCA offers men socially normative reasons for wearing costume. Male respondents in Miller's study identified their "love of history" as the chief reason for dressing in costume.¹⁹⁷ In addition men more frequently identified that dressing in costume offered them an escape. That said, in Miller's conclusions, she suggested that some men seemed to need to justify their involvement with garb. Miller asserted that on the open-ended section of her questionnaire, men tried to disassociate themselves from the fantasy component of dress and tried to legitimize their participation by claiming gender appropriate reasons like comparing the wearing of a costume for their hobby to the wearing of a uniform for their occupation. In contrast to Miller's respondents, the men in my interviews did not express any apprehension about wearing garb; one reason for the difference may be my standing in the Society or my role

¹⁹⁷ Miller's "Dressing for Fun and Fantasy Questionnaire" asked respondents to identify the source of their interest in dressing in costume. Respondents were asked to mark all that applied. Their choices included: a) reinforcement of an illusion/fantasy, b) this was a hobby of your family's and you more or less grew up with the interest of dressing in costume, c) love of history, d) costume/doll collection begun by other family members, e) an opportunity to assume another persona, and f) other—which the respondent would specify.

as a participant researcher. Though not reluctant to wear garb, the responses of the men I interviewed differed in the way garb made them feel. Some wanted to dress in garb just so that they would feel like they fit in; they did not want to stand out. Others commented on a mild improvement in their self-image and likened their boost in confidence to that of wearing a good suit. Viscount Aaron Duncan, KSCA, said, "I don't feel more masculine or feminine; I just get a sense of confidence that raises my play. This same confidence continues to drive me to make better garb."¹⁹⁸ Some men expressed that wearing nice garb, especially authentic garb, signaled their participation in a higher class of the Society or demonstrated their commitment to the SCA. Ayla Roth, an extremely talented seamstress, shared her partner's sense of the role of garb when she gifted him with hose, period braes, a cotehardie, and a nice hood. "He said that he had been in the SCA for too long to still have what he called 'newb'¹⁹⁹ garb,' and [the new garb] made him feel like he LOOKED as accomplished and serious about the SCA as he actually was."²⁰⁰ Some respondents noted significant personal change and commented on the transformative possibility inherent in wearing garb. Seamus O'Caelligh, who dresses in elaborate Elizabethan-era clothing, voiced the concept of multiple selves when he identified his separate public and secret selves. He said, "I actually feel more comfortable in my garb than in my regular clothes. I feel that [garb] allows you to be who you really are, not who

¹⁹⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aaron Duncan, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

¹⁹⁹ *Newb* is short for newbie and is used in reference to a new player in the Society.

²⁰⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Ayla Roth, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 09 Oct. 2016.

you should portray. It lets the better part of me, that was already there, out.”²⁰¹ As pointed out in the epigraph, for some men: Garb is freedom.

While men invoked love of history as the top reason for wearing garb, female respondents in Miller's study offered the “opportunity to assume another persona” as their primary reason for dressing in garb.²⁰² For many women, specific characteristics of a dress or the garb's shape play a role in selecting their persona. Johanna Trewpeny, O.P., explained her process for selecting her garb. “The time was determined by the sleeves. Yes, it was the SLEEVES. I went to the knowledgeable at Arts and Sciences and asked them, ‘WHEN [meaning, in what historical period] do I need to be to have long flowing sleeves?’”²⁰³ Once she had narrowed the time to the 1200s to 1400s, she selected the earlier because of her interest in archery; she figured 1200 was closer to Robin Hood's time. Other women are drawn to a period of time more by what they don't want to wear. A former princess of the Summits, Vestia Antonia Aurelia, was told that she “couldn't do Roman.” So, she explored the possibility of becoming a thirteenth-century German woman to connect with her family history; the clothes instantly put her off. “I looked at the clothes. Eff that. I didn't care what I ‘couldn't’ do—I was doing Roman: one sheet, two pins, a rope belt and I'm DONE with clothes.”²⁰⁴ Sometimes persona choice and garb choice are equally important. Magnhildr Geirsdottir noted that her garb played a huge role in her persona choice. “I love how well Viking garb suits the Pacific Northwest.

²⁰¹ Seamus O'Caelligh, Personal interview, 03 Sept. 2016.

²⁰² Miller's “Dressing for Fun and Fantasy Questionnaire.”

²⁰³ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Johanna Trewpeny, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

²⁰⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Vestia Antonia Aurelia, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

[But] the bigger reasons [for choosing a Viking persona] were the feminist aspects of Icelandic culture.”²⁰⁵ In some cases, players don't adopt the dress of a singular persona but prefer to be free to choose depending on the event setting, weather, and occasion. Aife inghean ui Callieg said her persona's identity doesn't affect her garb choices. Aife chose her persona to honor her heritage and selected the twelfth century because her favorite spelling of Aife is dated to then. But her garb stretches across a broad geography and span of time.

In that sense I am an ardent anachronist. My general camping outfits are a Norse apron dress (complete with brooches) and an Irish skirt/kirtle/chemise set. My fighting garb is a doublet modeled after a portrait of King Charles IX of France. My usual feasting outfit is a linen cotehardie and my ball gown is a Burgundian and truncated hennin.²⁰⁶ I'm also in the process of putting together a Roman outfit.²⁰⁷

Like most women I interviewed, Aife feels more feminine in her SCA garb. “When I wear my SCA garb, even the camping outfits, I feel beautiful, something I rarely feel in mundane clothes.”²⁰⁸ Rose Atherton notes a frequently expressed sense of grace that seems to be missing from most lived-world daily attire. “I feel more poised and elegant in my garb. I move differently and I feel like I have better posture.”²⁰⁹

Dissatisfaction with the body image expectations of the contemporary world

²⁰⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Magnhildr Geirsdottir, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²⁰⁶ A Burgundian is V-neck gown popular in the fifteenth century. A hennin is a cone-shaped headdress usually worn with a thin veil hanging from the top.

²⁰⁷ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aife inghean ui Callieg, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

²⁰⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aife inghean ui Callieg, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

²⁰⁹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Rose Atherton, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

forms a subtext for garb choice and the medieval persona. In modern daily life, a disconnection exists between the reality of body shapes and sizes and the commodified body image; women who do not fit into a narrow band of acceptable body size are frequently shamed and made to feel unfeminine. But, in the SCA, full-figured women are common and contribute to the general tableau. Historically, excess weight was a symbol of success, wealth, and power, and it was also believed that extra weight might help resist disease.²¹⁰ In fact, fashion often created a round shape where none existed, as is the case in Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini Portrait."²¹¹ Tessina Felice Gianfigliuzzi comments reflect the impact of that acceptance:

When I put on garb I feel beautiful. In modern life very little I wear makes me feel pretty. I have suffered with low self-esteem for much of my life. My size has always been one of the things that has defined me. In everyday life being a larger woman has left me feeling rather bad about myself. It wasn't until the SCA that I have ever really felt good in my skin.²¹²

In the SCA, men and women value themselves and each other in ways that contrast with the contemporary world; they focus on courtesy and knowledge of all things medieval more than the modern aesthetic of physical beauty. As a result, most of the women I interviewed expressed feeling more feminine and body confident in garb. Violante de Rosa said, "As a full figure woman I've always been self-conscious, but the garb somehow frees me from that. I put on that outfit and I can truly be myself, not what

²¹⁰ "The History of Obesity: Stone Age through the Renaissance," *SERMO* (24 June 2015).

²¹¹ An example of the value of the rounded female shape is discussed by Craig Harbison in "Sexuality and Social Standing in Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Double Portrait," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 43, No. 2, University of Chicago Press (Summer 1990).

²¹² Temperance Trewelove, comment by Tessina Felice Gianfigliuzzi, "Dress and its role in the SCA," *Facebook*, 10 Oct. 2016.

society dictates.”²¹³ Liberated from the narrow body type expectations of contemporary society, women in the SCA feel freer to make discoveries about themselves. Keterlin von dem Drachen describes her experimentation with different styles of garb as “a changing experience that took me from caterpillar to butterfly.”²¹⁴ She described growing up a tomboy who avoided wearing dresses. Eventually she discovered that she was choosing to make longer tunics. She likened the change to “stepping into a new room,” one in which she liked female garb better. Just as plus-sized women are marginalized by real-world society, so too are post-menopausal women who are de-sexed by youth-obsessed media, which rarely celebrate women's independence from the vagaries of the reproductive cycle. Yseult of Broceliande, O.L., O.P., said:

[S]ince menopause, I almost always wear slacks in the 21st century and I feel quite androgynous, but in 12th century garb, I'm a 'lady'—I become noble, aristocratic and hold myself appropriately I feel more feminine.²¹⁵

In interviews and on-line discussions, I heard over and over again, how garb made women feel more feminine. Upon further analysis, I discovered that women were reclaiming the term *femininity* from an external assessment of sexual desirability and passivity to an internal sense of power and self-satisfaction. Rose Atherton told me, “I definitely feel feminine I feel confident and attractive in clothing that I know was made precisely for me.”²¹⁶ Some participants, like Magnhildr Geirsdottir, articulated the

²¹³ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Violante de Rosa, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²¹⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Keterlin von dem Drachen, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²¹⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Yseult of Broceliande, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

differences they experience between the way they feel in everyday clothing and in garb. “I feel more body-confident in my garb BY FAR than I do in my mundane clothes, and the comfort, body confidence, and superiority of the fabrics and construction make me wish that I could wear my garb all the time without getting weird looks!”²¹⁷ The positive association participants have with their garb causes some to want to linger in their garb as long as possible. Johanna Trewpeny, O.P., said, “When I get ready for an event, I put on the garb as early as possible and only step back into modern clothes when I absolutely must - after I get home.”²¹⁸ Garb creates a plasticity of identity that biology does not provide.

Common Ground

For SCA participants, garb serves to distinguish the event territory as a transformational space, where the real world identity is left behind and individuals can take up their SCA personas. Garb allows people to escape from the “serious, work-oriented activity of everyday life in which business suits and other ‘no-nonsense’ clothes are expected to prevail.”²¹⁹ Cassandra Deveroux reflected, “As the years have passed and modern life has become more stressful or complicated, I find that putting on garb allows me to pause real life for awhile. I need a bit of time that isn't quite so grounded in reality.”²²⁰ Beyond an escape, garb encourages people to access and perform their secret,

²¹⁶ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Rose Atherton, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²¹⁷ Temperance Trewelove, Magnhildr Geirsdottir, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²¹⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Johanna Trewpeny, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 03 Oct. 2016.

²¹⁹ Fred Davis, *Fashion, Culture, and Identity* 40.

ideal, or aspirational selves, which can set them on the path toward becoming the kind of people they would like to be in their public lives. Magnhildr Geirsdottir said, “I feel like [garb] DOES help me fit in with the people I care about, and I feel like there's a great deal of subconscious romance involved in wearing garb that just makes me happy.”²²¹

Garb is imbued with meaning, both symbolic and narrative. It is the nexus between historical accuracy and fantasy, between femininity and masculinity, between a Viking persona and an Elizabethan one; in short, as Jana Maddalena di Palermo said, “When it comes to the SCA, garb is *everything!*”²²²

²²⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Cassandra Deveroux, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 04 Oct. 2016.

²²¹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Magnhildr Geirsdottir, “Dress and its role in the SCA,” *Facebook*, 30 Sept. 2016.

²²² Jana Maddalena di Palermo, Personal communication, 30 Sept. 2016.

CHAPTER IV

MORE THAN WORDS:

CEREMONY'S ROLE IN BUILDING COMMUNITY

I don't think most of us would BE in the SCA if we didn't like the courtesy and ritual and pomp to a certain extent. It's another, deeper way to supply meaning to our "fun" times and deepen the layers of memory and caring that we attach to an activity that we consider special. The more seriously we take the rituals, the more special the memory? Or maybe the more emotional content attached to the ritual, the more special it is?
--Sannan OneEyed²²³

In Need of Ritual

In 1966, amid the social and cultural chaos of the Vietnam War and the threat of a draft, with race riots and the dangers of cigarettes looming, and against a backdrop of increased hostilities with the Soviets in a race to land a man on the moon, a handful of college students in Berkeley sought to transform their environment.²²⁴ Unconsciously, they looked for stability. They quested for tradition and recalled the ideals embodied by King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. And, they formed the Society for Creative Anachronism. Reflecting on the creation of the SCA thirty years later, Countess Diana Listmaker, O.L. O.P. wrote:

The first Anachronists came from the leading edge of the Baby Boom. We grew up in the fifties, that triumph of plastic suburban culture, and we hated it. For the most part, no matter how hard we tried, or our parents pushed, we could not bring ourselves to truly conform. But in the

²²³ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Sannan OneEyed mka Sondra Miller-Prowett, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

²²⁴ Initially, the party that gave rise to the SCA would have to be characterized as a form of escape. However, it was not very long before they realized its potential. Many other people turned to television to escape from reality. Just as the party-goers were looking to chivalric tradition for inspiration, the television series "Batman" debuted offering simple moral lessons in every show. Other escapist fare included programs like "I Dream of Jeannie," "Bewitched," and "Gilligan's Island," which provided a counter-point to the nightly news ("The Relationship Between Television and Culture," *Culture and Media* Section 9.2, 2012).

sixties, the Civil Rights movement and the "New Society" heralded the possibility of change. When we gathered for the first Tournament, a catalytic reaction occurred. The moment was magic, and no one wanted it to end. And suddenly we realized that it did not have to—if we did not like the world we had been born into, we had the power to change it and create one of our own In the Current Middle Ages we have restored the relationship between the dreamer and the doer, between users and the things we use, between those who command and those who serve (whose roles may be reversed the next day) The spirit we have created here speaks [with] the voices of the ancestors whose skills we are trying to re-learn. In reconnecting with the things we use, and with each other, we restore our severed links with forests more ancient still.²²⁵

Little did the first participants know they would make their own history; the founders established traditions and grew into a society. Jean and John Comaroff point out that tradition, and more specifically ritual, “is always a vehicle of history-in-the-making: at times it conduces to sustain and legitimize the world in place; at times it has the effect of changing more-or-less pervasive features of that world; at times it does both simultaneously.”²²⁶ Because of the duality of ritual—it can create stability and concurrently accommodate transformation—it is an ideal method for personal and social transformation. The Society for Creative Anachronism embraces the potential of ritual. It creates an intentional space where formal social structures, traditions, and rituals promote community and enhance individual experience. While many elements of the Society contribute to its overall success, the ceremonies and rituals that occur in the most official, structured arena, court, are central. This chapter examines the ritual of court, especially its role in reinforcing community ties.

Court refers to the formal gatherings presided over by ceremonial leaders. “The primary activities of court include announcements, presentations and awards from the

²²⁵ Diana Listmaker, “The Seed and the Tree,” <www.currentmiddleages.org/3yc/seed>.

²²⁶ Jean and John Comaroff, Introduction, *Modernity and Its Malcontents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) xxix.

leaders to individuals in the group.”²²⁷ My examination of the SCA's court rituals and ceremonies combines several levels of analysis. It considers the physical boundaries of constructed ritual spaces and the performative markers of rites, identifies and analyzes the social structure addressed by the rites—including an examination of the power structure—and considers the value of the practices to the Society as a whole. Though often the words *ritual* and *ceremony* are used interchangeably, they can be viewed as a spectrum. Purely personal meaning and transformation lie on one end—deeply embedded in rites and ritual—and community meaning and social affirmation lie on the other end, with ceremony. In this context, ceremony most definitely requires a public performance—an audience—while ritual can be performed for and by the individual alone. The crucial difference between the two is the target audience and the purpose of the practice. As I am defining it, ritual functions primarily to transform the individual, while ceremony reinforces the community.²²⁸ However, all rites are some combination of both ritual and ceremony and, as such, the terms remain interchangeable. Here, ceremony's effect on the individual will be considered primarily in the context of community; in Chapter V, greater attention will be paid to the ability of ritual to transform the individual.

²²⁷ Hirsch von Henford has compiled a list of terminology used in the SCA. “Court,” *An Unofficial Glossary of Terms as Used in the SCA*, <goldenstag.net>.

²²⁸ Victor Turner draws a distinction between ritual and ceremony. He wrote, “I consider the term ‘ritual’ to be more fittingly applied to forms of religious behavior associated with social transitions, while the term ‘ceremony’ has a closer bearing on religious behavior associated with social states, where politico-legal institutions also have greater importance. Ritual is transformative, ceremony confirmatory” (“Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites De Passage*”) 47.

Performance Studies as an Orientation to Analysis

Richard Schechner identifies performances as actions that can be analyzed in four ways: behavior as an object of study, performance as artistic practice, performance as participant observation, and performance as advocacy.²²⁹ I will consider SCA performances as a participant observer. Schechner suggests that because performance is so varied scholars may employ a wide range of disciplines and their theories and I have done so. Initially, my analysis of SCA ceremonies and rites drew on Victor Turner's ideas about liminality and Erving Goffman's theory of performance as a tool of social communication. In Chapter III, I considered more closely the role of dress in per/forming identity. I thought about the signs involved in performing an identity; my theoretical tools expanded to include semiotics. Yet, as I considered how to discuss ritual in this chapter and in Chapter V, none of the theories adequately accounted for the emotional responses displayed by onlookers during SCA rituals and ceremonies.

The idea advanced by Émile Durkheim that rites and ceremonies create opportunities for the social group to assemble and be emotionally stirred came nearest to explaining the emotional responses of participants, but his ideas were centered on religion and the sacred, which did not apply to the SCA. Durkheim posited that on these religious occasions, individuals felt connected to others, and they experienced something larger than themselves. Their social order was ratified; people felt like a part of a community.²³⁰ Like the communities in Durkheim's analysis, participants in the SCA

²²⁹ Richard Schechner introduces readers to the concept of performance studies in his article "What is Performance Studies?" in a special issue on Performance Studies, *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities* Vol. V, No. 2 (2013): 2.

²³⁰ In *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York, Oxford UP, 1977), Catherine Bell discusses Émile Durkheim's ideas in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 24.

generally experience a strong sense of community and often form close bonds with those with whom they regularly interact. When an individual from the group is acknowledged in court, unsurprisingly, some group members display emotion in celebration of their friend's recognition. However, I had no clear explanation of why onlookers exhibit similar displays of emotion when they have no real familiarity with the award recipient. Then, I encountered Jonathan Haidt and Sara Algoe's research on cognitive appraisal theory of emotion. This psychological theory has provided insight into understanding how SCA ceremonies function with regard to reinforcing the community.

Cognitive Appraisal Theory of Emotion

The way cognitive appraisal theory works is that a person encounters a stimulus, like being given recognition in court. Then, five components of appraisal follow: *motivational state*, *situational state*, *probability*, *power*, and *agency*. The *motivational state* appraisal determines "whether the event includes an important aspect that is perceived as a goal or some aspect that is perceived as a punishment."²³¹ When people are being recognized in court for their hard work, the motivational appraisal should be viewed as desirable (appetitive as opposed to aversive). The *situational state* "determines whether the desirable or undesirable quality of the event is present or absent."²³² Both the presence of a desirable agent and the absence of an undesirable agent present as *motive-consistent*, meaning the experience will generally be positive. For example, "Joy includes

²³¹ Gregory Johnson, "Theories of Emotion," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

²³² Gregory Johnson, "Theories of Emotion," *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

the appraisal that a desirable state is present.”²³³ So, in the case of the individual receiving recognition in court, the desirable agent is present or motive-consistent and the individual is primed to experience positive emotions.

		Motive-Consistent		Motive-Inconsistent		
		Appetitive	Aversive	Appetitive	Aversive	← <i>situational state</i>
						← <i>motivational state</i>
Circumstance-Caused	Unknown	Surprise				
	Uncertain	Hope		Fear		
	Certain	Joy	Relief	Sorrow	Discomfort, Disgust	Weak
	Uncertain	Hope		Frustration		Strong
	Certain	Joy	Relief			
Other-Caused	Uncertain	Liking		Disliking		Weak
	Certain			Anger		Strong
	Uncertain					
	Certain					
Self-Caused	Uncertain	Pride		Shame, Guilt		Weak
	Certain			Regret		Strong
	Uncertain					
	Certain					

↑
agency
↑
probability
↑
power

Figure 12. “Cognitive Appraisal Theory.” The arrows point to the different values that each appraisal component can take. Each emotion type takes the values that its placement in the chart indicates. When the emotion is placed such that it lines up with more than one value for an appraisal component (e.g., anger can be uncertain or certain), any of those values can be assigned for that emotion. Adapted from Ira J Roseman. “Cognitive Determinants of Emotion: A Structural Theory.” *Review of Personality & Social Psychology* Vol. 5 (1984) 31.

Next, “the *probability* component evaluates whether an event is definite (certain), only possible (uncertain), or, [if the situational state cannot be determined], of an unknown probability.”²³⁴ If the probability from the previous example were uncertain, then hope

²³³ Gregory Johnson, “Theories of Emotion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

²³⁴ Gregory Johnson, “Theories of Emotion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

would take the place of joy. In the case of the award recipient, he or she is definitely being recognized and so feels joy, liking, or pride. The next component is *power*, which “is the individual’s perception of his or her strength or weakness in a situation.”²³⁵ The final component is agency. “An evaluation is made about whether the event was caused by the individual, caused by some other person, or is merely a result of the situation (that is, the event is perceived as lacking an agent).”²³⁶ The whole process is unconscious, but elicits an emotional response that is marked by feelings associated with an emotion, a pattern of bodily response, expressions that communicate to others the emotion being felt, some sort of action, and determining a goal related to the emotions.²³⁷ This emotional theory framework can be extended and applied to those who observe acts of kindness, moral excellence, generosity, or supreme skill. Witnessing these acts generates what Haidt and Algoe identified as *other-praising* emotions: elevation, gratitude, and admiration.²³⁸ These three emotions are precisely those demonstrated by audience members at an SCA court. I believe they are principally responsible for the close community of the SCA.

A feeling of elevation comes as a response to observing a display of moral excellence. It “motivates prosocial and affiliative behavior Elevation is elicited by

²³⁵ Gregory Johnson, “Theories of Emotion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

²³⁶ Gregory Johnson, “Theories of Emotion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

²³⁷ Gregory Johnson, “Theories of Emotion,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Drexel University, <www.iep.utm.edu/emotion>.

²³⁸ Sara Algoe and Jonathan Haidt detail three experiments that demonstrate that the other-praising emotions exist and are separate from other positive emotions like joy and happiness (“Witnessing Excellence in Action: the ‘Other-Praising’ Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration” Author Manuscript, *Journal of Positive Psychology* 4.2, 2009): 1.

acts of charity, gratitude, fidelity, generosity, or any other strong display of virtue.²³⁹ Essentially, the principal values espoused by SCA participants—of courtesy, generosity, and honor—are hard-wired to create community. Algoe and Haidt observed that people experiencing feelings of elevation were conscious of an opening of the chest and sensed they had been uplifted. The resultant behavior prompted by the feeling of elevation is increased motivation to act in a charitable or generous manner. Basically, people who witness a good deed feel enriched by the deed—even though the deed did not benefit them directly—and are motivated to do good deeds themselves. Within the relative closeness of the Society, which expressly promotes generosity and hospitality, such munificence should be, and—from personal experience—is, frequent.

A feeling of gratitude is evoked when one person is the recipient of another person's positive actions. Algoe and Haidt were clear that gratitude did not seem to be a kind of economic exchange or quid pro quo. Feelings of gratitude are shaped by the degree of thoughtfulness of the act—did the benefactor consider the recipient's wants and needs?—and whether the action that prompted the feeling of gratitude was liked or not liked. The response to experiencing a feeling of gratitude is not only a desire to repay the favor but also an increased sense of loyalty to the benefactor and a desire to spend more time with him or her. In Algoe and Haidt's research, the positive relationship benefit created by the kindness remained a month after the initial stimulus.²⁴⁰ The implications for creating strong bonds among individuals in the Society are clear. The generosity,

²³⁹ Algoe and Haidt "Witnessing Excellence in Action: the 'Other-Praising' Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration" 1.

²⁴⁰ Algoe and Haidt, "Witnessing Excellence in Action: the 'Other-Praising' Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration" 3.

which characterizes the SCA and was touched on in Chapter III with regard to dressing royalty, promotes positive relations and closer bonds between individuals.

The third feeling, admiration is a response to “extraordinary displays of skill, talent, or achievement,”²⁴¹ Terms associated with admiration are “appreciation, awe, esteem, and respect.”²⁴² Admiration inspires individuals to want to excel in their own endeavors. Related to admiration is the idea of prestige. Individuals who excel at any culturally valued skill can be a resource for others and will acquire followers or students. In the Society, the peerages recognize prestige; peers take on students and squires and share knowledge with them. Generally, all three emotions: elevation, gratitude, and admiration, build relationships and skills. Additionally, in Algoe and Haidt's experiments, people experiencing any of the three other-praising emotions were more aware of positive qualities in others and were more likely to express respect for others. Algoe and Haidt noted that because all three other-praising emotions were focused on others, people seemed generally more open. They concluded: “Witnessing and interacting with excellent individuals can create opportunities for enrichment of the self and society.”²⁴³ The rituals of the SCA generate other-praising emotion, which serves to create community.

²⁴¹ Algoe and Haidt, “Witnessing Excellence in Action: the ‘Other-Praising’ Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration” 3.

²⁴² Algoe and Haidt, “Witnessing Excellence in Action: the ‘Other-Praising’ Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration” 3-4.

²⁴³ Algoe and Haidt, “Witnessing Excellence in Action: the ‘Other-Praising’ Emotions of Elevation, Gratitude, and Admiration” 24.

The Function of Court

The chief area to witness the recognition of others is court. Ceremony, particularly court ceremony, is a shared institution among SCA participants. The customs and beliefs of the Society are enacted in each court. This may be one reason why people who rarely participate in court are sometimes viewed as marginal or fringe players.²⁴⁴ Durkheim wrote, “[T]here can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality.”²⁴⁵ Court, a centerpiece of most SCA events, upholds and reaffirms collective sentiments and ideas, which unify the participants. Court, at any level, serves as the sanctioned ceremonial aspect of the Society for Creative Anachronism. Officially, it functions as a setting in which to conduct ceremonies, to confer awards, and to create opportunity for the populace to interact with the royalty. Unofficially, a court's purpose is to transport participants. Fionn MacKonell, a herald²⁴⁶ in the Kingdom of Atlantia,²⁴⁷ said, “Court is the most splendor-filled thing that we do in the S.C.A. Like nothing else, it brings us closer to the feeling of pageantry that most of us

²⁴⁴ *Fringies*, or participants who are metaphorically located at the border of the Society's boundaries, are discussed in Chapter III. In general, they are more ludic and less historical in their dress. They often eschew the formal trappings of the SCA and engage more fully in the social aspects of camping with friends. They are rarely found at court.

²⁴⁵ Émile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912) quoted in Catherine Bell *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (1977) 83.

²⁴⁶ A herald is a person who is trained in one or more areas as defined by the College of Heralds. The areas of heraldry include field heralds, court heralds, and submissions or arms heralds. The first—the field heralds—make announcements on combat fields. Court heralds function as the master of ceremonies for court. Arms or submissions heralds are in charge of consulting on and registering names and arms or devices (Hirsch von Henford, “An Unofficial Glossary of Terms As Used in the SCA,” *Society for Creative Anachronism*, 2015).

²⁴⁷ The Kingdom of Atlantia encompasses all of Maryland, the District of Columbia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and a small portion of Georgia.

associate with the times that we are attempting to emulate. Court is (or at least can be) one of the ultimate 'suspensions of reality' that this recreation of ours offers us."²⁴⁸ Court creates a connection with an imagined historic past and serves as a frame for ritual performance where the Society's most sacred values are enacted. Many factors contribute to the structure of court performance. The goals of the participants, the competence of the performers to focus the audience's attention and enhance their experience, the setting, the text, the sequence of business, the social structure, the event structure, and the ground rules of performance—the cultural themes and the interactional organizing principles—all influence one another.²⁴⁹ These terms will be discussed in general and then analyzed through the lens of a single event, Coronation.

Court is a constructed ritual space, which is centered on the thrones. In fact, the thrones are so much a part of the Royal Presence that when people pass within ten feet of them, even if the sovereigns are not present, they are expected to bow as if the thrones were occupied, much like an altar. Every kingdom, principality, and barony has its own set of thrones.²⁵⁰ The rest of the court configuration depends on the purpose of the event. Court occupies a position of prominence in any event's schedule. In fact, some events—like investitures and coronations—must be structured around multiple courts. When

²⁴⁸ Fionn MacKonell mka Richard Coleman, "Philosophy of Court Heraldry," *Atlantian Herald's Handbook* (2013) reprinted with permission on-line at <www.heraldry.sca.org>.

²⁴⁹ Richard Bauman, "Verbal Art As Performance," *American Anthropologist* 77.2 (1975): 299-302.

²⁵⁰ In fact, the Kingdom of An Tir and the Principality of the Summits have several sets. The lighter, more portable sets are referred to as the travel thrones. The thrones often demonstrate significant craftsmanship. Before the last set of thrones were retired, the Crown invited bids for the constructions of new thrones. Among the stated requirements were the expectations that: "The new thrones SHOULD represent the might and majesty of An Tir, and when displayed among other thrones of the Known World, be recognizable as the Kingdom of An Tir . . . There SHOULD be some level of historical authenticity in design; however, a fully authentic design may not be feasible . . . The new thrones MAY utilize components of former thrones incorporated into the design and construction for nostalgic purposes" (Charles de Bourbon, "New An Tir Thrones," *Facebook*, 3 May 2016).

events are planned, a schedule is proposed to the sitting royals or their representatives, whoever will be presiding over court; they have the power to adjust the schedule and will arrange it to feature a court that best fulfills the needs of the event as they perceive them. For example, a morning court is generally held for coronet and crown tournaments—during that time little else is scheduled—so that everyone's attention is focused squarely on the combatants. This arrangement holds the fighters accountable to the royalty and the assembly, thereby affirming the central purpose of the event—to find the next sovereign—and placing importance on witnessing the competition.

The processional court for crown and coronet tournaments is a spectacle. Period pavilions and banners surround the list field, or area of combat. The royal pavilions hold positions of honor, arrayed as they are along one side. Lines of people gather for the processional, which is one of the most authentically medieval performances in the SCA.²⁵¹ Historically, processionals called attention to social structure. They served to distinguish the classes—a potential divisive force—but they “almost always accompanied civic ritual and festival”²⁵²—and so could be a force for “social harmony.”²⁵³ In the SCA, the processional of combatants and their inspirations²⁵⁴ along with accompanying

²⁵¹ The many different kinds of medieval processionals and their varied purposes are detailed in *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994).

²⁵² Eds. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken, *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* 9.

²⁵³ Eds. Kathleen Ashley and Wim Hüsken, *Moving Subjects: Processional Performance in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* 7.

²⁵⁴ An *inspiration* is a person whose honor the fighter is hoping to advance. Some inspiration and fighter pairs are romantic couples, but an inspiration can be a friend, a family member, or just another person whose conduct the fighter admires. The inspiration's role is to support the fighter and hold the fighter to the highest standards of conduct.

attendants²⁵⁵ serves much the same function. After the King and Queen have been seated, the processional begins. It includes: the Royal Guard, musicians, representatives of territorial branches—princes and princesses, barons and baronesses, shires, cantons, strongholds—and combatants and their consorts in *Order of Precedence*,²⁵⁶ a ranked order, with the highest-ranking individuals coming first.



Figure 13. May Crown Processional. Photo by Ylva Annarsdottir/Lisa Jacobsen, 2017.

Performance and Power

All combatants, in full pageantry, enter a large central aisle and are identified by name,²⁵⁷ greeted by the monarchs, seek permission to compete, and offer oaths during the

²⁵⁵ Attendants often include a personal herald, family, standard bearers, or members of a shared household. They process in with the fighter and inspiration as a sign of support and as a display of influence.

²⁵⁶ The Order of Precedence is the relative ranking of awards within the SCA. The ranking simulates rigid medieval social hierarchies. The Order of Precedence is a means of tracking where someone ranks in relation to everyone else. Ranks are achieved. Royal peers hold the highest ranks, even after stepping down. In An Tir, a small Order referred to as the Lions of An Tir, appears first in processions immediately following all sitting royals.

invocation of the list.²⁵⁸ Potential combatants must meet certain requirements and be acceptable to the reigning monarchs in order to participate in the tournaments. It is unusual for any participant to be publicly refused, but, during the Crown Processional in 2011 under King Thorfin and Queen Dagmar, three same-sex couples presented themselves as combatant and inspiration pairs and were refused. The act was political theater conducted in order to raise awareness of the Inspirational Equality issue. The request and refusal performance used the platform of the processional to raise awareness about discrimination within the Society; it was the second step in the Inspirational Equality struggle. The previous September, in their Crown Contenders Court, Their Majesties Tiernan and Miranda received a presentation from two well respected peers, Eduardo Maria Lucrezia O.L. and Ariel de Courteney O.L., of a petition that requested permission for same-sex couples to enter crown lists in future tournaments. Their Majesties accepted the petition and agreed to pass it on to their successors and to the Board of Directors of the Society. Eduardo and Ariel used a traditional form of address—a court petition—to contest the limited opportunities represented by the very same structure they were contesting. In essence, the peers who made the initial petition, and those that participated in the request and refusal performance used their standing in the Society to change the balance of power and ultimately the rules. The transformative potential of the Society for Creative Anachronism is demonstrated by their slogan:

“O, in futurum gradum faciat praeteritus antequam praesentem.”

“Oh, to have the past step into the future before the present.”

²⁵⁷ Some combatants speak their own words of introduction; otherwise, a herald will announce the combatant and consort.

²⁵⁸ The invocation requires fighters to swear that they are able to abide by the rules of the lists, have a consort, and will swear fealty to the Crown. Coronet tournaments determine the rulers of principalities. Crown tournaments determine the sovereigns for kingdoms.

The petition and the request contributed to changes in Society law, which now grants permission for same-sex pairings at the discretion of the Crown.

Once fighters and their *consorts*, the partner who will serve beside the fighter during a reign,²⁵⁹—also known as inspirations—have presented themselves, the king gestures either to his right for knights and their inspirations or to the left for all other fighters and their consorts, thereby forming two lines.



Figure 14. At May Crown 2017, fighters and inspirations listen to Her Majesty Stjarna talk about the importance of chivalry. Photo by Ylva Annarsdottir/Lisa Jacobsen, 2017.

The division of *belted* and *unbelted* fighters²⁶⁰ is another status marker, but this specifically identifies excellence in the realm of combat whereas in the Order of

²⁵⁹ The term *consort*, which refers to the person whose favor the fighter is advancing, is mostly synonymous with *inspiration* and is used interchangeably with one exception. When fighting in a Crown or Coronet, a fighter must have a consort to become a co-ruler should the fighter win. With very few exceptions, the consort must be present at the Crown or Coronet tournament in order for the fighter to be permitted to compete.

Precedence fighters may be highly ranked for other kinds of achievement or by the status of their consort. The two-line orientation causes all fighters to face inward, looking at the other fighters and at the sovereigns who stand between. The non-fighting audience surrounds the lines, momentarily excluded from the action of court, but still able to watch. In this formation, the sovereigns deliver messages about the importance of chivalry and honorable combat, and oaths are made. Then, since there are far fewer knights than unbelted fighters, the sovereigns even up the lines. They walk down the left side and invite fighters across to the knights' side until the lines are even. Being selected to cross to the knights' side is an incredible honor and often speaks to the individual's quality as a fighter—singling the individual out as noteworthy.

The final use of this court space configuration is *The Challenge*. Unbelted fighters, one at a time, cross over the aisle space to request a fight from one of the fighters on the knights' side. This ritual selection of opponents addresses both the social structure of the SCA and the rules for interaction. Since fighters enter in rank order, the earliest in the lines on either side—and the closest to the sovereigns—should have the highest rank, which often means they have the greatest proficiency in combat. The challenging fighter feels pressure to choose well. By custom, a challenging fighter should choose the highest ranked fighter on the knights' side with the idea that the knight might be able to help the challenger grow as a fighter and the knight may simultaneously gauge the fighter's prowess, which could advance the challenger on his or her quest for

²⁶⁰ The term *unbelted* refers to the absence of a knight's white belt. The white belt, which is protected regalia worn only by knights—the *belted*—is then a sign for excellence against which all others are compared.

knighthood.²⁶¹ However, the tournaments are generally double-elimination and the first fight is often the first loss for the challenger. So, challengers must balance their desire to be victorious with the expectation that they choose a highly ranked fighter. Fighters who don't choose from the highest ranks might be viewed as prioritizing victory over honor and might be criticized. However, challengers are not the only ones being critiqued. If a highly ranked knight is continually not selected during the challenge round, it is a comment about the knight as an unsatisfying adversary; usually that means that the knight does not *acknowledge*, accept as lethal, his opponents' blows, derisively called rhino-hiding.²⁶² In one Coronet tournament, a high-ranking knight was by-passed by all challengers until there was only one challenger left. The slight to the knight was a clear expression of his reputation for being unwilling to be killed. The public nature of the challenge provides participants and audience alike with clues as to the combatants' social status and the respect accorded them.

In courts focused on recognition, the arrangement is still centered on the thrones, but the audience is positioned in long rows facing the thrones, not unlike pews facing an altar.²⁶³ There is still a central aisle, though often only wide enough for two or three people to walk shoulder to shoulder. The first row of the audience is usually relatively close to the monarchs, on average set away fifteen to twenty feet. More intimate courts, such as at smaller shire or baronial events, tend to have less space between the monarchs and the audience. Sometimes the royals will invite the audience to move closer or even

²⁶¹ There are some acceptable reasons not to choose the highest ranked knight. For example if the natural pairing would pit a squire against his or her knight, it is acceptable for a squire to choose a different opponent.

²⁶² See Chapter II for a description of rhino-hiding and the rules of Society combat.

²⁶³ Traditionally in the West Kingdom, the audience faces the aisle.

under the royal pavilion; this is especially true when the sun is overwhelming and the audience is not in the shade. In An Tir, court is generally arranged to give the greatest number of people an opportunity to hear the heralds' and sovereigns' words. This orientation puts all the focus on the interaction between those people called before the court and the royals, which serves the purpose of calling attention to the actions and behaviors that are prized by the Society. Generally recognition is for dedication to service, skill in combat, skill in arts and sciences, and demonstration of the values espoused by the SCA such as courtesy. Because more people can hear and see such acknowledgments of virtue and skill, the possibility for creating the elevation and admiration emotions described by Algoe and Haidt increases.

Court Ritual

The physical arrangement of court space establishes a ceremonial frame.²⁶⁴ However, it is the voice of the herald that proclaims the beginning of court. The cry of the herald serves to get the populace ready to listen and establishes the grandeur of the occasion; it signals a ritual performance. The opening of court is one tool for building a feeling of community. Annábla “Nai” Martyn said:

I love that moment when the royals are arriving in court. Everyone stands and bows. So often throughout the event this level of respect is put on the back burner or missed. But in that moment, we are all united in a true moment of awe, wonder, chivalry and respect for the game, for the people, and for the role they fill.²⁶⁵

The first court of an event often includes a processional, but not always depending on the

²⁶⁴ In this usage of the term *frame*, it is not a material boundary. Rather, it is a message that communicates that something different or special is going to occur in the space. Analyzing the framing of a ritual can provide insight into the social structure and may hint at how power is negotiated. Simon Bronner discusses framing in “Framing Folklore,” *Western Folklore*, Vol. 69, No. 3/4 (2010): 275-6.

²⁶⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Nai Martyn mka Brandy Pickle-Chambers, “Favorite SCA Ritual,” *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

business of that court. Generally, one processional a day is enough. However, if other royals arrive after the first court or if a later court involves a particularly ceremonial order of business, a second processional may occur. A processional often signals the importance of the court and its business. Formal court, as opposed to announcement court,²⁶⁶ usually includes a processional. “The purpose of the procession is to let everyone get a close-up look at their Sovereigns and, in effect, introduce Them”²⁶⁷ If the highest ranked rulers present want to *process*, walk in a processional, all others will also process. Though the herald's formulaic words vary somewhat, they all include a call to the populace to assemble before the royals arrive for the processional. The ritualized language invokes the respect that is due to sovereign powers. In Kingdom court, the herald will call, “All rise for Their Majesties ____ and ____, King and Queen of An Tir.” Once the royals are settled (the populace remains standing), Their Majesties will invite other royals into Their court. Each is announced and the populace pays their respect as they did with Their Majesties, by bowing. After all the invited royals have been announced and are settled before their respective thrones, The Majesties usually tell the herald to announce that the populace can sit. “You have Their Majesties' leave to be seated” or “You have Their Majesties' leave to make yourselves comfortable.”

If there is no processional, the royalty just informally take their seats; this is called

²⁶⁶ Law changes must be read in court. This is one of the few times when the corporate side of the SCA is apparent, though it masks as royal decree. Occasionally, when the changes are lengthy or numerous, a special court is held so that only those interested in hearing the law changes need attend. Often these courts are less performance oriented and the laws are just read. However, sometimes, if there aren't too many law changes or if there is no other suitable occasion and the laws must be read, the royals call upon people to interpret the laws as they are read. This produces an entertaining mix of pantomime and facial expression. These ludic interpretations signal a tension between the performed SCA and the legal and business aspects of the Society.

²⁶⁷ William the Lucky, “How to Start and End a Court,” *Ceremony Book of the Kingdom of the West* (2008) A9.

poofing, as in “Poof, you are magically present.” Then the herald begins court. “Thus begins the court of _____ and _____” or “Hear the words of _____.” By custom, the populace rise and remain standing until the monarchs have offered opening words and the people are invited to sit as before. The formality of the occasion and the general feeling the monarchs have for the desire of the populace dictates whether the royals enter with a processional or poof. The former is far more dramatic.

In addition to signaling the beginning and ending of court, the herald serves as a sort of master of ceremonies. The herald guides the action—essentially prescribing the action so it is performed in the proper way—but is not supposed to be the center of attention. Heralds know all the business that will be conducted in court that day. They propose a court schedule to the royals that keeps business moving, hold the audience's interest, and build toward a climax. For example, if there are multiple announcements, they should be broken up. If a person's name is called and he or she is not there, court should continue and can pick up with that recognition when the individual arrives. Heralds have a ceremonial book, which includes the royals' choice of wording for each award or ceremony. There are several versions—with slight variations in style—for each award, and the sovereigns can alter the scripts to add their own flair. In this way, room exists for personalizing the language of ceremonies while keeping them identifiable. Some monarchs provide the herald with a notebook of court business with ceremonial language included for each item. This saves time, as the herald does not have to flip pages to find the correct ceremony.²⁶⁸ When audience members hear the herald's words announcing the recognition for an individual, they often see if they can guess the award

²⁶⁸ Saving time whenever it is possible is appreciated. An Tir courts have a reputation for being extremely long. It is not unusual to sit in court for several hours. Some courts, like Coronation, stretch to five hours.

based on the language of the announcement. The repetition of ritual language, which makes this guessing game possible, demonstrates the inscription on the community's psyche of the values highlighted by the award. After an award is given, the recipient—who may be moved to action by emotion—often hugs the royals. During this time, the herald prompts the audience to cheer for the award recipients, even if cheers have already gone up spontaneously. Typically, the herald will call for three cheers or a joyous noise. The cheers provide time for award recipients to recover from the surprise and exit from the royal presence. The greatest challenge for a herald is pronouncing unfamiliar names, which are drawn from a wide variety of cultures. A good herald will find out the correct pronunciation ahead of time and write it down phonetically. The skill displayed by the herald and the tone he or she establishes is important in setting the mood for the court as a whole.

Just as the herald's invocation marks the beginning of court, the herald also calls for a concluding cheer. Aifé inghean ui Callieg identifies the ending chant as particularly powerful. "At the end of court when the herald leads the populace in calling out the branch names starting with the local branch and going up to Kingdom, each time increasing the number of repetitions, it's almost cathartic, shouting all together the names of the places we love."²⁶⁹ Nai adds, "I second this ritual [as a favorite] as well. This moment stirs the passion in all present as well as those in the distance. Even a newcomer can get swept up in this ritual and feel its power and wonder."²⁷⁰ In the Principality of the

²⁶⁹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Aifé inghean ui Callieg mka Emily Paige Taylor, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

²⁷⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Annábla Martyn mka Brandy Pickle-Chambers, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

Summits, the closing language names the host area once, the Principality twice, and the Kingdom three times. For example, “Corvaria! “Summits! Summits! An Tir! An Tir! An Tir!” The third “An Tir” cheer is stressed, drawn out somewhat, and loudest. At kingdom level, when all business is done, the herald signals the completion of court by saying, “There being no further business before this court” or “Thus concludes the court of ____.” In An Tir, the closing of court is signaled by a specific cheer: “Thrice sound the name of An Tir,” to which people respond with: “An Tir! An Tir! An Tir!” A skilled herald conducts a successful performance of court, culminating in the emotional release heard in the chorus-like cheer, which demonstrates the power of even a seemingly unimportant act to build community. The herald’s performance provides a frame for understanding the event, just as the setting does. The archaic language, announcements of beginning and ending action, and the use of distinctive phrases guide the audience’s response.²⁷¹

The Role of Corpora: SCA Incorporated

The herald focuses attention on the monarchs and their interactions with the populace through the arrangement of space and the establishment of a ceremonial frame. The relationship between the monarchs and the populace provides insight into the social and behavioral roles of the Society. The official, and seemingly most important, role of the monarch is to govern. By all appearances, the power of the monarchy is absolute. Monarchs decide who receives recognition, they approve proposals for events, they can even banish a person from their presence—making it impossible for that person to be at

²⁷¹ Erving Goffman uses the term *keying* to describe “the utterances or actions that signal the meaning of interaction to participants” (“Mini-guide to Goffman’s Frame Analysis,” <http://mnissen.psy.ku.dk/Undervisning/soejle/miniguide_to_goffman.htm>).

any event they attend during their reign. However, an understanding of the structure of the business side of the SCA demonstrates that the real value of the monarchs is in their interactions with the participants, not in absolute authority. The structure of the Society provides for long-term governance. The Society has a Board of Directors (BoD) whose job is overseeing the entirety of the SCA's activities.²⁷² The BoD focuses on the organization's mission, strategy, and goals, and it handles serious disciplinary issues. In addition to the BoD, the Society has officers that provide a business structure, which is replicated in each kingdom. These positions include: Seneschal, the administrative head, who is in charge of all legal paperwork; Chatelaine, who serves as the organization's recruiting arm; Chancellor of the Exchequer, the treasurer, who insures that the SCA maintains practices in compliance with its non-profit status; Chronicler/Librarian/Archivist, who maintains a historical record of sorts by producing a newsletter; Webminister, who oversees all electronic publications of the SCA and maintains the Society's website; Laurel Sovereign of Arms, the chief heraldic officer, in charge of heraldic activities like name and arms submissions;²⁷³ Marshal, the combat supervisor and administrator for the paperwork involved in authorizing people to compete in all martial activities; deputy marshals specialized in different kinds of martial arts, who report to the Marshal; Minister of Arts and Sciences, the coordinator for classes and demonstrations that help fulfill the educational mission of the Society—which is to

²⁷² The Board maintains the long-term vision. In contrast to a monarch's rule which lasts from three to six months—depending on the kingdom—each Board of Director's term is three-and-one-half years.

²⁷³ The College of Heralds registers the armory of participants. The Laurel Sovereign of Arms evaluates each submission to ensure that it is period, does not conflict with other registered items, and is not presumptuous or offensive.

“enable people to learn skills that would have been practiced in period”²⁷⁴; and Minister of Youth, who arranges for activities to engage the Society's youth with historically appropriate pastimes. Each of these Society officers has a counterpart in every kingdom, principality, barony, shire, and canton. Each plays a role in supporting the appearance of the monarch as being all-powerful. Though the structure generally promotes consistency and unity of purpose, a dichotomy exists between the BoD and the monarchs; differences of opinion have occasionally led to friction. In one sense, the BoD as the head of the SCA Corporation can be viewed as the power center of the SCA, but that view fails to recognize the importance of the fantasy of recreating a monarchy and the energy of the people; that is where the real power of the SCA lies.

The Role of the Sovereigns

The Society's monarchs are fundamental in the success of the SCA. They serve as the intersection of history and fantasy. Both their interactions with the populace and their distance from the populace contribute to the mystique of the royal personae.²⁷⁵ Among royalty, it is often said, “You rule because they [the populace] believe.”²⁷⁶ While the official role of the sovereign is to govern, the unofficial role is to be models of idealized conduct, exhibiting courtesy and magnanimity, and to interact with and inspire the populace to want to participate. The actions of the sovereigns are orchestrated to create

²⁷⁴ The educational mission is described in many SCA documents. This description is from the *Chancellor of the Exchequer Handbook* (2017) <www.sca.org/pdf/exchequerhandbook.pdf>.

²⁷⁵ Etiquette dictates a ten-foot area around the Royal Person. People should bow when they get approach that space and should rise if seated when the royal gets within ten feet. “The Royal Person should never be alone when in public” (Duchess Mary-Grace of Gatland, “Top 10 Tips for being a Lady-in-Waiting or a Guard to SCA Royalty,” *Stefan's Florilegium*, 2010).

²⁷⁶ The inscription is actually cast into His Majesty of Caid's crown (“Crowns,” SCA History Trivia, <middlewiki.midreal.org>, 2008). Caid is the sixth kingdom created in the SCA. Its boundaries include Southern California, Southern Nevada and Hawaii.

the other-praising emotions in others. Good rulers must inspire the populace and that can only be done with personal contact; that means monarchs travel extensively. Kingdom and Principality laws only require monarchs to attend four specific events: the Crown or Coronet tournament at which they were victorious, their Coronation or Investiture, the tournament at which their successor will be determined, and the Coronation or Investiture of their successors. However, from the moment Crown or Coronet victors are identified, they begin to develop their *royal-progress*: the tour of their kingdom or principality, respectively, with their retinue and entourage. Monarchs will be judged, in part, by the extent of their travel and efforts to be present in every corner of their lands. In fact, so clear is the expectation that sovereigns travel that monies are allotted to royals to help defray the cost of their journeys.²⁷⁷ Considering the difference between a monarch's attendance at only the required events and a monarch's actual attendance at events illustrates the importance of this unofficial role, which prioritizes interacting with the populace. In the nine months I served as Tanista and then Princess of the Summits, we took only 1 weekend off from events, the weekend our son was graduating. Though not articulated or required, this level of commitment is expected and contributes to the impression that a reign was successful.

The monarchs are the focal point of the SCA and never more so than during court. Royals are easily identified by their location at the center of court and by their crowns or coronets. Metonymically, they become the Crown or Coronet; they are symbols. Court orchestrates the sensory experiences associated with being in the presence of the Crown

²⁷⁷ In the Kingdom of An Tir and in the Principality of the Summits, rules govern how much money and for what events travel funds may be accessed. The Coronet may only access 50% of the balance available on the first day of their reign and is expected to solicit contributions to the fund in order to augment it.

or Coronet and “embed[s] their allied ideological values into people’s consciousnesses (sic), endowing the ideological with sensory power and the sensory with moral power.”²⁷⁸

In other words, the values represented by the Crown and Coronet—of loyalty, honor, generosity, courtesy, courage, truthfulness, ability to keep one’s word, magnanimity, frankness, and unselfishness²⁷⁹—are inscribed in the hearts of the populace by the examples set by the people serving as Crown and Coronet, and that experience generates a kind of moral power, which encourages people to behave with heightened generosity.²⁸⁰

All the rituals in court are designed to raise individuals up and recognize them for demonstrating this elevated conduct. This creates a positive feedback loop. People’s positive behavior is affirmed, which promotes continued desirable conduct and—in turn—inspires others to emulate the behavior in hopes of also being recognized. In this way, the values of the Society and expectations for elevated conduct—the elements that distinguish this social organization from others—are affirmed and reinforced.

Coronation: A Case Study

The SCA community is reminded of its unique qualities through the use of symbolic devices.²⁸¹ The Coronation of a king or queen is the ultimate declaration of a community’s values and boundaries. For example, at the Coronation of the Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II communicated certain values through her actions:

[B]y taking the oath, receiving the Bible, and being anointed by the archbishop, she demonstrated her human subservience to the laws of God

²⁷⁸ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 41.

²⁷⁹ The values of the SCA and the traditional values of knights are discussed at length in Chapter II.

²⁸⁰ This moral power is exactly what was described by Algoe and Haidt and stimulated the emotion of elevation.

²⁸¹ Anthony Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester, UK: E. Horwood, 1985) 50.

and the moral standards of the society, even as she was given the right to rule that society in the eyes of God. On another level by virtue of the presence of the people in the abbey as well as the power of the media, the coronation was a collective experience in which idealized social bonds were reaffirmed.²⁸²

In the SCA, the coronation ceremony articulates the values of the Society. The Coronation of Queen Mary-Grace of Gatland and King Havordh Ættarbani demonstrated the agency of the populace in constructing their monarchy, and it emphasized the diversity of skills and knowledge valued by the Society. The traditional coronation ceremony in An Tir calls for the crown prince—the next king (who earned the right by winning the Crown tournament)—to approach the current king and queen and press his claim to the throne. In all SCA coronations, the proceedings are mostly scripted and often follow the text in the ceremonial. In Havordh's case, Duchess Mary Grace of Gatland wrote a different ceremony, one that helped establish Havordh's identity²⁸³ and fitness to serve as a model of the Society's values. When the herald called for Havordh to approach, his progress up the aisle was interrupted repeatedly. Each stop highlighted values important to the SCA and, as a subtext, demonstrated how those values disrupt the social, economic, and cultural limitations people experience in the day-to-day world. At the first halting, a representative of the populace stepped in Havordh's way and said, "I am a member of the populace and I represent all people who are loyal and true subjects of the Crown of An Tir. But I must ask, who are you?" Havordh answered, "I am Havordh Ættarbani, Crown Prince of An Tir. I too am a proud member of the populace of this

²⁸² Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* 84.

²⁸³ Though Havordh and Mary-Grace have participated in the SCA for many years, they had only lived in the Kingdom of An Tir for a few years when they won the crown tournament. Additionally, for the first year they lived in An Tir, Havordh was still the King of Gleann Abhann and spent all his time traveling to events there. Consequently, he was not as well known as Mary-Grace when they were stepping up to the thrones of An Tir.

glorious realm and I have been a member of our Society for these past 30 years. Just as you do, I seek to serve my Crown and Kingdom to the best of my ability.” In this answer, Havordh established his cultural credentials—people were reassured of his awareness of the culture of the SCA. Notably, he did not introduce himself with his title, Duke, which would have told the crowd that he had at least twice been king. The simplicity of claiming only his name reflected the humility of Havordh, and also demonstrated his willingness to be one with the populace—to share in the Society without benefit of title. The populace representative indicated approval of Havordh’s quality and wished him well on his journey, and thereby served as a model of acceptance for the general populace of An Tir.

Next, representatives of each of the four peerages that recognize martial skill, artistic craft, or generous service stopped Havordh. The peerages represent the pillars of the SCA; membership in their orders is esteemed. Members are recognized throughout the Society as paragons in their areas and are expected to demonstrate Peer-Like-Qualities, PLQs.²⁸⁴ A Master of the Order of Defense²⁸⁵—often viewed as the Queen’s guard—waylaid Havordh. “It is our duty to promote honor and courtesy wherever we go, and to protect our gracious Queen and all this realm from harm. Now, I should know...who are you?” This challenge emphasized honor and courtesy, two premier values and the most frequently cited foundational values of the SCA. Havordh responded, “I too am a man who endeavors at all times to treat those of all ranks with the utmost

²⁸⁴ One frequently discussed element in considering a candidate for elevation in any of the peerages is the idea of peer-like qualities. There is not a clear definition, but it essentially references personal conduct, which must be courteous and honorable.

²⁸⁵ Masters of Defense are recognized for their rapier or cut-and-thrust combat.

honor and courtesy and with my Princess, seek to promote these virtues in others wherever I find them.” The challenger noted Havordh’s honor and invited him to proceed.

The next challenge came from a Pelican. “I am a companion of the Order of the Pelican. It is through a commitment to service promoted by this order that our Society has continued these 50 years. But, I must ask, who are you?” Havordh responded, “During my many years in the Society, I too have been its willing servant. I have been an officer, volunteer and mentor to others in hopes that others may enjoy all that our Society has to offer.” His reply reaffirmed the importance of service in an all-volunteer organization. People’s willingness to donate their time keeps the Society functioning. The Pelican urged Havordh to continue and said, “Joyful service to our Society is truly commendable. Thank you my Prince and please continue on your journey.”

Next, a Laurel stepped in Havordh’s path. He said, “I am Master Eduardo a member of the Order of the Laurel. This order creates, teaches, encourages and elevates the arts and sciences that bring a wealth of beauty and learning to our great Society. I must know, are you a patron of the arts?” Havordh demonstrated his appreciation for the arts and his worthiness to rule over the Laurels with his response: “I am an artisan. Armoring, sewing, building, and painting are all arts done by my hand, and yes, I also am a patron of the arts, supporting others whose skills inspire us all.” In naming the arts in which he participates, Havordh acknowledged the importance of the medieval arts that have contributed to transforming the Society from a themed party to a non-profit medieval educational organization.

Havordh continued his approach and was stopped by a Knight. “I am a Knight of An Tir and the Society. As Knights we strive to display Chivalry, Courage, Justice, Mercy, Generosity, Faith, Nobility, and Hope. It is our place to serve our king, and set the example for others in our Society. Tell me now, who are you?” In this challenge, everyone heard an index of specific and historical knightly virtues that are prized in the SCA. In some ways, the knights of the Society embody the very essence of medieval re-enactment and re-creation. Knights were powerful in reality, and the romanticized vision of the knight in shining armor remains a powerful cultural symbol.²⁸⁶ Havordh proved his worth to other Knights in his answer: “Good Sir, I have been a Knight of this Society for twenty-two years and have always honored my fealty to my king, to always remember the oath I took when this white belt was first placed upon me.” Knights are closely bonded with their king since they must make oaths of fealty to the Crown. The requirement of the oath of fealty is unique to knights; other peerages may choose to swear fealty or can make an oath of service instead of fealty. Symbolically and historically, the knights’ approval is crucial to the success of the future king. The satisfied Knight stepped aside and Havordh continued.

The next person to interrupt Havordh’s journey was a member of the Noble Estates, a Baroness. Her challenge demonstrated the importance of personal relationships throughout the Society but especially of the sovereigns with the populace. “It is the role

²⁸⁶ The Marines drew on the romantic image of the knight as powerful and honorable in their 1987 advertising campaign. The commercial has a knight ride through a portcullis into a castle and up to a king. Lighting is flashing off the king’s sword. The announcer says, “Once there were a few proud men. Men of adventure. [The king dubs the knight on one shoulder and lightning sparks off the sword.] Men of courage. [The king dubs the other shoulder the lightning repeats.] Men who knew the meaning of honor. [The king extends the hilt of the sword to the knight’s hand and lightning travels the length of the sword where the maille-gloved hand of the knight transforms into the white-gloved hand of a soldier.] There still are. [A modern Marine in his dress blues draws his sword in ceremonial salute.] The few, the proud, the Marines.” A former Marine Corps recruiter said that the commercial was “extremely successful” (USMC Marine Corps Recruiting Commercial "Knight" *YouTube*, 1987, posted 08 Feb. 2013).

of a landed baron and baroness to be the Crowns' voice in our baronies. Are you one who knows and understands the service and responsibility that the baronage provides?"

Havordh, who has been king five previous times in two different kingdoms, certainly understands that a monarch cannot be everywhere in his kingdom and can best satisfy the desire of the people to have royal representatives—if not the royalty—through barons and baronesses and princes and princesses. Havordh replied, "Your Excellency, I know all too well of the service that you do. I was Baron of the Far West in the Kingdom of the West and worked tirelessly to care for my people and convey the love, fair rule and support of the Crown. It is a most arduous but rewarding job that you do." In his response, Havordh affirmed his understanding of the importance of the Crown's representatives in the form of the Noble Estates. The Baroness continued, "I see that you know well the importance of this link between the Crown and her people. The people of our realm are lucky indeed to have you as their Prince. I pray you, continue on your path with my good wishes." The Baroness's reply confirms that the real importance of the Crown lies in the relationship kings and queens have with the people.

The next interceptor was a member of the royal peerage, which includes all who have served as either prince or princess or king or queen.²⁸⁷ In this case, the peer was a beloved and well-respected former King of An Tir, Styrkarr Jarlsskald. He said, "I know well this journey that you make. As a Sovereign ruler in this Society, taking up the mantle of Kingship means that you must relinquish the thought of 'self.' You must take upon yourself the hopes, the fair judgment and the good keeping of your people. It is said that you will rule because they believe you to be their ruler. Can you strive to make

²⁸⁷ Chapter II discusses the power dynamics in the peerages and specifically of the preeminence of the royal peers.

yourself worthy of their belief?” In his challenge, Styrkarr voiced several fundamental truths: one, that the SCA is not reality and can only function if people are willing to suspend their ties to modern-world reality and work to create an alternate, intentional reality; two, that the role of king is predicated on serving the people first; and three, that kingship is demanding and highly intrusive on any sense of privacy—a point I will address in Chapter VI. At this point, Havordh revealed his experience as king. “As one who has ruled five times before in other lands, it has ever been my wish to do so, not for the glory of my name or my house. I have always sought to provide good governance and joy to my realm and my people.” Anyone who may have doubted Havordh’s ability to rule would have been satisfied by his history.

In most kingdoms, a challenge by a former king would be the highest in Order of Precedence. In An Tir, however, members who have received the Honor of the Lion of An Tir²⁸⁸ precede all others by tradition, except for sitting royals. A Lion greeted Havordh and said, “I am a Lion of An Tir. It is the Lions who have been recognized as those who embody the ideals of our Society. As you come before me now, I must ask you once more, who are you?” Havordh had a final opportunity to summarize all his qualities and, in so doing, reinforced the Society’s values. He said, “I, Duke Havordh Ættarbani, Crown Prince of An Tir. I am a member of the populace who challenges myself to strive to be an exemplar of those virtues we hold most dear. I am an artisan and I am a servant. I am a Knight of the Society and liegeman to the King. I have been a landed baron,²⁸⁹ and

²⁸⁸ “Created by Queen Hlutwige and King Tjorkill. The Honor of the Lion of An Tir is given with the recommendation of the previous recipients and may be bestowed once per reign by the Crown. It is given to honor those who emulate the ideals and embody the essence of An Tir and the Laurel Kingdoms” (“An Tir Order of Precedence,” *An Tir College of Heralds*, SCA, 2017).

five times a king. But most of all, I am one who hopes to be worthy of the people of this great Kingdom.” The Lion offered the final stamp of approval, deemed Havordh worthy, and said, “Your Highness, your virtues are many, your heart true and I now commend you to our King.” By choosing to have Havordh face a Lion of An Tir as the final challenge on his way to claim the throne, Mary-Grace demonstrated her awareness and respect for the SCA culture in An Tir. Along the way, each challenge was a test of Havordh; each helped him to mentally and emotionally take his place as King.

The procession to claim the throne is only the first part of the coronation ceremony; each processional is unique. Some are extremely simple. Havordh's served a vital role; it introduced him to An Tir's society. In addition, by having individuals—who represented others like themselves—purposely impede Havordh's progress toward the throne, the normal balance of royal power was inverted. The successful resolution of each challenge advanced the model of a social structure that values the wealth of priceless personal resources like loyalty, courtesy, and a willingness to serve or teach. By acknowledging the important role each person and group plays in the SCA, the ceremony increased the sense of agency for everyone and diminished the differences inherent in a society modeled on a monarchy. All who were present were affirmed through the challenges, the core values of the SCA were pronounced, and the sense of common purpose and community was re-inscribed in the minds' of the participants.

²⁸⁹ In the SCA, a landed baron is actively serving as the Crown's representative in a barony. The term of office is generally three years, though barons and baronesses terms can be extended another three years if the barony indicates their desire through a process known as “confidence polling” in which members of a barony are invited to indicate whether they would like to see turnover in the office. Once a baron and baroness's term comes to an end, they may be granted a Court Barony. This means they retain the title of baron and baroness, but no longer have the responsibility of ruling the barony.

Finally, Havordh was proclaimed King and crowned his inspiration, Mary-Grace of Gatland, Queen. Once enthroned, their symbolic authority was constructed. Just as the challenges in the procession called attention to the values of the Society by affirming them in Havordh, the symbols of State—which are returned to Their Majesties—communicate the values of the Society. Each artifact is presented and its purpose is described:

[Presents Scepter] Wield this Scepter of Royal Justice, mindful of your oath to treat all who come before you, friend or foe, subject or stranger, with justice and honor.

[Presents Rod] Bear this rod of Royal Mercy, heedful of your oath to see that justice is tempered with mercy, and to nurture courtesy and chivalry throughout your realm.

[Presents Orb] Accept this Orb of Royal Dominion, remembering your promise to nourish the well being of the realm, to restore the decayed and to maintain that which is restored, that the Kingdom may flourish and prosper and her people be always first in your heart.

[Presents Great Seal] Receive the Great Seal of An Tir, mindful of your oath to make laws which are just, to reward virtue and punish transgression for the good of the Kingdom and its people.²⁹⁰

The symbols reflect the Society's social order and fit its Romantic vision of the Middle Ages. SCA participants, like all people, engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages about the structure of their society. Ritual, therefore, becomes "a medium for the expression of cultural ideals and models that, in turn, serves to orient, though not

²⁹⁰ The Sword of State remains on the Kingdom Champion's side. The Kingdom's Champion, as with all the Champions—arts and sciences, bardic, archery, and rapier—watch over the Coronation ceremony to ensure an orderly transition. In fact, they play a role in confirming the Crown Prince's claim to the sitting king and offer challenges of their own if any should doubt the rightness of his claim to the throne. Similar artifacts of State were presented at Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation. She received the Spurs and Sword of State, the Bracelets of sincerity and wisdom, the Stole Royal, the Robe Royal of righteousness, the Orb with the Cross, the Ring of kingly dignity, the Sceptre with the Cross, and the Rod of equity and mercy (Simon Kershaw, Ed., "The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II," Anglican Liturgical Library, 1953 and online 2017).

prescribe, other forms of social behavior. As a medium for cultural messages, ritual enables people to modify their social order at the same time that it reinforces basic categories of it.”²⁹¹ By connecting the symbolic forms to the everyday culture of the SCA, the royal rituals—as performative acts—validate all participants and simultaneously legitimate royal authority.²⁹² Once invested, the monarchs restore the hierarchical structure at the center of the game²⁹³ through the giving and receiving of oaths.

Oaths of Fealty

One way to think about ritual is to conceive of it as making the emotional externally observable.²⁹⁴ The Oath of Fealty perfectly epitomizes this process. At its core, the oath defines the social and behavior roles between the Crown or Coronet and the rest of the people. Historically, fealty is primarily a contract; it is less binding than *homage*, literally to become a liege lord's *homme* or man. In the SCA most oaths of fealty reflect the lesser obligation and participants can be in fealty to many different parties. For example, students—squires, apprentices, protégés, or provosts—can swear fealty to their

²⁹¹ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* 65.

²⁹² Richard Bauman argues that performance can establish one's role (“Verbal Art As Performance,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 1975): 299.

²⁹³ Members of the Society for Creative Anachronism often acknowledge the ahistorical nature of the Society by calling what they do “the game” or “the dream.” Diana Listmaker addresses the idea of the dream in her article “The Seed and the Tree” written for the thirtieth anniversary of the SCA. She asserts that what some consider an escapist dream becomes active reality through the actions of participants. Recruitment materials frequently reference the idea of “The Dream.” There are several videos available on YouTube that mention The Dream in their titles: “SCA – Live the Dream” (uploaded by Rockskald, 2008, www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOZRTkqUT8s) and “SCA – The Dream” (created by Raiya Corsiglia, 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCyu7rveBXs). The latter captures the breadth of the SCA experiences and creates a tapestry of images from Great Western War.

²⁹⁴ Catherine Bell summarizes E. E. Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer of southern Sudan and discusses his conclusions about ways of conceiving ritual (*Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*) 35.

instructors—either knights or masters of arms, laurels, pelicans, or masters of defense, respectively, or to multiple instructors—and still swear oaths to the Crown. The only oath that comes near to that of homage is the knight's oath given at the time he is knighted. Based on the idea that a fighter could only be committed to one lord in time of war, homage can only be sworn to one liege lord.²⁹⁵ When a knight is made in the Society, he or she swears an oath to the Crown as an entity, not the specific person wearing the crown at the moment; it is a promise of absolute service and obedience to the Crown of his Kingdom and the Society as a whole. The first knighting in the SCA occurred at Twelfth Night A. S. 2²⁹⁶

And that the Crown may endure, and our Kingdom prosper, these Gentlemen will be asked to give fealty, in matters concerning this Society, and –only– this Society; not to the King, who shall, in his time, pass from the throne; but to the Crown of this, the Society of (sic) Creative Anachronism. And if these Gentlemen will give that fealty, then they shall be created Knights.²⁹⁷

The original oath of fealty knights make when they are created knights is the only oath knights must make since the oath is to the Crown and Society and not to the individual wearing the crown at the time. All future offerings of the oath of fealty to the Crown are re-affirmations of their fealty. Occasionally, knights will not renew their fealty at a Coronation in order to make a political statement about the new king or queen. “This

²⁹⁵ There have been moments in history, as when England held lands on both sides of the Channel, where the oath was modified to accommodate several obligations. William Marshal arranged to delay by a year-and-a-day doing homage to the French king after King John surrendered Normandy to France (W. L. Warren, *King John*, Yale UP, 1997).

²⁹⁶ A. S. stands for *Anno Societatis*—in the year of the Society—and is the dating system used in the SCA. All dates are counted from May 1, 1966 when the first party was held. May 1, 1966 is May 1 A. S. 1 (Hirsh von Henford, “An Unofficial Glossary of Terms as Used in the SCA, *Society for Creative Anachronism*, updated July 2015).

²⁹⁷ The oaths from Twelfth Night AS 2 are reprinted in “The Feudal Contract: Fealty In the SCA” by Joseph of Locksley mka W. J. Bethancourt III (1992). He cites as his source the only existing copy of the ceremonies, which were posted on the Internet on a now-defunct newsgroup for the SCA.

should not be considered as 'De-fieing' the Crown, for they are –not– formally renouncing their fealty to the Crown, but rather choosing not to renew it thru (sic) this particular person. It's –*rude*– but not *wrong*."²⁹⁸ The same option to swear fealty is true for all the peerages, except ruling princes and princesses, who must swear an oath of fealty to the Crown. Duchess Mary-Grace of Gatland said, "[The oaths] are really important to me personally because I mean them genuinely. I give my fealty to the Crown. I've never refused to give my fealty, even if I wasn't super thrilled. I support the organization. [The oath] means more if it's someone I really care about, but [oaths] are really important."²⁹⁹ Thus, in offering or withholding oaths, participants can push back on the power structure while still maintaining the harmony of the Society.

For many participants, oath giving feels personal and sacred. Iurii Levchenich said, "I have sworn oaths of Fealty and Service, and regardless of which one I am swearing, I take them very seriously and to heart. [T]hey are as valid and important to me as the oath of service I swore when I enlisted in the Army."³⁰⁰ People might not even realize how powerfully connected they are to their oaths. In 2015, An Tir granted kingdom status to one of its three principalities, Avacal. Prior to that, An Tir stretched from the northern border of California north including Oregon, Washington, part of Idaho, British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and the provinces of

²⁹⁸ In "The Feudal Contract Fealty in the SCA," Joseph of Locksley O.L., O.P., describes the process of entering into fealty. He notes that "each party promises certain things to the other, and *if this contract is violated, then the fealty can be 'de-fiefed' or 'de-fied' with no penalties nor legal difficulties; there is no 'felony,' in the medieval legal sense of the word*" [emphasis his] (1992) <www.whitebard.tripod.com/onfealty.htm>.

²⁹⁹ Mary-Grace of Gatland, Personal interview, 29 Dec. 2016.

³⁰⁰ Iurii, Levchenich, "What is your favorite SCA ritual?" *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

Alberta and Saskatchewan. It was too large for the royals to easily maintain person connections. When the Kingdom of An Tir split and created the Kingdom of Avacal, all the peers who resided in the former Principality of Avacal were released from their fealty with the King of An Tir. When King Savaric released the knights of An Tir, Duke Vik Vikingsson, KSCA, O.L., O.P., was visibly shaken and was brought to tears. He said, “It’s harder than I thought . . . suddenly it hits you like a punch in the gut.” Later, after swearing fealty to the King of Avacal, Vik addressed the Crown of An Tir and pledged freely to help An Tir if ever they should have need.

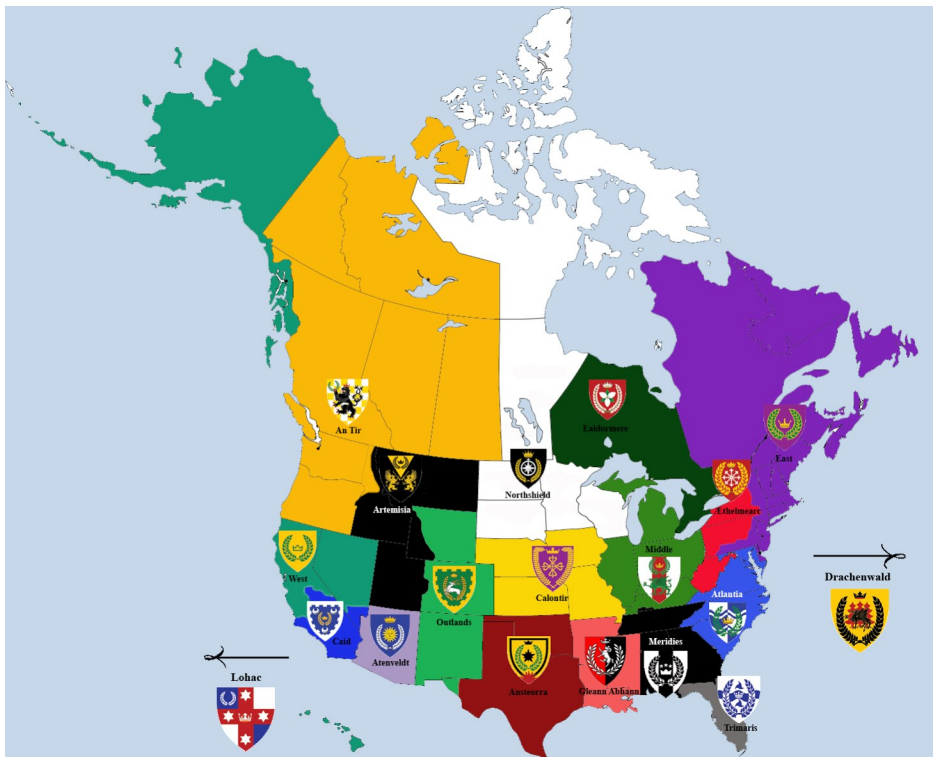


Figure 15. The complete map of the SCA before the creation of the Kingdom of Avacal. An Tir is the golden section, <sites.google.com/site/scabardic>.

The oath of fealty establishes and renews the community bonds that are at the heart of why people participate in the SCA. “Duchess Verena of Laurelin said, “Swearing fealty is the most important ritual to me. It ties me directly to the Crown and Coronet, so I

feel they 'have my back' if I need it."³⁰¹ Part of the Coronation ceremony calls for fealties to be renewed. The past King and Queen are often invited to swear fealty first. This act illustrates the complete transfer of power and signals to the rest of the populace, who may still feel a bond of loyalty to them, that it is right and appropriate to pass that fealty to the new king and queen. The former King and Queen of An Tir's oaths echo many medieval oaths and mirror almost word for word the oaths given by the Dukes of Edinburgh, Gloucester, and Kent to Queen Elizabeth II at her Coronation. The SCA oath says:

I, ____, do become your liegeman/woman of life and limb,
and of earthly worship.
Faith and truth will I bear unto you,
to live and to die, against all manner of folks.³⁰²

At the Coronation of Elizabeth II, the Duke of Edinburgh spoke words of homage:

I, Philip, Duke of Edinburgh
do become your liege man of life and limb,
and of earthly worship;
and faith and truth I will bear unto you,
to live and die, against all manner of folks.
So help me God.³⁰³

Dropping the final divine invocation reflects the SCA's commitment to inclusion. In An Tir, in an effort to involve everyone, all people are invited to offer fealty to the Crown.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ The title Duchess is awarded after having served as queen a second time. Duchess Verena of Laurelin was twice Queen of the West [A.S. VI and A.S. VII], "Princess Survey," 26 Jan. 2016.

³⁰² *Ceremonial of the Kingdom of An Tir* (2003) 7.

³⁰³ Simon Kershaw's version of the text "The Form and Order of Service that is to be performed and the Ceremonies that are to be observed in The Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in the Abbey Church of St. Peter, Westminster, on Tuesday, the second day of June, 1953" (2016) reflects a compilation of on-line versions, a copy of the *Order of Service* contained in the official souvenir published by the *King George V Jubilee Trust*, and a second-hand copy of the *Order of Service* published by Cambridge UP.

³⁰⁴ Significant differences exist across the kingdoms of the SCA; not every kingdom offers the opportunity to swear fealty in the same way. For example the Kingdom of the West does not invite the general populace

The populace and members of each peerage as well as the barons and baronesses are invited to swear oaths of fealty en masse, by station—the highest ranks first and the populace last. Some, like Hector of the Black Height, O.P., O.L., feel that the group oaths are impersonal and offer an anonymity that weakens the link between the Crown and the vassal even if “it may strengthen the bonds between the Kingdom as an organization and its populace.”³⁰⁵ However, in An Tir, even when swearing en masse, everyone is physically connected to the Crown through a chain of contact. Those nearest the Crown lay their hands on a symbol of state—the sword or the crown; anyone who is not close enough to touch the object touches the shoulder or back of the person in front of them who is either touching the artifact or touching someone who is. In this way, people stand and kneel—all connected—to renew their fealty and proclaim their bond. Viscount Tryggr Tyresson explains the feeling of connectedness:

I am aware of everyone. Sometimes you are up front and other people are linked, relying on you to make the connection. Sometimes you are in the back and must depend on other people. You are symbolically linked to the Crown and physically linked to each other; it's kind of like a prayer circle. We are linked by word and deed.³⁰⁶

Any sense of anonymity is diffused by the physical contact with others and the small size of the groups swearing fealty.

In the tradition of An Tir, the Summits Coronet accepts en masse oaths; few oath-giving groups would exceed thirty people, reducing the sense of the impersonal. Contrary

to swear fealty during Coronation. The East Kingdom does not swear en masse; instead, individual subjects swear fealty. According to Hector of the Black Height, “Eastern Coronations can take four hours, as the parade of Peers . . . shuffling forward to swear individual fealty goes on and on” (Hector of the Black Height mka Arthur McLean, “On Fealty and Other Relationships in the SCA,” 1998).

³⁰⁵ Hector of the Black Height, “On Fealty and Other Relationships in the SCA.” He lives in the Middle Kingdom.

³⁰⁶ Tryggr Tyresson, Personal interview, 28 Jan. 2017.

to a feeling of anonymity, Tsarevna³⁰⁷ Alina feels the oaths to be intimate. “I find [the swearing of fealty] very personal myself which is why during our ceremony I lowered my voice to give my oath to the people who were in front of me. This is one of the greatest gifts you can receive from the people.”³⁰⁸ It may be that receiving oaths as a royal intensifies the gravity of those oaths. Viscountess Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle said:

[My favorite ritual is] receiving the oaths of the people. Also, giving my oath to the Crown or Coronet It's startling how much [being a princess] changes your view of [fealty]. I had always considered it a privilege to swear fealty, but having had the Coronet on my head, I now understand why that feeling [of connectedness] has always been so pervasive³⁰⁹

Elizabeth explained that after she became Princess, she understood the oath to be more a “two-way street,” meaning that with each oath she was reminded of her obligations to others even though she was no longer the princess; she experienced an increased feeling of fellowship.

As with medieval oaths of fealty, the SCA Crown and Coronet reciprocate, pledging their protection. King Havordh and Queen Mary-Grace offered a variation on the standard oath, which emphasized the potential penalty for breaking an oath:

Let all here bear witness, that We, Havordh, King of An Tir
And We, Mary-Grace, Queen of An Tir, hear and accept your oath of
fealty, given in good faith. In turn, We vow to defend and support you and
yours, with word, deed and force. Those that keep and hold this oath true
shall be rewarded with Our favor. Those that forget this oath and break
faith shall be repaid with Our dreadful wrath. Now arise and go keeping
honor and courtesy above all.³¹⁰

³⁰⁷ Tsarevna is the persona equivalent of Princess.

³⁰⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Alina of Folkstone mka Linda Klein, “Favorite SCA Ritual,” *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

³⁰⁹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle mka Jillian Bower, “Favorite SCA Ritual,” *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

Though the King and Queen have no permanent power, they do have the authority to issue royal sanctions which can include banishment from the Royal Presence, banishing a player from their presence for the duration of their reign—essentially the banished individual could not attend any event attended by either of Their Majesties; prohibiting the wearing or display of the kingdom or principality insignia, which includes displaying any awards, badges or armory related to any part of the kingdom; withdrawing the privileges of rank, though not for peerage ranks like Laurel, Pelican, Knight, or Master of Defense as they are peers of the Society and not of individual kingdoms; suspension or removal from office; and proscription from active participation in a specific kingdom. The sanctions endure for the stated length or until the end of a reign, whichever comes first.³¹¹ During all this time, royally sanctioned SCA participants can still play in other kingdoms and always maintain their peerage status. Nevertheless, the threat of sanction by the Crown or Coronet serves as incentive to take seriously any oath made.

³¹⁰ “Coronation Ceremony of Havordh and Mary-Grace,” text supplied by Mary-Grace of Gatland.

³¹¹ The SCA does have a sanctions guide. It explains that the purpose of sanctions is to protect the SCA “by removing or limiting the participation of an individual who has violated the rules of the SCA, the laws of an individual SCA Kingdom, or the laws of modern society . . . Sanctions will be tailored to the gravity of the offense.” Though royal sanctions are temporary, permanent sanctions that expel players from the SCA do exist and have been applied. Since all sanctions are published, players are aware that sanctions are applied (*SCA Sanction Guide*, Society for Creative Anachronism, 2014).



Figure 16. King Styrkarr Jarlsskald receives the oaths of the Knights of An Tir at his Coronation. Photo by Sir Matheus Bane/Matthew Sugarbaker, 2014.

The double edge of the oath is literally reflected in the Knights' oaths to the new King. In An Tir, a unique tradition surrounds this oath. All the Knights in attendance lay their unsheathed weapons on the new King. Luaithrend Inghean Uilliam said, "It sends goosebumps down my spine every time."³¹² Gulenay Khazari agreed: "It is such a potent symbol of trust, accountability, and fealty; I always tear up."³¹³ Tsar Tjorkill Kann explained, "That's the 'Trust' bond between the King and His knights."³¹⁴ King Styrkarr Jarlsskald elaborated that the beauty and significance of this gesture lies not only in the

³¹² Temperance Trewelove, comment by Luaithrend Inghean Uilliam, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

³¹³ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Gulenay Khazari, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

³¹⁴ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Tjorkill Kanne, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

King's trust in his knights, but also in his knowledge that the knights will hold the King to his oath. The laying-on of swords is absolutely romantic and certainly not historical; in the Middle Ages, very few people would have had permission to touch the king or queen's person.³¹⁵ The An Tir tradition is an especially photogenic moment.

At the second Coronation of King Styrkarr and Queen Stjarna, the King and Queen made arrangements to create a similar photographic opportunity for the Queen when the Masters of Defense issued their oaths to her. She held the Kingdom Rapier Champion's sword tip down with her arms out as if she were hugging a beach ball. Then the MoD rested the handles of their swords on the Queen—points to their hearts—as they delivered their oaths (see figure 17). The configuration of the Queen holding the sword with the tip to the Masters' heart is not new, that is how they swear fealty when they are created Masters, but doing it en masse was new. The new ritual created the desired photographic opportunity and stimulated appreciative responses from the audience, which were echoed later on-line.

³¹⁵ Cardinal Thomas Wolsey drew up a set of rules known as the Ordinance of Eltham (January 1526) to regulate Henry VIII's privy chamber when he was staying elsewhere. The text indicates that only six people be allowed in his room to help him dress. It reads: "and that none of the said grooms or ushers doe approach or presume (unlesse they be otherwise by his Grace commanded or admitted) to lay hands upon his royall person" ("Henry VIII Court Rules," Source 1b, *The National Archives*).



Figure 17. Queen Stjarna accepts the oaths of the Masters of Defense at her second coronation. Photo by Sir Matheus Bane/Matthew Sugarbaker, 2017.

Aleire of Paris said, “We always see the King and his Knights; this Queen and her Rapier warriors is a truly beautiful representation of what we do.”³¹⁶ In creating ritual, SCA participants can define what is sacred.³¹⁷ It is that possibility of ritual innovation that is at the essence of a re-creation society. Dynamic traditions can accommodate change and endure.

Because ritual reflects the emotional state of the participants and creates new states, ritual can be cathartic and serve as a regulator for the social system, adjusting as

³¹⁶ Dagrún Stjarna, comment by Aleire of Paris mka Allie McNama, “Twelfth Night Masters of Defense Oath Photograph,” *Facebook*, 18 Jan. 2017.

³¹⁷ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* 37.

needed to maintain the community. “Ritual is an opportunity to reflect on the disjuncture between what is and what ought to be; it is a ‘focusing lens’ through which people can attempt to see, or argue for, what is significant in real life.”³¹⁸ The rituals of the SCA address the absence of the face-to-face community in an ever-increasingly digital world; they build community through personal interaction. At Kingdom-level events like Coronation, the micro-communities of the SCA are united in purpose. The values of the Society are proclaimed through the rituals and ceremonies; this establishes the social entity that is the Society for Creative Anachronism. The rituals of the SCA create opportunity for people to be affirmed, to feel connected, and to experience a much-needed sense of community. As Anja Snihova said, “[Rituals] are part of who we are and why we can stay together as a group.”³¹⁹

³¹⁸ John Z. Smith’s phenomenological approach to ritual flipped the lens of interpretation to focus on how rituals create patterns of order and meaning rather than how universal patterns underlie religion (Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 12.

³¹⁹ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Anja Snihova mka MaryAnne Anja Bues Bartlett, “Favorite SCA Ritual,” *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

CHAPTER V

CREATING A NOBLE AND RECOGNIZING A PEER:

RITUAL'S ROLE IN BUILDING PERSONAL IDENTITY

Peerage ceremonies are touchstones, transitions and transformations—much like weddings are. In the SCA, a Peerage ceremony is a touchstone for those who witness it—a commonality and shared experience for those who go through them and those who witness specific ones. A Peerage ceremony is also a transition—it notes someone moving into a different social status, with different rules for those around them and a different social perception—and also a transformation, as those different rules and understanding of place within them is also an internal transition, changing how the individual views herself. —Viscountess Vesta Antonia Aurelia³²⁰

The Library of Congress categorizes the Society for Creative Anachronism as a historical re-enactment group, but the SCA is really less of a group than a syncretic culture complete with its own social organization,³²¹ customs and traditions, articulated values, economic system,³²² arts, government, and language. The difficulty in defining or distinguishing the exact culture of the SCA—and a continuing source of contention within the Society—lies in trying to identify which cultures are mixing. For some, the SCA combines the cultures of the fantasy-reading, role-playing gamers with the Romantic vision of the Middle Ages. For others, the historical re-enactor with an eye to

³²⁰ Vesta Antonia Aurelia, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 24 May 2016.

³²¹ The social organization of the SCA includes social classes, though everyone is assumed to be some level of lesser nobility to begin with, people rise through the ranks through a peerage system. In addition, though households have no formal standing in the SCA, they play a prominent role in SCA culture. A household is a voluntary association of friends or people with similar interests, organized under whatever rules the members jointly accept. For example, some households are organized around combat. A knight and his squires and their families might form a household. Households generally eat together at feasts and camp together at longer events. They often share resources.

³²² Though actual money is paid to get into events, the spirit of the gift economy pervades the rest of the SCA experience. People donate goods and services with no expectation of return. The gift economy's importance in peerage ceremonies will be discussed later in the chapter. An excellent exploration of the importance and value of giving objects during a knight's elevation can be found in Althea Turner's dissertation *Honored Values and Valued Objects: The Society for Creative Anachronism*, Oregon State University, 2010.

recreating authenticity replaces the fantasy-gamer. This conflict represents changes in the Society itself. The early history of the SCA is grounded in both the fantastic and the Romantic. After the Society for Creative Anachronism became incorporated as a non-profit educational organization, the focus on medieval authenticity began to grow.

Expressions commonly heard in the SCA like “the Middle Ages as it should have been,” or “you rule because they believe” demonstrate a degree of cultural and temporal hybridity. Regardless, all participants bring their twenty-first century experiences and beliefs into the mix. Some hold ideas that are socially progressive and others quite conservative; the SCA draws people of all political and philosophical stripes together into what is ideally a harmonious community. The liminal spaces created at SCA events make it possible for all these people to co-exist, and be appreciated for their contributions.³²³

The SCA is an intentional community that creates liminal spaces where participants meet and interact—some would say to play “the game” or “live the dream.”³²⁴ In this chapter, I will use two case studies, Johanna Trewpeny's elevation to the Order of the Pelican³²⁵ and Sigriðr in Ráðspaka's Award of Arms,³²⁶ to consider the liminal potential of persona

³²³ In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Victor Turner describes *communitas* as breaking through social structure to dissolve “norms that govern structured institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency” (“Liminality and *Communitas*,” Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969) 128.

³²⁴ Members of the Society for Creative Anachronism often acknowledge the ahistorical nature of the Society by calling what they do “the game” or “the dream.” In the most formal official setting, Court, it is customary for the Crown or Coronet to address the populace with regard to first time participants, *newcomers*, and thank them for helping bring new energy, which allows the dream to continue. Likewise, the organizers of the particular event, *event stewards*, are publically thanked; their efforts are acknowledged for having created an environment that allowed the rest of the participants to experience the dream.

³²⁵ When individuals are being recognized for extraordinary contributions of service to the Society, they are invited to join the rank of the Order of the Pelicans. Peerage ceremonies are extensive and often include a period of contemplation, a vigil.

³²⁶ In the SCA, a foundational premise is that everyone represents some level of noble birth but has not necessarily earned a title of advanced station, like Lord, Sir, or Princess. Lord is the first level of rank

creation. By investigating the interplay between ritual spaces, ritual performance, identity creation, and identity performance, I hope to reveal the transformational power that persona creation has on the Society person's identity and on the contemporary person's identity, and, by extension, draw conclusions about the function the SCA plays in the world.

Entering Liminal Space

Victor Turner devoted significant time to studying the transitional or liminal stage of Arnold van Gennep's three-part theory of rites of passage. He argued that it is an extremely important stage because it allows for a temporary dissolution of status and the creation of social and psychological conditions that encourage transformation.³²⁷ Just as Court rituals create the opportunity for positive incorporation, the liminal space that is an SCA event promotes conditions that allow for people to separate from their lived-world reality—their daily structure—and engage in utopic thinking and chivalric performance. When participants "'stand at the threshold' between their previous way of structuring their identity, time, or community, and a new way," they are entering a liminal state.³²⁸

Countess Astrid av det Fjord Landskap said:

For me [all the rituals are] important. Traveling to site, getting in the right mindset, getting to site, setting up, and then changing into garb. Just that part is a ritual in [and] of itself, helping you get into the state of mind of leaving the mundane world and getting ready for the rest of whatever event you are attending that weekend.³²⁹

When SCA participants come to an event, their first stop is gate, the point where people

elevation. Knights and Masters at arms claim the title Sir or Dame. Only the ruler of a principality, who is victorious in a coronet tournament, may claim the title of Prince or Princess.

³²⁷ Ronald L. Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (New York: Oxford UP, 2014) 216-17.

³²⁸ Carrie Barron, "Creativity and the Liminal Space," *Psychology Today* (04 Jun. 2013).

³²⁹ Astrid av det Fjord Landskap, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 25 May 2016.

sign waivers and pay site fees.³³⁰ At larger events, often participants have had the opportunity to pre-register. This makes their passage through gate more rapid, and not occasionally the slight envy of others. Anyone can pre-register, but people frequently do not because they have not committed to attending the event early enough to take advantage of the pre-registration. On the gate sign-in sheets, participants list both their modern name and their Society name, if they have one. Each step is moving them toward entry into the liminal space. Everyone is welcome to attend SCA events, but not everyone who participates is a member. Members of the Society have blue membership cards, which indicate that they have already signed a blanket waiver and can bypass this step at gate. An additional benefit of membership is a five-dollar discount on site fees, the cost of attending events.³³¹ At gate, volunteers dressed in medieval costume greet new arrivals. Acquaintances are renewed; community is re-established. Thyra Tryggisdottir said, “When you see people you know, it’s so exciting. At gate, I have already begun seeing my SCA family. It’s like returning to your neighborhood.”³³² Here, people who have arrived without garb—an attempt to dress in a non-modern fashion is required for participation—can borrow costumes. At camping events, often a map is located at gate. It establishes the internal boundaries of important spaces like the royal encampment, the list field—where tournament combat occurs—and period encampments, and offers the opportunity for various households to communicate where they can be found. Rules and

³³⁰ According to Hirsch von Henford’s “An Unofficial Glossary of Terms as Used in the SCA,” gate is sometimes called the “Troll Booth” or other derogatory terms (updated Jul. 2015).

³³¹ In 2017, an Associate membership costs \$30 a year. This level of membership provides the blue card. The Sustaining and International membership, which costs \$45, also gives the member access to all electronic publications of the Society and they can add family members for \$10 per person.

³³² Thyra Tryggisdottir, Personal interview, 04 Feb. 2017.

warnings unique to the site and event are communicated at the gate. For example, some summers have been too dry and a fire ban may be instituted or a body of water might be accessible on the property and participants are informed of this potential hazard.

Attendees receive site copy, which provides a rough schedule for all the activities at the event. Finally, participants usually receive a site token as their ticket of entry; like Charon's obol,³³³ the site token³³⁴ allows them passage into a new world. Gate marks the limen, the threshold. Gate is the beginning of the separation from lived-world society.

Even before arriving at gate, would-be participants begin to see hints that they are approaching their destination. Along roads leading to SCA events, SCA signs point the way. Stickers displaying kingdom heraldry cling to car windows in parking lots and farmers' fields—which are converted to temporary parking lots—offering further confirmation that participants are entering SCA space. It is possible to think of an SCA event as concentric rings, which become increasingly liminal the nearer the thrones.³³⁵ Land is reserved around the list field and thrones for period encampments, where all the tents are medieval in appearance and modern conveniences are disguised or put out of sight. The outer most rings are the most modern: the road signs, then the parking lot, and then the gate. Once through gate, the ordinary begins to give way to the extraordinary.

People's costumes contribute significantly to the general medieval flavor. In some ways,

³³³ Charon's obol is the gold coin paid to the underworld's ferryman to transport the dead across the river Styx. Those who had not received a proper burial—with a gold coin placed in the mouth—were unable to pay the fee and were left to wander on the earthly side, haunting the world as ghosts for a hundred years.

³³⁴ Whether to give and use site tokens provokes frequent debate in the SCA. Some groups go to significant expense of time and resources to craft a remarkable keepsake, others gesture at it, and, in recent years, some events don't give tokens at all. At some very large events like Pennsic War—held in the East Kingdom/Pennsylvania—the site token must be displayed as proof of payment; failure to do so results in having to pay again.

³³⁵ See Chapter IV for a discussion of the importance of the thrones and the central role Court plays in the SCA.

creating a medieval world is easier at outdoor events because people's encampments set the stage and there are fewer real-world intrusions. If the only locus of reality is people in their garb, it is easy to imagine being in a medieval place. For example, the An Tir/West War site—a farmer's field near Gold Beach, Oregon—could just as easily be the site of a medieval battle like Agincourt, which was fought on a narrow strip of land between two woods. With no buildings or modern intrusions, a viewer can only look at people's dress and the surrounding pavilions for a time period reference.

At indoor events, efforts are made to transform or, at the very least, disguise the interiors of buildings with decorations, banners, and even faux stained glass. For an experience to be liminal, participants must be removed from their sense of time and place; that is more difficult in modern buildings. As described in Chapter IV, the focus of most events is Court; the apex of the liminal space centers on the thrones. With limited resources, event stewards will put the greatest efforts into transforming the Court space. Other than Court, indoor events frequently are focused on classes and feasting. At these events, handicraft projects can be seen everywhere. Feast ware, candlelight, table clothes and linen napkins help to change a cafeteria into a feast hall. In addition, live music played on period-appropriate instruments enhances the ambiance. But the most impactful impression, the most notable change, is in the dress and conduct of the participants. People dressed in costumes ranging from Roman tunics to Elizabethan gowns mix and mingle.³³⁶ They greet each other. They go out of their way to be helpful and courteous.³³⁷ Participants are ultimately dislodged from their daily world by the civility and cordial

³³⁶ Chapter III examines the role of dress in the formation of identity.

³³⁷ Chapter II details the principle values of the SCA; courtesy, generosity, and honor are central to expected behavior at SCA events.

conduct of others, behaviors frequently cited by participants as lacking in the day-to-day world.

Every kingdom has some version of a primer for newcomers available on-line; every one of those documents presents the message that courtesy toward others is the primary expectation for conduct in the SCA. Most also provide a little working knowledge of SCA proper forms of address and forsooth speech,³³⁸ like using such terms as m'lord or m'lady when greeting others and decorous conduct with royals, including a simple bow or curtsy. Even if a newcomer had not accessed the primer before attending, the conduct of participants would almost immediately convey the expectation of courtesy. People open doors for others, help carry loads, and generally pitch in to make everyone's experience more pleasant. It is the expectation of chivalric conduct that sets the tone and allows participants to suspend their contemporary realities in favor of the re-created medieval one.

The Path to Persona Creation

The chief reasons people give for initially participating in the SCA include a love of history, the SCA's medieval focus, the martial activities, the idea of courtesy and honorable conduct often referred to as "the Dream," and friends; in fact, the majority of first time attendees come with a friend or family member who is already playing in the SCA. In An Tir, the Crown makes a point of calling up first time participants in front of

³³⁸ Forsooth speech has a double meaning. It most commonly means to speak in a period manner or style. In the SCA, it is "a formalized type of modern English." However, it also draws from "the etymology of the word 'forsooth' . . . from the phrase 'for truth . . .'" ("forsooth," *wiki.antir.sca.org*). The latter usage reflects the values espoused by the SCA of honesty. An individual identified only as Briana added to the wiki entry, "Let no word of a lie or hint of dishonour (sic) cross our lips, an especially salient concept in a close-knit (read insular) and talkative (read gossipy) bunch of people like the SCA."

Court, giving them a token to remember the fun they've had, introducing the participants to all those assembled, and inviting them back. After their first experience, people who have decided they are going to continue to attend events begin the process of creating their SCA persona. Like the development of characters in role-playing games, persona creation in the Society shares stages of character evolution; that is to say that a person's persona changes and develops overtime. A persona may begin in a very skeletal form, a stylized sketch of an imagined character, likely inspired by pop culture. According to Sarah Bowman, the first stage in tabletop game play is the Genesis stage, or the act of character creation.³³⁹ A similar stage exists in creating an SCA persona. Because the eras covered by the SCA span one thousand years—from approximately 600 CE to 1600 CE, though there is flexibility on both ends of the timespan—and include any culture that existed and might have had interaction with Europeans, some suggest that choosing a persona is one way to provide an entry point into this vast history.³⁴⁰

Choosing a persona is momentous, regardless of the path one takes to get to there. Some people choose a persona based on the style of garb they like or feel they can construct. Others choose based on the sort of activities in which they are interested. For example, a rapier fighter might choose a very late period Italian persona since that period represents a golden age in rapier fencing. Some people begin with a culture in mind. The Pacific Northwest is home to a large percentage of Viking personae. A number of events

³³⁹ Sarah Lynne Bowman identifies four stages of character evolution in *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Co. (2010) 157.

³⁴⁰ In "SCA Personas for Fun and Profit," Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin discusses the idea that developing a persona distinguishes the SCA from other forms of historical research groups. Since the span included in the SCA is so broad, some claim that the time warp, which would allow a late period Roman exist next to an Elizabethan lady, is the Anachronistic element of the SCA—others argue that the anachronism is meant to include more fantasy elements.

specifically reflect this Norse focus, including, for example, Egil Skallagrimsson Memorial Tournament and the Grand Thing.³⁴¹ So intense is the focus on the Vikings that SCAdians in the Barony of Stromgard,³⁴² using period tools and materials, have built a permanent Viking house complete with low side sleeping benches, a center fire pit, and a turf roof, which is used as lodging throughout the summer.

Selecting a Name

Some people commence their persona development by choosing a name. In the earliest stage of play, SCA participants are more fully in their real-world identity or primary identity and are quite consciously performing their SCA persona. They look for touchstones to attach meaning to an SCA identity. Often people choose a name based on their ancestry, as a beginning place for researching family history. For example, Brandubh MacCairbre chose an Irish persona name because he has an Irish modern name, Patrick; he thought an Irish name fit him. Everyone is encouraged to have an SCA name. Though some people begin with a name already in mind, SCA heralds discourage this practice. "It's better to pick a culture, and then look through names that we know were used by that culture, rather than to pick out a name, and later try to shoehorn it into whatever culture you can manage."³⁴³ Too many people set their heart on a name that cannot be documented as existing in the time period covered by the SCA, and it must be documented in order to be registered.³⁴⁴ The early years of the SCA were deeply rooted

³⁴¹ A Thing is an assembly of free men and women to settle disputes and conduct political business like electing chieftains.

³⁴² The Barony of Stromgard is located in Clark and Skamania Counties in southwestern Washington State.

³⁴³ "Choosing a Society Name: Hints for Newcomers," Dietmar Reinhart von Straubing mka Thomas N Eastman and Malachias von Morgenstern mka Sean C. Laney (2005) <www.s-gabriel.org>.

in Tolkien fantasy; the names that were registered by the College of Arms³⁴⁵ then included many inspired by science fiction and fantasy literature. Gradually, as the Society became more sensitive to its historical education mission, the naming conventions became more standardized and narrower.³⁴⁶ In order for a name submission to be approved by the College of Arms, it must pass a number of checks such as temporal and geographic naming conventions. So, despite the “creative” element in the Society for Creative Anachronism, not every name will be registered. This means that while people may call participants by their chosen name and it may even end up on some award charters, it may not be approved for the official registry of SCA names.³⁴⁷

Historically, when people lived in small communities, they did not need surnames. As communities grew and people began to travel more, the chances of meeting someone with the same name increased, and bynames became useful. Place names, personal characteristics, occupations, and patronymics were added to distinguish between

³⁴⁴ Somewhat ironically, for much of the historical period of time covered by the SCA, a single name would have sufficed. According to Peter McClure, for almost five-hundred years, seventy percent of English men were named one of four names: John, Thomas, Robert, Richard, and William. However, in the SCA, it is unlikely that SCA name submissions with only a single name would pass because they would hardly be unique in a community of over 100,000 participants (“Personal names and the development of English,” Oxford UP, <www.public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/shapers-of-english/personal-names-and-the-development-of-english>).

³⁴⁵ The College of Arms is responsible for the registering the names and devices Society-wide.

³⁴⁶ In 1967, the Society has grown to the point where its structure needed to be formalized. The College of Heraldry was created, with three heralds. In 1970, minutes from a Laurel meeting indicate that names and devices used up till then were considered “grandfathered” and were registered, though names at that time were only used as references for keeping track of the armory. Late in 1970, names began being returned. In 1975, the first addition of “Rules for Submission” was codified. In 1976, the most frequent reasons for returning names was “offensiveness, overuse of fantasy, and non-period style.” The SCA College of Arms history notes that such returns “had happened only rarely before.” In 1992, Elvish names of all sorts were finally banned (Bruce Draconarius of Mistholme, “Timeline of the SCA College of Arms,” 22 Apr. 1998, <heraldry.sca.org>).

³⁴⁷ Usually, not having a registered name is no inconvenience, but at this writing, the current King of An Tir, Styrkarr Jarlsskald, has made name and arms submission a pre-requisite for fighting in Crown; neither has to be fully approved, just submitted. In addition, to make sure that the cost of submission was not a hardship, he volunteered to pay for any who requested it. Those wanting to be underwritten merely asked that the fee be waived when they submitted their materials to the herald.

two people with the same given name. After 1066, when the Norman barons introduced surnames into England, the practice gradually spread. “By the end of the twelfth century, adding a surname to someone’s personal name had become a common practice among members of the Anglo-Norman ruling class.”³⁴⁸ In the SCA, some people begin with their own name, a portion of which can be registered if it is not too overtly modern; for example, Brian Ledbury chose as his SCA name Brian of Ledbury. Making Ledbury sound like a place name by adding the “of” fits the naming conventions for his chosen time and place. Duchess Mary Grace of Gatland, O.P, said she picked the Mary Grace part “out of the air. I knew I wanted a double name, maybe because I went to Catholic school. Gatland, [which] means keeper of the gate, is my maiden name.” She had intended to be Mary Grace Gatland, but she checked a box on the name submission form that allows heralds to make minor changes. “They made the ‘of’ as a minor change. The herald said ‘of’ at the procession [when she first became queen] and then it was a done deal.”³⁴⁹

Some people agonize over finding just the right name. Participants must have a registered name before they can submit a personal device to the College of Arms. Kelsy Aylesworth submitted her name in 1993 so she could register her arms, but she doesn’t like her name and continues to look for a name that she does like. She has a lengthy spreadsheet of names she has mulled over in the more than two decades since. She goes through a sort of trial for each name she is considering: she imagines how it will sound

³⁴⁸ Naming conventions now are different than they were in the Middle Ages. In “Surnames as sources in the OED,” Peter McClure highlights some of the history of names. The SCA naming pattern that many people employ reflects a more contemporary multipart name style. (“Surnames as sources in the OED,” Oxford UP, www.public.oed.com/aspects-of-english/shapers-of-english/surnames-as-sources-in-the-oed.)

³⁴⁹ Mary Grace of Gatland, Person interview, 29 Dec. 2016.

when she introduces herself, when she hears it spoken by her friends and husband, when it is announced in Court, what it will look like on an award scroll, what the name means, and in what culture and time period the name would be appropriate; she still has not found a name that seems right.³⁵⁰ In many ways, Kelsy's struggle to pick a name represents the importance these alternate identities hold. In his advice about choosing and name and creating a persona, Baron Modar Neznanich, O.P., writes: "A persona is the fictional person you wish to have been . . ." ³⁵¹; I believe it is even more accurate to say that people's SCA persona might be the person they wish they were. Since part of social identity is constructed by how people respond, there is both risk and potential in adopting a persona. If the persona represents any element of the secret self, discussed in Chapter III, then performing a persona opens the self up to criticism. Not choosing a name is a way of not committing to a persona and not exposing one's self to judgment.

By contrast, some people know their names immediately; they feel their names resonate with their essence. Tryggr Tyresson chose the name True because he does not lie. He said he discovered when he was a small boy that he was neither good at nor comfortable telling lies. Given that limitation, he said he has pursued a path of speaking the truth. So when asked for a name, "True" was his immediate response. Tryggr admits that when he first started participating, he imagined himself being knighted and thought that Sir True reflected everything he thought a knight should be.³⁵² Changes in the spelling of True reflect his persona's development. As his persona became more Norse,

³⁵⁰ Kelsy Aylesworth, Personal interview, 08 Feb. 2017.

³⁵¹ "Choosing a Name and Creating a Persona," Modar Neznanich mka Ron Knight, *Modar's Heraldry Page*, 2009.

³⁵² Tryggr Tyresson, Personal interview, 13 Feb. 2017.

the spelling altered, finally landing on Tryggr, which both means and—when pronounced—sounds a lot like true. It took him years to find documentation to submit with his name, which is carved as some ancient graffiti in the Maeshowe ruins in Orkney.³⁵³

Some people stumble upon a name or get named by others. Sigríðr in Ráðspaka recalled how she got her name. It was July and she was attending her first camping event. As she explained it, “A random woman asked what my name was and [I replied] I don’t have one yet. My name is Jen . . . and she’s like ‘Sigríðr is an amazing name.’” Sigríðr recounted having thought at the time, “That’s a horrible name. It sounds like sea hag.”³⁵⁴ Nevertheless, the name stuck and a month later, when one of her Shire mates yelled for her across the field, she knew it was right. Since having chosen her name, Jen has become habituated to Sigríðr and has done some research; she discovered a story about a Sigríðr who married two kings—killed them both—and had two sons. The story echoes parts of Jen’s life; she feels like the name suits her. She toyed with the appellation Sigríðr the Fair, which is fitting because she is stereotypically Scandinavian with blonde hair and pale skin, and also because she felt that it reflected her sense of justice. But, ultimately she rejected “the Fair” because it was too bland. As she said, “It’s so generic to me, like my real life name, Jennifer Smith, so I didn’t want it.” The thought processes that caused Jennifer to reject “the Fair” for her persona, Sigríðr, demonstrates how identities interact. Since Jennifer conceived her real-world name to be bland, she specifically chose to

³⁵³ The Maeshowe runes were discovered in 1861. The excavators were examining a Stone Age chamber when they noted the Viking inscriptions. There are thirty unique inscriptions, some important and others more like ancient graffiti. The inscription Tryggr submitted as his documentation for his name literally says, “Tryggr carved these runes” (Sigurd Towrie, “Maeshowe’s Runes: Viking Graffiti,” 25 Feb. 2016, <Orkneyjar.com>).

³⁵⁴ Sigríðr in Ráðspaka, Personal interview, 27 Dec. 2016.

perform a persona with a more meaningful name, perhaps enacting her secret self. Sigríðr acquired the second part of her name as a byname, a sort of nickname based on her temperament; *in Ráðspaka* means truth speaker. She had two choices of last names, both meaning truth speaker, but ultimately she opted for the one that sounded most like “truth speaker.” At some level, she wanted people to understand the meaning of her name. When asked, she notes that the truth being referenced isn't necessarily the sage sort of wisdom, but more the candid speech she gives regardless of the station of the listener. The Prince of the Summits at the time, Sverre Bjornhjarta, gave her the nickname “truth speaker” because, in the privacy of camp, she would keep him grounded with her non-deferential words.

The SCA Life Cycle

Choosing a beginning point for persona development is like being a newborn, and newcomers are given more support and leeway than others. They will find experienced players to serve as resources and advisors. Some advisors function in official capacities, like chatelaines and heralds, but most people help because they remember being a “newb.” SCA participants experience a Society life cycle and undergo changes in their status that parallel natural human development. The average length of participation in the SCA is ten years.³⁵⁵ In the lifespan of an SCA participant, the persona creation and development phases represent the newborn, childhood, and early adolescence of a Society member. In the childhood phase of SCA participation, everything is new and exciting; participants are embracing the liminal space. The Society is full of potential friends, and the opportunities to play and explore seem endless. Regardless of their initial

³⁵⁵ Many people play beyond the ten years at a slightly reduced participation rate of around 3% every four years after the first four “Core Key Findings First Release,” *SCA Census 2010* (2011) <www.sca.org>.

choices, participants are not stuck with any one identity because personas are not static; the more comfortable people become with their SCA identity, the more it takes on the characteristics of life in that the persona gains a reputation and experiences growth. As SCA participants begin to truly inhabit their identity, personas change. In classic role-play gaming, development is the second stage in a character's evolution.³⁵⁶ On his blog discussing names and persona development, Baron Modar Neznanich, O.P., wrote:

A persona does not have to be stationary. It can change and grow with you. Don't be afraid to change your name and/or culture and/or time period and/or persona story (even after you've had it for a while). This can be a small change or changing it totally. Many folks begin in the SCA with a particular focus or goal and as time passes that focus changes. This can result from discovering new interests that one gets involved in, finding out the original area of interest just "isn't you" or wanting to mesh more closely with the personas of other folks you've become connected with. Do not let yourself be limited...feel free to change.³⁵⁷

The third year is a peak year for participation as measured by membership purchases; membership saves participants five dollars at every event they attend and lets them bypass the waivers that otherwise must be signed at gate.³⁵⁸ The purchase of a membership often represents an opportunity to transition from being a new player to becoming a blue card holding³⁵⁹ member and from just attending events to helping organize them. Interaction is the third stage of character development.³⁶⁰ In terms of SCA

³⁵⁶ Bowman, *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity* 158.

³⁵⁷ Modar Neznanich, mka Ron Knight, "Names" (2009) <modaruniversity.org>.

³⁵⁸ Non-members make up the bulk of participants at events. Individuals balance the cost of membership against the savings. Currently, a member would need to attend six events in a year to break even.

³⁵⁹ Blue cards are literally printed on blue card stock and indicate that the member has signed a blanket waiver and can by-pass that step when arriving at an event.

participation, the first four years are the most active. According to the 2010 census, participants are more likely to be paid members beginning in year three, likely because of the increased involvement.³⁶¹ Participants begin to recognize people by their SCA names, even at out-of-SCA event situations. Their SCA personas are becoming internalized and participants can easily switch between the primary self and the SCA self. This is the point when many participants are recognized with an Award of Arms, which I will discuss later in the chapter.

Once participants dress—and sometimes name—their personas, they have to figure out how to behave. In his approach to performance theory, Richard Schechner privileges embodied behavior over language. He argues that before there was speech, there was bodily action. In the SCA, people start by performing an identity. At first participants begin to find ways to interact with others; volunteering is one way to do something and contribute to the community. Once participants have their bearings, they begin to develop skills in areas that interest them like archery, fighting, or weaving. Sometimes people bring relevant knowledge with them and add to the community by teaching or entertaining, as with a musical performance. With each action, the participants become more confident in their persona. Because courtesy and generosity are stressed as cultural norms, people are supported in their efforts; this feedback inspires increased participation. Of the seven spheres or functions of performance proposed by Schechner, the SCA explicitly addresses five: to teach or persuade, to make or change identity, to foster community, to create beauty, and to entertain. The degree to which

³⁶⁰ Bowman, *The Functions of Role-Playing Games: How Participants Create Community, Solve Problems, and Explore Identity* 156.

³⁶¹ “Core Key Findings First Release,” *SCA Census 2010* (2001) <www.sca.org>.

SCA participants can convince others that they are who they appear to be, shapes how they see themselves.³⁶² Succeeding in their SCA persona affects their ego identity, their subjective sense of who they are and how they exist in the world.³⁶³ At this stage, people begin to comment on the carry-over of performed conduct, like courtesy, from the SCA back into the everyday world. Brandubh de Santini said, "One of the things that crosses over with me, to an absurd amount, is keeping my word."³⁶⁴ This stage of the SCA life is like adolescence. The SCA persona is well developed and pretty social.

The Idealized Self

Regardless of the way people choose their names and personas, how they ultimately interact with others has the greatest impact on the conception of their Society self, their social identity.³⁶⁵ Unlike most factors that contribute to our modern world identity, like race, gender, and class, SCAdians³⁶⁶ start with a blank slate and can construct and perform chosen identities. The theory of identity's social construction places the self in dialogue with the Other. In the Society, the Other is both the modern world culture and the imagined historical Other to which participants aspire. SCA

³⁶² Simon Clarke add a dimension of "emotion, passion or motivation in the construction of self" that is not reflected in Erving Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* or in Michael Foucault's work. Clarke discusses similarities and differences in Chapter 24 "Culture and Identity" in *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Eds Tony Bennett and John Frow, SAGE UK (2008).

³⁶³ Erving Goffman identified three types of identity: the social identity, the personal identity, and the ego identity. Social identity is based on first impression assumptions about the attributes that a person is thought to possess. One's personal identity is one's biography; what makes one person unique from another. However, this is not how that person feels about him or herself. That sense of self is the ego identity.

³⁶⁴ Brandubh de Santini, Personal interview, 28 Feb. 2017.

³⁶⁵ Erving Goffman identified three types of identity: social identity, personal identity and ego identity (Simon Clark, "Culture and Identity" in *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Eds Tony Bennett and John Frow, SAGE UK, 2008).

³⁶⁶ SCAdians is the way SCA participants refer to themselves in comparison to non-participants.

participants can pick and choose; in this way, constructed Society personas can accept or reject elements of the modern world, adopt idealized behaviors of an imagined historical era while ignoring less appealing aspects, and create syncretic personas that represent their best possible selves. Society members are encouraged to develop back-stories to flesh out their personas, to “breathe life into them.”³⁶⁷ The choices of what to include in their biography and what to exclude also contribute to the construction of identity. In the SCA, participants can construct a heritage of which they are proud, no matter how implausible.

In this way, an Irishman can be the illegitimate son of a Spanish noble. Such was exactly the case for Brandubh MacCairbre. As the story goes, in order to gauge his skill, Brandubh—who was becoming a good fighter with a pole arm—sought a fight with Sir Esteban Tomas de Santini, KSCA, known as Sir Santos, who was one of the most skilled pole arm combatants in the Kingdom of Meridies. Their epic fight lasted for twenty-three minutes. Brandubh recalled, “It was like fighting in a mirror.” Eventually, he managed to kill Santos. Later that afternoon, Brandubh’s knight, Sir Starhelm Warlocke, KSCA,³⁶⁸ turned to Sir Santos as they were washing up and said, “I noticed you and my squire fighting earlier today. You fight an awful lot alike, would you care to explain.” As Brandubh tells the story, Santos sighed and, in an off-the-cuff remark, said, “I’d explain it to you, but I can’t. It’s an ancient fighting tradition handed down from father to son.” At

³⁶⁷ Arnora Dunestan mka Karen B. Murphy, “Who are You? The Art of Persona Development,” Canton of Vanished Wood: Barony of Ayreton (2000) <www.vanishedwood.org>.

³⁶⁸ In the early years of the SCA, many participants chose names straight out of science fiction and fantasy novels or created them from bits of names and ideas. In Sir Starhelm Warlocke’s case, the name Starhelm came from a lucky moment in Vietnam when he was hit in the helmet and not killed; the projectile left a perfect seven-point star. The Society began to limit the registration of names from characters in the *Lord of the Rings* in the early 1980s, especially Elvish character or place names. In the intervening years, names have grown more historically authentic.

that moment Brandubh emerged from the changing area and called, “Daddy,” reaching his arms to Sir Santos. Surprisingly, Sir Santos echoed back, “Son,” and reached for Brandubh. Then Lord Henry of Westmore, a squire brother of Brandhub’s spoke up and said, “Witnessed.” Sir Starhelm took a step away from Santos’ reach and called “Witnessed.” Then, Santos dramatically counted on his fingers—one, two, and went to wipe his brow with relief that there were only two witnesses—when the then King of Meridies, Duke Sir John the Bearkiller, KSCA, called out, “not only witnessed, but I really want to hear the story behind this one Santos.” As with the biblical testimony of witnesses, in the Kingdom of Meridies having three nobles witness an incident confirms the matter. They had all heard Sir Esteban Tomas de Santini acknowledge Brandubh as his child. Brandubh promptly began using the surname de Santini. Though the temporal strictures imposed by the College of Arms prohibit his registering the name, Brandubh is known in ten kingdoms by the name Brandubh de Santini.³⁶⁹ Brandubh’s story illustrates how a persona takes shape with active participation. In Brandubh’s case—as with all socially constructed identities—his persona developed as a result of the collusion of others. Together, they crafted their own version of the force of multiple witnesses and spontaneously agreed on the reality of Brandubh being an acknowledged bastard child. Brandubh’s story is a single incidence of the entire experience that is the SCA. Participants, each with an idea about what the Middle Ages was like—shaped by fantasy literature, historical knowledge, and popular culture—gather and construct a reality.

³⁶⁹ The flexibility of being able to draw on various ideas of the Middle Ages, which is at the core of the founding of the SCA, creates tension with the elements of the SCA that strive for historical authenticity. Name registration is one place where these two approaches to the SCA collide. Since the College of Arms has institutional power, the individual rarely prevails. As a result, the heralds in charge of name and device registration are either appreciated or maligned, depending on whether a submitter’s name and device are registered or returned.

Essentially, every event is improvisational; the purpose of the event provides a loose frame for the performance. As people's SCA persona develops, they become more familiar and comfortable performing their SCA selves and can take more liberties and risks. In this way, people's persona continues to grow and change.

Rites of Passage

In his *Les Rites de Passage*, Arnold van Gennep recognized patterns or phases associated with natural life events like pregnancy, marriage, and death. He noted that one's positionality or status within a society is fairly stable until life events disrupt the equilibrium, either socially or psychologically. Balance is restored when individuals participate in transition rites, which guide them from one stage to another. Van Gennep's rites of passage are loosely linked to the order of biologic changes without being absolutely tied to them.³⁷⁰ Tourism studies have drawn comparisons between Van Gennep's ritual process and a tourist's process of "departure, absence, and return to the everyday."³⁷¹ Victor Turner's identification of the *liminoid* experience, a break from society that is voluntary and primarily applies to the individual's experience in post-industrial societies, complicates the concept further.³⁷² On the one hand, in mirroring Van Gennep's model, SCA participants experience a Society life cycle and undergo changes in their SCA status that parallel natural human development. At the same time, they participate in a voluntary sort of tourism when they attend SCA events—along the lines

³⁷⁰ Catherine Bell summarizes Arnold van Gennep's ideas from *Rites of Passage* and compares them with other scholars of ritual in *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 94.

³⁷¹ Clare Foster and Scott McCabe, "The Role of Liminality in Residential Activity Camps," *Tourist Studies* Vol. 15 No. 1 (2015): 49.

³⁷² Foster and McCabe, "The Role of Liminality in Residential Activity Camps," 49.

of Turner's liminoid experiences—and, in the process, experience the positive impact of travel on an individual's psychological state. In both cases, it follows that participants should have rituals to recognize and ease these transitions. Throughout participants' SCA lifespan, they are recognized and affirmed in a variety of ways; some of these milestones are recognized informally, as when participants become members and receive their blue membership cards. Others are marked by formal ceremony, as when an officer is being installed and takes an oath. In the SCA, each change in status is celebrated and guides players toward full recognition as a member of the Society. On average, the third year is when many players receive their *Award of Arms* (AoA), which is usually the first royal confirmation that they are “playing the game” well.

Van Gennep identified three phases common to all rites of passage: *separation*, when the person leaves behind one social group and its concomitant social identity; and *transition* or *liminality*, a stage in which the individual is stripped of prior identities and affiliations; and *incorporation* or admission into another status, which confers a new identity.³⁷³ To some extent, these phases are reflected in the performance of the SCA identity. By the very act of dressing up and participating in an SCA event, newcomers separate themselves from the daily world. Once they change their clothing and pass through gate, they are literally out of time and their normal place. In this sense, SCA events are liminal spaces. Newcomers, who are tourists in an imagined medieval space, are always encouraged to stay for Court. If they do, these first-time-spectator-participants are called up in Court, welcomed into the SCA community with cheers and applause,

³⁷³ Foster and McCabe assert that the concept of a “linear progression of transformation always leading to a new social status” has been convincingly contested in tourism literature. They note that similarities between the ritual process and the tourism process exist (“The Role of Liminality in Residential Activity Camps,” *Tourist Studies* Vol. 15 No. 1, 2015): 49.

given a token, and very explicitly invited back. The tokens they receive from the royals, which can be carried back into the real world, serve as concrete reminders of the feeling of being appreciated and of *communitas*—the spirit of community—they experienced at the SCA event.³⁷⁴ The hope is that the tangible object will kindle a desire to return to the SCA community. It is the experience of *communitas* that recasts the liminoid experience as liminal.³⁷⁵

The Award of Arms

One way that Society members communicate acceptance and approval of the full expression of people's personas is to recommend them for recognition in Court. Only the Crown or the Coronet—with permission from Their Majesties—can award arms. An Award of Arms grants the recipient the right to bear a unique, registered Coat of Arms and charges him or her to submit a name to the College of Heralds for approval. The award also grants the title of Lord or Lady, an elevation in nobility, and—in accordance with sumptuary law—means that he or she can wear a one-inch metal circlet with a stone. The time spent playing in the SCA after that first newcomer experience represents van Gennepe's and Turner's liminal stage. Participants have crossed the boundary and are in between states, no longer newcomers and not yet lords or ladies. Depending on the quality and intensity of their participation and on the mindset of the Crown or Coronet,

³⁷⁴ Working with van Gennepe's three-stage process, Victor Turner refined the understanding of the transitional or *liminal* stage. Importantly, van Gennepe was looking at ritual in very small societies; Turner expanded the application. Over time, he revised his ideas on liminality. He distinguished liminality as applicable to societies that are basically unchanged by industrialization; societies in which the whole process is still "serious work"—though ludic in the liminal state. He contrasted those societies with modern societies that have leisure time, and he described their experiences, which on the surface seem liminal, as liminoid (Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbolology," *Rice University Studies*, Vol. 60 No. 3, 1974).

³⁷⁵ Foster and McCabe argue that the liminoid experience places emphasis on the individual, while the liminal experience attends to the growth of a community, "The Role of Liminality in Residential Activity Camps" 49.

some SCA players receive their AoA sooner than the third year mark, although some think this is too soon. Other participants wait far longer than they should, often because people don't realize that the individual doesn't have an AoA. Regardless of when it is granted, the Award of Arms represents a significant rite of passage in the Society.

Recipients are called into Court. They are escorted up the aisle and present themselves as they kneel before the Crown or Coronet. They do not know why they have been singled out and called forward. Then, the Royalty speaks words praising the person they are elevating. The sovereigns recount the efforts that the individual has taken usually with regard to his or her costume, acts of service, or display of positive and welcoming attitude. Then the herald reads the text on the award charter, which has been hand painted in the style of an illuminated manuscript. The Award of Arms ceremony is brief, but the recipient emerges changed. For many, the Award of Arms is the most significant award they will receive and is very memorable. Duchess Mary Grace of Gatland vividly recalled the moment she received her AoA:

I was wearing a green velvet dress My circlet had been made by the King. That was really cool That moment was so special. It made such an impression on me of all the work I had done. When you're really trying to immerse yourself in the medieval experience, that title was so important. It's shaped how I run court now Putting something on their head, telling them they're special, and telling them that they are noble is exactly how I want them to feel.³⁷⁶

During their reign, Queen Mary Grace and King Havordh, KSCA, placed circlets on the heads of Award of Arms recipients. Not all rulers bestow circlets; some rulers give necklaces and others just give the AoA charter. Finally, marking their incorporation into the Society and their heightened nobility, the newly elevated are invited to stand and are

³⁷⁶ Mary Grace of Gatland, Personal interview, 29 Dec. 2016.

announced as Lord or Lady to the cheers of the audience.

When Sigríðr in *Ráðspaka* received her Award of Arms, she had only been playing for six months, but she had integrated into the game at a very high level. Her dedication to creating authentic looking clothing, her level of participation, and the service she provided to my husband—the Prince—and me as Princess, distinguished her as worthy of such recognition. Because of her conduct and attire, many people mistook Sigríðr for an experienced SCA player; she had to keep reminding people that she was really just a newcomer to the Society. It became a running joke that Sigríðr was the perpetual newcomer. As Princess, I granted Sigríðr her AoA. When she received her Award of Arms, I told her she could no longer claim to be a newcomer because now she was a titled lady. That was the first moment that Sigríðr realized why she had been called up in Court. Because, in the beginning, everything is new and there is no familiar cultural standard against which to compare, the recipients of the Award of Arms may not even recognize that they have been in a liminal state, devoid of status—having separated from the modern world—and existing in a sort of ambiguity. During their liminal state, some players become attuned to the Society's expectations and develop a sense of how they compare in terms of being deserving of recognition,³⁷⁷ but that was not the case in Sigríðr's situation. Because the AoA came so quickly in her SCA play, she felt both honored and guilty.

I felt guilty because I haven't been playing very long and I feel really lucky to know the people that I know and to be in the circles that I'm in. So, I don't know what it's like to be new because I came right into, 'You'll be in the royal camp.' It wasn't even just you're going to be in service [to the prince and princess]. You're in the royal camp. I don't know what it's like to be an outsider.

³⁷⁷ Awareness of the culture and performance of the values encouraged by the SCA does not guarantee recognition by royalty. Not advancing at any level is a source of frustration for some participants.

In her second six months, Sigríðr increased her involvement. She attended close to twenty events. There is no statistical comparison available for Sigríðr's level of involvement since it is similar to that expected of ruling monarchs, and there are too few of them to be statistically significant. However, the next closest comparison is the number of events attended in a single year. Only eleven percent of participants attend thirteen or more events in a one-year period.³⁷⁸ In short, Sigríðr's level of play was intense. In addition to her extensive attendance at events, during which time she was frequently the sole attendant for our heir—Prince Ziitos Turk—Sigríðr began to do the real work of persona development that comes with the elevation. Award of Arms recipients, having been charged by the King and Queen or Prince and Princess to formalize their names and devices, are encouraged to learn about the historical conventions of naming and armory. Usually, this award also prompts people to improve the authenticity of their garb too. Thus the Award of Arms welcomes SCA participants into the full Society—incorporating them—and simultaneously prepares them to be more knowledgeable about some basic medieval ideas such as heraldry, which, in turn, makes them better representatives of the SCA's educational mission.

Elevation of a Peer

Though no less a rite of passage, the Award of Arms ritual is not as clear an example of the rites of passage described by Arnold van Gennep as a peerage elevation.³⁷⁹ Peerage elevations provide Society-wide recognition of individuals at the

³⁷⁸ "Core Key Findings First Release," *SCA Census 2010* (2011) <www.sca.org>.

³⁷⁹ Because the period of liminality before new participants receives their Award of Arms is undefined and because the separation is not explicit—it's just part of the new experience—the AoA ritual is less

top of their game in a particular area—like the arts and sciences, marshal combat, or service—and more fully demonstrate the tri-partite process. Publicly, most peerage elevations begin with the King and Queen asking if an individual is interested in joining a specific order—the Chivalry, the Laurels, the Pelicans, or the Masters of Defense.³⁸⁰ At that time, individuals can refuse the invitation, though this rarely happens. This initial asking moment is often a surprise. When Dame Johanna Trewpeny, O.P., was first invited to consider joining the Order of the Pelicans, her reaction was an adrenaline-driven flight.

The idea that they wanted me to be a Pelican was so shocking that my body responded in the fight or flight syndrome; mine apparently is flight because I turned around and ran away. I only got two steps and there were all these people fluttering toward me, all the Pelicans were coming up fluttering at me. I found I couldn't run that way and I didn't mean to run away. It wasn't intentional. I didn't say, "Oh I'm going to run away. I won't accept this." I just physically turned and ran. That's how surprising it was to my inner being. I did not conceive of myself in that realm. I did not conceive of the idea that I had reached the state that anyone would consider me as Pelican.³⁸¹

If the individuals indicate that they wish to consider membership in an order, then they are placed on vigil, which is a time of reflection and consideration, before becoming a member of one of the peerage orders.³⁸² This interim period is the liminal time, when the initiate has been publicly identified as worthy of elevation but has not yet been elevated.

recognizably a rite of passage. However, when one considers the stages of separation, transition, and incorporation, the AoA is, in fact, a rite.

³⁸⁰ Before an individual is offered membership in a peerage, the Crown consults with the Order. Usually a candidate's merits are discussed and the Order makes a recommendation to the Crown, but the King and Queen are not required to abide by the recommendation and can elevate whomever they please or not. However, despite the monarch's high position, only a knight can create a knight. There have been rare occasions when a king was not a knight. In those situations, a knight's hand must support the king, either by resting on the king's shoulder or on the sword, as the new knight is being created.

³⁸¹ Johanna Trewpeny, Personal interview, 04 Mar. 2017.

Society members who are being elevated often participate in a vigil celebration; usually a more experienced member of the Order has been serving as mentor and shepherds the novitiate through the vigil period, which includes planning both the vigil celebration and the elevation ceremony.³⁸³ Each of these events is highly personal and no one ceremony will be satisfactorily meaningful to all. The vigil and elevation ceremonies should be reflective of the prospective peer. As Malcolm MacEoghainn, KSCA, put it:

One of the things about a vigil, for me, was the way it spoke to my spirit. Every person is different, and in my opinion, every vigil should be. Whether it be lit by candles and be an all night endurance run or well lit with the voices of singing in the background, whatever it takes to transcend the "here and now" and help the individual find that magic [W]hatever is needed to get them to focus on what it means to be more than they see themselves to be.³⁸⁴

The vigil period is ostensibly based on the highly ritualized period of contemplation and purification a medieval squire spent before becoming a knight. In general, the candidate would cut his hair to demonstrate humility before God, take a bath to symbolize being washed clean of the sins of his previous life, and be dressed in a white linen tunic to symbolize his new purity. The vigil evening was passed in prayer and the soon-to-be-knight's sword would be set on the altar to be blessed. Sir Justin de Leon's vigil echoed this. He cut eight inches of hair from his long tresses "as a nod to humility and sacrifice." Then he sequestered himself in a tent that was mostly decorated in shades of white. There was a makeshift altar on which items significant to him or to the idea of knighthood were

³⁸² On rare occasions, individuals are elevated on the spot. This is usually done because someone who knows the candidate well indicates to the Crown that the individual would prefer not to have a vigil.

³⁸³ Initially, only the Order of the Chivalry held vigil ceremonies. Later, they were extended to the rest of the peerages.

³⁸⁴ Gui Avec Chival, comment by Malcolm MacEoghainn, "What Makes A Good Vigil," *Facebook*, 23 Dec. 2016.

placed. He said, "The ritual at the beginning put me in the right frame of mind It allowed me to really focus, and to really experience it."³⁸⁵ In general, vigils in the SCA include a time and place for the candidate to listen to advice from others, food, and refreshments. Frequently alcohol is served at vigil celebrations. Some vigils are more raucous while others emphasize creating a medieval atmosphere. One participant described his vigil tent, which was a 10 x 10 popup that had been transformed into a faux cloister with theatrical gel to mimic stained glass, as "an amazing, transportive space."³⁸⁶ Regardless, the vigil ceremony is an opportunity for the SCA person to become fully immersed in the experience of his or her persona.

After recovering from the initial shock of being invited to join the Order of the Pelicans, Johanna Trewpeny realized she didn't know the expectations of the Pelican community and she had no official mentor as she had never been a protégé to a Pelican, the normal path that one takes to the Order.³⁸⁷ Another Pelican from her local group, Yseult of Broceliande, O.P., O.L., volunteered to help Johanna prepare. Johanna recalled thinking that when she was awarded her arms she felt confident; she saw that as a title. Though she did not perceive that elevation in her status as joining a community, she admits that it changed the way she thought about herself.

It raised my sights from my local group to the larger group I was officially a Kingdom person now. Before that, I had known about An Tir, but I had really not had any contact with An Tir Now I suddenly felt a kinship with the Kingdom because I had been recognized by a larger

³⁸⁵ Gui Avec Chival, comment by Justin de Leon, "What Makes A Good Vigil," *Facebook*, 23 Dec. 2016.

³⁸⁶ Gui Avec Chival, comment by Peter Olsen, "What Makes A Good Vigil," *Facebook*, 23 Dec. 2016.

³⁸⁷ One of the reasons Johanna did not have an Archos or a Pelican is because of the nature of the close mentoring bond. Her father said that whomever she chose as a mentor had to be a Christian and share her spiritual path.

group than my own . . . and that made me more interested in the larger group.³⁸⁸

The Award of Arms confirmed that Johanna could be the medieval self she had imagined and be successful. She didn't have to try to conform to a narrow expectation for behavior, other than being courteous and honorable, which is Johanna's natural state. Becoming a Pelican was altogether different for her. Johanna's response and her consideration of the norms of the Pelicans demonstrate her awareness of the significance of the ritual and the desire to be successfully integrated into her new community of Pelicans.

The end goal of rites of passage is achieving incorporation. In groups like the SCA, the ritual passages help define a 'before' period, a time of training that is 'a betwixt and between,' and an 'after' in which the transformation of the persona is complete, at least for the moment. Turner suggests that *communitas*—the liminal period—and structure are cyclical. "Maximization of *communitas* provokes maximization of structure, which in its turn produces revolutionary strivings for renewed *communitas*. In van Gennep's observations, all the rituals of passage include a physical removal from the rest of the world, physical changes of appearance—as with hair cutting or special clothing—and basic conceptual changes in one's sense of self. When this progression is integrated into a framework for identity creation, it can establish a new way of seeing and acting. The new peer is officially confirmed and socially recognized by others as having a new identity and community.³⁸⁹ Some knights even change their names at their elevation. As the historic knight's ritual bath washed away his sins, a new name can be a persona's second baptism. Some SCA knights take a surname based on their knight or their knight's

³⁸⁸ Johanna Trewpeny, Personal interview, 04 Mar. 2017.

³⁸⁹ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford UP, 1977) 95.

lineage. It also creates an opportunity for a knight to make a different name choice, perhaps to one that might be more period and more persona accurate.³⁹⁰ For example, when he was knighted, Brian of Ledbury became Brian Caius Brittanicus, KSCA, in keeping with this tradition.

For Dame Johanna Trewpeny, the experience of her vigil and the elevation ceremony allowed her to integrate her real-world identity with her persona. Though Johanna is a devout Christian and willing to witness to any who are interested, she is careful not to impose her beliefs on others. She is mindful about creating an environment that is welcoming and comfortable to all. However, for her vigil and ceremony, she was able to incorporate her everyday world faith and values into her persona's elevation experience. For example, Johanna maintains an alcohol free camp and didn't want to have alcohol at her vigil. But mindful that people who were attending her vigil may not know her expectations, she made arrangements. Outside her camp, her sisters set up a table with flowers and platters of candles and a sign that said, "You are welcome to come in, please leave your alcohol out here." People left their mugs on the table and entered the vigil space. Yseult had sent word out that Johanna loved roses, and the response was overwhelming. So many people brought her flowers that they had to get more vases. Her vigil's ambience was beautiful. Johanna's father made a large Norse log³⁹¹ fire around which people gathered. There were tables of period foods and desserts, both donated and purchased. Her vigil space created an opportunity for attendees to know her better by

³⁹⁰ William Geoffrey the Rogue, Personal communication, 05 Mar. 2017.

³⁹¹ The Norse log is sometimes called a Swedish torch. It is made by standing a section of log on one end, splitting it in pie-shaped sections, but only down three-quarters of the way. Then lint or kindling is pushed into the splits and a fire is built to ignite the cracks. The result is a freestanding heat source than can be used as a cook top and can be extinguished and used again. It burns until the core burns away and then suddenly extinguishes itself.

displaying her achievements and crafts. She exhibited her award regalia on a table with a guest book.



Figure 18. Vigil Display. Johanna's awards and her crafts were displayed on a table. Photo supplied by Johanna Trewpeny, 05 Mar. 2017.

Alongside, in an open tent, she provided her special punch and displayed examples of the painted silk banners for which she has become renown, a picture book, and a hand painted veil that she would wear during her ceremony. The edge of her veil was painted with blue swirling waves with her badge, a cross with a sapphire pimperl on a green stem and leaf on it, standing firm on the waves.³⁹² Hanging over all, was a large banner with her motto: "Commitment to excellence for the glory of God."



Figure 19. Verse and Honorable Escutchion Banners. Two of the banners that accompanied Johanna into her elevation ceremony. Photos supplied by Johanna Trewpeny, 05 Mar. 2017.

The same banner preceded her the next day as she processed into Court for her elevation ceremony. Not far removed from the fire and festivities, Johanna sat vigil in a private tent where people who wished to offer her advice could sit and chat with her.

In addition to the personalized vigil, Johanna wrote her own ceremony and oath. Of utmost importance was the wording, since she reserves her oath of fealty for God and her family alone. She was very concerned that her oath be one of service. “There’s many people who . . . play the game and then there’s their real life and there’s a disconnect . . . but I am me. My name may change, what people call me may change, but I am still me and what comes from my mouth I am beholden to.”³⁹³ She wanted the oath to be

³⁹² *The Scarlet Pimpernel*'s chivalrous Sir Percy Blakeney has been Johanna's hero since high school. His selflessness and willingness to forgive wrongs done to him is a model to which Johanna aspires. She created a group of girls in high school that imagined themselves the sisters of the Scarlet Pimpernel's group. Johanna called herself Sapphire Blakeney. It is that flower that marks her badge and shows up on her veil.

³⁹³ Johanna Trewpeny, Personal interview, 04 Mar. 2017.

something she could say without hesitation. The ceremony included many personally important elements from both her modern and SCA life. For example, Johanna always wanted to be a titled lady; a childhood favorite book, *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses*, inspired her persona name.



Figure 20. Johanna enters through an archway of bows for her elevation to the Order of the Pelican. Photo supplied by Johanna Trewpeny, 05 Mar. 2017.

In the story, a knight rescues Lady Joanna from being forced to marry against her will.

Johanna had a friend play the theme song from the Disney movie “The Black Arrow” as she moved up the aisle. She was heralded in as Honorable Lady Johanna Archos³⁹⁴

Trewpeny, crossing under an archway constructed of bows. The bows are significant to Johanna; in the Kingdom archery community, she is considered a cornerstone.³⁹⁵

Therefore, it was important to her that the archery community shared in her recognition. She took her oath on the Bow of the Summits, which was wielded by her close friend William Cristofore of Devonshire who was serving as the Captain of Eagles—the Principality of the Summits' archery champion. Friends and family carried two banners bearing her motto and another banner bearing an excerpted verse from Daniel 11:32, “They that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” Throughout her vigil and elevation ceremony, Johanna was able to infuse into her persona's experience an amalgam of the influences that literature, pop culture, and religion had on the values of her modern self.³⁹⁶

The preparations for Johanna's elevation were not limited to the vigil celebration and oath; Johanna also needed to consider her clothing. For example, her elevated station would entitle her to wear a cap of maintenance. Johanna researched historical caps and found that they were made from red silk velvet lined with ermine. Though happy with the

³⁹⁴ Archos is the highest level of achievement currently available to archers. The archery community considers it their own version of peerage since they are unable to achieve Society peerage directly though a combat peerage, though they can become Laurels or Pelican through their art or service. The archery community treats the achievement with the deference of a peerage. An Archos is entitled to wear white bracer and often marks his or her student, known as Arcuarius, with a red bracer echoing the knight and squire relationship signified by the white and red belt.

³⁹⁵ At her elevation, a letter was read praising Johanna's work with the archery score site, an online clearinghouse for all archery marshals to post archers' scores. Her effort on the score site has raised the Kingdom of An Tir to prominence across the Society.

³⁹⁶ People's ability to import their own idea of the medieval, without the strictures of historical fact and authenticity makes the SCA unique among re-enactment groups. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Black Arrow* was written in 1888, nearly fifty years after the Eglinton tournament and reflects the same romantic vision of the Middle Ages. Nearly 100 years later, in 1985, Walt Disney Studios made a full-length film, “The Black Arrow,” which continued the romanticized version into the modern era. In every case, the core values of chivalry and honor were contrasted with baser behavior. Perhaps the continued trope speaks to the need of people to be inspired by the elevated acts of others.

knowledge, Johanna recognized that she could not afford to construct a period appropriate cap and had resolved to save for one. However, quite characteristic of the generosity displayed in the SCA, Yseult donated the special velvet necessary for Johanna to construct her own hat.



Figure 21. Yseult of Broceliande, O.P., O.L., helps adjust the medallion of her order on the newly elevated Dame Johanna Trewpeny. Johanna wears the Cap of Maintenance she made from the gifted velvet. Photo supplied by Johanna Trewpeny, 05 Mar. 2017.

Once made, Johanna provided the hat to the King and Queen so that it could be presented to her in court.³⁹⁷ Knowing that she would emerge from the elevation with the cap—

which marks her as a peer—Johanna considered what she could wear on her head that would not interfere with the hat being placed on her. She chose to wear the veil described previously that she decorated with her badge. In addition to the veil and cap, Johanna wore a new blue linen dress. Yseult donated the linen and other women from her local group constructed and double-dyed the fabric so it would be Johanna's favorite shade of blue. Johanna's elevation ceremony dress stood in sharp contrast to her vigil clothing. For her vigil, she purposefully wore the very first dress she had ever constructed for the SCA, which was made from bed sheets. "For me, it was very much a before and after picture. This is who you were and this is who you are now. It's kind of extreme from sheets to linen with a silken velvet hat."³⁹⁸

Johanna's elevation dress served as focal point for the efforts of women in her community. And, in stark contrast to van Gennepe's notion of the transition as being without affiliation, Johanna felt even more connected. "All the support and care and love and showing me that I mattered by so many different people, it was really, really a blessing to my heart." Johanna's vigil experience aligns more closely with Bruce Lincoln's notion of enclosure, metamorphosis, and emergence.³⁹⁹ In fact, in every discussion I had with peers who have experienced a vigil, they felt exactly as Johanna with regard to the depth of support throughout the experience; even when they were cloistered away, people came to them to share in the experience and give words of advice and encouragement. The continued feeling of close community, which is intensified by

³⁹⁷ The recipients of the viscounty and ducal coronets also arrange for the design and construction of their extremely personal regalia.

³⁹⁸ Johanna Trewpeny, Personal interview, 04 Mar. 2017.

³⁹⁹ Bruce Lincoln, *Emerging from the Chrysalis: Studies in Rituals of Women's Initiation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1981).

the ritual, may be a result of the fact that the very essence of the SCA experience is liminal to begin with. Perhaps the nature of the pre-existing liminality means that the ritual form, which should feel more isolating, does not feel that way because everyone involved is already sharing the *communitas* of a liminal experience.

The vigil is generally conducted the night before the elevation. Obviously the elevation has an impact on the individual undergoing the ritual—which I will discuss shortly—but it also affects those viewing the ceremony. For example, Viscountess Vestia Antonia Aurelia described a part of the Principality of the Summits' Investiture. She said:

There's a particular part that gets me every time: the Grail. 'It is all that we are, for it takes an artisan to craft it, a servant to bear it, a warrior to defend it and a noble to drink from it.' Every time I hear that part of the ceremonial, I tear up. It sums up all the ways we can be, and all the paths that we can choose, in the SCA—all those paths I myself have walked. I've been the artisan, the servant, the warrior, the noble. And each different path too often excludes the other paths when it individually dominates my time. But in the Grail, they come together without conflict. In the Grail, I am whole.⁴⁰⁰

Vestia's comment reflects the strength of the emotional impact of ceremonies within the context of the SCA, on the audience. Countess Berengaria de Montfort de Carcassonne, O.P., likens the experience to emotional exercise. "I think people need to learn to be genuinely happy for others" and court recognition provides an opportunity for people to practice.⁴⁰¹ Both Vestia's and Berengaria's comments demonstrate the positive emotional value wrought by witnessing an elevation. These are the other-praising emotions of elevation, admiration, and gratitude to which Sarah Algoe and Jonathan Haidt refer in

⁴⁰⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Vestia Antonia Aurelia, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016

⁴⁰¹ Berengaria de Montfort de Carcassonne, "Princess Survey." Received by Deborah L. Parker, 06 Apr. 2016.

their research.⁴⁰² The elevation of a peer is frequently described not as an elevation but as recognition. In other words, one's peer-like qualities and conduct already existed prior to the elevation; the ceremony is just recognition of the fact. Viscountess Marian Staarveld, O.L. said, "Watching someone be recognized as a peer is one of the most thrilling things ever! Seeing someone really internalize that all those fantastic people think they are an equal? Amazing."⁴⁰³ For some royal peers, watching elevations is a reminder of their time as monarch. Viscountess Diana de Winterton said, "Since serving as Princess, ceremonies mean a lot more to me, now that I understand the time, effort and personal commitment that goes into earning a peerage or being elevated to a position of royalty, and how good it feels to just be recognized for what you have done."⁴⁰⁴ Court ritual and particularly elevations are opportunities to affirm not only the individuals being recognized, but also the underlying values of the society.

Being Transformed

Just as people bring parts of their lived-world identities into the SCA, whether it is a name, or a connection to a family culture, or a strong religious faith, the Society persona also contributes to the real-world identity. For example, Captain Rayna Dorian of the Kali Ma captured the impact of the SCA's emphasis on courtesy on her contemporary person when she recalled an award she received in the Principality of Cynagua. She said:

It was more meaningful to receive that award than any other . . . to celebrate courtesy and recognize it among the populace is a very special thing that promotes unity and acceptance. This is the spirit of the SCA alive in my heart even to this day where I don't attend regularly anymore but the virtue still plays

⁴⁰² I discuss Cognitive Appraisal Theory and other-praising emotions at length in Chapter IV.

⁴⁰³ Marian Staarveld, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Mar. 2016.

⁴⁰⁴ Diana de Winterton, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 18 Jan. 2016.

out in my life.⁴⁰⁵

The award for courtesy is just one of the many kinds of appreciation and recognition people regularly experience in the SCA. In today's modern age of semi-anonymity, just the fact that someone notices and affirms an individual is different. Recognition validates that hard work pays off in ways that aren't monetary and reinforces the individual's positive personal concept.

The highest validation of SCA participation is admittance to a peerage. The path of a peer is by its very nature goal-oriented—not necessarily to become a peer—but to achieve a level of excellence in an area. Seamus O'Caellaigh said, "Ever since I learned that the Order of the Laurel existed I wanted to be part of it. It has also been an important goal to me." Seamus was already deeply committed to research in medieval science when he decided to work with Master Eduardo Francesco Maria Lucrezia, O.P., O.L. Together they agreed to work as student and Maestro for a year to see if they were a good match and if Seamus had the drive to put effort into his goal. Master Eduardo gave Seamus a brown belt to mark the occasion and demonstrate their relationship and agreement—much like a knight gives a squire a red belt—and then helped him on his student project path. At the end of the year, Seamus had completed his project and they decided to alter the relationship to that of Apprentice and Maestro.⁴⁰⁶ Apprenticing ceremonies differ, but when Seamus became apprenticed to Master Eduardo, Seamus drew up a formal contract. In it, Master Eduardo promised to "provide support, opportunity, and guidance in all his

⁴⁰⁵ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Captain Rayna Dorian of the Kali Ma mka Nicolina Marie Santoro, "Favorite SCA Ritual," *Facebook*, 22 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁰⁶ Seamus, a pharmacist in modern life, completed a medieval herbal for his geographic region, and had it published.

[Seamus'] endeavors," and Seamus swore "to be true in my search for knowledge."⁴⁰⁷ Seamus' brown belt was replaced by a green one—the color of an apprentice—and the oaths were witnessed and celebrated. Throughout the experience, Seamus said working with Master Eduardo and his fellow apprentices was encouraging. He is validated by small displays of support like being tagged on a Facebook post by Eduardo when he says how "proud he is of his apprentice." Seamus said, "I do not get nearly as much in the modern world."⁴⁰⁸ Similarly, Master Luciano Foscari, O.P., M.oD., has specific expectations for his students including fighting at two kingdom-level events. In this way, his cadets can fight with members of the Order of Defense, which will improve their fighting and help them to be recognized and discussed when it comes time to elevate them. In both situations, the very nature of setting goals and achieving them is transformational for the students.

The SCA allows people the opportunity to envision themselves differently and practice doing something that they weren't originally comfortable with. One of the most frequently cited changes among the many peers interviewed in the course of the research was an increase in confidence. Dame Johanna Trewpeny, O.P., who has terrible stage fright and is very shy even though she's very outgoing, said that the SCA changed her. "Not in who and what I am, but it changed me in my perception of my ability to do it in person." Her daily life was lived completely and entirely among Christians before she started participating in the SCA. Her only non-Christian community was an on-line gaming group called the Purple Pirates. Her interactions there reinforced in her a sense

⁴⁰⁷ Text of the oaths was provided in personal communication, Seamus O'Caellaigh, 19 Mar. 2017.

⁴⁰⁸ Seamus O'Caellaigh, Personal communication, 19 Mar. 2017.

that she was a good organizer and people motivator, but she recognized that all those interactions were on-line, not in person. When she moved to a place without Internet, she lost that contact. The SCA provided her an opportunity to have the same sort of impact through her enthusiastic volunteerism as she'd had in the Purple Pirates, but now it was in person. Before the SCA she said, "I didn't have much confidence in me, as a person, in reality. I know the SCA in not 'in reality' exactly, but it's in reality with real people I no longer have this tentative question about myself of 'Could I make it in the real world?'"⁴⁰⁹ Viscountess Nadezhda Volynskaiia, O.P., said, "The process of becoming a royal peer gave me self-confidence, and that translates directly into the modern world."⁴¹⁰ From public speaking to dealing with high-powered officials in the government, former princesses and queens commented on interpersonal skills they gained from their time on the throne. Viscountess Ceridwen ferch Morgan, O.P., said, "I'm slowly learning to take the lessons . . . and the confidence I've gained from being in the SCA into the modern world."⁴¹¹ The transferability extends beyond the business world. Countess Astrid av det Fjord Landskap said, "I don't think anyone who plays in the SCA can say it doesn't impact their everyday life. I have learned to think in a different way to fix something or just figure out another way to make something work. The skills you chose to learn in the SCA can affect and have an impact on your modern life in a positive way."⁴¹²

According to Viscountess Suvia filia Hereberti, O.L., the flexibility of persona play

⁴⁰⁹ Personal interview, Johanna Trewpeny, 04 Mar. 2017.

⁴¹⁰ Nadezhda Volynskaiia, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 23 May 2016.

⁴¹¹ Ceridwen ferch Morgan, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Apr. 2016.

⁴¹² Astrid av det Fjord Landskap, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 25 May 2016.

allows people “to give expressions to different versions of yourself.”⁴¹³ That aspect can also lead to a range of physical transformations, from physical fitness to gender identity. Viscountess Vestia Antonia Aurelia said, “The process of armoring up creates a cascade of physiological changes that I can feel happening as they happen. The slow build of adrenaline, the rise of testosterone, [and] the expansion of awareness.”⁴¹⁴ Individuals who take up martial combat may find that they need to increase their physical stamina. Some give up smoking or increase their exercise in their daily world so that they can be more competitive in the SCA arena. Often times, individuals who are shy and maintain a private social life find a rich group of friends and develop a chosen family in the SCA. In short, SCA participants come to an event as their contemporary selves; when they pass through the physical gate, which denotes the border of the event space, they adopt a persona. Eventually, the life they have created in the SCA impacts their day-to-day person, usually for the better. Whether those changes are formalized through rites of passage as described by van Gennep, Turner, or Lincoln or remain informal, the individual still experiences the difference.

⁴¹³ Suvia filia Hereberti, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 12 Mar. 2016.

⁴¹⁴ Vestia Antonia Aurelia, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 24 May 2016.

CHAPTER VI

THE ONCE AND FUTURE PRINCESS:

CREATING AND PERFORMING PRINCESS TEMPERANCE,

AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY

Once upon a time in a kingdom by the sea, there lived a princess . . .

Or at least a little girl who wanted to be a princess.

Every Halloween, she would plan to be a princess, designing her gown out of scarves and tulle. But she lived in Montana, and it snows in Montana in late October. So, instead of being a princess, she trick-or-treated every year dressed as a hobo—*it was warmer that way*. Despite her humble attire, the girl knew she was a princess. She demanded to be called Princess Grace. And, for a while, her loving parents did just that. Those happy days came to an abrupt end when, lacking a traditional scepter, she improvised with a toilet brush. The years passed. (*To hear her tell it, she slaved away setting the dining room table, doing the dishes, and—as extra punishment—repairing buttons and hemming everyone’s clothes; never mind that she asked for the sewing lessons.*) Along the way she kissed a few frogs. But one day, she met her prince—*kind of like Disney’s Prince Ali, a diamond in the rough, but more Norse*. Together they had many great adventures. One took them to a strange land called the Summits. Everyone was so nice, and there was so much to do that they decided to stay—at least on weekends. The SCAdians—which is what the inhabitants called themselves—called the boy and girl Tryggr and Temperance, respectively. Then one day, something more wonderful than usual happened. In a fearsome battle to see who would become the next ruler of the land—called the Coronet Tourney—against a mock but mighty foe, Tryggr won. And in no time at all, Prince Tryggr placed the Coronet of the Summits on Temperance’s head and she became Princess Temperance. *It only took half a century, but the girl was finally, really and truly, a princess.*

If you know your fairy tales, you are expecting me to say, “and they lived happily ever after,” but putting on the Coronet was just the beginning. Now for the rest of the story . . .



Figure 22. Princess Temperance. Photo by Tessina Felice Gianfigliuzzi mka Geneva Borland, August 2015.

My Frame: Identity, Liminality, Ethnography, and Performance

Who we are at our core is the sum of our experiences. I am someone's daughter, mother, and wife. I am a teacher, a scholar, and a friend. I love to dance and read. I am passionate, competitive, and smart. That I can speak of myself in this way is evidence that my self is *reflexive*. I see myself in relation to others and, by comparison, know myself better. Much of this knowledge is dependent on a familiar social structure; when that structure is dissolved, I have only the shadows of what Pierre Bourdieu calls *habitus*, the deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions resulting from my life experiences. I have a sense about who I was in the structure I knew. The SCA creates a liminal space that initially breaks down the modern world structures that allow us to define our roles and categorize others. Without those structures, participants find themselves equals with other participants in a temporary *communitas*; this disruption of the normal structure allows participants to tap into their creative potential. Eventually, a structure re-emerges. However, Victor Turner proposed that people released from structure into *communitas* return to structure revitalized by their experience.⁴¹⁵ The new structure is altered; inside the SCA, this structure mimics a monarchy but is based on an idealized level of courtesy and honor. As a viscountess⁴¹⁶ of the Summits, I am a participant and can speak to the roles SCAdians adopt, which are centered on a shared positive view of each other and ourselves—we are all the “in-group.” That is not to say there are not differences or strife. The sorts of negative classifications that occur in the modern world sometimes find a way to rear their ugly head. But, that is not the view of

⁴¹⁵ Victor Turner, “Liminality and Communitas,” *Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969) 129.

⁴¹⁶ In the SCA, a viscountess is a woman who has served as the ruler of a principality—a division of a kingdom.

the SCA that predominates in my mind, and that is the crux of the matter. The hardest part about writing an auto-ethnography is analyzing oneself and asking, “Am I a reliable narrator of the cultural experience that is the SCA? Can I represent the culture fairly? Is my experience useful to others in creating cultural understanding?” I believe the answer to these questions is yes, with a caveat. No single representation can provide a complete understanding of any culture. The best that can be said of any ethnography is that it provides a window through which to observe, in a limited way, the happenings of a culture. This chapter is meant to provide insight about how my performance as Princess of the Summits created community and transformed both my social identity and my real-world sense of my self.

My Vision of a Princess and the Fairy Tales That Shaped It

To understand how my experience changed me, it is important to know who I was at the beginning. The creation of my identity as a princess took a lifetime and began with my love of fairy tales, which—when I was a small child—my father read to me almost every night. My general conception of what it meant to be a princess was shaped, like most little girls, by the media to which I was exposed. Since I grew up in a time before VHS, I didn’t have instant access to the film versions of princesses like Snow White, Cinderella, or Sleeping Beauty. But, I did have their stories in print, theirs and so many others. Thanks in part to Hans Christian Andersen, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Andrew Lang and Christine Chaundler, I developed my own sense of what a princess looks like, how she conducts herself, and the meaning and importance of independence, loyalty, self-sacrifice, integrity, manners, justice, and nobility (regardless of station)—qualities every person should have but especially princesses. Three tales in particular illustrate my

understanding of how I should perform as princess: “The Roses of St. Elizabeth,” “Mother Hildegarde,” and “The Frog Prince.”

Though the moral derived from “The Roses of St. Elizabeth”⁴¹⁷ is chiefly to always tell the truth. The story also reminded me that a princess should not be seen doing manual labor. In fact, in *The Princess’ Handbook*—a text made specifically for upcoming princesses of the Summits and given to me by a former princess—princesses are exhorted to “do very little or no obvious physical work while wearing the hat.”⁴¹⁸ The populace takes this injunction quite seriously: Princesses should not stoop to pick up anything, and they should not carry anything heavier than a rose. Generally, this rule applies to princes too, though they can exert themselves more if the effort is chivalric in its nature. In “The Roses of St. Elizabeth,” a young queen with the help of one of her serving maids carries bread loaves to her poor people while her husband, the king, is off hunting. When he returns unexpectedly, surrounded by haughty nobleman who are looking askance at her for walking in the street, she wishes not to shame her husband further by having everyone see her working in such a menial way. When the king asks what she has in her apron, on an impulse she says, “Roses.” Instantly, she knows that she was wrong to lie and that she should have bravely spoken the truth. She flushes crimson with shame. The King, seeing that something is distressing her, asks to see the contents of her apron; what she reveals is an apron full of red and white roses. God in his wisdom changed the bread loaves into roses and, in doing so, made the untruth true. This story’s underlying moral is clear: Tell

⁴¹⁷ “The Roses of St. Elizabeth” appears in *My Book of Beautiful Legends*, with illustrations by A. C. Michael (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., n.d.) 5-7.

⁴¹⁸ The Coronets of the Summits are made of silver and are both beautiful and heavy. They are fondly referred to as “the hats.” Upon victory in the Coronet Tournament, the soon-to-be-princesses are supplied with a handbook to guide them in their preparations before Investiture (*The Princess’ Handbook*, Collection of Advice from Princesses of the Summits, Oregon) 8.

the truth. But, there are other lessons to be drawn as well. Even while the tale reinforces the prohibition on manual labor, the story highlights the idea that a princess should serve her people and provide for their welfare. On that first night as Tanista⁴¹⁹—as I lay in bed thinking about the memorable day—I recalled the story from my childhood. The unconscious recollection of this story speaks to the process of my mental transfiguration from Honorable Lady Temperance to Princess Temperance; I had begun to internalize the injunction against menial labor when in the public eye.

The story “The Roses of St. Elizabeth” also illustrates that it is important to speak the truth but to do so with an awareness of the impact of your words. In my family we call the concept of a measured truth the Elven truth. To speak an Elven truth means one is making a statement that is accurate but not full, a half-truth. This motif of the Elven truth may have come from *The Lord of the Rings*, but it became a family colloquialism after reading Christopher Paoli’s *Eragon*. In my advice to future princesses, which is recorded in a special handwritten journal that is passed from princess to princess, I wrote:

“Measure your words. Always speak the truth in defense of the defenseless, be generous in your praise and stingy and gentle with your criticism.” This advice highlights both the importance of speaking the truth and of showing compassion. Though many fairy tales emphasize the importance of telling the truth, the one that impressed my young mind the most—perhaps because of its gruesome details—came from *The Wonder Clock*. The story is called “Mother Hildegarde.”⁴²⁰ In this tale, a kind and hardworking princess is

⁴¹⁹ In the Gaelic system for passing on titles and lands, a *Tanist* is the man selected to succeed to the kingship. In the SCA, once the victor of the Coronet Tournament has been decided, he or she is crowned Tanist or Tanista. The female consort of the Tanist is known as either ban-Tanist (wife of the Tanist) or the *Tanista*.

wronged by her stepmother and cast into a well to drown. However, the cistern opens to another land where the princess encounters an old woman, Mother Hildegarde, who offers the girl food, lodging, and a promise of payment if she will serve her faithfully for a year and a day.⁴²¹ The girl does as she is asked until one day the old woman has to take a journey and gives the princess keys to all the rooms of the house with the specific injunction against going into the little room. Of course the princess goes into that room, that's how fairy tales work. The room is nearly empty except for a tall jar; when she peers inside the jar, she sees water and the reflection of Mother Hildegarde looking back at her. Surprised, she quickly tries to close the lid. A strand of her hair touches the water and instantly all the hair on her head is changed to pure gold. When Mother Hildegarde returns, the princess tries to hide her hair and denies all wrongdoing. Mother Hildegarde gives the princess multiple chances to tell the truth and with each denial the punishment becomes greater. Ultimately, after being abandoned in a forest and losing her ability to speak, the princess is rescued by a prince who marries her despite her silence. But at the birth of each of her three children, Mother Hildegarde arrives and gives the princess the opportunity to tell the truth. When the princess refuses, Mother Hildegarde steals the babies away in the night, smearing blood on the princess' mouth to make it appear that she ate her children. After the third child, the prince cannot protect the princess from the people calling for her execution. While flames are enveloping the princess, Mother Hildegarde appears in the midst of the fire with the stolen children and the princess finally tells the truth. Mother Hildegarde says, "The truth is better late than not at all . . .

⁴²⁰ "Mother Hildegarde" appears in a special edition of *The Wonder Clock*, with illustrations by Howard Pyle (Chicago: Cadmus Books E.M. Hale and Co., 1915) 191-202.

⁴²¹ In the SCA, it is not uncommon to see student and master relationships based on contracts of a year and a day. After that time, they can be renegotiated or ended.

and if you had but spoken in the first place, I would have freely forgiven you.”⁴²² The flames are dowsed, the princess’ speech and children are restored to her, and everyone lives happily ever after. The chief moral is reiterated at the conclusion of the story: It is better to tell the truth in the first place. However, the story of “Mother Hildegarde” also demonstrates the importance of compassion and forgiveness. These skills combine with truth speaking in the form of diplomacy. As sovereigns we needed to use diplomacy on many occasions. For example, while we were Tanist and Tanista, a branch that had long felt neglected by their Baron and Baroness was exploring leaving the Summits to join lands to the north. We visited the aggrieved branch and listened. Then, we visited with the Baron and Baroness and listened. Then, during our reign, through diplomacy and an increased royal presence, we worked to repair some of the discord and managed to maintain the borders of the Principality.

Of the many lessons that fairy tales instilled in me, the one I most frequently cite to my students is that of keeping one’s word. Not infrequently when talking to students about the need for honest communication, I can be heard to say, “Your word is your bond.” Countless fairy tales emphasize this ideal. Before I became a princess, I took that saying at its face value; that is to say that one’s word is a valid oral contract—one that defines expectations—and I completely failed to take into account the emotional connotation entwined with the word *bond*. As Princess, I finally understood the bond that was so clearly referenced in the Grimm brothers’ story of “The Frog Prince.”⁴²³

⁴²² “Mother Hildegarde,” *The Wonder Clock* (Chicago: Cadmus Books, 1915).

⁴²³ “The Frog Prince,” *Household Stories from the collection of the Brothers Grimm*, translated by Lucy Crane (New York: Dover Publications, reprinted 1963) 32-6.

The Once and Future Princess: An Auto-Ethnography

As most will recall, a frog retrieves a princess' golden ball from the bottom of the well in return for her promise to love him, have him as a companion and playfellow, let him sit at her table, eat from her plate, drink from her cup, and sleep in her bed. But once the princess has her ball back, she runs off. When the frog comes to the castle to claim his due, the king tells the princess, "That which thou hast promised must thou perform."⁴²⁴ At every turn, the princess resists doing what she had promised and the king reprimands her. Ultimately, rather than making a place for him on her silken bed, she hurls the frog toward the wall. At that moment, the frog magically transforms back into a prince and they are married. That story has always been problematic for me; I never thought that the princess deserved that happy ending. I still don't think she does. She seemed to me to have never learned the importance of the value of one's word. In that respect, the tale continues to be unsatisfying. However, now that I have been a princess, I think I understand that the central lesson in the story is not about keeping one's word as much as it is about the quality and depth of bond that can be created by giving one's word. In "The Frog Prince," the prince's faithful servant Henry, whose heart had to be bound with iron bands to keep it from breaking when his master was turned into a frog, was overjoyed by his master's return. When the prince took back his natural form, the iron bands fell away as Henry's heart swelled with joy. Henry's loyalty is the real lesson of "The Frog Prince." I didn't understand the depth of Henry's bond until I became Princess and experienced it for myself. The import of one's words and the bond that is invoked by swearing an oath took on greater weight than ever before through the ritual oath giving

⁴²⁴ "The Frog Prince" 34.

that was integral to the process of becoming a princess. The Prince and Princess speak their oaths at *Investiture*:⁴²⁵

Know that in Us⁴²⁶ the blood of the Griffin runs true.
By its sign and upon its Grail We give Our oath:
To serve and protect the people of the Summits to the utmost of Our power.
At their hearths, in their crafts and against all their foes,
We shall be their true guardians.
We will mete justice, tempered with mercy, to all,
be they child or youth, man or woman, high or low.
This We swear, for so long as We rule the Summits,
and the high mountains hold the grail up to the sky.⁴²⁷
So swear I, Tryggr Tyresson
So swear I, Temperance Trewelove

In addition to pledging our oath during our Investiture, we also made pledges throughout our reign as the populace is offered the opportunity to swear an oath of fealty or service at each event.⁴²⁸ In response to the oaths taken by the people, we responded:

This oath do We hear, and for Our part,
We pledge to you and your household Our protection,
We will watch over and shelter you,
We will place Ourselves between you and all your foes,
for so long as We rule the Summits,
and the high mountains hold the grail up to the sky.
So say We, Tryggr, Fyrst⁴²⁹ of the Summits.
So say We, Temperance, Fyrsta of the Summits.

⁴²⁵ Investiture, like Coronation, is a ceremony to install a monarch. In SCA principalities, princes and princesses are invested with authority. In An Tir, new monarchs are chosen twice a year at a Coronet tournament. Generally, the victor and consort are *invested* three months later.

⁴²⁶ When speaking or writing in the royal persona, I have used capital letters to designate the royal We.

⁴²⁷ The mountain and grail symbolize Crater Lake and Mount Mazama. Crater Lake is a beautiful lake in the caldera of the mountain, hence the grail. The whole area is a National Park.

⁴²⁸ Oaths of service are offered so that individuals who cannot offer fealty to another for reasons of religion or conscience can still pledge their support of the Crown or Coronet.

⁴²⁹ In Icelandic, *Fyrst* means first or beginning. We took these titles, rather than Prince and Princess, because they are period appropriate to my husband's persona, a Viking born in 962 A.D. Though history will record us as the 39th Prince and Princess, Tryggr and I chose the more persona appropriate terms Fyrst and Fyrsta. I will use these interchangeably with Prince and Princess.

When spoken in unison, as with the swearing of fealty, the theatrical aspect transforms to ritual. Each and every time I intoned those words, I felt a sacred bond grow between me and those who had sworn their oath to me. I felt a wave of support and experienced a sort of maternal interest toward my people. I finally understood the depth of faithful servant Henry's commitment to the Frog Prince.

In addition to having a well-formed idea about the conduct of princesses, I also had a clear picture of what a princess should look like; think of the pre-Raphaelite images of John William Waterhouse. His images also reflect an imagined medieval. Like Waterhouse, I imagined princesses as having long flowing or braided tresses and gowns of rich material with elegant sleeves. Appearance is important in both creating an image for others and for embracing a role.⁴³⁰ When we won and were going to be made Tanist and Tanista, I worried about my appearance. I realized I could no longer wear my well-worn and slightly holey underdress; it isn't regal to have holes in clothing. As I began making myself ready for Court, I experienced an internal debate about my appearance that rarely occurs in my daily life. "What should I wear? How should I look?" I realized that cameras would be capturing my image, and I would be representing the Summits. I felt I had an obligation to look good for the people because I was the embodiment of their dream. I almost always wear my hair in braids, but for that ceremony, I wore it down. Viscountess Acacia Gryffyn helped me arrange it and treated it with something that would smooth it and make it shine. After a while, I became more relaxed and was able to focus on being present and not worry about the digital representation of myself.

⁴³⁰ I discuss the connections drawn between appearance and identity in Chapter III. In that chapter, I reference G.P. Stone's "Appearance and the Self" in *Dress, Adornment, and the Social Order* (New York: John Wiley, 1965).

However, a princess' appearance communicates a message about the kind of game she plays. The tension between the historically authentic clothing and the Romantic image of a princess impacts each Princess's choice of clothing as she shapes her identity. An excellent example of the difficult balance can be seen in the comments of a young Thyra Tryggdottir, our daughter. When Thyra was just twelve, Countess Liesel von Langental, O.P., was serving her third reign as Princess of the Summits. At the time, Thyra commented that she liked the princess very much, but she didn't think she looked very "princess-y" because she was too plainly dressed. The Landsknecht attire is definitely not plain, but did include a white, starched headcloth that did not show Liesel's hair. What Liesel wore was extremely authentic and, a few years later, she was recognized for her dedication to persona authenticity with the Order of the Carp award.⁴³¹ However, Liesel's appearance did not match Thyra's view of what a princess should look like. The pastiche of fairy tales, fantasy literature, movies, and paintings combined to create my idea of the perfect princess and is representative of the way many SCA players conceive of their version of the Middle Ages. In my role as Princess of the Summits, I performed the lessons drawn from the fairy tales. I spoke the truth, endeavored to treat everyone with compassion, worked arduously to serve the populace of the Summits and provide for their needs, and—most importantly—I gave my oath and worked to honor the bond it created.

Upending Gendered Stereotypes

In many of the early fairy tales, the female protagonists were both beautiful and complex; they learned complicated lessons. These stories—unlike Disney movies—were gruesome and portrayed women as having a lot more pluck and ability to have a hand in

⁴³¹ I discuss the Order of the Carp award in Chapter III. It is recognition of excellence in persona development. Clothing is an outward symbol of this persona work.

their destiny. Rather than sitting and waiting to be rescued, these princesses worked to overcome the misfortunes that befell them. Unfortunately, the sanitized versions of these stories have emphasized a gendered binary for princes and princesses, one that robs princesses—and by extension girls—of their agency. From an outsider’s perspective, the role of princess in the SCA would seem to confirm the passivity that characterizes femininity in medieval romance literature too.⁴³² Initially, even from the emic perspective it would seem that way. The very first line in the first chapter of the *Principality of the Summits Princess’ Handbook* says, “You are a symbol.”⁴³³ In the Society, the Princess embodies grace and beauty and displays emotion. In each case, she would appear to have little agency; a princess’ *face*—the positive social-value-image one presents—to use Erving Goffman’s term, seems consonant with the diminished agency of objectification. In actuality however, as I experienced it, the role of the Princess is empowering. Symbolic meaning is constructed by understanding how a symbol operates in the context of the whole system. The Princess, as a symbol, embodies the culture’s primary level of meanings, values and attitudes and effectively acts to shape the social organization of the Society.⁴³⁴ Far from being a mere object, in her role as monarch the Princess champions the arts, inspires acts of chivalry, affects the culture of the SCA, and shares absolute command with her consort. In the process of being princess, I discovered that the stereotypical and idealized gender binaries epitomized by princes and princesses can be

⁴³² *Gender and Romance in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1994) by Susan Crane provides an interesting examination of gender in Romance literature.

⁴³³ *The Princess’ Handbook* is a notebook of assembled advice for how to plan for the work involved in being Princess. It is a self-published document. I was provided a copy by Viscountess Suvia filia Heriberti the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth Princess of the Summits.

⁴³⁴ Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford UP 1977) 61.

explored, performed, and, sometimes inverted in the liminal spaces created by the Society for Creative Anachronism.⁴³⁵

Initially, the exploration of gender roles in the SCA seems superficial and stereotypical. By invoking an imagined chivalric ideal of courtesy, men are positively reinforced for being helpful and considering the needs of others—especially women—above their own desires. Correspondingly, all women are encouraged to accept help with simple tasks, like carrying unwieldy loads, even though they can do the work by themselves. At first, most women I know are uncomfortable accepting help for a chore they can manage alone. Their reluctance is a side effect of the second wave of feminism. Known as the Superwoman Complex, this unwillingness is “an expectation of a superwoman that she can and should do everything.”⁴³⁶ Feminist Betty Friedan argued that rather than freeing women from societal limitations, the idea of superwomanhood created a new kind of enslavement. She recommended that the feminist movement work to reshape both gender roles, not just the role of women.⁴³⁷ In a way, the SCA does that. Once women understand that men’s helpfulness is part of the culture of courtesy and not an act of overt sexism, and that women also can provide help to others, they begin to appreciate the opportunity to help and be helped. Despite the superficiality of the exchange—men helping women to carry a load and women letting them help—the explicitness of action and intention contribute to a culture of respect, which is expressed as true equality in other areas of the SCA like the peerages or on the battlefield. The

⁴³⁵ I discuss the influence of garb on gender performance in Chapter III.

⁴³⁶ Judith Serrin, "Superwoman Complex A Pain In The Ego," *Boca Raton News* 28 July 1976.

⁴³⁷ Rosemarie Tong summarizes Friedan’s position from *The Second Stage* in her book *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (1998). 27-8.

social structures that code such actions as sexist in the modern world don't hold sway in the SCA, which cultivates a culture of service and courtesy regardless of gender.

Creating the Royal Personae

One of the greatest expressions of the service culture is seen in the actions of the royal *retinue*, a group of advisers and assistants to whom tasks can be entrusted. One of the first orders of business after we won the Coronet Tournament was to assemble a retinue. These people helped manage all the details of the royal production.⁴³⁸ Lots of this work is related to staging the performance of Court so that the ceremony of Court can appear effortless. Royal tailors, though not an official office, play an enormous role in presenting a royal front since clothing is a material display that enhances the atmosphere and helps participants embrace their royal status.

⁴³⁸ Our chief offices in our retinue consisted of a Head of Retinue, whose job is to provide detailed organization, planning, and support for the reign; Head Lady-in-Waiting (L-I-W), who is charged with the direct care and feeding of the Prince and Princess and organizing shifts of ladies-in-waiting so that neither the Prince nor the Princess is unattended at any time before they retire for the evening; the Head Guard, who, similar to the L-I-W, must schedule guards to attend both the Prince and Princess at all times; the Chamberlain, who is responsible for the transport and arrangement of all the material goods associated with Royalty (the thrones, the pavilion, the sacred relics, the Principality trailer); the Royal Scribe, who designs and distributes charters and recruits people to make original scrolls as needed; the Court Coordinator, who keeps the court schedule, records and reports awards to the Dexter Gauntlet—the officer in charge of maintaining records of awards throughout the Kingdom, and makes sure that every charter is properly signed and has a royal seal attached; the Herald, who is the official voice of court—calling people before the royals and reading the texts of each charter or scroll aloud; a Cup Bearer, who position is as adviser to the Royals—usually this is a very experienced peer who will understand the politics and demands of reigning; Largess Coordinator, who solicits donations of gifts, inventories them, and prepares them in gift bags for redistribution by the Prince and Princess; and a Camp Master, who arranges camping space in advance of an event and supervises the physical layout of the camp to ensure that the Prince and Princess are surrounded and that a suitably impressive entry is constructed to identify the royal camp. We also asked for a council of advisers, peers of the realm who we could consult in extreme cases. We did not need to seek their advice during our reign.



Figure 23. Fyrst Tryggr and Fyrsta Temperance. Photo by Diana de Winterton mka Diane Tripp Brazell, 20 June 2017.

Because I particularly admired the garb of Leora the Red, we contacted her to see if she would be willing to organize special clothing for the day of our Investiture, also known as *step-up*. Despite her busy real-world life, she spearheaded the entire project. We provided our

measurements, approved drawings, and provided feedback on the period and style, but she orchestrated all the work. Our Investiture clothing was more authentic than any garb we owned. Made of linen, the seams were hand-finished and decorated with hand-woven trim highlighting Tryggr’s heraldic colors.⁴³⁹ The design also incorporated a stylized raven appliqué.⁴⁴⁰ All was completely donated to us. This commitment of time and service by others for the love of the game produced in me a feeling of indebtedness and profound gratitude. I wanted to be a Princess worthy of their generosity.

⁴³⁹ The importance of authenticity in royal attire is discussed in Chapter III. Baroness Elspeth Ainslee Goldheart wove more than six yards of the trim on her inkle loom.

⁴⁴⁰ Anne Ingstad discusses the technique of appliqué in her article “The Textiles in the Oseberg Ship,” <www.forest.gen.nz/Medieval/articles/Oseberg/textiles/TEXTILE.HTM>. There is debate as to the authenticity of appliqué in Viking-era clothing.

Performing the Royal Personae

Once the stage has been set, the success of a reign depends on the performance of the monarchs. Just as the outward attire contributes to the appearance of royalty, generosity like that described in *Beowulf* contributes to the royal appearance too. Being royal is expensive. Royals should recognize the efforts of others with gifts. Much of the *largesse*, or generous giving, of nobles is achieved by donations from the populace. Throughout the SCA, skilled crafts people gift a wide variety of items to the reigning monarchs to be given away as largesse. Sometimes the efforts of these individuals are recognized in Court with an award called The Bountiful Hand; in this way, their generosity is acclaimed and encouraged, which serves a two-fold purpose: it acknowledges and appreciates the artisan and it makes it possible for the royals to maintain their generous giving by encouraging others to emulate the model. To manage all the donations and the gift bags, we had a designated steward for largesse items. He inventoried everything that came in so that I could write personalized thank you notes to the crafts people—if they included a tag indicating who made it—and he prepared gift bags in advance of events. Royals can keep items from the gift bags if they choose to, but usually almost everything is passed along. In Court, visiting royals exchange gift bags with other royalty. In this way, artisans' work is spread throughout the Society. In addition to the gifts given to other royals or the barons and baronesses of the area, the Prince and Princess also present gifts to event stewards. They are encouraged to share the items in the gift bag with all those who helped in the creation of the event.

On top of the donated items, Princes and Princesses often create tokens to give on special occasions. We commissioned the making of silver rings in style that would have

existed in the Prince's time period, which we gave to newcomers and as special thanks to people who joined our retinue temporarily—as would happen when traveling far away and the hosting land would provide people to serve as guards or ladies-in-waiting. There is no way to compensate people for their many hours of service to the Prince and Princess, but tokens of thanks are formally presented in Court in the form of the Throne Favor, the Gryphon's Paw, or Silver Berberie.⁴⁴¹ These tokens are unique designs for each reign and provide a personalized thank you for the many people who contributed to the success of a reign. It was also our custom to treat our retinue to lunch after every event. We would all break camp together and go to a local restaurant for lunch. Additionally, at the end of our reign, we tried to find unique and suitable gifts for our key retinue. The expenses of royalty are offset some by not having to pay site fees at events, though at smaller events where the margin of profitability may be tight, many royals do pay anyway as a donation. Some otherwise qualified candidates choose not to enter a Crown or Coronet tournament knowing that their finances would not support their reign as they imagine it.

⁴⁴¹ The Throne Favor is official thanks from both the Prince and the Princess. It is usually a cast pewter medallion whose two-sided design is unique to the reign. The Silver Berberie is a token displaying a silver spray of the Barberry, an evergreen plant; the consort gives it as a sign of appreciation to “select gentles who have contributed greatly to the personal care and well-being of Her Highness.” The Gryphon's Paw is the Prince's token and displays a paw print customized as desired. It is given to those who have contributed greatly to the care and well-being of His Highness.

The Once and Future Princess: An Auto-Ethnography

The best monarchs make an effort to attend an event in every shire or barony in their land. Once at an event, royals are expected to participate in a variety of activities including judging contests, tasting all manner of food and drink, and generally displaying support and appreciation for the efforts of the populace. Because the Principality of the Summits stretches from Salem, Oregon to the northern border of California and I live in Central Oregon, most events require driving three or four hours one way.



Figure 24. Partial map of Oregon with the Principality of the Summits highlighted. Source: Tryggr Tyresson mka Jeff Parker, 2007.

In addition to the requirements of travel within the Principality, royalty are encouraged to travel outside of their own kingdoms. A travel fund is created for the express purpose of promoting and supporting such travel. For one event, when the Kingdom of An

Tir split off a section in order to form a new kingdom—the Kingdom of Avacal—we drove to Red Deer, in central Alberta, Canada. Another event, Great Western War—which is a huge inter-kingdom war fought between participants from southern California, Nevada, and Hawaii and allies from other kingdoms—took me to Bakersfield, California. Our presence as royals contributed to the overall feeling of grandeur at these events and represented our Principality to others in the Known World. In both cases, retinue—who

volunteered to come at their own expense to make sure to maintain our royal presence—accompanied us.

The Coronet Tournament: A Liminal Space

What most people see and experience in the SCA is the Romantic imagination and historical re-creation of the Middle Ages. Nowhere is that more evident than at Crown and Coronet tournaments with their processions and pageantry. To become a royal peer, a fighter must emerge victorious in a Crown or Coronet tournament. Rulers are chosen by *right of arms*, which means they engage in full contact armored combat. Some scholars in the SCA have suggested that this method for determining royalty finds its precedence in the mock king games played by peasants and the aristocracy alike in the Middle Ages.⁴⁴² A less medieval interpretation connects the SCA's royal combat to the first tournament held on May 1, 1966 at the home of Countess Diana Listmaker, O.L., O.P.,⁴⁴³ one of the founders of what would become known as the Society for Creative Anachronism.⁴⁴⁴ The fliers for the first party advertised the format: "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." In either case, the victor becomes king or prince and crowns his consort.

⁴⁴² Sandra Billington examines the historical evidence on mock kingship in her book *Mock Kings in Medieval Society and Renaissance Drama* (New York: The Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1991).

⁴⁴³ The title Duke or Duchess means that an individual has reigned as king or queen at least twice. The peerage orders are represented as abbreviated titles: Knight of the Society as KSCA, Order of the Laurel as O.L., Order of the Pelican as O.P., and Master of Defense as M.o.D.

⁴⁴⁴ The first party history is discussed in the Introduction and Chapter II. Further information can be found online at *West Kingdom History Prehistory*. The site, <history.westkingdom.org>, is managed by Ken Mayer and William R. Keyes.

The Once and Future Princess: An Auto-Ethnography

In the Coronet tournament, fighters advance to finals through a series of contests. A fighter engages a single opponent each round and after two losses, he or she is eliminated from the tournament. When only two fighters remain, the Prince calls for a halt in fighting so that the finalists may prepare for a special processional before the final combat. This cessation marks the next rounds of combat as highly significant and signals upcoming ritual. When Viscount William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA, my husband's knight who was then Prince, came over and told us to take ten minutes to gather ourselves, we both thought perhaps there was some controversy or a problem with the previous round of fighting. In the not too distant past, combatants had marred a Coronet tournament by *rhino hiding*, sloughing off blows that would seem to have been good. With the unusual weapons style called for in this tournament, pole arms instead of sword and shield, everyone was a little wary. But nothing was in dispute; the break was the customary interim before the final round. We could not have been more surprised; neither Tryggr nor I realized that he had advanced to finals. Thus, along with the other combatant and his consort, we were commanded to begin our preparations for the final round processional. This interlude marks a ritual separation from the gathered host. However, unlike the neophytes described by Victor Turner, who are "represented as possessing nothing . . . to demonstrate that as liminal beings they have no status . . . rank or role, position in a kinship system,"⁴⁴⁵ the combatants' friends and family gather around them to demonstrate their allegiance and support.

⁴⁴⁵ Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites of Passage*," *The Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society* (1964) reprinted in *Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 47.

Prior to the final round of combat where the victor must win two out of three fights, each combatant and consort makes a grand entrance followed by supporters. Generally a spokesman of their choosing heralds the combatants and their consorts into Court. The presentation by the herald makes an impression on all within earshot; it is important to be well represented. The support by well-respected players speaks to the quality of the combatants and consorts and indicates that they will have the support they will need during their reign. Likewise, a skilled herald both reflects on and advertises the qualities of the combatant and consort. Our first thought was to ask Viscount Sir Diego Rodrigues de Cordoba, KSCA, to act as our herald. He is a gifted extemporaneous speaker and a friend. However, our opponent, Viscount Keith the Wanderer and his consort Duchess Verena of Laurelin, O.P., O.L., had already secured his services.⁴⁴⁶ A member of our shire⁴⁴⁷ volunteered to herald for us, but we declined. Tryggr and I determined that, with few exceptions, he was one of the strongest orators at the tournament and, as such, we would speak for ourselves. This refusal marked the first action we took in shaping our personae as potential Prince and Princess. We would control, to the best of our ability, how we were presented and perceived. As we stood in line waiting to process with supporters in tow, two knights—both Viscounts—insisted that they herald for us. Before we could say no, they began. In a play on “Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure,” they presented us complete with air guitars played on swords and spoke of our “most excellent” qualities; they concluded with “Party on, dudes.” While

⁴⁴⁶ Viscount/Viscountess is a title denoting a former prince/princess of a principality. Duchess is bestowed on rulers who have served as king or queen at least twice.

⁴⁴⁷ The SCA divides the "Known World" up into kingdoms, which contain smaller chapters known as Baronies, Shires, and Cantons, <www.sca.org>.

not the dignified and period introduction we envisioned, the introduction seemed appropriate since the purpose of Bill and Ted's time travel was to assemble a menagerie of historical figures to help them pass their history presentation. In some ways, the SCA is that kind of array. Despite the tone, the Viscounts' rank and status and their skill as orators confirmed our fitness as candidates. In my journal that night, I recorded the day:

We decided to herald ourselves. Tryggr thought of the words "crucible of chivalry" and the idea of us feeling humble. But, that was not to be. Viscounts Aaron Duncan and Durin Oldinmoor would not allow it. They heralded us in in a "most Excellent" way, Bill and Ted's Most Excellent Adventure.

The processional herald's oration highlights the ceremonial aspect of the occasion.⁴⁴⁸ Ordinarily, courteous and noble speech is esteemed in the Society, but, in a finals processional, heralds often humorously undercut their fighter's opponent while at the same time extolling the virtues of their own fighter, recounting an honored lineage, and lauding the beauty and grace of both consorts. The public slighting applies only to the fighter and never to the fighter's inspiration. After the presentations, the fighters meet in the list or *lyst* field.⁴⁴⁹ They cross a physical boundary, usually ropes, from which, afterward, one will never return to his previous status. For the final round of combat, members of the Chivalry sit just inside the border on the list field, ringing the fighting space. The purpose of their presence is multivalent: as a recognition of fighting prowess, as an enforcer of the expectation that fighters conduct themselves with honor, and as

⁴⁴⁸ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago: Aldine (1969) 106.

⁴⁴⁹ In answer to a question posed in an on-line group, rec.org.sca, about the list/lyst field and the correct spelling, a SCAdian—who goes by the name Talan—offered a description of why the area designated for combat is called the lyst field. He wrote, “[A]ccording to OED1 the original meaning was ‘border, hem’. By an obvious extension the term came to mean ‘boundary, limit’. In these (sic) sense <lyst> and the plural <lysts> are found. To enter the lists was then to enter within the boundaries, and the term then came to be applied to the field itself” (“Period vs. Medaevalish (sic) Terms” Mar. 31, 2001).

scouts for the Order of Chivalry—the knights of the Society. The Chivalry recommend potential members to the King and watch promising fighters at Crown and Coronet tournaments especially. In the meantime, their consorts are expected to gather literally on the margin as they join the Queen or Princess at the front of the field along with assembled past princesses and queens who offer temporary *communitas*.⁴⁵⁰



Figure 25. Spring Coronet. Royalty gather on one side, Chivalry kneel, and the populace ring the final fighters—Sverre Bjornhjarta and Duke Tjorkill Kanne. Photo by Diana de Winterton mka Diane Tripp Brazell, 20 Mar. 2016.

This moment, frozen in photographs captures the “betwixt and between” state referenced by Victor Turner in his series of binary oppositions with regard to status systems.⁴⁵¹ The consort is positioned between two statuses. On the one side, the non-royal participants stand in relative anonymity and equality. They have freedom to conduct themselves as they see fit. They can dress, speak, and behave in ways that may or may not reflect well on

⁴⁵⁰ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 96.

⁴⁵¹ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 106.

them but with the knowledge that the consequences of their actions fall chiefly on them alone. On the other side stand the past and present royalty. They are distinguishable by their coronets, which mark their status.⁴⁵² They know that becoming royalty alters both one's status and sense of duty. The actions of the royals reflect on their populace, the Principality, and the Kingdom. When SCA participants are sitting royals, they are obligated to their people; to be a royal is to serve. Even after stepping down, a royal peer is expected to work for the good of the Society, often taking on important projects for the good of others. After the fighting ends, one consort will slip back into anonymity after brief court recognition; the other will be elevated.

The Heirs: A Liminal State

Then it happened; Tryggr won in two straight bouts.⁴⁵³ We were swarmed by well-wishers who hugged us and pledged their help during our reign. Fighters carried Tryggr on their shoulders around the field. It was several minutes before I could finally hug him myself. We spent the rest of the afternoon basking in a state of anticipation. Though I often fight in the same tournaments as Tryggr, because of the weapon choice being pole arms—a weapon form that can result in more pushing than in sword and shield—I was reluctant to fight in this Coronet. Instead, I fought in a fundraising tournament for Autism, which was held after the Coronet tournament.⁴⁵⁴ Tryggr watched

⁴⁵² There are sumptuary laws in the SCA as there were in the Middle Ages. The rules governing coronets vary slightly from kingdom to kingdom. For example, in An Tir, crenellations are reserved for those who have been king or queen. Strawberry leaves denote those who have been king or queen twice. Essentially, the simpler the coronet, the lower the royal status. The Coronets of the Summits are exceptionally beautiful and rival the Crowns in almost every kingdom. They are made of silver and intricately worked (Appendix A Figure 2).

⁴⁵³ In Crown and Coronet finals, victory goes to the combatant who wins two out of three rounds.

and listened as a steady stream of people offered advice. Once I was out of armor, I too was inundated with people and their offers of counsel. Victor Turner describes our liminality; we represented “a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status.”⁴⁵⁵ This advice giving would continue, though to a lesser degree, for the next three months, until we became Prince and Princess.

Investing the Tanist and Tanista is a simple ceremony, which gives the future prince and princess time to adjust to their new roles. Usually, the Prince calls the victor and consort into Court and the Prince proclaims that, in accordance with the laws and customs of the Principality of the Summits, they are the Tanist and ban-Tanist or Tanista. Recently, at the request of the combatants, the investing has immediately followed the final round on the field of combat. In both cases, the Prince and Princess adorn the Tanist and Tanista, respectively, with a circlet to mark them as the heirs to the throne and the Princess invites them to sit beside *Their Highnesses*, a collective reference to the Prince and Princess. Special thrones are prepared for the heirs. We were proclaimed as victors and invested, and we didn’t say a word. As cheers rang out, we took our place at Their Highnesses side. For the next three months, the Tanist and Tanista accompany the Prince and Princess to events. We were given the opportunity to speak words of appreciation in

⁴⁵⁴ In the spirit of generosity and caring, the SCA supports many charitable organizations by sponsoring fundraising tournaments and auctions. For example, in the past fifteen years, An Tir’s Knights’ Auction—which occurs at Twelfth Night—has raised over \$25,000 for various charities including Make a Wish Foundation, Camp Erin, Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, and RAINN.org. Artisans from around the Kingdom make and donate items for an auction. Since all the items are donated, 100% of the funds raised are donated to the cause. For tournaments, often people pay an entry fee or sponsor a fighter. All the fees generated are donated to the charity. This sort of involvement with the modern world is one reason why the SCA should not be identified as an escapist pastime. The level of philanthropy demonstrated by the SCA is much more characteristic of a new social movement. Read Chapter II for more on this discussion.

⁴⁵⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* 103.

Court. We got to practice being served and conducting ourselves with nobility in the limelight. We were also exposed to the business side of the SCA, which is a large non-profit organization with laws and regulatory elements. A successful first reign depends on wise use of the months spent in training. In that time, the Tanist and Tanista must decide what is important to them in their reign—how and for what they want to be remembered. We assembled our retinue, chose to create our own unique charters rather than use past reigns' charters, arranged to have special clothing made for our Investiture, decided on the specifics of our Investiture ceremony, and determined how to manage our public SCA personae in a digital world.⁴⁵⁶ Those elements were the technical, bureaucratic pieces of the reign. Though almost all of the work is done behind the scenes, it all affects the public presentation of the personae. The months as Tanist and Tanista provided us with time to create ourselves as Prince and Princess.

After three months as Tanist and Tanista, our Investiture was at hand. We finalized the Investiture ceremony, which we based on the very first Summits' Investiture ceremony. Finngall McKetterick, O.P., knew the herald in charge of the first Investiture and got a copy of that ceremonial for us. Not that much had changed in the twenty years since the first performance, but there were small, significant differences. One reason for the enduring tradition may be cultural. According to Duchess Mary Grace of Gatland, O.P., who has lived in a number of kingdoms, An Tir and the West are different from

⁴⁵⁶ While SCA events avoid modern technology, the Society maximizes the use of social media, particularly Facebook, for outreach and communication. Many participants maintain second Facebook accounts with their persona names. The use of a persona name on social media highlights how the social identity is performed and can be separated from the self. Until recently, Facebook has closed these accounts when they were notified of their existence. However, now they have created a policy that is more supportive of alternate identities if people can demonstrate a need. Katie Ellis discusses the relationship between social identity and personal identity in her article "The Philosophy of Facebook: Identity, Objects, and/or Friends?" *SchirnMag* 16 Nov. 2015.

many other kingdoms in that they have a strong heraldic culture with specific ceremonies that are enacted fairly rigidly.⁴⁵⁷ Because there is room for personal innovation, the ceremonies stay relevant and demonstrate the elements of conservation and dynamism in the folkloric process, but remain recognizable, even for people who have taken a break from play and then returned.⁴⁵⁸

We took our last lesson as Tanist and Tanista while sitting in peerage meetings. We watched the Prince and Princess to see how much guidance or input they offered. Being a sitting royal grants access into peerage meetings and insight into how those orders conduct business, but while all peers are respectful of the sitting rulers, it is also a little tricky because royal peers often are not members of the orders and, in the grand scope of time, are relatively short-lived in comparison to the time it takes to recognize a peer. So, while a potential candidate might be mentioned at the beginning of a reign, it is unusual for that individual to be elevated during the reign. This realization on the limitations of sovereignty can be frustrating. Viscount William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA, acknowledges that the Prince and Princess's presence in these meetings is largely ceremonial, but it can be effective when they do speak. "A Coronet speaking for a candidate is a powerful voice and can carry a lot of weight."⁴⁵⁹

The week leading up to Investiture was a little stressful. The event steward's schedule did not match our desire to be invested early in the day.⁴⁶⁰ It took the Prince's

⁴⁵⁷ Mary Grace of Gatland, Personal interview, 29 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁵⁸ Barre Toelken of performing and communicating traditions in *The Dynamics of Folklore* (Logan: Utah State UP, 1996).

⁴⁵⁹ William Geoffrey the Rogue, Personal communication, 9 Apr. 2017.

command to change the schedule. Also, a member of our home shire messaged me to ask for time in our first Court to recognize two puppeteers who were performing that afternoon and induct them into an order of knighthood from the fairy tale that was being performed that day. Because in the SCA there is already an order of knighthood, we were reluctant to create confusion or be thought to devalue the Knights of the Society. Awarding the recognition in Court seemed formal and authentic as opposed to a fantasy. We declined and suggested that the ceremony occur immediately following the show. Our suggestion was ill received, a justification was demanded, and I was personally slighted. After several reasoned exchanges, I invoked my station and reminded the petitioner of the first law: “The word of the Coronet is Law within the Principality.”⁴⁶¹ The petition was withdrawn, but it left me feeling tyrannical. As much as royals want to facilitate harmonious interactions, the hierarchy does actually exist as a powerful structure. Despite my right to say no, I felt conflicted because, as Princess, I wanted all my people to feel appreciated and supported, but—at the same time—I expected my decisions to be accepted without question. The whole experience brought to mind a story from the early history of the SCA in which a power struggle between the Chairman of the Board of Directors and the King of the West came to a head over a mimeograph machine. By one account, it ended with the King drawing his sword and commanding the board

⁴⁶⁰ Later we discovered that some of the hesitation to shift the schedule was due to a special presentation that they had planned. The Shire had arranged some professional Polynesian dancers to entertain in William Geoffrey the Rogue and Diana de Winterton’s final court. With the altered schedule, their performance occurred just after our Investiture; a later ceremony—as had originally been planned—would have had their performance precede Investiture court, which would have been more appropriate as it lacked a medieval flavor.

⁴⁶¹ *The Laws of the Principality of the Summits* (revised 20 Sept. 2008) 2.

member to leave without the machine.⁴⁶² The SCA's cultural construct is that the sovereign's word is law. People who are unwilling to accept that premise have failed to understand the structure of the game.

Investiture

Investiture begins with the entrance of the Tanist and Tanista. The ceremony has a framework, but as with Coronation, it can be personalized. As my husband's persona is that of a Norseman, early on Investiture morning, we set up our Viking ship on the far corner of the lyst field. It is really a day shade with a twenty-foot mast that holds



Figure 26. Friends and family assemble to form the ship. Photo by Arthur H. Walton, June 2015.

red and white striped canvas up like a sail. Then poles stretch the hanging canvas out to either side to form shade. To add to the ship's appearance, we have a decorative carved dragon's head and tail that stand about ten feet off the ground. Most of the time, these addendums are anchored to mark the perimeter of camp, but for our Investiture we

⁴⁶² The story is recounted in Michael Cramer's article "Psychedelic Medievalism," *The Year's Work in Medievalism*, Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers (2005 and 2006): 125-6.

enlisted people to carry them and invited friends and family to bring their round shields to form the sides our ship. With a measured tread to simulate the pull of oars, our party approached the thrones. The whole effect was that of a Viking ship coming on shore as if from a foreign land. At the time, we did not consider the symbolism of a ship crossing a boundary, but—cognizant of the element of performance—imagined how awesome it would look to others. Once at the end of the aisle, horns blew and Tryggr stepped forward to claim his right to rule. Princess Diana asked, “Do you make this claim only for yourself?” At which time, I joined Tryggr in front of Their Alpine Highnesses.⁴⁶³ The Principality of the Summits’ Investiture ceremony draws on the ceremonies of modern monarchs like Queen Elizabeth II, just as with the Coronation ceremony described in Chapter IV. But unlike British rulers who hold hereditary title, SCA kings and princes or queens and princesses must earn their title by being victorious in combat. After the Seneschal⁴⁶⁴ and the Minister of the Lists⁴⁶⁵ attest to the good standing of the Tanist and Tanista and that the victory was achieved within the rules of the lists, the Prince asks if there is anyone who would second the Tanist’s claim to the throne. Since a claim to the throne could be theoretically contested, part of the ceremony includes declarations by all of the Principality champions⁴⁶⁶ and the Defender of the Summits⁴⁶⁷ of the right of the

⁴⁶³ Their Alpine Highnesses is another term for the Prince and Princess of the Summits.

⁴⁶⁴ The Seneschal is the legal representative of the Society for Creative Anachronism. The seneschal is responsible for the real-world legal, financial, and operational matters.

⁴⁶⁵ The Minister of the Lists is responsible for making sure that everyone who participates in the Crown or Coronet tourney is a member in good stand. Both fighter and consort must be paid members. If the paid membership expires before the end of the reign, the victors must renew.

⁴⁶⁶ Champions are acknowledged the best at their art, science, or martial skill on the day of competition. They serve as Champions for a year during which time they are expected to encourage participation in their area of interest. The Arts & Sciences Champion is called the Alpine Scholar, the Captain of Eagles is the Archery Champion, the Captain of Cats is the Rapier Champion, the Outrider of the Summits is the

Tanist to become Prince. At our Investiture, the Defender said, “I, Weylyn Middleleson, Defender of the Summits, witness and proclaim the right of Tryggr Tyresson’s claim.” He threw down his gauntlet. “Does anyone here challenge Tryggr’s right to ascend the throne of the Summits?”⁴⁶⁸ Following the Defender’s challenge, all the champions issued similar challenges. If no one contests the Prince’s claim, the champions reclaim their gages and the Investiture continues. In truth, few ever contest a victor’s claim openly and no one has contested in the Principality of the Summits.⁴⁶⁹ As Ulf the Wanderer said, “I have heard mumbles, but not anything louder. So, although people may have thought about resisting the Investiture of certain individuals, decorum has held them back.”⁴⁷⁰ Hence, the challenge affirms the authority of the monarchy.

Equestrian Champion, the Bard of the Summits is the Bardic Champion, and the Captain of Tigers is the Cut and Thrust Champion. All issue challenges.

⁴⁶⁷ The Defender of the Summits is selected by combat. Though much of the role is ceremonial, the Defender would serve as regent until a new Prince and Princess could be selected if the Prince and Princess are unable to finish their reign. Sir Morgan the Truehearted is the only individual to have served as Prince Regent in the Summits.

⁴⁶⁸ *The Boke of Ceremony of The Principality of the Summits*, AS XL, 11. In a very forward minded approach, the ceremonial already has language for when the victor is a woman. It has not happened in the Principality of the Summits yet, but Vestia Aurelia Antonia made it to finals in the Spring Coronet 2017.

⁴⁶⁹ In my research, I came across several challenges at the Kingdom level, one was done a little as dramatic theatre and one was decidedly not. The first challenge occurred at the first Coronation for the King and Queen of An Tir. Queen Morag, the first Queen of An Tir recounts the story in “A Brief History of the Kingdom of An Tir.” The Champion of An Tir issued the challenge as was tradition in the Principality of An Tir. He dropped his glove calling for challengers; picked it up and cast it down a second time. “A voice rose from the crowd . . . ‘Excuse me,’ said Daniel Shadygrove . . . a well-known fomenter of excitement . . . ‘I have a few questions . . . Who were the contenders for the crown?’ [Sir Seamus answered listing the combatants] ‘Was the battle fairly fought?’ [Seamus responded,] ‘It was Sir. Master Manfred fought nobly and with great honor for his lady and the Crown.’ ‘Are you satisfied that he is the true and rightful claimant to the crown of An Tir?’ [Sir Seamus answered,] ‘I am and challenge any who would deny his right.’ Daniel stood another moment then nodded and gently lay the champion’s glove back on the ground. ‘I am satisfied, long live the King.’ . . . There was no further challenge and so we were crowned . . . as the first King and Queen of An Tir.” The second challenge was not a theatrical performance. The Sword of State was drawn in defense of the King and all involved took the challenge quite seriously.

⁴⁷⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Ulf the Wanderer, “Defender issues the challenge,” *Facebook*, 09 Apr. 2017.

As the ultimate rulers, the King and Queen and Prince and Princess must be seen as working for the good of the Kingdom and Principality and cannot be thought of as being beholden to any individual. It is for this reason that the Tanist and Tanista must relinquish any bonds of fealty they have to others before being invested. Tryggr returned his squire's belt to his knight. Then, both the Tanist and Tanista offer oaths of fealty to the only individuals with greater authority in the Kingdom than they, the King and Queen.⁴⁷¹ Next, the Tanist and Tanista give their oath to the populace. (This oath was listed earlier.) Once the oaths are given, the Prince and Princess take turns anointing the Tanist and Tanista. For our ceremony, we used water from Crater Lake—which is viewed as semi-sacred in the Summits—to fill the *Grail*, a silver ceremonial cup. As they speak their words, the Prince and Princess anoint the body part being referenced: the head, the breast over the heart, and the arm:

Prince (spoken to both): With this water, We charge you rule this land from your head, with glory and wisdom.

Princess (spoken to both): With this water, We charge you rule this land from your heart with compassion and love for your people.

Prince (to Tanist): With this water, I charge you rule with land with your arm, to guard it with strength and honor.

Princess (to Tanista): With this water, I charge you rule this land with your arm to teach with skill and craft.

Anointing is an ancient ritual act and closely tied with many religions. It is perhaps anointing's universal characteristic that enables it to be incorporated in an otherwise explicitly areligious organization.

Following the anointing, Tanist and Tanista are mantled in cloaks of their royal office. There are two cloaks, winter and summer. The winter cloaks are heavy blue wool

⁴⁷¹ Though the King and Queen make every effort to attend the Investiture of the Prince and Princess, sometimes they miss. If they are not physically present, the Prince and Princess must offer a personal oath to the King and Queen at the first available opportunity.

with a striking white gryphon motif. The summer cloaks, despite being made with shiny lamé, are visually impressive and feature two gryphons twining tails to support a begemmed grail. The mantles are symbolic.

Prince (to Tanist): Thus sworn and charged, We now clothe you in the glory of your realm. Tryggr, receive this Mantle of the Summits, mindful that you now bear the honor of the realm upon your shoulders.

Princess (to Tanista): Thus sworn and charged, We now clothe you in the glory of your realm. Temperance, receive this Mantle of the Summits, mindful that you now bear the virtue of the realm upon your shoulders.

The foundational values of the SCA are reiterated in the ceremony. Our understanding of honor echoes the medieval and classical ideas. However, a contemporary listener may misconstrue the meaning of virtue and equate it with virginal, which make the Princess's oath sound a little puritanical. But when the listener adopts a medieval or classical sensibility, the word virtue can be fully appreciated as moral excellence that encompasses the classic cardinal virtues of temperance, prudence, courage, and justice. Temperance is best understood in contrast to the vice of gluttony. Temperance is a moderating force, nothing in the extreme. Prudence is the characteristic of considering all the consequences of an action and choosing to act wisely. Aristotle noted that courage goes hand-in-hand with prudence since it can be understood as both the opposite of cowardice and of rash action. Like honor, the contemporary understanding of justice is consistent with the medieval sense.⁴⁷² Finally, the Prince and Princess take the coronets from their heads and the herald says:

Behold the Coronets by which all may know you as rulers of this, the Principality of the Summits. Let them be a symbol to you. As their weight

⁴⁷² My understanding of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, Books 3.6-9, comes from Michael Lacewing's article "Aristotle on Courage, Temperance, and Justice," Routledge, <www.alevelphilosophy.co.uk>.

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rests upon your brow, so do the hopes and aspirations of the populace rest upon your hearts. Receive this burden with a sure and mighty resolve.⁴⁷³

The Prince crowns the Tanist. Then, depending on the desires of the Tanist and Tanista, either the Princess will crown the Tanista or she will hand her Coronet to the new Prince so that he may crown his consort. Tryggr crowned me. This was trickier that it appeared



Figure 27. Fyrsta Temperance and Fyrst Tryggr. Photo by Tessina Felice Gianfigliuzzi mka Geneva Borland, June 2015.

because my head is much smaller than the Princess before me; without proper preparation, I could literally pass the Coronet over my head and rest it on my shoulders. There is padding that can be added to the Coronets to accommodate the differences in head sizes, but there was not time during the ceremony to switch out the padding to make it fit. Part of my preparations that morning included having my hair braided by my Head

⁴⁷³ *The Boke of Ceremony of The Principality of the Summits*, AS XL, 17.

Lady-in-waiting. She braided my hair into a crown to create a ledge on which to rest the Coronet; my braid was fattened with a strip of the hand-woven trim matching on our Investiture garments. All the preparations were worth the effort; the Coronet rested comfortably. The Investiture ceremony is regal and functions to inspire the very behaviors necessary to build and maintain a harmonious community. It also places the new Prince and Princess fully into the spotlight. For the first time since Tryggr's victory, I was acutely aware of the public's gaze upon me, a feeling that only subsided with the investiture of our heirs.

First Court

The ceremony went as planned. We gave our oaths and became the Fyrst and Fyrsta. In the eyes of all who watched (and in my own mind), I ceased to be the Honorable Ladyship Temperance Trewelove and became Princess Temperance, a royal We. One of the first orders of business in the new court is to call the former Prince and Princesses into Court and grant them their Viscount and Viscountess status. Usually, the sitting Prince or King lets the incoming royals plan the ceremony they want. Often there is some theatre to create an excuse for the departing royals, since real monarchies don't change rulers every six months. I have seen a King come out in full make-up as if he were aged. Departure theatre has also included assassination and abdication, basically creating the necessity for a new king. When we were invested, we didn't have any specific ideas for the Prince's departure; we were focused on our entrance. Fortunately, the departing prince had ruled four times already and, with our consent, created some special theatrics. The previous April, at an All Fools event where participants were invited to dress as their favorite fool, Viscount Angus McClure, O.P., dressed as the

Prince complete with a long, dark-haired wig and the Prince's signature Landsknecht slashed trousers. The resemblance was clear, despite significant differences in height. His departure theatrics began during Prince William Geoffrey's final Court. William Geoffrey arranged for Taran Destingr Mac Tarl'a to present herself as a sorceress in court to collect on a Faustian deal she claimed he made that granted his lineage five reigns. There has been a long standing contest between William Geoffrey and a few other



princes as to who would be the first to become Prince of the Summits five times. The deal William Geoffrey was to have made with the sorceress would have insured him five reigns. However, since his squire—a member of his lineage—was stepping up as Prince,

Figure 28. The Sorceress and Death. Photo by Tessina Felice Gianfigliuzzi mka Geneva Borland, June 2015.

the terms of the contract were fulfilled. Prince William Geoffrey told her that he was not yet finished, but that he would go with her when the new Prince was invested if she would return then. After Tryggr and I were invested, we called Viscount William Geoffrey the Rogue and Diana de Winterton into court so that she might receive her *viscounty*, a coronet and original scroll acknowledging her as a former princess. However, it was not the real William Geoffrey escorting her, it was Master Angus



dressed as he had been at All Fools. The sorceress returned in that moment along with Death and a host of demons, they swarmed the fake William Geoffrey and took him away; the debt was paid. Once the demons departed, the real William Geoffrey the Rogue revealed himself from underneath a

Figure 29. Death's minion escorts Viscount Angus McClure, O.P., dressed as the false William Geoffrey the Rogue. Photo by Arthur Walton, June 2015.

black hooded cloak and indicated that he wasn't called "the Rogue" for nothing. The theatrics demonstrate the *mélange* of fantasy and historical re-creation characteristic of the SCA. No such occurrence could have happened at a historical re-enactment event.

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The rest of our first Court would have been uneventful had a troop of Polynesian dancers not been commissioned as a surprise gift. Their pre-arranged performance time would have occurred after court when everyone was feasting and socializing, but our schedule changed and theirs could not. So, their performance happened in the middle of our Court. The performance did not fit with our sense of the medieval, but there was really nothing to be done but to be good sports. We could have chosen not to let the performance proceed, but that would have been disrespectful of the performers time and talent and ungrateful for the surprise. Instead, Tryggr and I both participated in hula dancing. Some SCA players from outside the Summits—who said nothing about the sorceress and demon—criticized the hula performance for being out of the medieval European context. But we explained that we appreciated the gesture for what it was and defended the thoughtfulness of the populace; that response momentarily ended the criticism. However, the Polynesian experience continues to be a point of ridicule for the Summits among a few of the non-Summits participants who were there. I think it is interesting that, though the Polynesian performance was authentic, it was viewed more critically than the appearance of the sorceress and death. The criticism may be driven by the fact that a group outside of the SCA was performing as paid entertainers rather than participating in the culture, thus commodifying “the dream.” Though Tryggr and I participated in the dance, we were not criticized since everything we did was in service to our people. The rest of the day was a blur of activity: attending a puppet show, viewing the arts and science display, and holding an impromptu cake cutting ceremony to celebrate the Shire’s twentieth anniversary, to name a few of the obligations. There was

never a moment when I wasn't engaged in conversation or needed for something. I began to understand what it truly meant to be the Princess.

Performing as Princess

As described in Chapters IV and V, one of the most visible and important roles of the Coronet is to recognize the contributions and achievements of others. Members of the populace often suggest possible recipients, and the princess also works to solicit award recommendations. She researches potential award recipients so that the Coronet can speak about their unique contributions as if they knew the recipient personally. Frequently, the princess also prepares the award *charters*—hand-painted documents in the form of illuminated manuscripts⁴⁷⁴ and the accompanying tokens to go with the awards. Generally, award tokens dangle from hand-beaded necklaces. These charters and tokens are presented in Court. Words of recognition have power. I discovered that the emotional impact of my words was magnified as Princess. In Court, it is very common for people who are being called before the Prince and Princess for recognition to be moved to tears. If the core identity is the categorization of the self as an occupant of a role and the incorporation into the self of the meanings and expectations associated with that role—like good artist, skilled fighter, or excellent volunteer—then the recognition of a persona feels like recognition of the self. In the day-to-day world, there are very few opportunities for people to be validated for their efforts. In our reign we gave more than fifty unique awards; of those awards, more than twenty included a *circlet*, a metal band

⁴⁷⁴ During their reign, the Coronet selects a scribe to create award document templates, *charters*, which will photocopied and distributed to painters across the Principality to be hand painted. Scribes also create unique awards, *scrolls*; these are not photocopied. Princesses typically illuminate some of the awards and often add the name of the recipient. All charters and scrolls are signed by the Coronet and sealed with the official Seal of State.

worn as head adornment to illustrate rank in the SCA. I created each of these symbols of rank by weaving nine strands of silver jewelry wire into a braid (see figure 30). Dame Johanna Trewpeny, O.P. recalled the impact of these circlets from her perspective:



Figure 30. Braided Award of Arms Circlet. Photo by Sigríðr in Ráðspaka, 11 July 2017.

One of the things I would like to say about your being princess . . . you did one of the most amazing things that I have seen in the culture effect of the SCA when you started making and handing out circlets during your reign. When you started giving out the circlets to people and they started wearing them, you could look around the Summits and see the Lords and Ladies that had been recognized by Temperance and Tryggr. It was stunning how I watched those people who had been active become [something more], it's like they blossomed, right under your eyes because they had been recognized as Lord or Lady by Temperance and Tryggr. And seeing the circlets, especially since they were so personal by you having woven them yourself and they were recognizable, so it kind of made them their own comrades because they could recognize each other. It made an effect and it was dramatic. So, that choice of yours to go the extra mile and to do that extra expense and extra bit and extra work and extra recognition really, really was an impact on the culture. And more people wear their circlets now than did before.

I confess that it brings me great joy to see the circlets I created worn by the recipients.

Individual recognition affirms both the recipient's persona and the Princess'.

One of the most memorable awards I ever handed out wasn't official in the sense that it would contribute to the recipient's standing in the Order of Precedence, but, because of its extemporaneous nature, it felt like a more genuine recognition of the values of the SCA. The Fyrst and I were at Acorn War, which is held outside of the Principality of the Summits. After a day of watching adults fight, Tryggr and I went to watch the youth tourney.⁴⁷⁵ One combatant, Ulf, distinguished himself as being true to the ideals espoused by the SCA. He was already champion in a neighboring barony and had asked permission from his Baron to enter the tournament. Permission to fight was granted, but Ulf was reminded that he could not become the champion in this other barony while still a champion of Dragon's Mist, his barony. Despite knowing that he could not win, he was determined to give each fighter he encountered the best fight he could muster. In the end, Ulf made it into the finals; the other boy won, but Ulf's conduct was unparalleled and inspirational. I had our herald call Ulf into court, recognized his chivalric actions, and gifted him with a stone to polish his helmet. This moment was captured in a photograph.

Figure 31. Princess Temperance recognizes Ulf's chivalric conduct at Acorn War. Photo by Lisa Cahill Mairghread mka Lisa Morello, 15, Sept. 2015.

(Image on next page)

⁴⁷⁵ With extreme attention to safety, youth are encouraged to develop as warriors. There are three youth divisions: Lions—ages 6-8, Griffins—ages 9-12, and Dragons—ages 13-17. According to the *An Tir Book of Youth Armored Combat*, "The primary purpose of today's program is training youth armoured (sic) combatants to transition into safe and chivalric adult heavy combat when they reach the appropriate age" (ABYAC, 2008, <www.antir.sca.org/Pubs/YouthCombat2008.pdf>).



At the time, I wrote:

Ulf fought with beautiful honor and chivalry during the youth defender tournament. Knowing he could not officially hold this defendership should he win, because he is in fealty to the Baron of Dragon's Mist, he fought valiantly nevertheless, giving his opponent excellent fights in the finals.

When Ulf knelt before me and I spoke of his honor and gave him a token, my heart was filled with the rightness and nobility of my actions. I did not feel *like* a princess, I was the

Princess. Even the words of my journal reflect a slightly elevated diction and archaic construction that I have come to think of as my Princess-self.

The Princess of the Summits has many duties, but one of the most important symbolically is choosing the recipient of the Shield of Chivalry, which is presented to a combatant in the Coronet tournament at which the heirs to the Alpine Throne are being chosen. The Shield is awarded to the fighter displaying the greatest chivalry. During the invocation of the list processional, the most recent recipient of the Shield is the final person to be presented so that all those gathered can hear the names of previous Shield recipients, both fighter and consort, read aloud by the Shield bearer and the Shield consort. When the Prince and Princess offer words to the fighters after the oaths are sworn, they always emphasize that the real prize is not the Coronet, but the Shield. Choosing the right recipient is difficult in part because the definition of chivalrous conduct is broad and encompasses a host of values as described in Chapter II. Viscountess Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle emphasized courtesy when she looked for “someone who respected his opponents on the field [and] who treated his consort with the honor due her.”⁴⁷⁶ Viscountess Nadezhda Volynskaia, O.P., had different criteria. She emphasized combat prowess and franchise:⁴⁷⁷

[S]omeone who was consistent in their calibration, both taking and giving. Someone who erred on the side of their opponent. Someone with confidence in their skill, and themselves, so they didn't react out of fear or shame or embarrassment . . . I was NOT going to give it to someone who did one nice thing on the field, one grandiose gesture that wasn't true to themselves. I've seen that before, and it enforces the wrong behavior.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁶ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle, “Shield of Chivalry,” *Facebook*, 19 Apr. 2017.

⁴⁷⁷ The chivalric values are discussed at length in Chapter II. In this instance, franchise can be understood as a measure of deserved confidence.

In addition to courtesy and courage to speak with an opponent if they thought something wasn't quite right, Zarevna⁴⁷⁹ Alina of Folkstone also chose someone who would “help to inspire and encourage others to try to obtain the same at the next tournament.”⁴⁸⁰ Some Princesses ask for input from other Ladies of Valorous Estates or Ladies of the Rose⁴⁸¹; some ask input from the knights and other fighters. Some people, unasked, will offer their suggestion as to a good candidate. With such a diversity of selection criteria and input, it would seem that a Princess couldn't go wrong. However, that is occasionally not the case. Some people will criticize the Princess's selection privately, and others have no compunction and will verbally attack the Princess, either behind her back or to her face. Viscountess Acacia Gryffn suffered the latter when one woman, who she characterized as having a personal grudge against the Shield recipient, told the Princess she had “invalidated the Shield” with her choice.⁴⁸² Ultimately, the responsibility and right falls to each Princess. At the time, the decision feels momentous. I definitely thought long and hard about my choice, but I was certain in my selection even when others mentioned potential candidates. Some Princesses remember their pick in the years after. Viscountess Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle said, “When I hear his name called in the reading of the names, I'm really quite proud I chose him.”⁴⁸³ For others, the name of the specific

⁴⁷⁸ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Nadezhda Volynskaiia, “Shield of Chivalry,” *Facebook*, 19 Apr. 2017.

⁴⁷⁹ Zarevna is a persona appropriate term for princess. Alina of Folkstone served as the 41st Princess of the Summits.

⁴⁸⁰ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Alina of Folkstone, “Shield of Chivalry,” *Facebook*, 19 Apr. 2017.

⁴⁸¹ These are women who have served as Princess or Queen, respectively.

⁴⁸² Temperance Trewelove, comment by Acacia Gryffyn, “Shield of Chivalry,” *Facebook*, 19 Apr. 2017.

recipient fades and what is left is a sense of the general excellence of the bearers of the Shield and the knowledge that the Princess's choice is among that honored host. As a fighter myself, I felt an extra weight in my choice. Viscountess Vestia Antonia Aurelia's thoughts on choosing the Shield recipient mirrored my own. She said, "As a fighter, I felt I had a double responsibility to choose wisely . . . I paid very close attention to the earlier fights. I wanted to see how people were acting when the eyes of world were elsewhere, the "not important" fights where their characters were revealed."⁴⁸⁴ In the history of the Principality, there are two occasions when the Shield has not been awarded. Viscount William Geoffrey the Rogue, KSCA, was Prince on both occasions. He explained, "Chivalry is not a passive act; it's active choices. Chivalry is that extra effort beyond following the rules, giving up an earned advantage or not exploiting it; it's in the respect you show your opponent and consort." Though he and his Princesses received a lot of criticism, William Geoffrey the Rogue insists that the Shield stand for more than good behavior and clean fighting. As he said, "Clean isn't chivalrous; clean is the minimum." In other words, fighting well and fairly—clean—should be the expected standard. If no one exceeds the standard, then no one should earn the Shield. In both the awarding and the withholding of the Shield, the expectations of the performance of chivalry are negotiated and filtered through the Princess.

Being always in the public eye is exhilarating, but it is also highly intrusive. For me, the hardest transition to becoming Princess was with regard to my physical conduct and complete lack of privacy. Once invested as Princess of the Summits, and to a lesser

⁴⁸³ Temperance Trewelove, comment by Elizabeth Turner de Carlisle, "Shield of Chivalry." *Facebook*, 19 Apr. 2017.

⁴⁸⁴ Vestia Antonia Aurelia, "Princess Survey." Received by Deborah L. Parker, 21 Apr. 2017.

extent as Tanista, there is virtually no time alone. From the moment the Prince and Princess arrive at the event site, ladies-in-waiting and guards escort the Princess everywhere, even to the bathroom. Before entering the restroom or porta-potty, I removed the Coronet and, if I was wearing one, Cloak of State. An attendant held them and I advanced alone. I instructed my attendants to please wait at least ten feet away so I could relieve myself out of earshot. For me, going to the bathroom in private was the privilege I most missed during my time as Princess.⁴⁸⁵ I will admit that as a non-royal observer over the years, I thought having attendants would be sort of fun. Even having served on the retinues of other princesses, I did not understand the level of personal sacrifice made by princesses since, as a lady-in-waiting, I got to take a break when my replacement attendant came. In essence, one's self is sacrificed in order to perform the role of Princess. *The Princess' Handbook* explains this loss of self:

As a symbol, You are on display at all times. There is NEVER anytime that You will not be the Princess . . . You will never escape the duties and responsibilities of Your new position. You are now the representative of two powerful entities: The King and Queen of An Tir and the People of the Summits . . . Your conduct reflects DIRECTLY on the people of the Summits and An Tir . . . For the next nine months, any personal grievances You have with people in the SCA must be put aside. The well being of this Principality is Your first and most important concern, regardless of personal feeling. You are, for now, no longer playing this game for Yourself. You are now playing for an entire Principality.⁴⁸⁶

In short, the Princess of the Summits transforms from the material being she was into a symbol. Elements that contribute to an individual's SCA identity, such as branch

⁴⁸⁵ The consideration of bathroom needs and privacy for royals is timeless. According to Gordon Rayner, Chief Reporter for *The Telegraph*, there is an established loo protocol for Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh ("On the Road with the Queen: What I learnt from 20 Royal Tours," 21 Apr. 2016). Martha Bayless cites Marguerite de Navarre's sixteenth-century *Heptameron* when she describes the necessity to use the potty. She writes: "eut une grande necessit  d'aller au lieu o  on ne peult envoyer sa chamberiere," "had a great need to go where you can't send your chambermaid for you" (*Sin and Filth in Medieval Culture: The Devil in the Latrine*, New York: Routledge, 2012).

⁴⁸⁶ *The Princess' Handbook* Collection of Advice from Princesses of the Summits, Oregon, 5.

affiliation, are put aside. The *gate sheet*, the legal register of who enters an event site, records all attendees and asks for SCA name, legal name, and branch affiliation; normally I would register as a member of the Shire of Corvaria, but as Princess, my branch was The Summits. The loss of my persona's last name, which I spoke for the last time during my reign when I swore the oath that invested me with the authority to rule, provides a further example of my metamorphosis from an individuated self to a collective symbol. Though seemingly insignificant, those two examples serve to illustrate the exchange of self as a singular agent for a royal identity.⁴⁸⁷ One of the hardest parts of becoming a royal is embracing the status change. People bow. I, as an individual, couldn't help but feel awkward. Just a few hours before, I was shoulder to shoulder on the battlefield and now these people treated me with deference and, sometimes, outright awe. The royal We eventually learned that if I just nodded an acknowledgement of the respect I was being paid, then the I-identity could be comfortable with others bowing. During Court's processional, it is customary for people to stand and bow while the monarchs take their thrones, so that was not disconcerting. However, despite the royal We mindset, I never got used to the feeling of having a whole room full of people who were working on crafts or feasting stop what they were doing, stand and bow when I walked in; it was thrilling and simultaneously a little disconcerting.

Once the Coronet Tournament is held and the Prince and Princess have their heirs, they often share the spotlight with the Tanist and Tanista, who may choose to accompany the Sovereigns. Just as that time is a training period for the heirs, it is also a reminder of

⁴⁸⁷ Peter Weinreich explores the ideas of singular self in contrast to identity in depth in his work on identity structure analysis in *Analysing Identity: Cross-Cultural, Societal and Clinical Contexts*, Eds Peter Weinreich and Wendy Saunderson, (New York: Routledge, 2003).

the diminished focus on the individual Prince and Princess. *Stepping down*, relinquishing the thrones, is a challenge; many people take a brief hiatus. When we stepped down, I was exhausted. Being a reigning princess is a full-time job without weekends off. In the nine months that I served as either Tanista or Princess, I had five weekends where I did not attend events. Even so, I personally felt guilty when we skipped Twelfth Night—the first Kingdom event after our heirs were invested. I felt like I should be there. I used the fact that our son was home from college as an excuse—both to others and myself—for not going, and I did feel that I needed a justification for not going. I looked forward to my real-world demands as a sort of respite from the SCA. In a way, the daily world provided a break from the work of being the Princess. My own expectations for how a royal peer conducts herself were demanding; the SCA's monarchy had become a structure for self-identification. In order to escape the role, I needed to leave the structure—at least temporarily.

Many princesses reported taking a short break before returning to pre-royal levels of play. Many of those that reported taking a break offered justification for their diminished participation like the demands of a new job, a new house, or a move. Almost all reported that they could never play as they had before because they were identifiable as royal peers and felt pressure to continue to perform as role models. Those who did return immediately used service as their vehicle. They reintegrated by returning to local branch offices or as retinue for the new monarchs. Finding a way to re-integrate into regular SCA play is hard for some. As Viscountess Marian Staarveld, O.L. said, “The greatest challenge of becoming a royal peer is surviving both the reign and the time

afterwards when your brain hasn't stepped down yet!"⁴⁸⁸ Several royal peers echoed this sentiment. Duchess Verena of Laurelin, O.P., O.L., said her greatest challenge was "remembering that you are no longer [sitting] Royalty." Viscountess Ceridwen ferch Morgan, O.P., described the hazards of stepping down after ruling three times in quick succession. "[Reintegrating into regular play] was harder after our third reign, mostly because all three of them were so close together. I'd find myself looking for an attendant that was no longer there."⁴⁸⁹ Ceding power is a double-edged sword. Viscountess Nadezhda Volynskaiia, O.P., summed up perfectly the Princess's paradox, "While glad to get my personal time and space back, it was difficult to not have the world revolve around me any more. It took a few months to regain a balance."⁴⁹⁰

My own period of adjustment has been eased by the academic demands of this dissertation. It has served as a focus for my energy while still engaging with the SCA. After a little more than a year, I had returned to pre-royal levels of play and had adjusted to my new role as Viscountess Temperance. For my own viscounty coronet, I chose to use as the base the same braided circlets that I had made for Award of Arms recipients during our reign. In my mind, it symbolizes the noble nature of everyone who plays and honors the importance of the Award of Arms. To that base braid, Tryggr added adornments to give it the appropriate height and gravitas (see figure 32).

⁴⁸⁸ Marian Staarveld, "Princess Survey." Received by Deborah L. Parker, 3 Apr. 2016.

⁴⁸⁹ Ceridwen ferch Morgan, "Princess Survey." Received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Apr. 2016.

⁴⁹⁰ Nadezhda Volynskaiia, "Princess Survey." Received by Deborah L. Parker, 23 May 2016.



Figure 32. Temperance's Viscountess Coronet. Photo by Temperance Trewelove, July 2017.

Just as the regalia and clothing the Princess chooses shapes her own vision and transforms her. So does the regalia of the viscountess. Viscountess Marian Starveld, O.L., talks about the power invested in her coronet:

It contains the original Iron Crown of the Summits . . . as well as symbols for both reigns, my time as Baroness, and the Laurel wreath. While putting on garb turns me into Marian Starveld, I am somewhat careful about when I wear the Circlet as it accesses Viscountess Marian Starveld, Baroness and Magestra of the Order of the Laurel, and that is someone I love to be, but must ration as she takes a LOT of energy to be!!⁴⁹¹

Marian connects the degrees of difference in her commitment to her persona to the power of her regalia to transform her.

Transforming the Self

For those who play with some regularity, the SCA persona becomes a part of their identity and the people they play with become family. Viscountess Diana de Winterton said:

⁴⁹¹ Marian Starveld, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Apr. 2016.

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The SCA has been a part of my life since high school . . . it is just part of who I am . . . evolving as the years go by. Sometimes I play as a creative outlet and to learn new things, sometimes to pursue my inner warrior and fight, sometimes to find true solitude and disappear among the many (not easy since my time as Princess). But always to see friends I wouldn't otherwise be able to spend time with.⁴⁹²

While the whole SCA experience shapes the persona, the princess identity is most fully realized in Court. There, her performance becomes ritual for others and, as a result, people are changed. Countess Astrid Av Det Fjordlandskap said, “There are so many ceremonies and rituals that have an impact; they have importance in different ways and are unique and create a sense of wonder for each individual.”⁴⁹³ The experience of SCA ritual is as real and as important as modern world rites of passage. For example, Countess Berengaria de Montfort de Carcassonne, O.P., said, “My Coronation was the most important ritual to me ever, outside of my second wedding.” Ceremonies communicate values and identities. Viscountess Vestia Antonia Aurelia said, “To say I am a "squire" is to invoke a set of social understandings of my place within the Great Work which is the SCA society.”⁴⁹⁴ In the same way, to say I am Princess is to create an expectation, which shapes the performances both of the Princess and of those around her.

I no longer think of Temperance as a role that I play or a persona; after spending so much time as Temperance, she feels more integrated with my sense of self. I feel like in my lived-world, I can draw on the diplomacy demonstrated by Temperance. For example, I am more likely to consider my words before I speak, especially if I am displeased or angry. The current Queen of An Tir, Stjarna, wrote: “I now know that

⁴⁹² Diana de Winterton, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 18 Jan. 2016.

⁴⁹³ Astrid Av Det Fjordlandskap, “Princess Survey.” Received by Deborah L. Parker, 25 May 2016.

⁴⁹⁴ Vestia Antonia Aurelia, “Princess Survey.” Received by Deborah L. Parker, 24 May 2016.

[Temperance] is not quiet, she just chooses when to speak.”⁴⁹⁵ I can tell when Temperance, my princess-self, is responding to someone.

My identity as Princess Temperance in my weekend hobby leaked into my contemporary world. I became more comfortable acknowledging that I needed help in both worlds. To be successful as Temperance, I had to share the work. I learned to allow other people to help me do what I had always done for myself. Reigning requires a lot of work—both physical and clerical—to create the semblance of a monarchy, though much of it is behind-the-scenes. For example, monarchs pack their car or trailer—which is full of camping gear, totes, thrones, and gift boxes and bags—and drive incredible distances to events. Once there, others help unload, set up the royal camp, and repack it at the end of the event, but the sovereigns must unload it all at home and repeat the next weekend. On the clerical side, rulers keep up a steady stream of correspondence—writing thank you notes for largesse and service—process award recommendations, prepare the court ceremonial for the next event, publish words of appreciation for the last event, and finalize the court report that notifies the College of Heralds of awards given so that they may be recorded in the Order of Precedence. It would have been virtually impossible to do all that was required of me as Princess without help. The space between the appearance of effortless monarchy and the reality of the work that is needed in order to create the image has transformational potential.

Becoming a royal taught me that I had to share the workload; I had to delegate. Though I had practiced this kind of shared authority in my personal life in my marriage, becoming Princess Temperance let me translate the shared performance of duty into my professional life. For the first time in a quarter century of teaching, I was willing to take

⁴⁹⁵ Dagrún Stjarna, “Temperance Trewelove,” *Facebook*, 2 June 2017.

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on a student teacher. In doing so, I had to relinquish control of every detail of the curriculum and daily management of my classes and share the decision-making and teaching with another person. It was personally challenging and very rewarding. I find it rather ironic that enacting the imagined behaviors of a medieval princess expanded my professional practice as a teacher and enhanced my freedom as a modern woman.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In the years since the SCA was formed, only a handful of scholars who were veteran SCAdians have written analytically about the SCA's culture; of those academics, few have been royal peers. This dissertation adds to that number. According to the SCA's 2010 census, the average lifespan of an SCA player is ten years. Given that, I should be approaching my golden years; yet, I am just as excited about playing in the SCA as when I started. Some critics might say that my enthusiasm colors my view, that I lack the dispassionate objectivity of a social scientist. I would respond that no ethnography is truly objective and that to really know a culture, a researcher has to do more than see it as an object. "Feelings and desires are not a pollution of cognitive pure essence."⁴⁹⁶ As a folklorist, I applied my experience as a participant observer to question why—fifty-two years after the first gathering—the Society for Creative Anachronism still exists. What is the value to the individual? How does it serve the culture? What function does the SCA play in the modern world? The answers can be found by understanding the roots of the SCA's creation.

The Society for Creative Anachronism was inspired by the aristocratic and Romantic vision of the Earl of Eglinton's tournament held in 1839, but counter-culture college students produced it. The SCA is a long-term act of resistance. Rather than a temporary escape to a fictionalized past motivated by a rapidly changing economic system and social status as Eglinton's tournament had been, the SCA provides an

⁴⁹⁶ Victor Turner, "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology, *The Kenyon Review* Vol. 1, No. 3 (1979): 82.

intentional community grounded in utopic ideas that have the power to transform people and society through courteous and respectful—chivalric—behavior. Eglinton's tournament represented select elements of chivalry in a ritualized manner in order to connect with a past and re-inscribe hierarchy, but the SCA combines chivalric virtues with ritual and ceremony to create a unique place that alters the dynamics of real world interactions, freeing people from the limitations of their modern world status.

Though not the subject of this dissertation, one of the ways that the SCA pushes back against modernity is to offer participants an opportunity to reconnect with the processes of making by teaching medieval skills and craftsmanship. Industrialization, which emphasized efficiency and mass production, removed people from the process of handcrafting. Teaching and learning is at the heart of the SCA's educational mission. There are individuals in the SCA who are practicing and teaching skills that are on the verge of extinction; this would be a rich area for further study. Nevertheless, however important the skills, the community created by sharing one's knowledge and learning from each other is more important. The SCA undermines the forces that isolate individuals by creating community.

Unlimited by geographic boundaries, SCA events spring up as liminal spaces where the structures of society that contribute to social classification and the designation of an Other break down. When individuals pass through gate, they signal their openness to the SCA experience. They choose to participate. For Victor Turner, that leisure choice marks the experience as liminoid. But just as Turner identified "the seed of the liminoid"⁴⁹⁷ secreted in the liminal experience of the Ndembu waiting for changes in

⁴⁹⁷ Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, In Play, Flow, and Ritual," *Rice University Studies* Vol. 60, No. 3 (1974): 75.

their culture, liminality exists within the liminoid of SCA events. Removed from the normal social structures of their daily lives, people with very different backgrounds and world-views build *communitas*. This temporary *communitas* enables participants to tap into their better selves as a society and behave more altruistically. As Viscountess Ceridwen ferch Morgan, O.P., said, “Too many people will take advantage of people in the modern world. It's hard to trust people. I don't understand why the SCA changes that, but it does.”⁴⁹⁸ Many SCA participants describe an absence of noble behavior like courtesy and honor in their daily lives. In the SCA, honor and courtesy—defined as politeness in one’s attitude and behavior—are the cornerstones of conduct among all people.⁴⁹⁹ Viscountess Marian Staarveld, O.L., suggests a reason why differences exist between the SCA world and the modern world: “The SCA can afford to have values outside the norm because it is an optional experience.”⁵⁰⁰ In other words, people have a choice.

The resulting transformation is not only communal, it is personal as well; here the seed of liminality germinates. The individual finds value in the SCA because the SCA is more than an oasis of chivalry. While the SCA is modern in its organization and reflexivity, in re-creating medieval culture—like Eglinton—participants are constructing a romantic anti-modern space.⁵⁰¹ In the SCA that space is a place in which to contest the modern world’s status quo and explore individual agency and identity within a pro-social

⁴⁹⁸ Ceridwen ferch Morgan, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Apr. 2016.

⁴⁹⁹ *The Society for Creative Anachronism: Organizational Handbook* (2015).

⁵⁰⁰ Marian Staarveld, “Princess Survey,” received by Deborah L. Parker, 03 Apr. 2016.

⁵⁰¹ Andrew Rodwell explores issues of Modernity and anti-Modernity in his thesis *Anti-Modern Performance in The Society for Creative Anachronism*, The University of Western Ontario, August 1998.

environment. The SCA offsets the loss of personal connection in a heavily digital world by stressing face-to-face interaction and participation; everyone must dress to participate. Changing one's outer appearance through costume facilitates the creation of the persona, or SCA identity. Viscountess Stephanie of the Sanguine Rose said, "Putting on garb is one of the most important rituals to me . . . it signifies that you are there fully present in the moment and ready to be a part of the event to the best of your ability."⁵⁰² In the SCA, costume serves as a vehicle for communication. It is an invitation to play. Garb signals the type of game that participants want to engage in as either more historical or more fantasy-inspired. In either case, SCA dress frees the wearer from the limitations of modern society. Men and women have a wide variety of clothing options. Men might display highly decorative codpieces, dress in elaborate garb, or cross dress, and all are accepted and acceptable. Women can don armor and fight on equal footing with men, adopt male personas, emphasize the flesh of a fuller figure—one that doesn't conform to the modern world beauty standard—and be respected and admired. In short, the SCA taps into the transformational power of play. In this way, individuals can literally try on different versions of themselves, and this allows them to "change their own personal world and themselves."⁵⁰³

Participants both dress and perform as their medieval personae; the performance reaches its acme in Court. Here, play changes participants by way of ritual, and the liminal sprout of individual transformation blossoms. Participants become emotionally invested and experience feelings of elevation, gratitude, and admiration; these sentiments

⁵⁰² Stephanie of the Sanguine Rose, "Princess Survey," received by Deborah L. Parker, 06 Apr. 2016.

⁵⁰³ Michael Cramer, *Medieval Fantasy as Performance* 174.

produce actual, measurable changes in individuals. These changes—wrought in the liminal zone of SCA events—can be carried back into the real world where the continued performance epitomized by the chivalric, SCA behavior alters the lived-world experience not only for SCAdians, but also for those around them. When one considers the state of our world: the fragmentation of society and the inequalities perpetuated by our institutions and social structure, I argue that social change is necessary, not optional. In that way, the SCA experience, which Turner would argue is liminoid, becomes liminal.

For most, the SCA is not an escape from the modern world or a social safety valve to siphon off modern anxieties in order to function in the real world. For many, the SCA is the actualization of a dream to be better. The SCA epitomizes potential. It offers the opportunity to create real personal and social change. In contemplating the growth and evolution of the SCA since it first began in her back yard, Countess Diana Listmaker, O.L. O.P., captured the potency of the SCA experience when she wrote: “I did not create the Society for Creative Anachronism. What I did, I think, was to plant a seed in good soil, and like anyone who starts a child, or a book, or any other creative project, the result has been greater, and in some ways different, from what was dreamed How does it feel to be here thirty years after we first gathered in my back yard? It feels timeless. It feels like magic made manifest. It feels real.”⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁴ Diana Listmaker mka Diana Paxon, “The Seed and the Tree” (1996) <www.currentmiddleages.org/3yc/seed.html>.

APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL MAPS & PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1. The Near East in 1135, with the Crusader states of Outremer marked with red crosses. MapMaster. "Map Crusader States 1135-en.svg." *Creative Commons BY-SA 3.0*. 19 Mar. 2015. <www.commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1622291>. 20 Feb. 2016.



Figure 2. The Coronet of the Summits crafted by Master William Bjornsen/mka Bill Dawson. Photo by Kate Haworth.

APPENDIX B

ROYAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questions

Royal Identity & Community in the Society for Creative Anachronism

This questionnaire is meant to gather information about how individual identity and communities are created and negotiated in the Society for Creative Anachronism. While there is no direct benefit to respondents, by discussing the analysis of this data, my dissertation will contribute to the general knowledge about the role of ritual in our lives. Though the time to complete the survey varies, completing it in a single sitting may take 30 minutes. You may complete part of the survey and submit your answers and return to complete more at a later time. You may skip any question or quit the survey at anytime. Participation in this survey constitutes consent for inclusion of the data in my analysis. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at dparker1@uoregon.edu. Write SCA in the subject line. You may also contact: John Baumann jbaumann@uoregon.edu, Fieldwork adviser, or the office of Research Compliance Services at the University of Oregon 541 346-2510.

Core Ideas

This survey contains two types of questions, selected responses and short answer paragraphs. If you decide to complete the survey in chunks, please click “submit” after each time AND copy the link you see after you submit. This link will allow you to return to your answers. The selected response questions should take 10 minutes to answer. The open-ended personal response section will vary. If you would prefer to answer some or all of the personal response questions as a part of an interview, and/or if you would be willing to be contact for a follow up interview, please indicate the best way to reach you to schedule it.

- 1. What is your SCA name?**
- 2. Why do you play in the SCA?**
- 3. How does being a part of the SCA impact your modern person or life, if at all?**
(Consider all aspects, not just the camping or alternate wardrobe, but how the experiences of the SCA impact what you value or your core ideas)
- 4. Tell me about the SCA ceremonies, rites, and/or rituals that are important to you.**
(You may consider both formal rites, like peerage elevations, and informal customs like going through gate or donning garb.)
- 5. What values, if any, would you identify as being promoted by the SCA?**
- 6. Describe how the SCA and modern world compare with regard to these values.**
- 7. If the values are not emphasized in the modern world, please speculate on why not.**

Royal Concerns

- 8. What is your royal title?** (If you have held other royal titles, what are they?)
- 9. For the tournament that made you a royal peer** (either the first time or one that stands out), **describe any preparations you made in advance.** (Special garb? A letter of intent? Heraldic display, etc.)

10. What do you remember from the ritual that marked your investiture/coronation? Why do you think that stands out as memorable? What does it mean to you?

11. What, if anything specific, was the source for the ritual? Did it have its roots in some other ceremony or text?

12. Describe the role you have had in creating ceremony or ritual for the SCA, if any.

13. Did you give newcomer tokens? If so, what were they? What is the importance of recognizing newcomers?

14. What is the greatest challenge of becoming a royal peer?

15. Describe how being a royal peer impacts your SCA persona and game play.

16. Describe how being a royal peer impacts your modern person/life.

17. When you stepped down, how did you negotiate reintegrating into regular play?

18. If you took time off, how long did you take before returning to a pre-royal level of play?

Community

Using the scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree, rate your agreement or disagreement with the statement.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly agree

- 1. "I think of the SCA as part of who I am."**
- 2. "I see myself as quite similar to other members of the SCA."**
- 3. "I enjoy interacting with the members of the SCA."**
- 4. "The SCA accomplishes things that no single member could achieve."**
- 5. "All members need to contribute to achieve the SCA's goals."**
- 6. "Members of the SCA like one another."**

Short answer

- 7. "When you consider all your friend groups, describe the mix."**
- 8. "If you have a group of people with whom you regularly play or camp, what brought you together?"**
- 9. "How does being a part of this group impact your SCA persona and game play?"**
- 10. "How are differences of opinion or expectations negotiated in the group?"**

How much like you is this person?

Here I briefly describe some people. Please read each description and think about how much each person is or is not like you. Select the dot to the right that shows how much the person in the description is like you.

Very much like me Like me Somewhat like me A little like me Not like me Not like me at all

- 1. Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her.**

2. **It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.**
3. **She thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. She wants justice for everybody, even for people she doesn't know.**
4. **It is very important to her to show her abilities. She wants people to admire what she does.**
5. **It is important to her to live in secure surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety.**
6. **She likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.**
7. **She believes that people should do what they're told. She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.**
8. **It is important to her to listen to people who are different from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them.**
9. **She thinks it's important not to ask for more than what you have. She believes that people should be satisfied with what they have.**
10. **Having a good time is important to her. She likes to "spoil" herself.**
11. **It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free to plan and to choose her activities for herself.**
12. **It's very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for other people.**
13. **Being very successful is important to her. She likes to impress other people.**
14. **It is very important to her that her country be safe from threats from within and without. She is concerned that social order be protected**
15. **She looks for adventures and likes to take risks. She wants to have an exciting life.**
16. **It is important to her always to behave properly. She wants to avoid doing anything people would say is wrong.**
17. **It is important to her to be in charge and tell others what to do. She wants people to do what she says.**
18. **It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote herself to people close to her.**
19. **She strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her.**
20. **Religious belief is important to her. She tries hard to do what her religion requires.**
21. **She seeks every chance she can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure.**

You have completed the survey.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in my survey. I truly value the information you have provided. Your responses are vital in helping me complete my research. I will be contacting a small number of participants for follow-up interviews. If you would be willing, please make sure you have provided your contact information on the first question so that I may reach you. With your help, I have edged one step closer to graduation.

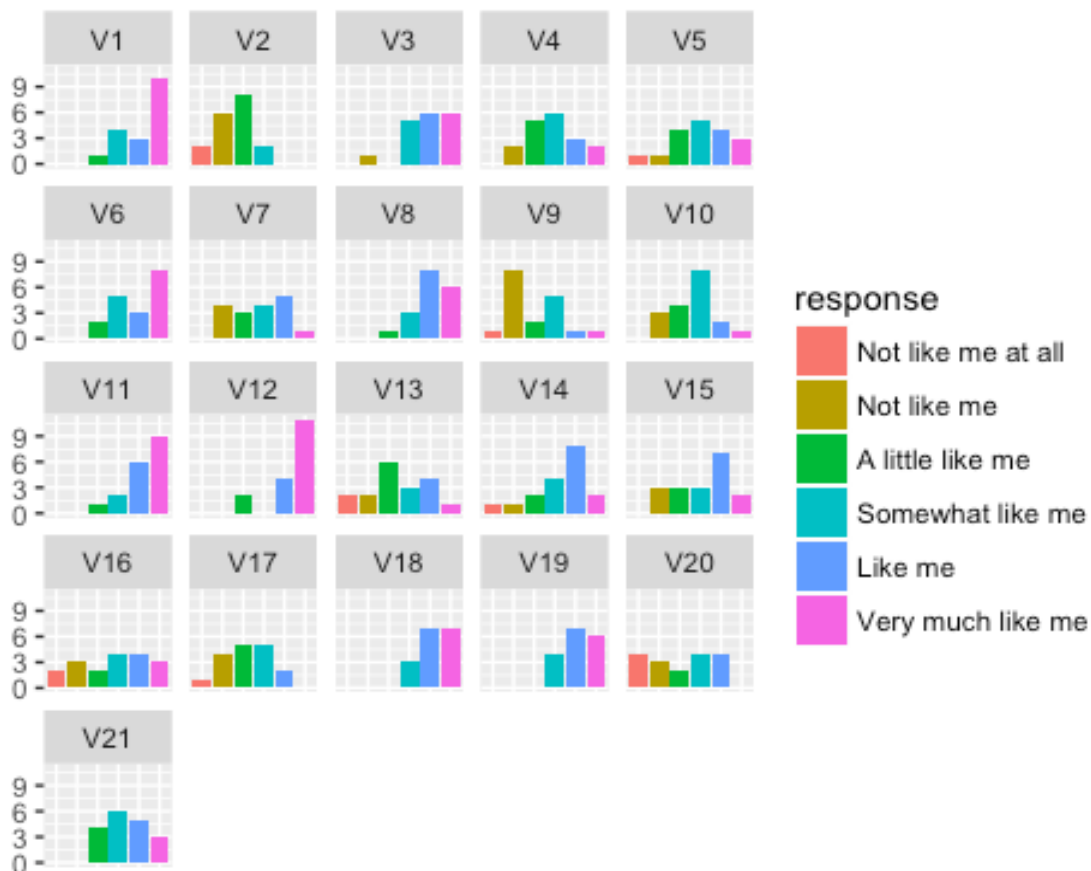
APPENDIX C

PORTRAIT VALUES QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Values data

The following plots show how many participants responded with each option for each question (i.e. the raw data for the Schwartz value questions). Higher bars mean more responses. For example, for question V1 ("Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her.") zero participants said "Not like me at all" or "Not like me", one said "A little like me", four said "Somewhat like me", three said "Like me", and the vast majority said "Very much like me". For the subsequent plots, the same data are shown, but aggregated by value into the 10 or 4 values Schwartz proposed. So, for example, the plot for self-direction pools together all of the responses to questions V1 and V11. The plot for openness to change pools together all of the responses for V1, V6, V11 and V15.

```
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(x=response, fill=response)) +
  geom_bar() +
  facet_wrap(~question) +
  labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
  theme(axis.text.x=element_blank(), axis.ticks.x=element_blank())
```



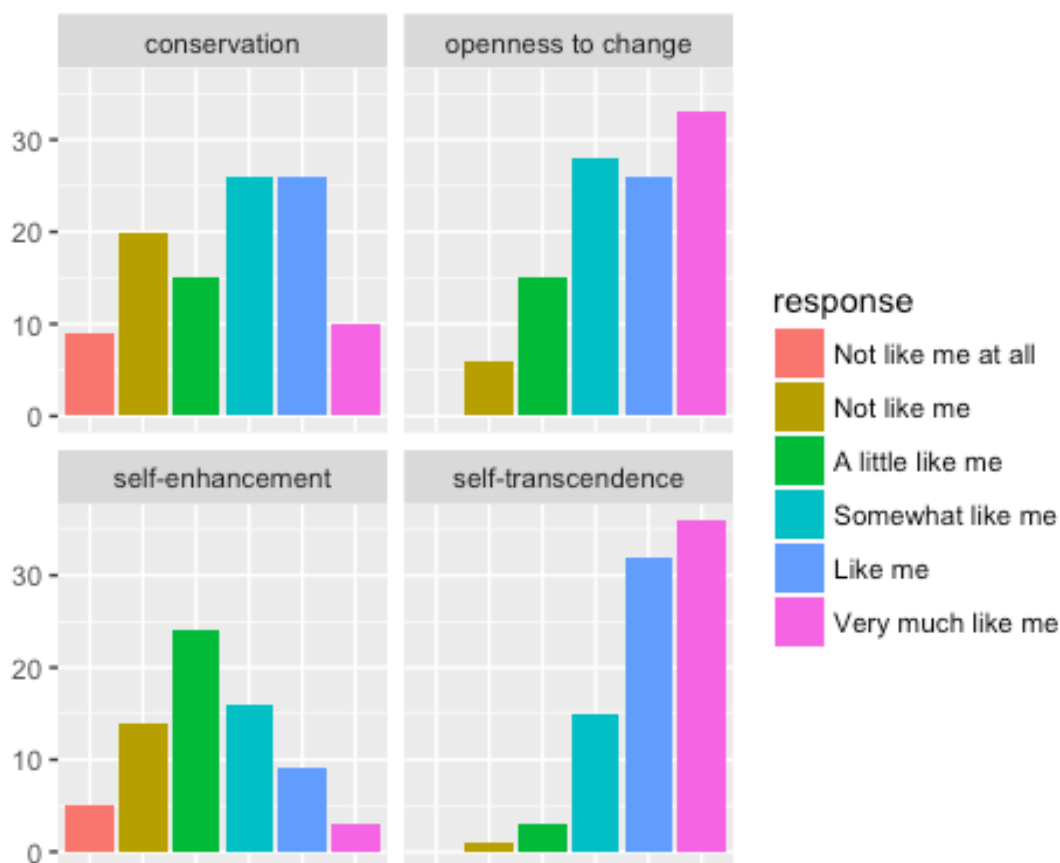
Bar graph for the Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question PVQ.

```
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(x=response, fill=response)) +
  geom_bar() +
  facet_wrap(~value) +
  labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
  theme(axis.text.x=element_blank(), axis.ticks.x=element_blank())
```



Bar graph for the Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question separated into ten values.

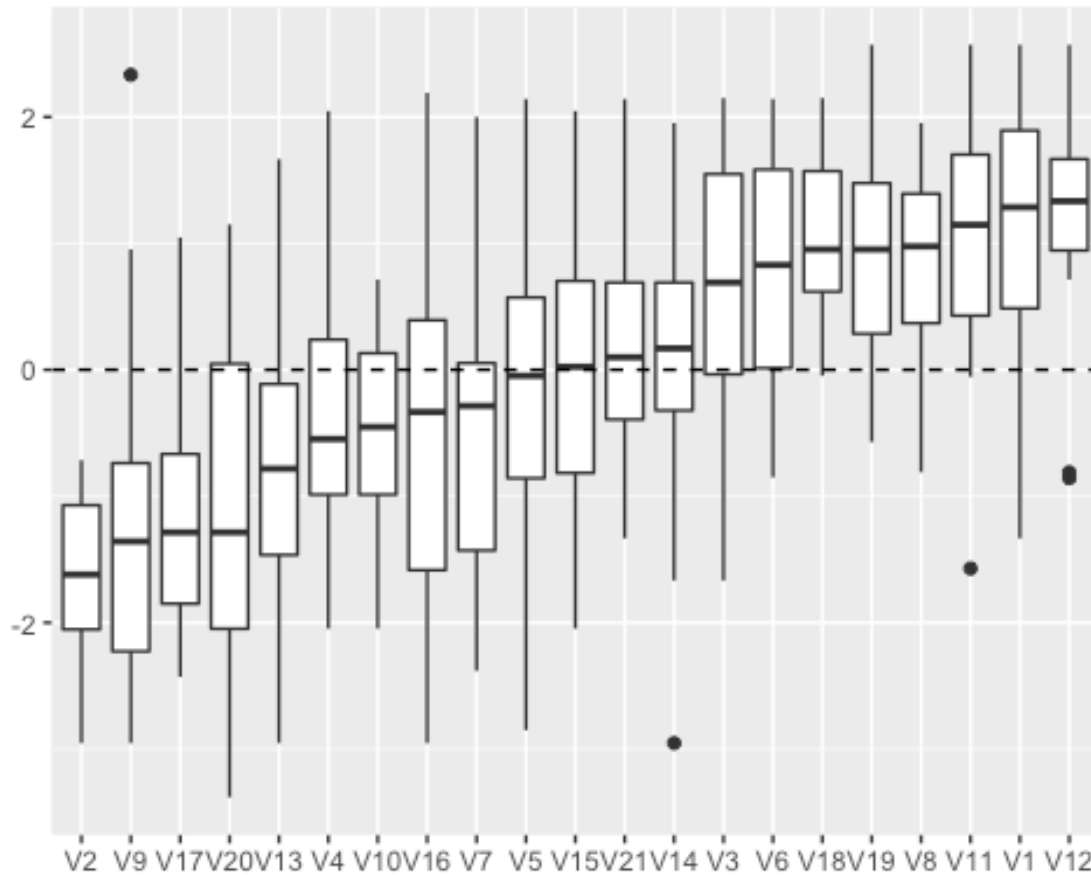
```
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(x=response, fill=response)) +
  geom_bar() +
  facet_wrap(~value_cat) +
  labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
  theme(axis.text.x=element_blank(), axis.ticks.x=element_blank())
```



Bar graph for the Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question.

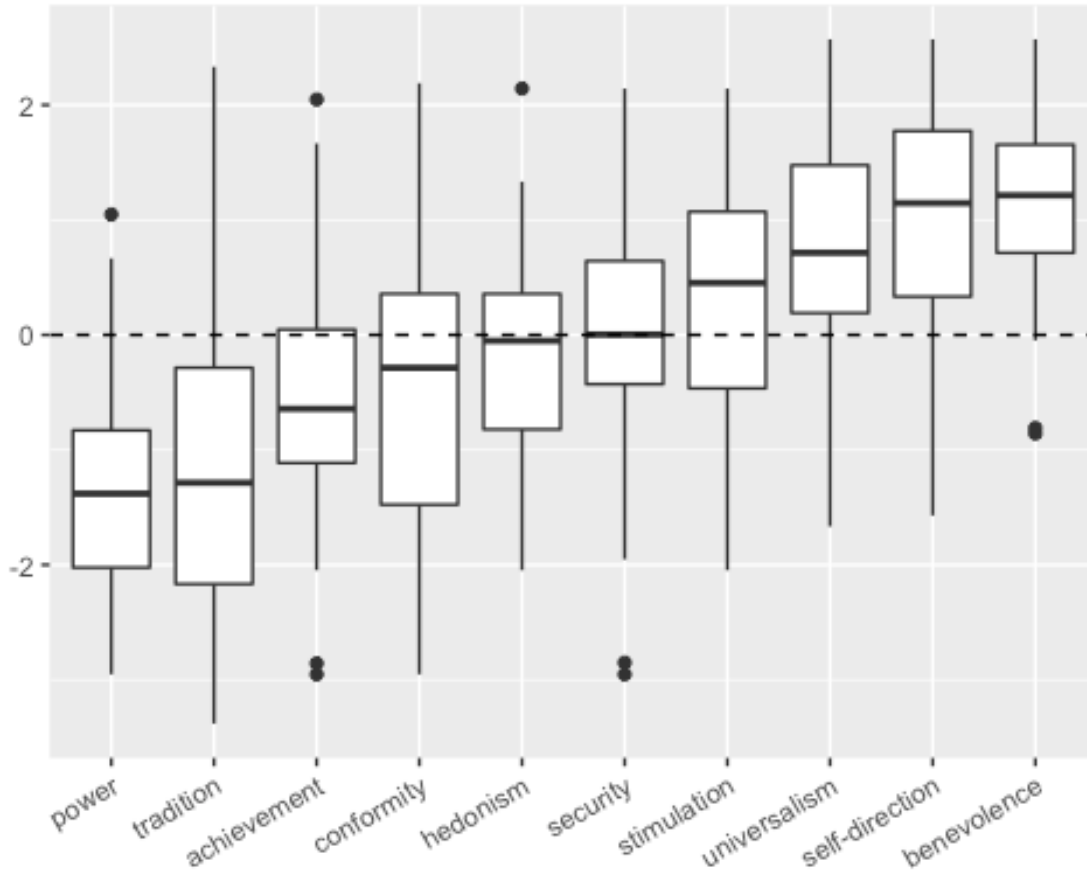
PVQ sorted into four overarching value categories.” The following plots show the distribution of responses for each of the 21 questions, each of the 10 values, or each of the 4 overarching value categories. Because different respondents may use the scale differently, scores are represented as differences from that participant's mean. For example, if two participants both respond with "Very much like me" to a question, it may mean something quite different for a participant who endorses most questions with "Very much like me" compared to someone who tends to respond with "A little like me" or "Somewhat like me". Subtracting each participants' average response from all of their answers removes any participant scale differences. What the following plots show, then, is which questions (or values) participants rated high vs. low relative to the rest of their responses. The dashed line across the middle of each plot shows where an “average” question (or value) would be. Higher than that dashed line means participants said it’s “like me” than their average, and lower means it’s less than their average.

```
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(y=res_num_c, x=reorder(question, res_num_c, FUN=median))) +
  geom_boxplot() +
  geom_hline(yintercept=0, lty=2) +
  labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
  theme(axis.text.x=element_text())
```



Scaled graph of Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question PVQ.

```
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(y=res_num_c, x=reorder(value, res_num_c, FUN=
median))) +
  geom_boxplot() +
  geom_hline(yintercept=0, lty=2) +
  labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
  theme(axis.text.x=element_text(angle = 30, hjust = 1))
```

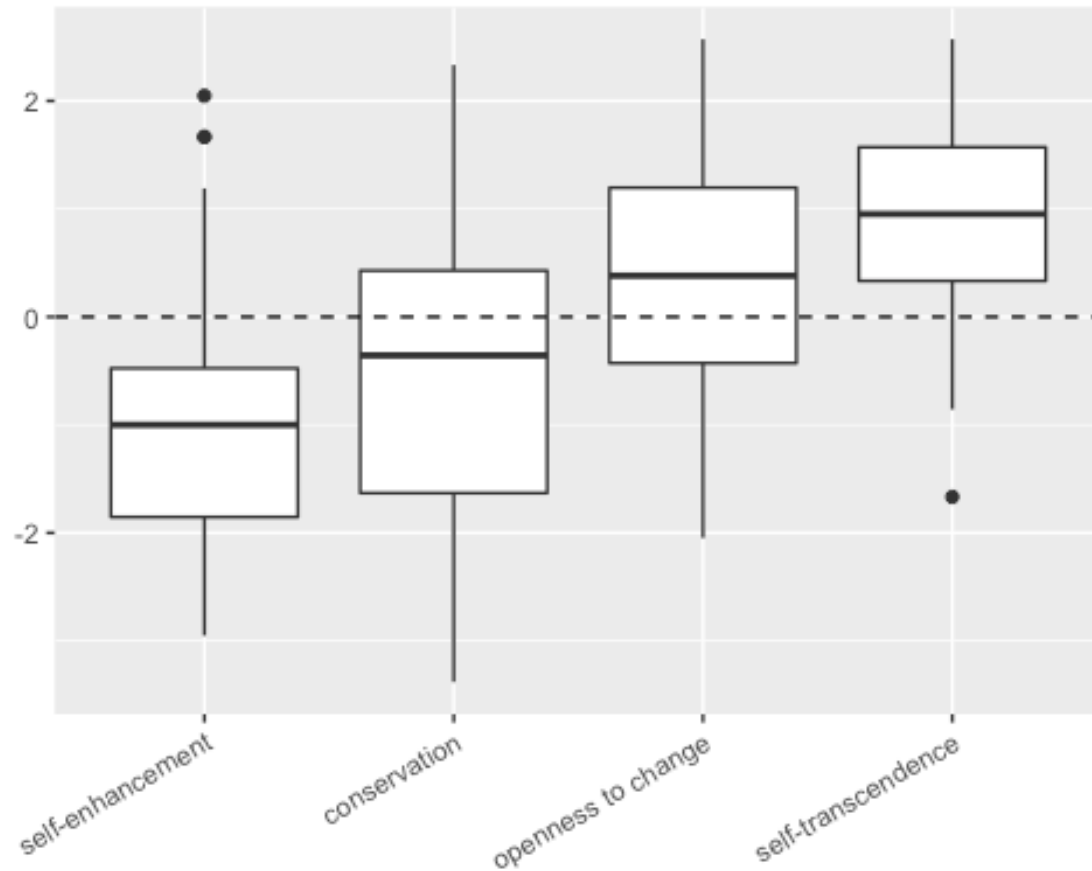


Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question PVQ sorted into ten value categories.

```

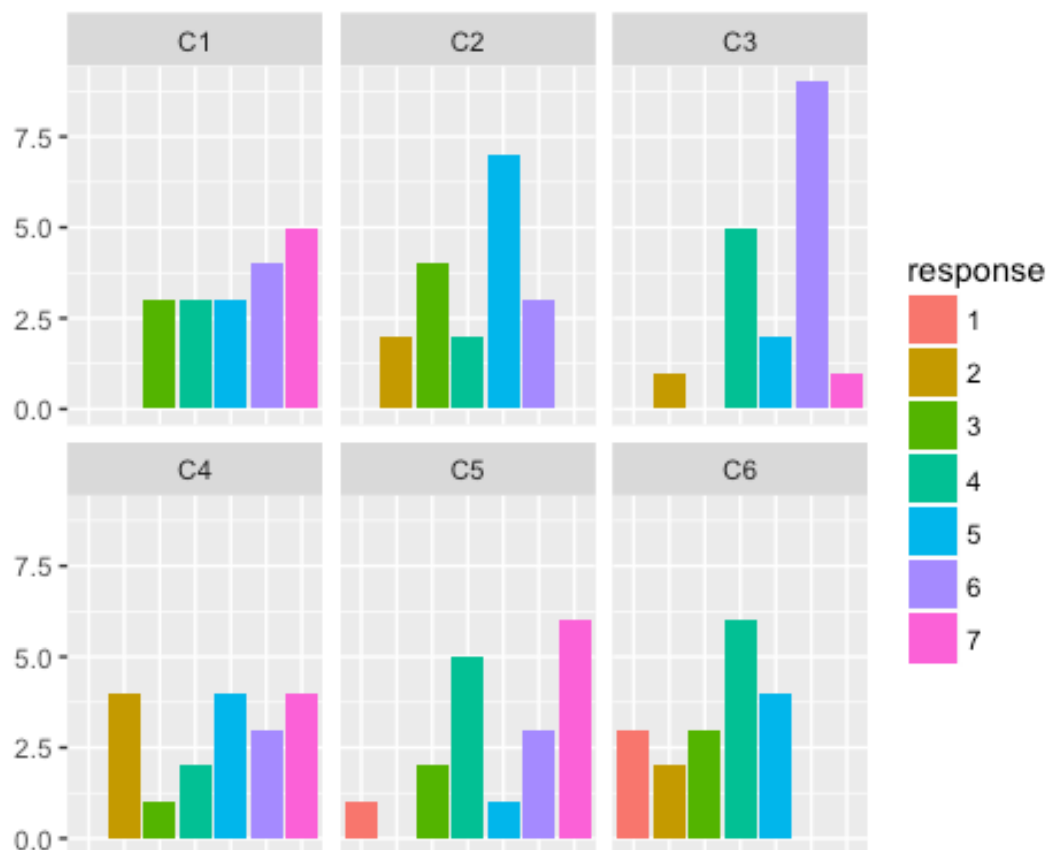
ggplot(na.omit(data_val_long), aes(y=res_num_c, x=reorder(value_cat, res_num_c, FUN
N=median))) +
geom_boxplot() +
geom_hline(yintercept=0, lty=2) +
labs(x=NULL, y=NULL) +
theme(axis.text.x=element_text(angle = 30, hjust = 1))

```

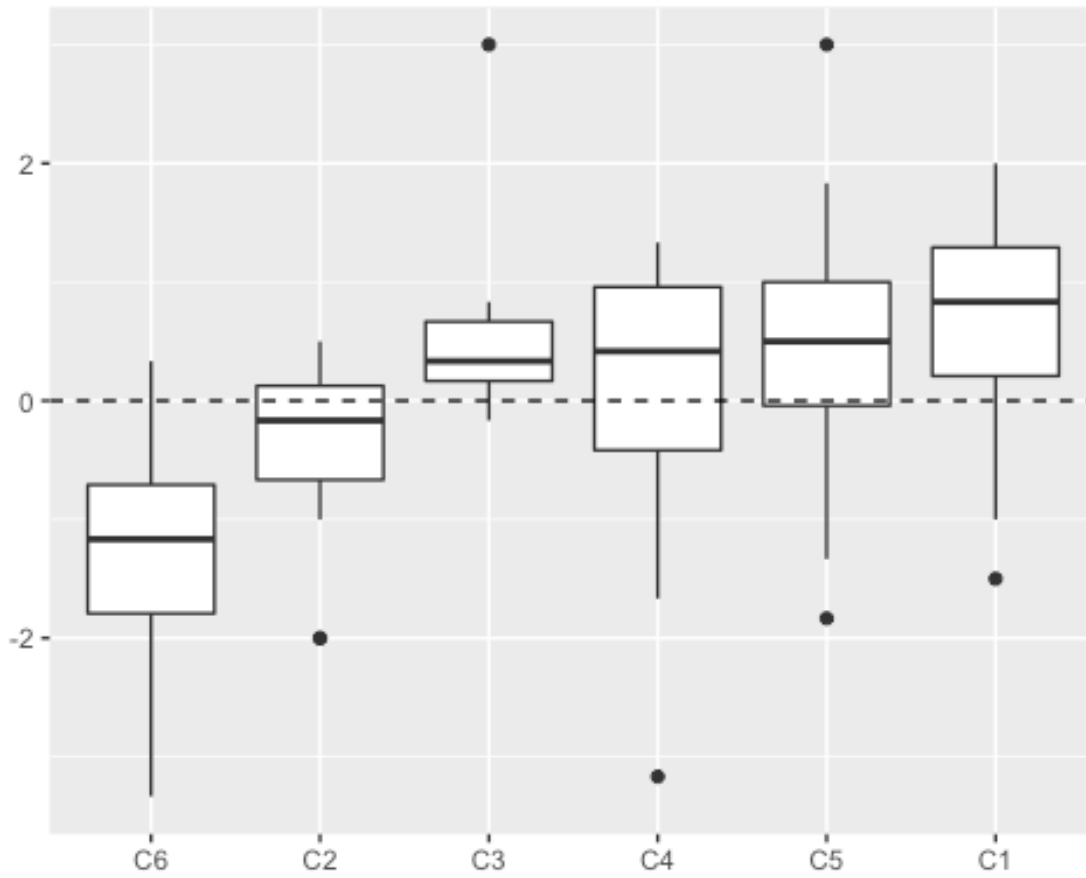


Queens and princesses responses to the Shalom Schwartz 21-question PVQ sorted into four overarching value categories.

Community questions data



Responses to modified Group Identification Scale 2.0. Original scale published by K.B. Henry, H. Arrow, and B. Carini, "A Tripartite Model of Group Identification: Theory and Measurement," *Small Group Research* Vol. 30 No. 5 (1999) 558-581.



Prioritized index of responses to modified Group Identification Scale 2.0.

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