PASSING MASCULINITIES AT BOY SCOUT CAMP

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A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Joe Austin, Advisor

This study examines the folklore produced by the Boy Scout summer camp staff members at Camp Lakota during the summers of 2002 and 2003, including songs, skits, and stories performed both in front of campers as well as “behind the scenes.” I argue that this particular subgroup within the Boy Scouts of America orders and passes on a particular constellation of masculinities to the younger Scouts through folklore while the staff are simultaneously attempting to pass as masculine themselves. The complexities of this situation—trying to pass on what one has not fully acquired, and thus must only pass as—result in an ordering of masculinities which includes performances of what I call taking a pass on received masculinities. The way that summer camp staff members cope with their precarious situation is by becoming tradition creators and bearers, that is, by acquiescing to their position in the hegemonizing process. It is my contention that hegemonic hetero-patriarchal masculinity is maintained by partially ordered subjects who engage in rather complex passings with various masculinities.
Dedicated to the memory of my Grandpa,

H. Stanley Vrooman

For getting our family into the Scouting movement, and

For recognizing that I “must be pretty damn stupid, having to go to school all those years.”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I never knew how many people it would take to write a book!

I always thought that writing was a solitary act. And yes, I did isolate myself upstairs in my uniquely ordered office to do the writing part of this dissertation. Writing has mostly been solitary—except for our cats Amos sitting on his haunches on my lap, front paws at the keyboard, with Ani laying on the papers I was trying to read. But there has been quite a bit more labor put into this dissertation than just my writing. In support of Edward Lorenz’s “butterfly effect,” hundreds upon hundreds of butterflies flapped their wings for this tornado to take wind.

I feel responsible to the thousands of Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts and hundreds of staff members that I have worked with over the past 20 years at Camp Lakota (Defiance, OH), Miakonda (Sylvania, OH), Pioneer (Idanha, OR), and Berry (Findlay, OH). I am especially thankful to the Camp Lakota camp staff members from 2002 and 2003 who participated in this study, as well as Bonnie, Jeannie, Matt, Cory, Baby Heuy, the Doctors, Troy, Gary and Kathi, Sean, Andrei, Dani, Kate, Dave, Will, Sean and Andy, Chris, Randall, Christine, Roger, Pat and Chelle, Bud, Bob, and Doug and Cindy—to name a few who directly influenced this dissertation. They offered me and collaborated with me to create experiences and a vast array of “whos”—which are the bedrock of my own identity and the cornerstone of this dissertation.

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what they were expecting: it certainly was not what I was expecting, but it does reflect a deep respect for them and the organization.

Financial support for this research came from two sources who thought it would be money well-spent to support my work. They will remain respectfully unnamed, but you and I know who you are. I was deeply honored by your out-of-pocket support, and I hope this product meets your expectations.

And to all my relations and friends who did not hear from me for long periods of time while I worked on this dissertation. Some have been patient, some have been relentless, and some I fear I have lost as these pages piled up.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PASSING MASCULINITIES AT BOY SCOUT CAMP

Chapter One Summary: In this chapter, I will unleash my own theoretical baggage and thereby situate my own participation in an on-going discussion about culture, youth, identity, and hegemony. This study emerged from literally a lifetime of my own experiences with Boy Scout summer camp staffing and became focused after a particular experience with gender in 1993. While there are certainly many ways to study summer camp culture, I choose to focus on folklore and qualitative research techniques. Unlike other data, folklore has a complexity which gives voice to the heart as well as the mind. This study should pose interesting and moving questions for both Academia and—what some have called—Arcadia.¹

Prequel: Whence It All Began

“You men! You men! You never listen!”

That is what she was yelling at me shortly before the conference session was promptly ended and the participants dispersed.

It was the last session before the closing plenary at the 1993 New Mexico Women Studies Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The session was a panel presentation titled “Questions of Power, Questions of Privilege: A Responsible Dance in the Margins”. The presenters had planned to describe their “praxis as white feminist scholars” to “offer strategies for critical analysis of marginality which subvert traditional divisions between women” (Program of Events). However, the presenters decided not to present their papers and instead deal with the more pressing issues raised during the conference weekend.

Earlier in the weekend, during a presentation by white feminists on slave narratives, a group of African American feminists stood up and accused the presenters of speaking about things they knew nothing about. They claimed that white feminists could not speak to the meanings of slave narratives because they were white. Other sessions were similarly critiqued,
and a wave of white guilt swept through the conference. Sessions were altered, changed, reworked.

This was, after all, 1993: when Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) was beginning to revolutionize queer and postmodern theory, and when feminism was dominated by “identity politics”—“based on the premise that those who experience specific configurations of oppression are best suited to articulate an adequate theory of that oppression and an adequate strategy for change” (17). Ironically, the title of the conference was “Power in Feminism: United as Feminists, Divided Across Power Lines,” and it was an effort to find commonalities across differences. They had brought in the big guns: Paula Gunn Allen was a guest speaker and bell hooks was the keynote.

This was the moment when I began this dissertation which examines the lived experiences and folklore of camp staff members at Camp Lakota in the town of Defiance in northwest Ohio.²

The session had begun with the presenters canceling their session. They argued that it would be racist for a group of white people to talk about diversity. Instead, they invited an African American speaker—that she was not “token”—to lead a discussion about privilege and othering, about diversity and appropriation. And when I tried to ask a question, critiquing their one-dimensional, race-based notion of diversity, I experienced a vast array of dissent. Participants were out of their seats, jabbing their fingers at me, yelling at me. They were asking why I was even there—at a feminist conference. One very irate participant suggested I listen better, that I wait two minutes—“120 seconds”—before saying anything.

After the moderator regained control of the session, I raised my hand and asked if I could please have my 120 seconds to consider their comments.
The room erupted and the session was summarily wrapped up.

When I returned home with my friends who had presented papers at the conference, I promptly wrote a paper for Dr. AnnLouise Keating’s ENG 559 course, Literary Research. The (unpublished) paper was titled, “Strategic Ma(le)sbianism: A Legitimate Attack upon the Heteropatriarchy—Bringing Male-Bodied Individuals into the Program.” Just as the African American feminists criticized white feminists for exclusion, I criticized feminism for its exclusion of male-bodied individuals. I then proposed a “strategic ma(le)sbianism” as a place for male-bodied individuals within feminism. I carved out a place for myself by organizing—among others—Chela Sandoval’s theory of oppositional consciousness, Donna Haraway’s notions of situated knowledges and cyborgs, and Maria Lugones’ notion of playful “world traveling”. And on top of that, I got to toss around phrases like “hegemonic heteropatriarchal masculinity” (a mouthful) and include words like “penis” and “gender fuck” in an academic paper! This was my manifesto.

At the time, I was unschooled in the ways of Antonio Gramsci’s “hegemony,” Mikhail Bakhtin’s “dialogism,” Michel Foucault’s “panopticon,” or Judith Butler’s “performance.” But this I knew: At summer camp, I worked with boys and men who exhibited in their daily workings the sort of characteristics a ma(le)sbian might exhibit:

- Renaming himself—a staple of feminist practice
- Relinguishing “his hold upon the symbolic phallus” and reconstruct his identity as a person with a penis rather than a phallus
- Struggling to eradicate what bell hooks calls the “ideology of domination” and to reorganize society so “self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires” (194,195)
• Interrogating masculinity, whiteness, and the power of the phallus.

And I was talking about a bunch of male-bodied, heterosexual-identifying, middle-class, rural white boys! How could that be?

Situating Myself in This Study: Personal and Historical Provocations

I genuinely believe the notion that scholarship is a discussion, and that each article or paper or dissertation is but another voice in a discussion. The discussion may jump and dodge and regress and jump again, always because someone else enters the discussion and adds their two cents. I am rather taken with Gregory Bateson’s notion of “playing a game” with the other discussants, but playing together against the building blocks—the ideas. Sometimes competing a bit—but competing as to who can get the next idea into place. And sometimes we attack each other’s bit of building, or I will try to defend my built-up ideas from your criticism. But always in the end we are working together to build the ideas up so that they will stand.

(Bateson Metalogue 17)

As such, I do not profess to having the end-all, be-all statement on hegemony, resistance, and identity. I am but a discussant, a fellow block-player. And I come with baggage:

I have had the sneaking suspicion for a long time that we students of culture write about our own personal, deeply subjective experiences and only loosely shroud ourselves beneath experiences of our subjects. We write about topics very personal to us, but we write about them in ways that avoid recognition: that is, we write our dreams, troubles, and neuroses so that nobody will recognize us in our own investigations. We attempt to step objectively backward as we explore some of our most intimate concerns.
Many authors hide their motivations behind thick wording and obscure footnotes, but increasingly scholars put it right on the table, open for all to see. For example, in *Shades of White: White Kids and Racial Identities in High School* (2002), Pamela Perry forthrightly states, “this study was as much a personal inquiry as it was an academic one,” emerging from her own anxieties about what her racial-ethnic identity was as a white person (6-7). Perry ends up studying whiteness in her own hometown and the high schools she grew up near. Similarly, in *Female Masculinity* (1998), Judith Halberstam states her authorial motivation clearly: “to make my own female masculinity plausible, credible, and real” (19). Halberstam writes about others in order to write about her own female masculinity.

To some, this is the hallmark of good research and good writing. For example, Peter Reason and Judi Marshall (1988) suggest that good research is simultaneously produced for three different audiences: First, the traditional, positivistic notion of research is that it is *for them*: “for the community of scholars of which the researcher is a member or potential member” (Reason & Marshall Research 112). Secondly, from a cooperative experiential perspective, research is also *for us*, in that it is “a cooperative endeavor which enables a community of people to make sense of and act effectively in their world” (112). Lastly, research is *for me*, “to the extent that the process and outcomes respond directly to the individual researcher’s being-in-the-world, and so elicits the response, ‘That’s exciting!’—taking exciting back to its root meaning, to set in action” (112-113).

Reason and Marshall claim, “All good research is *for me, for us and for them*: it speaks to three audiences, and contributes to each of these three areas of knowing” (112).

My own research is really no different. I entered this research project to contribute to the ongoing conversations in my field (them) and to hopefully help Scouters and camp staffers to make sense of their work (us), but also for my own personal development (me). My research is
bent in a particular direction, toward particular topics and theories, because of my own experiences and “storying” of my own life. In this dissertation, I go back to the place where I learned a great deal about masculinity, and it is a place—summer camp—in which I have invested a great deal of my life. I do no more nor less than any other scholar who bends their research agendas to their own idiosyncracies and bizarre life experiences.

In this particular study of Boy Scout summer camp staff culture, I will admit my own investment in the so-called subjects of my study: I am one of them. For well over twenty years, I have identified as a camp staff member. In fact, the camp at the center of this study is a camp I cavorted around as a small child of 6 or 7 when both my parents were on staff. My three older brothers worked on staff at this camp. When I was old enough—fourteen—I too was hired on staff. I transferred to another summer camp after two years, and I managed to make it through the very difficult transition from youth staffer to adult staffer. I went on to yet another camp, honing my skills as a program director. And now, as of the writing of this dissertation, I have played the role of camp director of the camp at which I am studying.

This dissertation is in many ways—like Halberstam’s study was for her—my own effort to make those many years of staffing plausible, credible, and real. Without a doubt, this dissertation about the relationship between culture, hegemony, and identity is motivated by my own desire to work out my own “identity development” issues as a staff member.

That is not to say, however, that my study of Boy Scout summer camp staff culture is only motivated by personal issues. According to recent statistics gathered by the American Camping Association, there are over 12,000 day and resident camps in the United States alone, with over 11 million youth and adults in attendance each year (Camp Trends). Not only is summer camping a significant industry worthy of study, Boy Scouting, itself, is one of the most
common male experiences in America: a full 54% of males have been in a Scouting program at some time in their youth, and on average stayed in for 4 years—with 42% staying in Scouting for five or more years (BSA, Values, 5). In 2002, with the support of 1.27 million adult leaders, Scouting “reached one out of every 10 young people in the nation” (2003 Annual Report). With that level of participation, I agree with Kleinfeld and Shinkwin who argue,

Educators studying an exotic tribal culture would be intrigued by an educational system such as Boy Scouts—open only to males of the tribe, designed to prepare pubescent boys for adulthood through distinctive teachings, containing a secret society, and marking membership by elaborate dress and insignia. (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin “Getting Prepared” 1)

While Kleinfeld and Shinkwin go on to incorrectly argue that this “widespread experience has gone unexamined” (for it has been examined), they do make the point that Scouting “is part of American folklore, a subject of childhood books from the Berenstein Bears to Lassie, the butt of New Yorker cartoons and Tom Lehrer lyrics. The very term Boy Scout has passed into American slang” (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin “Getting Prepared” 1). As a widespread voluntary educational institution, as an American institution, as a prevalent item in slang and folklore—for these reasons alone, Scouting itself is worth considerable study. And, since summer camping is a core experience of Scouting, it is a prime location for inquiry—indeed independent of, or perhaps balanced by, my own personal issues.6

My Ideological Genealogy

The data I have collected and the theories I will use to unpack that data are a unique collection of my own choosing and are not so much arbitrary but genealogical:

I entered the study of youth from a literary-turned-folklore background.
I worked on a bachelors degree in English in the late 80s and early 90s at Eastern New Mexico University, strangely enough, focusing on Renaissance literature. While pursuing a minor in anthropology, I was encouraged to read the latest innovative books on cultural criticism and writing by Clifford and Marcus (1986), Marcus and Fischer (1986), Brantlinger (1990), and Krupat (1992).\(^7\) I found I was able to mix my two interests—English and Anthropology—in an independent study that brought together friendly professors from the two departments. Oddly, my foray into culture studies was through the rubric of rhetorical analysis. I ended up studying the critique of ethnographic writing through the likes of Geertz (1980), Hammersley (1990), Kirby (1989), Marcus and Cushman (1982), Spencer (1989), and Wolcott (1990)—to name a few I found moving.\(^8\)

And then, I bumbled into folklore. As with many folklorists, the narrative of my path into folklore is tinged with mysticism.\(^9\) I was working at summer camp in Oregon, looking at master degree programs in mythology. At an early morning “polar bear swim,” an amazingly tall, beautiful female scout master approached me, and we began talking about future aspirations. I told her I was looking into mythology or folklore, and she said I needed to go to the University of Oregon where Barre Toelken was. That name was remotely familiar—beyond the allusion to *The Lord of the Rings*—and I ran into the observation tower on the beach, grabbed the issue of *Parabola: The Magazine of Myth and Tradition* I had been reading, and there he was. I had read an article titled “Fieldwork Enlightenment” by Barre Toelken in which he discussed the complexities of studying Navajo storytelling and his work and relationship with the Yellowman family (*Toelken Fieldwork*). The margins were packed with my scribblings. The article had hit me pretty smartly in the face. Toelken supported William A. Wilson’s admonition that
folklorists should/must start with their own people first: even there, we may risk embarrassing or endangering our informants, but since we ourselves are part of their picture, we may hope we can be more responsive to the ethical issues, more quick to recognize insiders’ perspectives and values, less ready to play the romantic jungle explorer. (35)

Toelken argued, “We already have plenty of ‘things’ to study; what we lack is a concerted effort to understand fieldwork itself as an interhuman dynamic event with its own meanings and contextual peculiarities” (35). I had loved reading this article!

Standing there, next to this Amazon-like woman, I turned to the back of the magazine where the profiles of the authors were, and it said Toelken was teaching at Utah State. That beautiful, tall lady (who just so happened to teach folklore and mythology at Portland Community College) said, “Then that’s where you need to go.” I ran back to my tent, started digging through my garbage can and uncovered the information from Utah State that I had flippantly thrown away without even looking at it (“There is no way in hell I’m going to Utah!”). And, Utah State University is where I applied for a masters degree in Folklore Studies and the Theory and Practice of Writing.

There, I fumbled around, trying to figure out what folklore really was—oral literature, verbal art, expressive behaviors and processes, artistic communication in small groups—and became enamored with the characteristics of the things folklorists studied: Folklorists studied the communal, everyday, informal, typically marginal, personal, traditional, aesthetic, and ideological (Oring 17-18). I wanted to study that sort of material, mostly because I was somewhat familiar with it: it was all around me. Plus, nearly every summer of my life, I had spent at Boy Scout summer camps where normal program features could now be understood as
folkart and folkways. I was enthralled by the academizing of my personal interests and experiences.

After completing my masters degree, I abruptly moved back to Ohio and started my doctoral program in American Culture Studies at Bowling Green State University. There, I encountered the youth wasteland of youth studies. With my anthropological and folkloristic background, I was accustomed to participant observation contributing to descriptions and interpretations of the lives of real, breathing peoples. What I found in youth studies, however, was little active inquiry of lived experiences, and far more research in books and other media than in life.

*My Gripe with Youth Studies: Where’s the Youth?*

Honestly, I do understand where my colleagues are coming from: They ignore the actual youth in youth studies because it is very difficult to determine where or who the youth actually are. My colleagues are actively trying to figure out how culture creates youth. Undoubtedly beginning with Philippe Aries’ seminal history of childhood\(^\text{11}\), youth studies, as it was, crystallized into the study of notions of youth. My predecessors began to ask questions like those N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes ask in *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective* (1985): questions like,

- What have been the attitudes of adults toward children and childhood?
- What are the conditions which helped to shape the development of children?
- What has been the subjective experience of being a child in the past?
- How have children and childhood influenced adults?
- What have been the social, cultural, and psychological functions of children? (xx-xxii)
Over time, youth scholars have steadily slipped away from questions about subjective experience of actually being a child and have been turned to a heavy investment in studying the attitudes, conditions, influences, and functions of cultural notions of youth. Their questions are almost entirely about adult culture and its creation of youth culture, not about any youth’s culture itself.

With these sorts of questions, it is no wonder we end up with scholarship about everything but youth: We study media representations of youth. We study culture and institutions made for youth by adults. We study race, class, and gender and their intersections with “youth.” But rarely do we study the youth. Such scholars err on the side of studying youth “culture” instead of actual youth. For example, in Nancy Lesko’s Act Your Age! A Cultural Construction of Adolescence (2001), she admits that she is shifting her analysis from what she calls “actor-centered” to “discourse-centered” (8). She joins other multidisciplinary studies that shift from, for example, studying children to studying childhood (that is, the space and time of being a child that is defined, theorized, patrolled, and maintained by adults); similar shifts involve moves from studying whites to whiteness, women to femininity, and freedom to power” (9).

This shift—while insightful into “notions” and “isms” and “hoods” and “nesses”—provides us with the negative example for the study of youth: rather than study the actual people, we have lots of studies of what the actual people are supposedly not (e.g., all these definitions, theories, and practices placed upon the actual thing).

Folklore studies has taken a different tack than much of youth studies: folklore studies study the people themselves and the culture that the people produce. I was first impressed by the research done in occupational settings in which there is a “direct application of one’s scholarship to the needs and problems of the people with whom the scholar works” (Santino 104). I was

Beyond these folkloristically-guided exceptions, most academic scholarship walks the same path that Estella Tincknell *et al* do in “Begging for It: ‘New Femininities,’ Social Agency, and Moral Discourse in Contemporary Teenage and Men’s Magazines,”: they study “discursive tropes and strategies deployed” by media organizations. They study the organizations or the media they produce rather than the youth itself or the culture that youth produce. Tincknell, for example, claims that men’s magazines “help to close off other possible identificatory positions and forms of agency” for young men, and that these magazines are part of a “discursive regime that produces sexual subjects in specific ways” (48). Tincknell does not examine the subjective youth experience with these magazines; in fact, youth are nowhere to be found in this scholarship on youth. Tincknell claims that these magazines “enroll” subjects through sexual desire, and then she takes a Foucauldian turn, arguing that “the desire is itself owned by the discursive regime that produces both it and the subject” (60). The youth at the center of this argument are
seemingly powerless against this discursive regime; the youth lack identity, agency, and even a response. This is an example of media studies, not youth studies.

In this dissertation, I will take part in “the return of the actor” as it is called in contemporary sociology (K. MacDonald 4). During the 1980s, sociology—and I presume cultural studies in general—witnessed what French sociologist Francois Dubet saw as a “fracture in the unity of youth culture” which resulted in an inability to “conceptually frame youth experience” as a whole (MacDonald 4). Students of culture found it difficult to focus on “youth,” and thus increased their focus “on modes of societal control or regulation” (MacDonald 4). I am part of the field who wants to focus on actual, living youth and their productions, performances, passings, and orderings.

My Gripe with Boyhood Studies: Wrong Premise

Over the past decade, there has been an onslaught of not only academic reviews of youth, but also popular books about how to raise boys: Michael Gurian’s *A Fine Young Man* (1998), William Pollack’s *Real Boys* (1998), James Garbarino’s *Lost Boys* (1999), Dan Kindlon and Michael Thompson’s *Raising Cain* (1999), Dr. James Dobson’s *Bringing Up Boys* (2001), to name a few of the big selling books. Books about girls have come out in significant numbers too, but books on boys were flooding the market at the time of my study. The National Boy Scout organization latched on to some of these books—most especially Michael Gurian’s work—resulting in a number of articles in *Scouting* magazine.

I agree with folklorist Jay Mechling’s critique of these books: While each book includes numerous quotations and anecdotes about specific, named boys, they were written “mainly by practicing clinical psychologists, who (by the very nature of their professional roles) tend to see troubled boys or boys somehow at risk” (Mechling *On My Honor* xvii). They fail to look at the
“actual everyday lives of normal boys”—whatever “normal” means—and they hold a “firm belief in the power of the boy’s biology and of human evolution” (Mechling On My Honor xvii, 280). That is to say, they use a specific group of boys and over-generalize to all boys, and they tend to take a very essentializing view of boys, proudly claiming that boys will be boys.

It seems that both academic and popular presses are full of scholarship and advice about youth, but lack a concentrated gaze on the everyday lives of living, breathing youth.

Statement of Thesis

Based upon the study of the folklore produced by the living, breathing Boy Scout summer camp staff members at Camp Lakota during the summers of 2002 and 2003, I will argue that this particular subgroup within the Boy Scouts of America orders and passes on a particular constellation of masculinities to the younger Scouts through folklore while the staff are simultaneously attempting to pass as masculine themselves. The complexities of this situation—trying to pass on what one has not fully acquired, and thus must only pass as—result in an ordering of masculinities which includes performances of what I call taking a pass on received masculinities. The way that summer camp staff members cope with their precarious situation is by becoming tradition creators and bearers, that is, by acquiescing to their position in the hegemonizing process. It is my contention that hegemonic hetero-patriarchal masculinity is maintained by partially ordered subjects who engage in rather complex passings with various masculinities. The power to hegemonize is in versatility, adaptability, and omnipresence, not centrality, coherence, or maintenance.

Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

In all research, the “choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context” (Nelson 2). And, the context of this
dissertation’s questions—yes, my questions—is subjectively based on my own beliefs about the nature of “reality” (ontology), what is “knowable” (epistemology), and ways of “knowing” (methodology).

It is difficult to identify the exact a priori ontological, epistemological, and even methodological beliefs which go into a study. Do I believe reality exists? Yes. Kinda. Do I believe it is knowable? No. But yes—in your own way. How do I believe I can know some sort of reality in my own way? Good question . . . I think. Does this make me an ontological relativist—that nobody knows anything because there is nothing to know? Does this make me a historical realist—seeing reality and knowledge as subjective interpretations which have become concretized? As a relatively young scholar, I must humbly state that I do not know the words and categories well enough to self identify. I feel like an intellectual omnivore who has not yet settled. I am sure a more knowing reader will organize me. However, I have come to some assumptions about culture which suggest ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs. For right or wrong, here are assumptions which I made prior to entering this study:

*There Is No Sub-Culture or Counter-Hegemony; Instead, There Are Only*  
*Cultures and Hegemonies*

I take exception to those who say there are “dominant” cultures surrounded by a myriad of sub-cultures—whereby “sub-” means “beneath” instead of “within”. I accept the notion of “subculture” only if it is in reference to a particular culture as a subset within a larger set of cultures. If, however, “sub” has any connotation that it works any differently than any of the other cultures with which it cohabitates, then I take exception. For example, to talk about youth cultures as “subterranean” or “subaltern” is to mystify, minimize, or romanticize them into illegitimate or obsequious sidebars to the “real” culture—say, adult culture.
I see reality as far too complex for such simplistic dichotomies. The study at hand demonstrates this: If we view staff members as a “subculture” of summer camp culture, we need to be wary of over-simplification and implying subordination. Which staff culture are you referring to? There are many cultures which are performed by staff members. If we go monolithic, yes, the “staff culture” is “sub” to the “official” Boy Scout Summer Camp culture. But the “sub” stops there. Staff are the purveyors of the Official Culture, so is their culture “sub” or hegemonic? And, as this study will demonstrate, staff performs the Official Culture, so is that performance their culture or the Official Culture’s culture?

In this dissertation, I work from the assumption that culture works the same way, no matter where it is found, no matter who its producers are, and no matter how many other cultures it happens to be cohabitating with. That is to say, youth culture found in the bedrooms of little girls or on the streets with young men works the same way, contains the same components, and is motivated by the same impulses as adult culture found in boardrooms and on shop floors. The so-called “dominant” culture does not hold some sort of magical characteristics which are beyond the scope of the so-called “subordinate” cultures which comprise it. Occupational or organizational,18 dominant or subordinate; “street” or “domestic”; ethnic, gendered, raced, or generational—no matter—culture is culture. Or, perhaps more appropriately, culture is (comprised) of cultures.

One caveat, of course, should be made. There is a difference between what I am calling “culture” and what some call mass-produced, “popular,” or mass-mediated culture. From my folkloric perspective, “culture” is what people “on the ground” make and do. Mass, popular, and mediated culture is what “others” produce on a larger, less-local level. People “on the ground” may use mass-produced and mass-mediated culture as source material (sometimes to the
exclusion of other materials) for what they do culturally, but mass-culture is not the same as nor
does it function the way that folk-culture does. Typically—and in the case of the material used
in this dissertation—folklore is passed from person to person within a group, oftentimes but not
necessarily orally, has variations, and is performed “naturally” (Brunvand Study 273). Mass-
produced and –mediated culture tends to distance the producer from the consumer of culture,
tends to have little variation, and is more “refined” or “formal” in presentation. I tend to think of
mass-culture as the “official” culture, as the culture of the “system” or the organization; where
as, folklore is the culture of the people, what they do within and with the system or organization.

Within the context of this one caveat, I also take exception to the notion that there are
hegemonies and then there are counter-hegemonies—as if the dominant cultures hegemonize any
differently than the subordinate cultures who are striving for authority. They are all
hegemonies—emerging hegemonies, hegemonies in waiting, hegemonies exercising different
degrees of legitimacy. As Jackson Lears (1985) points out, the essence of hegemony is not
manipulation or social control but legitimation:

The ideas, values, and experiences of dominant groups are validated in public discourse;
those of subordinate groups are not, though they may continue to strive beyond the
boundaries of received opinion. Where Gramsci differs from many “new” social
historians is in his recognition that the line between dominant and subordinate cultures is
a permeable membrane, not an impenetrable barrier. (Lears 574)

There are always multiple efforts to exercise multiple hegemonies within even one culture.
However, they work the same, have the same motivations, and enact the same sorts of
legitimations. The players may change, but it is still the same game.
I work from the assumption that hegemony is as hegemony does: and all hegemonies work the same. Perhaps wrongly, I equate culture with hegemony: all cultures—sub- or otherwise—work hegemonically; and hegemonies are culture-producers and productions. Antonio Gramsci is often quoted as describing hegemony as

the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function the world or production.” (Gramsci Selections 12)

My point is that no matter who sits at the head table of a dominant hegemony, the same rules apply. If the roles were reversed, my hegemony would enact perhaps different sorts of restrictions, rewards, and controls as yours; but we would carry them out in much the same hegemonic ways (unless we set up an authoritarian regime instead of a hegemonic one). This is not to suggest that all hegemonies are created equal and that power is unimportant; however, I would argue that all cultures—dominant or subordinate—function through legitimation, prestige, and confidence. All culture works hegemonically.

Gramsci’s notion of hegemony seems like a stone’s throw from folklorist Henry Glassie’s notion of culture. Glassie suggests that culture is a “concatenation of diverse efforts to construct [tradition]” (399). By “tradition”, Glassie is talking about “the creation of the future out of the past”; the study of culture is but the study of “the many ways people convert the old into the new” (395). By linking such efforts to create a future from the past, tradition is not in the service of dogma, rigid orthodoxy, or concretization—as some might argue. Glassie suggests, instead, “If tradition is a people’s creation out of their own past, its character is not stasis but continuity;
its opposite is not change but oppression, the intrusion of a power that thwarts the course of development” (396). Gramsci’s hegemony seems to be the mechanism of tradition: creating continuity, avoiding oppression that intrudes on a steady course of development. To Glassie, tradition is dynamic and is resistant to only one kind of change: “that in which disruption is so complete that the new cannot be read as an innovative adaptation of the old” (395). Is this not the same impulse as hegemony?

And when these diverse efforts to construct tradition wrangle for what pasts get churned into whose futures, it becomes difficult to know which is hegemonic, which is dominant, which is most common at any particular moment. Sheer numbers alone make it challenging. For example, at summer camp, if we focused solely on the cultures which the staff members perform, we could count dozens of different cultures vying for legitimacy and authority at different moments and contexts. Camp staff perform all sorts of cultures, including but not limited to the following:

- organizational cultures, including the cultures of the National Boy Scouts of America, the Camp Lakota culture, as well as the other groups which each staff members participates in outside of camp
- occupational cultures, including the cultures of their respective program areas and job responsibilities, but also their own parents’ work cultures (i.e., class cultures)
- youth cultures, including their own Scouting experiences in their respective troops, school culture, etc.
- popular and mass-mediated cultures, including television, movie, comic book references, music, etc.
And the list goes on. And this is but one group of participants in this culture we simplistically refer to as Summer Camp Culture.

Summer camp staff is a folk group, the members of which order their own unique constellation of cultures—organizational, youth, popular, mass, etc.—into one recognizable Camp Lakota staff folk culture. This folk culture is not mass-produced; rather, it is produced on the local level—in this camp, with these people, at this location, during this summer. Staff members do not have access during the summer to much of the founts of culture outside of camp. Instead, they bring what they can carry—sometimes literally (in their arms), but mostly figuratively (in their minds and on their bodies)—to the summer camp environment. There, they reconstruct, hybridize, and recontextualize the array of cultural forms and artifacts that each member brings to the table. And next summer, when some old and some new people come together to form the camp staff, a new constellation of cultures emerges.

Surely, the National organization—the Boy Scouts of America—mass produces the “official,” one might say “corporate” culture in the form of handbooks, merit badge pamphlets, song books, uniforms, insignia guides, camping standards and procedures, logos, camping gear, and the like. The staff folk culture works within and actually performs National’s “official” culture; but for them, National’s culture is only one of many cultures they are “working.”

It is difficult, therefore, to determine the relationships between these cultures. For example, which is the dominant culture at camp? Is the “official” BSA culture—the ideas and practices stated in the Boy Scout Handbook and produced by the National organization—the dominant culture amongst the staff? Is the college culture—materials brought to staff by college aged staff members—the dominant culture amongst the staff? Who belongs to the “dominant” groups and who belongs to the “subordinate” groups? And what about the different “cliques” on
staff—each with its own particular cultural behaviors—and what of the members of staff who float between or above specific cliques? Suffice it to say, summer camp staff culture is comprised of dozens of different cultures, and it is unclear which one (or which composite of cultures) is dominant.

*The “Critical Mass” Approach to Explaining Culture Should Be Usurped by an “Organism” Approach*

Most scholars, myself included, typically use a “critical mass” approach to explaining culture: We tend to describe all the little facets, the subcultures, the rituals, the uniforms, the folkspeech, and so forth, cataloguing and describing each little part so as to produce a collective, larger understanding by examining all of the parts. Eventually, with a large enough catalogue of parts, a critical mass of cultural understanding is reached, and a transformation occurs: one can now understand what summer camp culture is all about.20

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz rebuked this sort of study. He argues that culture should not be seen as “complexes of concrete behavior patterns—customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters,” but instead should be seen as a “set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call ‘programs’)—for the governing of behavior” (Geertz Impact 44). While the study of facets facilitates the writing of books about culture, it is probably not the best way to understand culture. In this project, I will attempt to avoid viewing the forest by looking at all the trees, and instead I will attempt to view the forest by looking at it as a living organism. Summer camp staff culture is more than just detailing the experiences of the 35-40 staff members or even describing the myriad cultures which make up staff culture. Summer camp staff culture is perhaps best understood through metaphor than listing.
Geertz has proposed two different metaphors for understanding culture. The first, and probably most popularly quoted metaphor is the web. Geertz claimed that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz, Thick Description 5). If we match this with his early writing about culture as a set of control mechanisms, we can begin to see how this seemingly democratic notion of a web of culture—whereby culture is created for the people by the people—also has a controlling, almost totalitarian undertone to it. It reminds me of a line French author Voltaire supposedly said: “every man may choose his choice, but no man may choose his choices” (Gelber 7). These webs of significance are determined by the collective, not the individual, and thereby plan out, control, and govern individuals in the collective’s best interest. According to Geertz, this is the web of culture we are all suspended in (or should I say “caught” in?).

Geertz did not stick with the web metaphor and instead developed a second, “more appropriate” analogy to understand culture. This new analogy portrays culture as less a product of the collective and more an organism in which the collective moves. He argues that the appropriate image, if one must have images of cultural organization, is neither the spider web nor the pile of sand. It is rather more the octopus, whose tentacles are in large part separately integrated, neurally quite poorly connected with one another and with what in the octopus passes for a brain, and yet who nonetheless manages both to get around and to preserve himself, for a while anyway, as a viable if somewhat ungainly entity” (407-8). This ungainly entity analogy does not even refer to the collective; it does not even recognize human interaction, interference, or production of culture. Instead, this analogy posits a notion of culture working of its own volition, as if the research has pulled back and is examining not the
individual components or producers of culture, but is examining the organization and movements of the cultural entity itself.

At least part of this octopussian analogy is accepted by the majority of students of culture—especially those who only wish to talk about the large-scale cultural issues: those who study youth without actually talking about young people. However, the vast majority of scholars frown upon the octopussian analogy—because it provides too much agency to the culture itself. When I have offered this notion in conference presentations, I have been mocked and yelled at. 21 It is much more palatable to work with the web analogy: in the web, humans are the creators and controllers. In the octopus analogy, though, humans are somehow partnered up with this “ungainly entity”—perhaps symbiotically, perhaps parasitically, perhaps antagonistically, or perhaps a myriad of other relationships. The point is that this analogy offers culture more agency: though poorly connected and separately integrated, cultures move of their own volition.

Geertz suggests that culture “moves” like an octopus: “not all at once in a smoothly coordinated synergy of parts, a massive coaction of the whole, but by disjointed movements of this part, then that, and now the other which somehow cumulate to directional change” (408).

Such a biological metaphor for explaining culture is not that strange: C. W. Von Sydow (1948) proposed biological and botanical terms like “mutation” and “oikotype” to describe how culture changed over time. Similarly, in “Epic Laws of Folk Narrative,” Axel Olrik offered an example of the “superorganic conception of culture” in which culture is seen as “an autonomous abstract process, sui generis, which requires no reference to other orders of phenomena for an explanation of its origin, development, and operation” (129). 22 Culture could be seen as “above” humans, not part of human psychology, “independent of and thus not reducible to purely human terms” (129). Olrik was trying to construct the laws which govern the epic singer, what he called
a “biology of Marchen” (131). Also, folklorists Barre Toelken and John Wilson Foster wrote an article titled “A Descriptive Nomenclature for the Study of Folklore” (1969) in which Toelken argues that “any particular traditional item may be viewed very much as an animal in the evolutionary process” (98). Foster goes on to argue: “Just as the ecological unit often supports more than one species, so the folkgroup will often support various kinds of lore” (101). Together, Toelken and Foster try to avoid being pegged as cultural evolutionists, but they argue that folk materials “derive their defining characteristics” not from their content but from their behavior within the space-time coordinates. To be more precise, folk materials enjoy the qualifier ‘folk’ because they endure with variation in time and move with variation in space, in both cases in accordance with certain tendencies or ‘laws’…. (109).

Toelken and Foster turned to biology for their methodology and terminology for describing these tendencies or laws because “there is a force at work in folklore analogous to that of natural selection which is selection by the folk of material for continued viability without ulterior or formal purpose” (110). This dissertation stands on the back of this scholarship: I want to understand how the folk select material to sustain the viability of their identities.

Whereas the web analogy appeals to my pessimistic side—because I envision the strands of the web constraining rather than liberating—Geertz’s octopussian notion of culture appeals to my optimistic side. Disjointed, gangly parts—a culture with all its subcultures and loosely integrated facets, all its hypocrisies and paradoxes, all its juxtapositions and contradictions—still move, still “work”. In fact, Geertz seems to suggest that it is only through such disjointed movements that any sort of directional change (a.k.a. survival) occurs. Coaction does not exist. Totally messed up albeit coherent culture does exist.
Instead of describing the vast array of complexes of concrete behavior patterns that make up summer camp staff culture—attempting to reach a critical mass of cultural understanding about summer camp staff—I will offer an organism approach to summer camp culture. In this approach, I will describe separately integrated tentacles of summer camp staff culture. I will describe poorly connected movements among the summer camp staff. And, I will describe the ungainly efforts to preserve itself among summer camp staff.

*Culture is Ordering*

Not only is culture octopussian, but Geertz also argues that culture has a great deal to do with establishing, maintaining, creating, or reassembling coherence. Geertz argues that humans use culture “always with the same end in view: to put a construction upon the events through which he lives, to orient himself with ‘the ongoing course of experienced things’” (Geertz Impact 45). This notion of culture highlights a very different part of culture that his metaphors do not explain: the role of the people in culture. In this notion, Geertz suggests that a person does not simply hang in a web of culture, nor suffer at the whim of an uncontrollable cultural monster, rather a person actively uses and constructs culture to orient him- or herself in the seeming chaos of everyday life. People have the ability to order the chaos through culture.

Such ideas are more fully developed by Gavin Kendall and Gary Wickham and their notion that “culture is ordering”. Kendall and Wickham claim, “Any time and any place you find ordering, by our account, you have found culture. ‘Culture’ is one of the names given to the different ways people go about ordering the world and the different ways the world goes about ordering people” (24). They define culture by quoting from John Law’s book *Organizing Modernity* (1994), changing Law’s word “society” into “culture”: 
[Culture] is not a lot of [cultural] products moving round in structural pipes and containers that were put in place beforehand. Instead the [cultural] world is this remarkable emergent phenomenon: in its processes it shapes its own flows. Movement and the organization of movement are not different. (15)

Like Geertz’s octopussian notion of culture, Kendall and Wickham interpret from Law a notion of culture as ongoing projects, never ending, continually emerging, shaping its own flows. Culture is not pre-existing—in some sort of Althusserian State Apparatus, where humans are interpellated into an ideology not of their own choosing. Kendall and Wickham argue against the notion that there is some sort of pre-existing order. Instead, they reiterate Law’s point “that order is a rarity while ordering is everywhere” (34).

Kendall and Wickham define “ordering” as any “attempts at control or management” (27). And “any attempts” means any attempts: Kendall and Wickham envision a very complex notion of culture whereby multiple attempts at ordering coincide:

Seeing ordering projects against other ordering projects, not in isolation, is necessary for a full appreciation of the limits of ordering. Separate instances of ordering might well appear to achieve complete or total control, but only if viewed in isolation. When one takes into account that the ordering project involved is itself subject to other ordering projects and they to still others, and so on, the idea of total or complete ordering becomes a chimera. (36)

Kendall and Wickham suggest that too much of Cultural Studies focuses on separate instances of ordering—rather like the blind wisemen in American poet John Godfrey Saxe’s fable of “The Blind Men and the Elephant”. As each wiseman interprets their part of the elephant, Saxe moralizes that “Though each was partly in the right, And all were in the wrong!”
Kendall and Wickham would go a step further and say that even seeing the elephant in its totality would not be enough to identify it. They argue that

no object is ever the target of just one ordering project and all ordering projects are themselves objects. So, in an array of ordering projects, any one of the projects is also the intersection of others inasmuch as each one is always the object of others. Ordering can therefore be described as an expansive and unbounded field in which diverse projects continually intersect, overlap and interfere. In this way, ordering is always a dynamic activity, in which objects are never completely controlled by any one project. (36-37)

Therefore, when we talk of ordering projects like masculinity, Boy Scouting, and cultural metaphors—even when we look at performances of a particular song, skit, or saying—it is important to recognize each is an ordering project which is also the intersection and object of other ordering projects. We cannot simply talk of monolithic “culture” like “Boy Scout summer camp culture,” but must talk instead about the multiple ordering projects within each “culture” which intersect, overlap, interfere, and even compete with each other.

Diverse ordering practices, objects, and projects actively conflict with each other, resist each other, produce interference with each other.

Objects are not compliant, ordering projects are continually disturbed, ordering is perpetual in that ordering is a continual battle against its own limits, against the possibility of its dissolution. Ordering projects, their limits, and the contests between them can never escape each other’s company. (Kenall & Wickham 37)

Even wisemen with their eyes wide open would still be partly right and in the wrong in their identifications of the elephant, for the elephant is the compilation of all orderings (past, present, and future)—unending and ever-changing and in-coherent. It is difficult to talk, then, of
“dominant” and “subordinate” cultures because we should be talking about ordering projects and about how one determines which project is dominant when projects are continually interfering with each other.

This also seems familiar to anthropologists like Anthony Wallace and his Principle of Maximal Organization which asserts that

an organism acts in such a way as to maximize, under existing conditions, and to the extent of its capacity, the amount of organization in the dynamic system represented in its mazeway; that is to say, it works to increase both the complexity and the orderliness of its experience. (Wallace 1969, 125)

Wallace argues that when an “innovative recombination will maximize the organization quantity in a given mazeway”—and if the “physiological milieu is adequate to support the cognitive task”—then that innovation will be produced (Wallace 1969, 125). So long as the innovation contributes to ordering of the existing “mazeway,” it will be integrated into the culture. Which seems to echo Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony as “a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria” between the old and new, the dominant and the subordinate (Gramsci Analysis 205).

I must offer one caveat, here, for my use of Kendall and Wickham’s work. Kendall and Wickham are rightly skeptical of “obsession with power-and-meanings” which has become hegemonic in Cultural Studies (2). They oppose the “almost Bacchic celebration of resistance, anarchy and class struggle” which has “hijacked” the field—all of which I agree with (10, 24). But then they start to throw out the baby with the bathwater: they are dismissive of the pursuit of “meaning” and notions like “power” and even “identity,” notions critically important to my own study and to cultural studies in general. They argue that Cultural Studies has an “obsession with
a search for meanings and for a desire to arrange all social meaning as a prelude to interpreting and judging them,” which leads directly to an “obsession with power” (14). Kendall and Wickham worry that these obsessions “are an obstacle to Cultural Studies providing useful and accurate descriptions of culture” (23). So, they dismiss these notions. For example, “identity” is seen as a “flabby, ill-defined concept which cannot satisfy our demands for precision and detail” (149). They want a more disciplined field of study which focuses more on description than interpretation. Certainly, what they offer up as an alternative to the study of power—the “study of culture through the study of order”—is insightful and useful, but I cannot follow them everywhere they go (142). For me, notions like hegemony help me to better describe and, yes, analyze power and identity ordering without the obsessions that Kendall and Wickham rightfully criticize.

Taking into account this caveat, my three assumptions about culture—all culture works hegemonically, culture is an organism, and culture orders—suggest that the object of this study of Boy Scout summer camp staff culture can be understood in the following ways:

• Boy Scout Staff culture is an “ungainly entity” that manages to survive through octopussian movements (a Geertzian notion). No matter the unauthorized, nontraditional, and even un-Scout-like methods that may be deployed by staff members, all their efforts contribute to constructing a Boy Scout tradition of masculinity. Counter-productive movements contribute to the construction. Unrelated movements contribute to the construction. The Boy Scout tradition and the camp staff culture would not exist were it not for this sort of movement. In culture, there is only ungainly movement.
• Boy Scout Staff culture is ordering, that is, it is involved in an unceasing revolution of unstable equilibria (a Gramscian notion). All of these ungainly movements by staff to construct a Boy Scout tradition of masculinity are efforts at ordering the chaos and disequilibrium as ensuing generations take the reigns of the culture. Some campers grow up to be staffers. These staffers bring new cultures to the camp-site. Some rearrange the fruit on the cart while other staff turn the cart upside-down. Culture and tradition—not even the centered Boy Scout masculinity variety—are never finally ordered. The culture bearers themselves are continually evolving it as they are evolved by it.

• Boy Scout Staff culture is a series of diverse efforts linked together to construct tradition (a Glassie-esque notion). Overridingly, all staff efforts are mobilized by the organization to construct a Boy Scout tradition in ensuing generations of young boys. This tradition—perhaps all tradition—is identity ordering. Boy Scout tradition is an ordering of a particular masculine identity which the organization seeks to construct. The organization chose an efficient construction crew to accomplish the job: peers. Ironically, the staff would not come together nor work together if it were not mobilized to participate in and order this tradition/identity.

It is within the ideological context of these notions of culture that I ask questions in this research project.

Research Questions

At this point, some readers have already turned me off because our assumptions do not agree. I am reminded of a story told by Chris Cavanagh about how answers or decisions divide us:
One day a devoted Talmudic student ran out of the synagogue shouting, “What is the meaning of life? What is the meaning of life?” . . . He came to the house of his Rabbi. He went inside and, almost in tears, pleaded, “What is the meaning of life, master?” The rabbi slapped the student across the face. “Why did you hit me,” asked the startled student. The Rabbi answered: “Such a good question. And you want to exchange it for an answer? It is the answers that keep us apart. It is the questions that unite us!”

(Cavanagh)

Perhaps outlining my assumptions about culture has drawn a line in the sand between me and some of my colleagues; however, my hope is that the research questions which emerge will reunite some of us.

Unlike in positivistic research, the hypotheses or questions with which I began the study are not the same questions that went into the writing up of the study. When I began this study, I was asking questions like,

• How are masculinities passed on from one person to another? In what ways and to what degree do youth encounter masculinity “training” in folklore?

• How do youth order masculinities? Do they “perform” masculinities? Are they “passing as” masculine?

• What is the relationship between contradictory cultural forces in staff culture at Boy Scout camp?

However, as the study deepened, my questions changed.

I became inspired by the notion of “moving questions” offered by educator and theorist Elizabeth Ellsworth (1997). Ellsworth is interested in “questions that shift and change what is asked and unasked by theory and practice. . . . Such questions can provoke an event—rather
than an answer—at the scene of address between teacher and student, researcher and researched, researcher and researcher” (Ellsworth 12-13). Ellsworth tries “to make possible and thinkable questions that I believe can set into motion ways of thinking and teaching that have otherwise become rigid, solidified, stuck, sloganized” (Ellsworth 12). She provides an example of a “potentially ‘moving question’: Is it possible to address ‘stuck places’ in our work as teachers and researchers with questions that, in the very process of their construction and articulation change our theorizing and practice already?” (Ellsworth 13). Such moving questions are my goal (if not reality).

The following potentially moving questions are based on the assumptions I have made about the nature of culture, about what is knowable about culture, and what ways I might use to know culture, and these questions have emerged out of the data I collected throughout this research project:

- How do those who order (say, for example, masculinity) accomplish that task when they, themselves, have not been fully ordered? How do they negotiate the incongruities? What ordering do they do when they, themselves, are ordering themselves?
- How does a boy’s world rise and fall in value based upon the meanings that are unleashed at Boy Scout summer camp?
- How might hegemony be a good thing? How might one hegemonize for social justice, democracy, citizenship?
- Can an individual change the way he or she sees the world based upon the ways a summer camp program or staff member addresses him or her?
Such questions are but the beginning: as the ordering of this dissertation occurs, more and more questions are unleashed.

**Big Ideas and Potential Significance**

These research questions are asked for two distinctly different audiences: academia and summer camp folk. The organization, theorization, and rhetoric in this dissertation are for the former, but the examples, histories, and interpretations (and many a footnote) are for the latter.

*For the Academic*

For the academic, I offer an examination of four key concepts in the field of youth culture studies and perhaps children’s folklore, and I will describe and interpret how they interact with one another in the lived experience of Boy Scout summer camp staff members. The four concepts are (1) masculinity, (2) hegemony, (3) resistance, and (4) passing. While most dissertations include a review of literature in the introductory chapter, I have opted to include specific scholarly discussions in the sections of the dissertation where they seem most pertinent. Here, however, I briefly outline the impetus and the exigence for these four concepts in my study of Boy Scout summer camp staff culture:

*Masculinity*

I began hearing masculinity murmurings while in undergraduate work in the early 1990s, and like the earliest students of masculinity, I caught the fever through feminism and the study of patriarchy (as described in the prequel beginning this chapter). Though there was good work prior, I did not catch the wave of masculinity scholarship until the mid-1990s with the following works: Connell’s (1995) explosion of monolithic masculinity into a vast plurality of constructed masculinities; Rotundo’s (1992) history of how notions of American masculinity are man-made rather than prescribed; Bederman’s (1995) articulation of the connections between race
(civilization) and manhood; the troubling of feminism’s oversimplified gender polarization and fear of masculinity studies in Penley and Willis’s volume of essays (1995); and Berger, Wallis, and Watson (1995), whose collection of essays starts with the premise that masculinity is performative, and as such, should look for less oppressive ways to be performed—to name a few prominent examples.\textsuperscript{30}

This wave of masculinity scholarship seems inspired by an opportunity described as the “crisis in masculinity,” a notion promulgated primarily by Kimmel (1996), Faludi (1999), and Robinson (2000).\textsuperscript{31} As Ross Haenfler puts it, “men are struggling with the meaning of manhood in a postindustrial, postfeminist world. Living under a constant “burden of proof,” men feel overburdened and undervalued, despite their continued structural advantages in a patriarchal society” (Haenfler, 77). This mid-90s scholarship suggested this was an opportunity to change masculinity, to improve it.

Increasingly, perhaps motivated by all the late-1990s popular books about how to raise, teach, and groom boys to manhood, some writers have begun to look at boyhood as a crisis in maturity. Examples include Lesko’s (2001) exposé on how adolescence is socially constructed; Côté’s (2000) description of extreme individualism and the loss of adulthood in America; Horowitz’s (2001) collection of a number of essays focused on the intersection of boys, work, and class; and the more “popular” texts, Apter’s (2001) debunking the myth of an independent path to maturity and Pittman’s (1993) search for models for adult masculinity—to name very few.\textsuperscript{32} Altogether, they seem to argue the importance of studying boyhood and an increasingly shaky relationship between adults and youth.

Using Connell’s (2000) history of masculinity scholarship, I would also place this dissertation in the “ethnographic moment” in which “the specific and the local is in focus” (Men
and Boys 9). Connell decries the “mystical generalities of the mythopoetic movement” and claims that contemporary masculinity research emerged during the new feminism of the 1970s, influenced by Freud’s psychoanalysis, sex role theories, and social constructionism (Men and Boys 3-9). Connell suggests masculinity research took a turn during the 1980s to the ethnographic, focusing on the “construction of masculinity in a specific setting” with “a concern to document and explain the particular patterns to be found in a definite locale” which has “brought a much-needed gust of realism to debates on men and masculinity” (Men and Boys 9). Rather than add to the debates about men and masculinity, however, I hope to add to the discussion of youth, boyhood, and masculinities.

As such, I am not sure I could say much about boyhood and masculinities without also talking about friendship among boys and men. While I do not go into detail about the friendships between the staff members (although that would be a worthy study), this dissertation definitely provides evidence of how many male friendships are often site-specific, task-oriented, and intense but most times punctuated (e.g., only developed during the summer camp season). What’s more, friendships with and among staff members are made in the context of work—and more specifically service work—so they are often non-competitive and supportive, and friendly if not familiar, affectionate if not emotional, physical if not sexual, and “fervent if not enduring” (Warner 50). As E. Anthony Rotundo has described 19th century boy friendships, so too are many summer camp staff friendships: felt camaraderie, yet no deep affinity (76). Having said this, I must admit a number of profound exceptions. A number of staff members were able to carry their camp friendships beyond the camp environment—either through membership in the Order of the Arrow, close proximity to other staff members back home, or simply based upon years and years of working together—some staff have found strong, multi-dimensional, quite
close friendships the likes of which they never would have found elsewhere. Some heterosexual friendships have led to marriage, while I have also witnessed some same-sex friendships which shared an intimacy indistinguishable from romantic couples.

In 2004, Jeff Hearn outlines the parameters of an emerging “Critical Studies of Men” which seeks to move away from the male-focused study of hegemonic masculinity and toward a more global, cultural study of the hegemony of man and about men (59). While I must confess I do not understand Hearn’s troubling of notions like hegemony and his support of “third dimensional views on power,” I see the truth in the logic of focusing on the study of men as a category and “that which sets the agenda for different ways of being men in relation to women, children and other men” (60). I see it as a move toward a “return of the actor”—actual men, in this case—in the scholarship; but it is also a more complicated and critical questioning of these men. Hearn appropriates Bocock’s (1986) inquiry, asking how “the intellectual, moral and philosophical leadership provided by the class [of men] or alliance of class fractions [of certain men] which is ruling successfully achieves its objective of providing the fundamental outlook of the whole society” (Bocock 63).

_Hegemony_

Antonio Gramsci’s notion of hegemony has forever changed our notion of culture: he saw culture as “not something ‘out there’ but intimate, internalized into our consciousness and directing—often without our knowledge—our activity” (Duncombe 9). “Hegemony is a term to describe relations of domination which are not visible as such. It involves not coercion but consent on the part of the dominated (or ‘subaltern’)” (During 4). Culture works in this way: not through coercion, but through consent, acquiescence, appropriation, and acquisition. And, it
does so, not only on the structural level but also on the intimate, personal level. Hegemony is the process not only on large, cultural levels, but also on smaller ordering projects.

Gwyn Williams (2000) provides a more ordered than ordering description of Gramsci’s hegemony while articulating its complexity:

By “hegemony” Gramsci seems to mean a sociopolitical situation, in his terminology a “moment,” in which the philosophy and practice of a society fuse or are in equilibrium; an order in which a certain way of life and thought is dominant, in which one concept of reality is diffused throughout society in all its institutional and private manifestations, informing with its spirit all taste, morality, customs, religious and political principles, and all social relations, particularly in their intellectual and moral connotations. An element of direction and control, not necessarily conscious, is implied. This hegemony corresponds to a state power conceived in stock Marxist terms as the dictatorship of a class. (Williams)

While I am not a fan of too simplistic dichotomies—between dominant and subordinate, state versus individual, culture versus subculture—I am surprised and moved by the claim that hegemony is really about equilibrium. Hegemony seeks equilibrium, an ordering, a coherence is maintained: this is hegemony. Where there is disorder, where there are divergent tastes, where connotations are multiple—hegemony is in crisis. Gramsci claims that a crisis of hegemony is a “crisis of authority” where the order of the state is jeopardized. In such crises, hegemony unleashes the dogs of culture and sends them chasing about the countryside, reinstating ordering projects as they go.34

Gramsci describes how a hegemonic equilibrium is arranged when a dominant group refrains from deploying force and instead deploys consent. “Force can be employed against
enemies,” Gramsci explains, “but not against a part of one’s own side which one wishes rapidly to assimilate, and whose ‘good will’ and enthusiasm one needs” (221). Authority is arrived at, Gramsci argues, by paying close attention to the subordinate groups. He argues that

the dominant group is co-ordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and the life of the state is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria . . . between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups—equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e., stopping short of narrowly economic-corporate interest. (Gramsci Analysis 205-6)

This notion of hegemony is radically different from one that sees the unstable equilibria as weighted always on the side of the dominant. As Stuart Hall has said, “Hegemonizing is hard work” (Hall). George Lipsitz (1988) describes the sorts of work hegemonizing requires:

Dominant groups must not only win the war of maneuver—control over resources and institutions, but they must win the war of position as well; they must make their triumphs appear legitimate and necessary in the eyes of the vanquished. That legitimation is hard work. It requires concessions to aggrieved populations. It mandates the construction and maintenance of alliances among antagonistic groups, and it always runs the risk of unraveling when lived experiences conflict with legitimizing ideologies. (Lipsitz 147)35

Culture—whether it be what some would call dominant or subordinate, cultural or subcultural—is an unceasing revolution of unstable equilibria which must be constantly constructed and maintained. It is as if the “weight of the culture” is not always on the side of the victor.36

In the end, hegemony is not simply the relationship between the dominant and the subordinate. Instead, hegemony is my notion of socialization, education, enculturation, the
combined relationship between cultural production and consumption: hegemony is how a culture is transmitted from one generation to the next, how one generation carries on any of the previous generation’s ordering projects.

**Resistance**

Ben Highmore (2002) suggests that the study of ordinary, everyday life emerged simultaneously with a growing understanding of the subject as active and increasingly resistant. Highmore describes a lineage of scholarship and creative work to make his case: from Georg Simmel’s focus on the “the incidental and the meager”; through Walter Benjamin’s privileging of “everyday detritus”; on to the surrealists and the Mass-Observation movement in 1930s Britain who provided tools for examining and representing the everyday; to Henri Lefebvre’s desire to transform the everyday and Michel de Certeau’s celebration of the inventiveness of everyday life (30-31). Rather than the notion that the subject is passive, entirely oppressed by culture and the State, these writers opened up a space to see the subject as active, creative, even powerful within their culture and within the State. And this view caught on.

Sociologist Kevin Hetherington (1998) explains how the field of sociology went in radically new directions when they reconsidered their notions of identity:

Where once sociologists talked about uncertainty and identity in terms of identity crisis, alienation or role conflict, now most commentators talk about the possibilities and forms of resistance opened up by fractured, hyphenated and multiple identities associated first with psychoanalytic, then structuralist and more recently with poststructuralist and feminist critiques of an essentialist subjectivity on which earlier sociological ideas about identity were founded . . . . One of the main issues behind this interest in identity and in identity politics more generally has been the relationship between marginalisation and the
politics of resistance, and affirmation, empowering choices of identity and a politics of difference. (Hetherington 21)  

Change the way identity is understood, and an entire field of study is reborn.

This new construction of a resistant subject had become so popular by 1990 that Meaghan Morris wrote that it was becoming a problem even then:

[S]ometimes, when distractedly reading magazines such as New Socialist or Marxism Today from the last couple of years, flipping through Cultural Studies, or scanning the pop-theory pile in the bookstore, I get a feeling that somewhere in some English publisher’s vault there is a master disk from which thousands of versions of the same article about pleasure, resistance, and the politics of consumption are being run off under different names with minor variations. (Morris 21)

Culture studies and especially youth culture studies is riddled with notions of resistance. Anthropologist Michael Brown (1996) calls it the “monoglossia” of resistance which has strongly skewed “the project of cultural anthropology in the direction of the work of Foucault: culture as prison, culture as insane asylum, culture as ‘hegemonic domination of the [insert Other of choice]’” (729, 730). Brown does not want culture study to revert exclusively to “normative patterns, shared cultural traits, or social solidarity at the expense of nuanced studies of power,” but to balance out the research agendas: drop the “paint-by-number analysis” which always finds resistance, and study domination and subordination as well as “reciprocity, altruism, and the creative power of the imagination” (733, 734).

There have been a number of writers who have chronicled a decline in what could be called resistance through commodification: Heath and Potter’s (2004) lament of the commodification of the myth of counterculture; Frank and Weiland’s (1997) collection of essays
fighting against the commodification of dissent; Quart’s (2003) critique of the branding of youth—to name a few.\textsuperscript{39} Their main concern is that everything that was fringe, marginal, edgy, and resistant is becoming increasingly integrated, assimilated, and included in the mainstream. Whether they are for it or against it, they bear witness to the lack of resistance in “resistance,” making it appear as though resistance does not really exist.

While I would not yet go so far as to say resistance does not exist, I propose an alternative view of so-called resistant situations: Rather than look at the situation as “A” resisting “B”, I prefer to look at what “A” is acquiescing to. That is, I want to know what “A” is moving toward rather than away from. Take, for example, what Glenn Feldman (1997) calls the “soft opposition” that Alabamians gave to the Ku Klux Klan following World War II. They resisted the influence of the Klan, not because they were against it; rather, they resisted the Klan in order to maintain their sovereignty. Feldman argues that Alabama elites geared their opposition to the Klan “toward alleviating federal concerns about state anarchy rather than truly curing the Klan cancer” (767). They employed “soft opposition,” including rhetoric, resolutions, committees, investigations, denouncements, and posturing—all to keep the federal government from coming in and taking care of business. Certainly, they took actions to resist the Klan; however, they were motivated to perform these behaviors because they were trying to acquiesce to something, not because they wanted to act against something.

\textit{Passing}

In my interpretation of summer camp culture, I am guided by a tri-fold reading of the concept of “passing”: passing on, passing as, and taking a pass on (described in Chapters 3-6). In a nutshell, I understand identity as an act of ordering passings. This understanding of identity is informed by the following work: Butler’s (1999) notion of the performativity of gender;
Goffman’s (1963) notion of passing to avoid stigma; Caillois’ (1958, 2001) understanding of mimicry—imitation, make-believe, passing—as a category of play; Turner’s (1987) notion of reflexive performance; and Wagner’s (1996) Geltung Hypothesis that suggests relationships are maintained through displays and cultivating appearance, through showing off.40 Taken together, these writers suggest a fundamentally different notion of identity, behavior, and culture than I personally grew up with: I was taught to find out who I was, but these authors make claims that I am multiple whos, that a singular “I” does not really exist, that what I know of myself is really a cast of various whos I have performed. Altogether, they opened up a space for me to construct a pleasing metaphor for identity, behavior, and culture: passing.

While the notion of passing is typically reserved for describing how light-skinned people of color can appear to be white and how homosexuals may appear as heterosexuals, I expand the use of that term to not only describe crossing into another culture or group (exoteric) but also crossing into what one might consider one’s own culture or group (esoteric). William Hugh Jansen (1965) describes the difference between exoteric and esoteric folklore: “The esoteric applies to what one group thinks of itself and what it supposes others think of it. The exoteric is what one group thinks of another and what it thinks that other group thinks it thinks” (46). In my context, traditional passing (black for white, homosexual for heterosexual) is an exoteric pass: presenting oneself as what one thinks another is and what one thinks that other group thinks like. I am expanding the use of the term passing to also include esoteric passing: presenting oneself as what one thinks membership in one’s own group is and how others think of that group.

An example of this comes from Robert Wood’s (2003) study of the complexity of Straightedge identity. Wood argues that an individual’s identity as a member of a so-called subculture is “at least partially impacted by pre-existing norms, values, beliefs, artifacts, spaces,
rituals, and people who communicate what the sub-culture is all about as well as what it means to be a member” (38). However, identity is only partially impacted by the preexisting culture. Wood argues that each “prospective member, however, necessarily possesses a unique biography, and thus prospective members will not internalize or identify with pre-existing culture in exactly the same way, nor will they necessarily construct identical or even similar sub-culture identities” (38). This gap between the preexisting culture of the group and the unique biography of the prospective member will require that prospect to pass in some ways to be considered a member. The prospective member must pass even into the culture he already belongs to, for there will always be a gap.

*For the Scout and Staffer*

As of the completion of this dissertation, I no longer work for the Boy Scouts of America, but I am still a registered Scouter, active on various committees, and I still find myself out at summer camp helping out. My intention in this dissertation is not to bore the Scout by theorizing summer camp—though I probably will—but my hope is to show how insightful, intelligent, and creative Boy Scout staff members are about their own identities, their culture, and their values. For the summer camp folk who read this dissertation, I offer two things: (A) a deeper appreciation for the fuller complexity of Scouting and (B) a different way to view something we take so much for granted.

First of all, the more I study Scouting history, documents, polices, arguments, and varieties, I am simultaneously more disgusted by and more adoring of Scouts than I was before the study began. In this study, summer camp staff will be shown to be less than Scout-like. In this study, Scouting will be shown to have a wider history than most may know. In this study, Camp Lakota itself will be shown to have some darker sides and some rough history. Your boys
may not be as safe as you once thought they were in Scouting. However, I offer myself as living proof that depth of study and critique—especially of the seedier side—does not lead to fear and apostasy. Instead, it leads to activism and an interest in re-ordering: a desire to improve the organization, the program, and yes, the self.

Secondly, this dissertation is an effort to rewrite summer camping and Boy Scouting as something much more than what it appears to be at face value. There is far more going on out there at summer camp than just chopping wood, learning to swim, and earning merit badges. In at least a small part, I would like to help “make strange and almost unfathomable the territories of self and society that are usually the most familiar to [Scouts] from everyday life” (Bentley 77, my insertion). I want to make strange one of the core experiences of Scouting: summer camping. For it is at summer camp that we witness the attempt to transmit and order nothing less than identities and cultures. We experience the poetry, the artistry of life itself. I hope this dissertation helps some Scout or staffer realize that they are part of something much larger than just a summer camp experience: they are participating in behaviors of mythic proportions and life-changing importance. And for staff members, they are doing so much more than just cracking jokes, teaching merit badges, and singing songs.

I remember an interview I had with camp staff member Christopher at Camp Pioneer in Oregon one summer in the late-1990s. He told me he never wanted to read what I wrote about summer camp because it “would ruin it for him.” He wanted to “stay ignorant” of what he was doing on staff—something he was so very good at it. For those like Christopher who are still involved in the performance of summer camp culture, this is your warning: My hope is that summer camp will never be the same again after this dissertation. I hope you will love and hate
it more. And in the process, you will be able to use some of what is reported here to change camping and Scouting for the better.

Method and Methodology of a Qualitative Study

With these audiences and with my research questions, I knew I could not use quantitative research methods to locate answers. I would not find answers to these sorts of questions by trying to measure the quantity, amount, and frequency of summer camp staff phenomena. And my audiences would not be interested in quantities so much as qualities of masculinity, hegemony, resistance, and passing. Certainly, during my study there were times when counting frequency was possible and illuminating. For example, my research journal contains the following entry: “Constant gay putdowns—and references to homosexuality. I need to record some of these. There are just too many!” I started to record some, but there were too many, too often to keep up with it. And, it did not really matter to me how often they happened. I was not interested in the quantity of gay putdowns, for instance. Instead, I was interested in more of the quality or “artistry” of the putdowns—their style, processes, contexts, performances, audience receptions, and meanings. In the end, qualitative research methods culled from anthropology, folkloristics, and sociology lend themselves to answering the sort of questions I am asking.

I wanted to find out more about what and how staff members know, understand, and perform the culture at Boy Scout summer camp. That is to say, I wanted to “uncover, make accessible, and reveal the meanings (realities)” staff “use to make sense of their daily lives”—and I wanted to accomplish this by examining lived experiences of staffing. For these ends, the methodology of participant observation seemed most appropriate:

The methodology of participant observation is exceptional for studying processes, relationships among people and events, the organization of people and events,
continuities over time, and patterns, as well as the immediate sociocultural contexts in which human existence unfolds. (Jorgensen 12)

Based upon my research questions, these are the sorts of data I am interested in: processes, relationships, ways of organizing, continuities and patterns, and contexts of summer camp and staff culture.

In pursuit of “insider” viewpoints and knowledge, I add to and challenge my own personal experiences on camp staffs with the following participant observation methods: (a) personal interviews with the community, (b) immersion in the community, and (d) video and audio taped conversations and events. I had lived this culture, but studying it was a different matter all together. I knew I needed to become a staff member and work along side the “subjects” of my study. I knew I needed to combine this personal exposure with extensive personal interviews with the staff members. Together, these practices would allow me the opportunity to understand their perspectives on staffing, to retrieve life experiences from their pasts, to obtain “expert” insight or information, to obtain descriptions of events or scenes that they may not show to non-staff outsiders, as well as to foster trust and to analyze their stories and folklore (Lindlof 5).

Challenges During the Study

The first challenge I encountered during the study was that, prior to this study, I have never recorded any of my summer camp staff experiences. Prior to this study, all I had collected “about” camp were memories and random notes in personal letters and emails. I knew I needed more than my own experiences to speak eloquently about staff culture. My agenda was, then, to interview each staff member and ask them about their experiences on camp staff. (See Appendix A for Interview Script.)
Prior to beginning the research, I submitted a proposal to the Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board, acquired permission from the local Boy Scout Council, the Camp Director of Camp Lakota, and each staff member and their respective parents (if the staff member was under 18 years of age). All the parents and staff conceded to participate in the research. It is important to note that I have changed all of the names of people to protect their identities. To make identification more difficult in some particularly sensitive cases, I have even changed the names of staff members between chapters. However, I have not changed the name of the camp, the town nearby, the Council name, nor any of the job titles, location references, or vocabulary choices. I was able to collect over 50 hours of interviews with 27 staff members ranging from 14 to 68 years old. I collected over 15 hours of video and audio recordings.

I was not able to interview every staff member, and this study is not a random sampling of the staff. I began by asking for volunteers during their “off time” to sit for an interview. When this proved insufficient for the time constraints, I began approaching staff and scheduling interview times. This proved more efficient, but I was still unable to interview everyone. The 27 of the approximately 40 staff I did actually interview are relatively representative in that they include some of the youngest staff members and some of the oldest, some of the newest and some of the most experienced.

Also during this research project, I kept an almost daily diary of my experiences. This was invaluable, for I had forgotten so many little conversations or sayings or side comments that occurred that enrich this study. Looking back, I wish I would have written more, kept up with it every single day, and included even more details. I now know better how to keep a notebook and when to push the “record” button on my tape recorder.
Another challenge I faced in this study was the role I played in the group I was studying. As an observer, I adopted “a role that other members recognize[d] as contextually appropriate and nonthreatening” (Lindlof 4). The vast majority of my interviews and observations for this study occurred during the summer of 2002 when I was employed as the Senior Commissioner. I had worked at Camp Lakota in previous years, but had returned in 2001 as the Frontier Patrol Director. Therefore, all the staff knew me already when I moved into the Senior Commissioner position in 2002. This was a tangential Administrative position: The role of Commissioner is to be a liaison between the staff and the Boy Scout troops who come to camp. I was not tied to a specific program area like most other staff members. It was my job to roam around, talk with campers and staff, take care of any immediate needs, and generally make sure everyone is happy.

In this position, I was privy to many administrative discussions, while also being included in many “regular staff” activities. In many ways, I belonged to neither the administration nor the regular staff. However, I seemed to be generally accepted by both because of my role of helping and supporting everyone at camp. This staff position allowed me unusually flexible and open access to many of the different socio-cultural groups and levels of ordering and control at Camp Lakota.

By the second year of my research (2003), I had become the Camp Director of the camp and had less time and capacity to do ethnographic research. What’s more, I had lost my ambivalent role and become “the man”—the one in charge of organizing at Camp Lakota. Throughout this dissertation, this role change will affect my interpretations and the actual data collected. I collected few interviews during my year as Camp Director, but I recorded a larger number of public performances (at campfires and at The Lakota Farce). Similarly, as I will note in future pages, my interpretations of some events are influenced by my changed role at Camp
Lakota. One campfire skit titled “Hard Core Flag Corps,” for example, is rich with meaning and identity ordering, but as Camp Director, I banned it after two performances. More on that in chapter three.

The third challenge I faced during this research is my own agenda. My goal was to describe the culture of Boy Scout summer camp staff members as comprehensively as possible from a decidedly functionalist perspective: This is how this group functions! I failed greatly in that goal. I am admittedly a functionalist at heart—I want to discover how things work—but my conclusions to this dissertation are mere speculation at how the center works.

I also had an ulterior motive to put a little jab into the ribs of the National organization of the Boy Scouts of America—inspired as I was by Jay Mechling’s critique in On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth (2001) where he suggests National make policies and procedures based upon lived Scouting (real boys in real Scout units) rather than some idealized, dead Scouting.

Unfortunately, I find myself pulling my punches in this dissertation. It is worth noting that I am working for the local Boy Scouts of America Council as of the writing of this dissertation—they pay my salary. Perhaps this is a factor, but I believe it has more to do with being an insider: Like Barre Toelken with his Yellowman interviews and tapes,41 I want to do no harm to these people, my friends and family. That will not stop me from describing some of the seamier sides of Boy Scout summer camp staff life and lore, but I will not roll this into a critique of the organization or this particular camp or the program. Instead, I come to my research with a genuine desire to do as renowned historian Jacques Barzun says: to “come closer and closer to the full complexity”—in his case, to history; in my case, of culture (Barzun xi). This dissertation aspires to come closer to the full complexity of the meanings and processes performed at Camp
Lakota among these staff members, and this dissertation argues that such complexity is good and appropriate.

**A Study of Folklore**

I certainly could have studied something besides the folklore of Boy Scout summer camp staff members at Camp Lakota; after all, there are numerous studies at and about summer camp. However, folklore seemed the most appropriate data to help answer the questions in this dissertation.

As I mentioned earlier, folklore is defined in about as many ways as there are folklorists. For myself, I begin my own definition by recognizing the word itself is a compound of the term “folk” and “lore” which means, in its simplest terms, “knowledge of the people.” In this dissertation, I want to study the knowledge of the camp staff members—as camp staff members. I am not interested in what they know of chemistry or mathematics or literature, except if those knowledges inform their understanding of what, how, and who it is to be a staff member. I am looking for the staff’s “staffing” knowledge—and what that might tell us about how they came to have this knowledge, how that knowledge is transmitted, and how they manage and order that knowledge for themselves.

Folklore, after all, serves a variety of functions. It does not just exist. It does something for the people who use it, and it is these functions which make folklore so highly appropriate for my own study. Folklorist Barre Toelken has argued that the “end” or purpose of expressions of folklore “is to carry and perpetuate constellations of culturally shared (and culturally-constructed) assumptions and values. . . . what we call folklore exists because it says something that otherwise would not get said” (Toelken, 1998, 92). Similarly, Jay Mechling argues that folklorists generally attribute two main goals or functions to folklore: (a) expressing “forbidden
thoughts and feelings in a coded way or within the safety and license” of a “framed” activity, and (b) decreasing “anxiety about a psychological or social situation” (Mother-Raised 214). If these assumptions, values, thoughts, feelings, and anxieties would not be expressed if it were not for folklore, then it seems critical to examine what is being said in folk expressions. What needed to be expressed, and what need is the folklore responding to?

Folklore keeps expressing what a culture needs it to say, what its people need to keep being said. Perhaps over-simplifying it a bit, folklore transmits culture. But maybe that is not too simplified. Turning again to Toelken, he describes what he calls folklore’s “educative matrix”:

[Folklore] constitutes a basic and important educative and expressive setting in which individuals learn how to see, act, respond, and express themselves by the empirical observation of close human interactions and expressions in their immediate society (that is, the family, occupational or religious group, ethnic or regional community). Folklore structures the worldview through which a person is educated into the language and logic systems of these close societies. It provides ready formulas for the expression of cultural norms in ways useful and pleasurable to us and to any group with which we share close and informal expressive interactions. (Toelken, Dynamics 21-22)

Thus, folklore is the mechanism for a culture to transmit itself: Folklore creates a learning setting. Folklore structures a worldview which opens the door for the acquisition of language and logic systems. And, folklore provides the formulas for expression. Therefore, I think it safe to say that folklore orders all cultural expression and transmission. Toelken claims that “folklore is the way we express [culture] to each other and critique it” (Toelken End, 99).
So, why study folklore? Because I am interested in how culture is transmitted, acquired, and used—and when I am an activist, how to improve or disassemble these actions—and this study explores the ways in which folklore is the mechanism by which a culture informally transmits itself to the next generation. Whether we are talking about culture or folklore—a mechanism of culture—it is important to note as folklorist Dan Ben-Amos does, that folklore is not “an aggregate of things”; instead, it is “a process—a communicative process” (9). Toelken also recognizes folklore’s communicative properties:

A quilt or a barn, as practical as its use may be, extends far beyond its mere thingness or its function. It is designed or phrased in such a way as to express and reflect the personal and cultural values in design and workmanship out of which the artisan works, and it is these designs and values, not the quilt or barn itself, that may be said to be dynamic, and thus to be folklore. (Toelken Dynamics, 34)

The folk objects—the quilts, barns, songs, skits, stories, jokes, motifs, etc.—are but the vessels a people use to transmit something else: the lore, the stuff we commonly think of as “culture”—the ideas, designs, and values of a people. This complex interaction between object and values is folklore.

Our job as folklorists, says Toelken, is to “present and study the processes of folklore that exist through time in a group of people by a comparative study of the items produced from the cultural premises of that group” (34). My job in this study, therefore, is to comparatively study the items produced from the cultural premises of the Boy Scout summer camp staff members at Camp Lakota in order to say something about the dynamism of folklore processes.
A Study of Border Culture

I have chosen, in this dissertation, to focus on the cultural productions of staff members in a very specific venue: what they produce in front of the campers. This is what Jay Mechling refers to as the third realm of cultural production in a residential institution like summer camp: the first is culture produced by staff members among themselves; the second is the culture produced by campers among themselves; and the third is the culture produced at the border between these two other groups (Mechling Children’s 274). Mechling builds off Erving Goffman’s work at a mental hospital (1961) and his description of “institutional ceremonies” in “total institutions”. Goffman claims that within the tightly structured and controlled environment of total institutions, “institutional ceremonies” are performed through which staff and inmates “express unity, solidarity, and joint commitment to the institution rather than differences between the two levels” (94). Goffman lists seven such “ceremonies”:

1. the “house organ—typically a weekly newspaper or a monthly magazine” (94)
2. “self government and group therapy” where inmates are allowed to spend time in an “egalitarian” milieu in return for being “less loyal to the counter-mores and more receptive to the ideal-for-self that the staff defines for them” (96-97)
3. the “annual party” at which staff and inmates “mix” through “standard forms of sociability” as well as “take liberties” across the “caste line” (97)
4. the “institutional theatrical” which “can be full of local references, imparting through the private use of this public form a special sense of the reality of events internal to the institution,” including satirical skits, lampooning staff members, burlesque (99)
5. the “annual open house” or “institutional display” in which outsiders are allowed to enter to inspect the premises (100)
6. “intramural sports” in which a “team of inmates” takes on “the role of representing the whole institution” (107)

7. “Sunday services and Sunday amusements” which show “in certain non-relevant roles both are members of the same audience vis-à-vis the same outside performer [preacher or sporting event]” (108).

Mechling adds four more institutional ceremonies he has witnessed in other total institutions:

8. meals—including foodways, folkspeech about food, food fights, and even seating arrangements (1999, 283)

9. assemblies—like flag ceremonies, talks by visiting dignitaries, and “town meeting” affairs (283)

10. rituals of incorporation, including official orientation sessions, mock ordeals, or initiation rites, “sometimes including artifacts that are symbolic adjuncts to the ritual” (like a t-shirt, haircuts, etc.) (284)\(^{45}\)

11. rituals of separation, “the border the child crosses to rejoin everyday society” like awards ceremonies and graduation ceremonies (284).

Mechling suggests there are “at least eleven sorts of performances in which to look for the emergence of children’s folklore” (284). If I might take him a step further: since we are looking at border performances, these are also the same performances in which we may look for the emergence of both children’s (camper) and staff folklore.

I have chosen to focus primarily on the culture produced by staff members at the border for three main reasons: First, based upon my years of experience at summer camps, I would concur with Mechling’s assessment that “cultural productions, performances, and genres in these two realms are likely parallel, possibly even mirror images of one another. At least they are
complementary” (274). As such, an examination of only “staff culture” would not tell me as much about cultural transmission, hegemony, resistance as studying the border culture at camp. Certainly, staff productions are informed by a wider array of stimuli (e.g., college and fraternity culture, television programs, school culture), and staff culture is based on an “intensification” of Scouting. But I agree with Mechling’s assertion that staff members and campers perform many complementary if not exact replicas of cultural materials for many of the same reasons: “to make visible the categories of their world view and to fix the public meanings of beliefs and values” at a Boy Scout summer camp (281). If all I had wanted was to look at staff beliefs and anxieties, I would have focused on what staff produce amongst themselves. Instead, I use that data to inform my primary focus at the border.

The second reason I focus on the border cultural production is because a large portion of “staff” culture is really occupational culture. Surely, the staff produce culture for each other, beyond the eyes and ears of the campers; however, I would argue this is relatively minute in comparison with the culture produced in front of the campers. I would argue that the vast majority of the production amongst summer camp staff members is guided by, informed by the need to, and evolving into productions at the border. It is their job—their 24 hour a day, six days a week job—to produce culture for the campers. Even a significant portion of their so-called subversive cultural elements are carried out in full view of campers.

Lastly, I focus on staff culture at the border because Boy Scout staff members can represent (a) the staff they presently are, (b) the campers they were (perhaps just the year before) as well as (c) the official Boy Scout role model they are trying to emulate. The staff are a fantastic example of not only a cultural producer but also a complex example of the consummate cultural consumer: both transmitter and receptor of official Boy Scout culture.
**Autoethnographic Style of the Dissertation**

As an insider, I could not write objectively about Boy Scout summer camp staff culture. As someone who believes in the “return of the actor,” I could not stay buried in books and secondary experiences during this research project. And, based upon my distaste for writing about myself by writing about another—what Susan Rubin Suleiman (1994) calls “mediated autobiography”—I have chosen to write this dissertation with autoethnographic tendencies (qtd in Bahar 30).

Autoethnography emerged amidst the 1970s “crisis of confidence” in the social sciences when the emphasis changed from participant observation to the “observation of participation” (C. Ellis 202, 212). Anthropologist David Hayano (1979) originally used the term autoethnography to refer to a “native” studying his or her “own people,” but the term has evolved into a wide range of researching and writing strategies for studying lived experience (qtd in C. Ellis 209). For example, some authoethnographies are written more like novels than essays. Other autoethnographies are very revealing of the author’s personal pain and development. Still other autoethnographers attempt to “co-construct” their text with the subjects of their study. “Autoethnographers vary in their emphasis on the research process (graphy), on culture (ethnos), and on self (auto). . . . Different exemplars of autoethnography fall at different places along the continuum of each of these three axes” (C. Ellis 211).

This dissertation is no novel. Nor does it revolve around my own pain or failures during the study or my own early childhood. And, it does not (regrettably) include co-authoring with my colleagues at Camp Lakota. As such, it only approximates some of the basic autoethnographic tactics:
• To demonstrate my own motives, feelings, and struggles, each chapter (except Chapter Two) begins with a story from my own experiences related to the topic discussed therein.
• Instead of writing from a distance, I write in the first-person throughout the dissertation, pointing out my own interests, intellectual baggage, and internal conflicts.
• While I do not fabricate any quotations or events, I do attempt to tell stories rather than just describe performances.
• I am attempting to write in a way that is accessible to a number of audiences, including academics and perhaps the now, college-educated youth that were part of this study.

I admit that these efforts may fail at times, making the dissertation challenging to read in places, but it seemed like an appropriate way to write about a group of folks to which I belong.

Organization of the Study

In Chapter One, I have unpacked some of my own baggage and described the constructions I have put on events to orient myself and the reader in this discussion of Boy Scout summer camp staff culture.

In Chapter Two, I describe Boy Scout summer camping from the National, official level down to the camp-specific level. I describe how Camp Lakota Boy Scout summer camp is organized, and I describe the job of a staff member.

This lays the context for the following chapters where I unpack the three readings of “passing” amongst staff members. I follow Sally F. Moore’s (1978) suggestion that sociocultural research should include analysis of three processes: processes of regulation, processes of situational adjustment, and indeterminancy within these other two processes (39).
In Chapter Three, I theorize hegemony, multiple masculinities, and how staff members “pass on” Scouting masculinities. The Boy Scouts of America has a distinct array of masculinities which they support, and this chapter explores how staff members order and attempt to transmit these masculinities onto the next generation. This corresponds to Moore’s processes of regulation.

Then, in Chapter Four, I explore how staff members simultaneously “pass as” masculine (because they are not yet “fully” masculine) as they are trying to “pass on” masculinity. What notions of Scouting masculinity have staff members—the most enculturated Scouts at camp—received from Scouting culture, and what have they discovered in the process? In other words, I explore how hegemony works when its primary agents are passing. This corresponds to Moore’s processes of situational adjustment.

I take these themes a step further in Chapter Five where I examine the origin stories of staff members—how they came to be on staff—as well as study a very complex cultural production—The Lakota Farce—to explore ways in which staff order their personal and collective identities. I examine the ordering tactics which staff members use to “pass as” rather than to resist Scouting hegemonies.

Next, in Chapter Six, I explore the ways in which staff members “take a pass on” masculinity—how they defer or avoid received notions of masculinity—by acquiescing to rather than resisting against a very traditional, Scouting form of masculinity. Their notions of masculinity are far more complex and decentered than one might imagine in such a centered institution as the Boy Scouts of America. This corresponds to Moore’s factors of indeterminacy, flux, and transformation.
Finally, in Chapter Seven I summarize my findings and explore the unintended consequences of pursuing this study. I delve into alternative implications of this study as well as the possibilities of participatory action research methodology and methods for furthering this study.
Notes

1 Used here, Arcadia is a contrasting parallel to Academia: the innocent pastoral in contrast with the all-knowing gatekeeper. While Academia is the reason this dissertation exists, Arcadia is the inspiration for and contents of this dissertation.

2 While I have changed the names of the staff members to protect their identities, I have not changed the name of the camp itself, the town in which it is situated, nor the positions staff members have on staff (Camp Director, Aquatics Director, etc.). It is important to divulge that one of the staff members quoted in this dissertation is my father, but I have attempted to alter identifiers to make it unclear which staff member he is. While it can be argued that this relationship is important to the analysis, I will argue that I did not feel it was critical at this juncture and that I would leave that analysis for another project.


4 Reason and Marshall (2006) view research as a personal process (for me) from three perspectives:

first, from an existential perspective as the here-and-now struggle with one’s being-in-the-world; secondly, from a psychodynamic perspective which views current patterns of experience and behavior as rooted in unresolved distress from earlier (often childhood) experiences; and thirdly, from a transpersonal perspective which views individual experience as a reflection of archetypal patterns of the collective unconscious. (Reason & Marshall On Working 315-316)

They argue we come to research with a bundle of life issues, choices, and opportunities; old distresses (and accompanying anxiety and defensiveness); and myths and metaphors in the unconscious (On Working 316-317). We bring this baggage to the act of research and use research to work through them to achieve personal development.

5 While this is not the focus of this particular study, this transition from youth staff member to adult staff member is a volatile, disrupting transition: I have watched as some staff make this transition through alcohol and marijuana, some by dropping out of summer camp staffing entirely, and some kicking and screaming through the process. This is a topic clamoring for further study.

6 And for those who have asked me, “Why study the center? Scouts are about as centered as you can get! You’ll never get a job studying the center.”—I have the following response: I like the rationale Daniel Mato uses in defense of studying the center. Mato describes how he used to study the “subaltern,” asking them how his research might be useful to them. Typically, their answers were in the form of requests—for supplies, doctors, etc.—which he saw as “material requests . . . related to situations of social disadvantage, which were in turn rooted in historically established power relations that kept these people in subordinated social situations” (486). With that knowledge, he decided to stop studying the “subaltern,” and instead study “those accountable for social injustice and make this knowledge available to those ‘subaltern’
subjects” (486). While my study of Boy Scout summer camp culture may not directly be a study of agents of social injustice, it is what Mato refers to as a study of “the practices of hegemonic agents and the global-local articulations of power” (487). What Mato now does—and I may one day—is he is able to reorient his research practice to ‘give some of these peoples’ organizations the practical support they requested as part of their negotiations with global agents such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and U.S.-based environmental organizations that operate at worldwide level’(487). Study the center for the margin: study the National organization for its membership; study the summer camp for the camper; study how hegemonizing is taught for those who confuse it with social control and domination.


9 A few years ago, a group of graduate students at a California Folklore Society conference sat around sharing our “origin” tales—of how we got into folklore studies. We talked about collecting the stories and producing an article or book about folklorist occupational folklore. However, to my knowledge, nobody has followed up with that discussion.


This entire issue of *New York Folklore* is devoted to occupational folklore and to this
notion of applying scholarship to real people and real people’s problems: McCallum, Brenda.
“Songs of Work and Songs of Worship: Sanctifying Black Unionism in the Southern City of
Portrait in Steel.” 73-86. Boynton, Mia. “A Woman in a Men’s Sphere: Testimonies from a
Woman Steelworker at Buffalo’s Republic Steel.” 87-99.

McCarl, Robert. *The District of Columbia Fire Fighters’ Project: A Case Study in
Institution Press, 1985. Bell, Michael J. *The World from Brown’s Lounge: An Ethnography of
Black Middle Class Play*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1983. Knapp, Mary and
Herbert Knapp. *One Potato, Two Potato . . . The Secret Education of American Children*. NY:
*Featherless Chickens, Laughing Women, and Serious Stories*. Charlottesville: University Press
of Virginia, 1997. Turner, Patricia A. *I Heard It Through the Grapevine: Rumor in African-

Kevin MacDonald borrows this notion of the “return of the actor” from Touraine, A.
*Return of the Actor: Social Theory in Postindustrial Society*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University

Gurian, Michael. *A Fine Young Man: What Parents, Mentors and Educators Can Do to
*Bringing Up Boys: Practical Advice and Encouragement for Those Shaping the Next Generation

Scouting magazine published a number of articles about and by these authors writing
about how to raise boys. Examples include, Dworkis, Janis Leibs. “How Society Fails Boys
[And What We Can Do About It].” *Scouting* May-June 1999. 26 Apr. 2007

This dichotomy is brought to you by the inflamed passions of Robert McCarl—the
guru of occupational folklore studies—and Michael Owen Jones—the guru of organizational
folklore studies, though never the twain shall meet. Jones, Michael Owen. “Why Folklore and
Michael Owen Jones’s Article, ‘Why Folklore and Organizations?’” *Western Folklore* 51 (Apr.
Concatenation means “a linking together or being linked together in a series” and “a series of things or events regarded as causally or dependently connected” (Webster’s New World Dictionary).

King (1994) and Wheatley (1999) have argued that critical mass thinking is a byproduct of Newtonian science and machine metaphors used to describe how things work. Following, I want to get away from the old sciences and bring in more of the new sciences like quantum mechanics to see what sort of metaphors of complexity they can provide to us. Machine metaphors are too neat for studying messy cultures.

My presentation of “‘It’s Alive!’ A Burkean View of Folklore as Agent” at the 1999 California Folklore Society Meeting garnered vehement opposition to the notion that culture could be alive: I received the same sort of response I’d received at the 1997 New Mexico Women’s Studies Conference described at the beginning of this dissertation. More on this later.


Cultural evolutionists look at different cultures as more evolved than other cultures—and such thinking as led to abuses by those who feel that white culture is more evolved than black culture. As such, Toelken and Foster claim they “have not tried to justify transference of the concepts such as ‘ascent’ or ‘progress’ to the field of folklore” (110).

As an alternative to the octopussian notion of culture, some scholars view culture through geological metaphors. Multiple fields of cultural influence can be seen as moving and shifting like some form of cultural tectonic plates, ramming up against each other, creating friction, tearing each other down and building new formations up.

Octopuses or tectonic plates, both metaphors help us to conceive of culture as coherent and organizing while also appearing full of fissures, cracks, breaks, and contradictions. We arrive at an understanding of how culture works—not by being ordered, but by ordering, by constantly attempting to equalize the unending equilibrium. Hetherington suggests looking at Michel Serres and B. Latour’s (1995) Conversations on Science, Culture and Time. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995 and N. Lee’s “Values: Pyramids and Blank Dominoes’ Paper presented at the Advanced Seminars in Childhood and Social Theory, Keele University, March 1997.

Kendall and Wickham chart their own genealogy, building their notion of “ordering” on “an understanding of order, that is built on an understanding of governance, that is built on an understanding of Foucault’s notion of governmentality.” (2). They borrow heavily from John Law’s book Organizing Modernity (1994) in which Law promotes the notion of “ordering” over notions of “order” or notions of there being any singular order (“the social order). Instead, Law promotes the notion of multiple orderings that are ongoing in society.
Kendall & Wickham make a distinction between their notion of “ordering” and other notions of culture based on power relationships and resistance. They explain:

> If any of you would think, from what we have said so far, or for reasons known only to yourselves, that our concern with the notion of ordering is a concern with some sort of ‘fascistic’ or ‘anally retentive’ obsession, we want to expunge such a presumption here and now. Ordering is not about dominating or even tidying, it is about acting on the world; dominance and tidiness are only two of many possible objectives for such action. From our point of view, freedom from dominance and messiness are equally objectives which must, for the study of ordering, be treated in the same way as dominance and tidiness. (38).


While the Boy Scouts of America has its three G’s—God, girls, and gays—I seem to have my own ideological three G’s: Glassie, Geertz, and Gramsci.

This question comes from a question Ellsworth (1997) appropriates from Phillips (1995): “In what ways does the world rise or fall in value when a reader or groups of readers perform and let loose in the world this particular meaning or reading of a text or event?” (Phillips 45; in Ellsworth 127).


Hearn claims that Critical Studies of Men has seven major aspects of their agenda: to consider and examine

1. the social processes by which there is a hegemonic acceptance of the category of men
2. the system of distinctions and categorizations between different forms of men and men’s practices to women, children and other men
3. which men and which men’s practices—in the media, the state, religion, and so on—are most powerful in setting those agendas of those systems of differentiations
4. the identification of the most widespread, repeated forms of men’s practices
5. the description and analysis of men’s various and variable everyday, ‘natural(ized)’, ‘ordinary’, ‘normal’, and most taken-for-granted practices to women, children and other men
6. the question of how women may differently support certain practices of men
7. the interrelations between the previous six elements, with special interest in the relationship between ‘men’s’ formation within a hegemonic gender order, that also forms ‘women’, other genders and boys, and men’s activity in different ways in forming and reforming hegemonic differentiations among men (60-61)

Hearn claims that the Critical Studies of Men is attempting to “face the possibility of the abolition of “men” as a significant social category of power” (66).

This starts to sound like a wag-the-dog scenario: hegemony is the tail of the dog, but I say the tail unleashes the dog.

Lipsitz cites Leon Fink for contributing to the debate surrounding Gramsci’s notions of domination, resistance, and hegemony by presenting “hegemony as something to be struggled for, rather than as something imposed on inert masses. . . . Fink insists that power is wielded within the context of historical blocs—temporary and unstable alliances built on combinations of ideology and self-interest that can be both created and destroyed through political struggle” (Lipsitz 146). Fink, Leon. “The New Labor History and the Powers of Historical Pessimism.”

Perhaps a better way to think about it is how Jonathan Joseph (2000), a proponent of the “transformational model of social activity,” distinguishes between the structural aspect of hegemony and the agential aspect of hegemony. Joseph describes the “agential” aspect as the “normal understanding of the concept as the struggle for dominance, the application of strategy, the exercise of power, the striving for consent, the articulation of interests, the construction of blocs and the battle of ideas” (190). These are the actual individual hegemonic projects which are unleashed on the world. However, there is a deeper, “structural” aspect of hegemony which refers to the “relations between [social] structures, practices, generative mechanisms and institutions, and between political, economic and cultural domains. Its basic role is to secure the cohesion of the social system and ensure the reproduction of basic social structures and social and institutional ensembles” (191). Joseph makes this distinction between “hegemony’s basic material necessity and various forms of its actualization through concrete projects and intentional agency” (191). While many of my colleagues will err on the side of studying the agential aspect of hegemony, I am interested in its structural aspect and understanding how the agential projects reach their structural ends.


I was lucky enough to be one of the last classes to hear Toelken’s Yellowman tape recordings before he sent them back to his Navajo family to dispose of them. For the telling of this story and an insightful discussion on issues surrounding it, see Toelken, Barre. “The Yellowman Tapes.” *Journal of American Folklore* 111 (Fall 1998): 381-391. A few years later, Toelken exposes even more of the issues surrounding his lifetime’s work in Toelken, Barre. “Beauty Behind Me, Beauty Before.” AFS Address. *Journal of American Folklore* 117 (Fall 2004): 441-445.


What Bateson says in Naven is that schismogenesis is “a process of differentiation in the norms of individuals behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals” (175). He despises the “confusion of spheres of relevance” when we confuse “our study of the psychological processes of the individual with our study of society as a whole” (176). Instead, we should define our discipline “in terms of the reactions of an individual to the reactions of other individuals” and that we should regard “the relationship between two individuals as liable to alter from time to time, even without disturbance from outside” (176). This alteration is typically progressive, building upon previous and succeeding interactions (176)

Bateson also differentiated between complementary schismogenesis—which exists when two individuals or groups reply to each other in opposite but unopposed ways (e.g., dominance/submission)—and symmetrical schismogenesis—which exists when two individuals or groups reply to each other with similar, competitive interactions (e.g., dominance/dominance)
It seems to me that the relationship between staff and campers is a healthy mixture of the two but with symmetrical schismogenesis as the motive: attempting to create “progressive change” so that campers take on more and more of the responses staff are using on them (Bateson 176).


CHAPTER II. CAMP CULTURE IN THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA AND AT CAMP LAKOTA, DEFIANCE, OH

Chapter Two Summary: In order to understand the context of summer camp staff culture, we must first explore the area surrounding Camp Lakota, the history of Boy Scouting, the history of organized camping in general, and the history of Boy Scout camping. Then, it is important to describe how staff are organized and trained, as well as how they describe their typical day on camp staff. This context will allow the reader to understand some of the verbiage and references in the following chapters.

Camp Lakota, Defiance, Ohio

What better place to explore notions of identity, culture, and hegemony than in a town called Defiance. Camp Lakota is located on the fringe of Defiance, Ohio (population: 16,400). The camp is approximately 640 acres, bounded on one side by the Auglaize River, and on the other sides by private property and encroaching housing developments (See Figure 1). For years, campers and staffers have lived under the rumor that these housing developments would raise the value of camp property and compel the Council to sell off part of the camp property. Based on the fact that so many movies about summer camp are predicated on the threat of losing the camp, it is not surprising that this mythology is pervasive at a living, breathing, non-celluloid camp as well.¹

Defiance, itself, is located at the confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize Rivers within a region known as the Great Black Swamp—a region renowned for its fertile soil and vicious mosquitoes. Historical records quote early white inhabitants as saying that "swampland mosquitoes would settle on the back of a person’s neck so thickly that, in the process of shoving them away, he would draw back a bloody hand" (Defiance City). This is still the case today.
Figure 1: Camp Lakota Camp Map, 2003: This map shows all the program areas, campsites, and major geographical features (lake, river, etc.) at Camp Lakota. The map covers approximately 640 acres, with Lake Glengary being about 48 acres in size.
Despite the harshness of the mosquitoes, the area now known as Defiance was a perfect gathering place for Native Americans. In fact, in October 1792, it was the site of “the largest Indian council of all times”:

“[T]he chiefs of all the tribes of the Northwest were here; and representatives of the Seven Nations of Canada, and of Twenty-seven Nations beyond Canada. That Cornplanter and forty-eight chiefs of the Six Nations of New York repaired thither. That three men of the Gora Nations were in attendance, whom it took a whole season to get there. "Besides these," says Cornplanter, "there were so many nations we cannot tell the names of them." (1883 History)²

However, these sorts of Native gatherings did not last long.

Two years after that large gathering, just before defeating the Native Americas in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in August, 1794, General “Mad” Anthony Wayne built a fort at this confluence. He ordered the destruction of all Native American villages and crops within a fifty mile radius of the fort (Fort Defiance). After completing its construction, Wayne reportedly surveyed the land and declared to General Scott, "I defy the English, Indians, and all the devils of hell to take it" (Defiance County). Thus, the new construction was named Fort Defiance. Fort Defiance was described as “a white man’s reservation in Indian territory” (Defiance County).

The area surrounding Camp Lakota is also famous for being the one-time home to one of the most eccentric and famous American outdoorsman, one John Chapman—better known as Johnny Appleseed. Mr. Appleseed had set up a nursery along the banks of the Maumee River nearby and made Defiance one of his main headquarters (1811-1828) (Defiance County).

With such rich history to pull from, you would think more of that history would leak into the summer camp lore. But it has not. While local Boy Scout troops may tell their boys about
this colorful history and heritage, the camp culture fails to reflect any of it. Very little has been done over the years to connect Camp Lakota to its surrounding community and its history. In so many ways, the Camp is an island unto itself.3

This point is placed in sharper relief when you note which historical figures are talked about at Camp Lakota. By and large, ignoring the tales of Indian gatherings, “Mad” Anthony Wayne, and Johnny Appleseed, Camp Lakota does revere the likes of Oliver Spencer and Neil Armstrong—two, perhaps more palatable, persons of note who walked the territory of what is now Camp Lakota.

The first, Oliver Spencer, wrote his autobiographical account of Indian captivity, titled *Indian Captivity: A True Narrative of the Capture of the Rev. O. M. Spencer by the Indians, in the Neighborhood of Cincinnati* (1835), which reportedly recounts incidents of 1795.4 Spencer was kidnapped as a young boy of about eleven years of age, taken to a Shawnee village at the confluence of the Auglaize and Maumee Rivers, and learned the ways of the Indians for approximately eight months. Then, with the benevolent influence of President George Washington himself, Spencer was sold back to his European family, taking nearly two years to get back home. This story has been told off-and-on over the years at Camp Lakota—either to the entire camp population or to first year campers.

Not only are parts of the story told to campers, but the camp’s dining hall was given the name Meecheway Lodge—“Meecheway” being Oliver Spencer’s Shawnee name. I will discuss the performance of this story at greater length in Chapter Three.

The other historical personage of note at Camp Lakota is astronaut Neil Armstrong—the first man to set foot on the moon. Armstrong grew up in Wapakoneta, OH, approximately an hour’s drive south of camp. He was a Boy Scout who not only attended Camp Lakota as a
youth, but also was a staff member in the 1940s. This connection to the camp was so impressive to the locals that in 1969 the Boy Scout Council—then, Shawnee Council—divided its property in half and maintained the name of Camp Lakota for one half and gave the other half the name Camp Neil Armstrong.

Seemingly incongruently, the Armstrong side of camp (with the technologically advanced motif of the Eagle spacecraft landing on the Moon) was more “primitive”: Scouts who camped there cooked their own meals, swam in the lake, and had to go to the other side of the lake for conveniences like indoor plumbing. Meanwhile, the Lakota side (with the rustic and “primitive” Native America motif) offered modern conveniences like meals served in the dining hall, a swimming pool, showers, and the like.

Nowadays, Camp Neil Armstrong is no longer operational. The property has effectively been subsumed under the name Camp Lakota even though that side of camp is still referred to as the “Armstrong side” of camp. Now, even those who camp on the Armstrong side come over to the Lakota side for modern conveniences.

It is in this place called Defiance—steeped in history and adventurous, lively characters—that I center my study of culture and hegemony, identity and masculinity at a Boy Scout summer camp.

An Origin Story of Boy Scouting in the United States

The Boy Scout movement was created by Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell (1857-1977), called Stephe by his family (pronounced Steevie) (Jeal 9). To most Scouts and Scouters, he is known as Lord Baden-Powell after he was knighted by King George V in a celebration of Scouting’s 21st birthday (Freedman 198). Prior to founding the Scout movement,
Baden-Powell was a soldier who had acquired “damnable notoriety” by his against-all-odds successful defense of the city of Mafeking in Africa (Collis 25).

Baden-Powell was like many other social watchers of his time, envisioning their grand Britain ailing and quickly falling into ruin. Baden-Powell told a colleague that he should “Go into any big works or into any back alley where working lads congregate and hear what they talk and think about . . . and you will come away ashamed at the results of our so-called civilization. But it is not the fault of the boys” (qtd in Jeal 413). Instead, it was the fault of those who had created this civilization. American journalist and friend of Scouting Jacob Riis described the problem as “Too much house,” that is, “Civilization has been making of the world a hothouse” (Gibson Camping 9). Britain was falling into decay because “national ‘greatness’ depended upon ‘character’ rather than upon technology, natural resources or size of population” (Jeal 571).

To save the nation, Baden-Powell felt he needed to save the character. He decided to do something about it by focusing on the youth of his country and building their character.

Baden-Powell had a “vision of a British society made strong by legions of well-disciplined, morally upright, patriotic youth who found their satisfaction in defending the interests of the empire and following the orders of their superiors.” (Rosenthal 53). In Scouting for Boys, Baden-Powell describes his primary goals for the “Boy Scout scheme”:

to revive amongst us, if possible, some of the rules of the knights of old, which did so much for the moral tone of our race, just as the Bushido of the ancient Samurai Knights has done, and is still doing for Japan. Unfortunately, chivalry with us has, to a large extent, been allowed to die out, whereas in Japan it is taught to the children, so that it becomes with them a practice of their life, and it is also taught to children in Germany
and Switzerland with the best results. Our effort is not so much to discipline the boys as to teach them to discipline themselves. (qtd in Rosenthal 174)

In such Panopticon-esque verbiage, Baden-Powell wanted to use Scouting to turn the wretched into self-disciplining, knights of the Empire.

No matter his genius, however, Baden-Powell did not simply create Boy Scouting out of thin air. Instead, he pulled together various existing philosophies, practices, and movements and connected and repackaged them in his own way. Baden-Powell cites the influence of the writings of Daniel Carter Beard and his Sons of Daniel Boone and the Boy Pioneers—youth organizations Beard founded as early as 1905 (Nash 147-148). As well, Baden-Powell indicates that he borrowed heavily—some have even said “stole” heavily—from author, youth worker, and Scottish emigrant to the United States, Ernest Thompson Seton and his seventy-one page handbook The Birch Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians (1906) (Morris 185). Seton had begun experimenting with the Woodcraft Indians outdoor movement as early as 1900 (Schmitt 107). Seton is beyond a shadow of a doubt the “vital influence who brought before Baden-Powell the model of an efficient, attractive, self-contained system toward which he had been working for two years” (Rosenthal 81).

Baden-Powell took Seton’s model, however, and fashioned it into a more modern, citizenship-building Scouting program. As he tells it, Baden-Powell was initially inspired by a conversation he had with William Smith, the founder of the Boys’ Brigade (founded 1883), while the two were attending the Annual Drill Inspection and Review of the Boys’ Brigade in Glasgow. The date was April 30, 1904. During the discussion, Smith asked Baden-Powell to revise the pamphlet he had written for soldiers, Aids in Scouting (1899), and make it more
suitable to a youth audience (Rosenthal 52). Baden-Powell took Smith’s suggestion but envisioned grander possibilities.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1908, Baden-Powell published the first parts of \textit{Scouting for Boys} (1908). It was a revision of his earlier pamphlet titled \textit{Aids to Scouting for N.C.O.s and Me}—just as Smith had suggested. The primary message of \textit{Aids to Scouting} “was that military scouting bred self-reliance by making men use their intelligence and act on their own initiative when away from the guidance of an officer.” (Jeal 361-362).\textsuperscript{14} The revised version, \textit{Scouting for Boys}, maintained this message, but was adapted to a younger audience:

In addition to the vast amount of information it contains about wildlife and camping, \textit{Scouting for Boys} offers useful wisdom on a dazzling array of subjects: on the proper way to breathe, eat, sleep, and clothe oneself; on how to fight disease, keep clean, and brush one’s teeth; on the necessity of keeping one’s blood clean by having at least one bowel movement a day—known as a ‘rear’—or sometimes even two; on the correct way to fly a flag, combat snakebite, remove grit from the eye, carry an unconscious person, make buttons out of bootlaces; on how to talk a suicidal person out of killing himself, how to choose a career (with a disproportionate amount of proselytizing about the benefits of the army and the navy), and how to bake bread, to name a few. (Rosenthal 185)

In a later edition (1932), Baden-Powell declares in the introduction that “Scouting for Boys is the Handbook showing us how to use, care for, preserve, and hand down, the tool which his genius devised and which he bequeathed to us”—that is, the tool of Scouting (Baden-Powell \textit{Scouting for Boys vii}).
Recently, however, a series of boxes have been unsealed at Yale University whose contents strongly suggest that the tool of Scouting was actually born of another man’s genius, an American by the name of Frederick Russell Burnham (1861-1947). Author of *Burnham: King of Scouts, Baden-Powell’s Secret Mentor* (2003), Peter van Wyk worked with Burnham’s son Roderick to sift through and interpret forty years of private correspondence between Burnham and Baden-Powell found in the Yale archives.15 Van Wyk argues that Burnham actually taught scouting to Baden-Powell while in Africa, and that Burnham continued to mentor Baden-Powell for nearly five decades.

Van Wyk describes how Burnham and Baden-Powell went on a reconnaissance mission together, and on that mission Baden-Powell was introduced to Scouting (Van Wyk 256-7). On the evening of Friday, June 12, 1896, when Baden-Powell rode out with Burnham, Van Wyk describes Baden-Powell as “a dilettante, a wil-o’-the-wisp dandy, a pretender given to light banter and dressing up for lavish social dos. His practical knowledge of frontier life, of scouting, of tracking and trailing was exactly zero. Zip” (Van Wyk 226). On the expedition, Baden-Powell impressed Burnham with his sketching and map-making skills, and Burnham inspired Baden-Powell as he

- described the quick draw, and he gave an exhibition of dry-fire snap-shooting as practiced in the American West. He then introduced some basics of woodcraft, a term that was new to Stephe [Baden-Powell]. . . . [He showed] how to trace the spoor of an enemy and how to cover his tracks. He described Indian sign language. He showed B-P how to slash a trail. He described how a crushed leaf found on an empty path could tell the story of a lone rider’s passage. . . . [He described] Apache methods of finding water,
of observing game and traveling without compass or maps in wild country. (Van Wyk 227-230)

While Baden-Powell may have left on his mission a dandy, three days later, he rode back “a man possessed” with Burnham’s scouting (Van Wyke 226).¹⁶

Years later, following the Boer War, a lively and lengthy (40 years) exchange of letters between Burnham and Baden-Powell sprang up.¹⁷ The first from Burnham, dated July 1900, was a request that Baden-Powell “still look on [scouting] as formerly, an important and vital branch of service and one that is sadly in need of organization” (Van Wyk 393). Burnham goes on to describe peace-time training of a small corps of young men in scouting skills, even describing First Class and Second Class Scouts (Van Wyk 393-4). Clearly, Baden-Powell’s formation of Boy Scouting was fed directly by Burnham’s letters.

This influence was recognized by early Scouters. In 1900, prior to printing Baden-Powell’s Scouting for Boys, Arthur Pearson proclaimed Frederick Burnham “the King of Scouts” (Van Wyk 454). Later, Chief Scout Executive James E. West referred to Burnham, suggesting that, “Sir Robert Baden-Powell felt like a tenderfoot before this American Scout” (Van Wyk 523). In 1927, Burnham was elected to the Boy Scout Order of Honorary Scouts—“men of adventure and exceptional character, men who had captured the imaginations of boys”—alongside Orville Wright and explorers Admiral Richard E. Byrd and Roy Chapman Andrews, and later received Scouting’s highest honor, the Silver Buffalo (Van Wyk 523, 543). While hardly recognized in contemporary Scouting literature or histories, Burnham was a key player in Scouting. Burnham’s influence on Scouting was as significant as it is unknown.

It is clear that Scouting took a very crooked path on its journey to becoming a movement. By most standards, Scouting ideals and practices were developed by Americans like Beard and
Seton and Burnham, but had to be refined in Africa and England by Baden-Powell, to then be returned to the United States.\textsuperscript{18} In a letter to Porter Sargent on August 30, 1923, Ernest Balch—founder of Camp Chocorua, one of the oldest summer camps in America—echoes the irony of this ping-pong, back-and-forth development of Scouting. Balch articulates a genealogy of the Scouting ideas, inserting himself as the forefather:

I suppose at the time that Beard and Seton Thompson [sic] took their idea from Camp Chocorua, but strayed off into sentimentality and nature faking to interest women, mothers, etc. Hence they made little progress until Baden-Powell took the idea and give it robust form and virility which made it go with boys. Then in the new form it came back to this country and when the recasting is perfected here, the Boy Scouts will come into their own. (Balch)

Balch’s prophesy of “recasting” in the United States began shortly after Scouting took off in England.\textsuperscript{19}

As the story goes, Boy Scouting was brought to America from England in 1910 because an unknown English Scout did a “good turn”:

All day long [London] had been in the hard grip of a dense, heavy fog. Traffic crept cautiously and slowly. Street lights had been ordered on by the police before noon, and now night was coming on. Danger lurked on every hand, because “going” was difficult even for the native.

Wm. D. Boyce, Chicago publisher [of the Chicago Ledger] and traveler, was seeking a difficult address in old London. A boy approached him, and asked, “May I be of service to you?” Mr. Boyce told him where he wanted to go and the boy saluted and said, “Come with me, Sir,” and forthwith led him to the desired spot. Like the typical
American tourist, Mr. Boyce reached in his pocket and offered the boy a shilling. The boy promptly replied, “No, Sir, I am a Scout. Scouts do not accept tips for courtesies.” The man in surprise murmured, “What do you say?” The Scout repeated and then added, “Don’t you know about the Scouts?” Mr. Boyce said, “Tell me about them.” The boy did and added, “Their office is very near, Sir. I’ll be glad to show you the way.”

Mr. Boyce had to complete his errand first. The lad waited, however, and then led him to the office of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the British Boy Scout Association, where information about the Scout Movement was gladly given. Mr. Boyce was tremendously impressed and gathering all available information, brought it back to the United States. (Boy Scouts Revised Handbook for Boys 17-18)

Boyce was in London in 1909 to finalize arrangements on a four month long African Balloonograph Expedition (Petterchak, 64). His foggy night foray changed his life forever. While there are various versions of the story, one claims that William D. Boyce actually met with Lord Baden-Powell the following day, and the two men talked:

This was Scouting for youth, not grown men, Baden-Powell told the American, this was the Scouting of peace not of war; the army of boys springing up was concerned not with guns and killing, but with the excitement of the out-of-doors, the forests, the trail, the campfire, with learning to read and understand the signs and languages of nature, the thousand facts you might deduce—like Mr. Holmes who was one of Baden-Powell’s favorite investigators—from a fallen leaf or the tracks of an animal in the dust. (Oursler 14)
Whatever really happened between Boyce and Baden-Powell, Scouting captured Boyce’s imagination and attention. He went on his four month African safari and returned to the United States with Baden-Powell’s program in mind and the desire to organize it in America.

The Scouting movement, however, had truly already preceded Boyce. When the first part of Baden-Powell’s *Scouting for Boys* was published in England in early 1908, the idea and practices were gobbled up by individuals and organizations around England and America alike. Not even counting Earnest Thompson Seton’s Woodcraft Indians and Daniel Carter Beard’s Sons of Daniel Boone, there were literally hundreds of different Scouting programs in the United States prior to Boyce’s “discovery,” including Peter Bomus’s The Boy Scouts of the United States, Colonel William Verbeck’s National Boy Scouts (from St. John’s School in New York), the Peace Scouts of California, Leatherstocking Scouts of Cleveland, National Scouts of America, Jack Crawford Scouts, United Boy Brigades of America, Boy Cadets, Frank Masseck’s Knights of King Arthur, William Randolph Hearst’s American Boy Scouts, and numerous random communities who had started their own “Scout Troops”—what Peterson has called “pioneer troops” (29). Many were formed by local Y.M.C.A.’s, organized under the direction of Edgar Robinson—considered by some to be the “father” of the Boy Scout Movement in America (Oursler 36). William D. Boyce’s accomplishment was to incorporate the organization and bring all these disparate movements together under one canopy.

On February 8, 1910, at 124 East 28th Street in New York City, in the board room of the International Committee of the Young Men’s Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.), William D. Boyce gathered together folks like Beard, Seton, and “leaders representing many organizations and professions, business and banking and education, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Big Brother Movement,” and they incorporated the “Boy Scouts of America” (Oursler 34). Those
gathered included Lincoln Steffens, Jacob A. Riis, banker Colin H. Livingstone, Edgar M. Robinson of the Boys’ Work Committee of the YMCA, William Mitchell of the YMHA, Ernest Bicknell, director of the American Red Cross, George D. Pratt of the Pratt Institute—to name a few (Oursler 34-35). They argued that

If boys are to grow into sturdy, self-reliant productive citizens they must have much outdoor life and get the training in personal initiative and resourcefulness, keenness of perception and alertness in action, courage, cheerful obedience, ability to command, self-control, ability to do team-work and the other manly qualities that can be developed in healthy outdoor sport (qtd in Murray 420, emphasis added).

With these manly sentiments in mind, those gathered quickly pooled their resources for the movement, creating “a uniform designed by Beard and a handbook hurriedly rewritten from Seton’s Birch Bark Roll” and published the first Boy Scout Handbook in 1911 (Schmitt 109).

They also organized a meeting on June 15, 1910, of a group of men interested in Boys’ Work, and another meeting on June 21, 1910, “for the purpose of considering the best means of propagating the movement” (Murray 28). The result of these meetings was that many leaders of boys’ organizations, like Seton and Beard, “indicated that they were ready to bring their groups into a new amalgamation of all major boy associations” (Oursley 38). Within months, most other boy organizations melded their organizations into the Boy Scouts of America.

By November 1910, they had also gathered an impressive array of men to form the first National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, including Major General Leonard Wood, John Wannamaker, Judge Ben B. Lindsey, Nicholas Longworth, Oscar Straus (Oursley 43), as well as naturalists Charles Abbott, David Starr Jordan and J. Horace McFarland; youth workers Dan Beard, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Jacob Riis; psychologists Luther Gulick and G.

To name a few. Boy Scout historian William D. Murray describes letterhead used by the National organization in February, 1911, with 75 men’s names on it—with the caption, “Partial List of the National Council” (Murray 39). These men were “men of national repute, men whose interests were in making a better Nation through its boyhood” (Murray 47).

The Beginnings of Organized Camping

Organized summer camps in the United States actually started long before the Boy Scouts came to the United States in 1910. Interestingly, organized camping—what we know as “summer camp”—is considered an American phenomena and an export to the world:

Outdoor living by young people in small groups within larger camp communities, isolated from city distractions, dedicated to free and joyous experiences with educational values, with leaders especially selected for their understanding and guidance skills: this is the American concept of camping (Eells v).

In fact in 1922, Harvard University President Charles W. Eliot told the National Association of Directors of Girls’ Camps that “the organized summer camp is the most important step in education that America has given the world” (Gibson Camp Management 3). While there are numerous other forms of camping, the kind of camping I refer to in this dissertation comes from this heritage.

This distinctly American notion of camping seems to have emerged from the distinctly American Civil War. When we look at the “pioneers” of organized camping, most were born and raised in the years surrounding the Civil War (1861-1865), perhaps influenced by the few
who took their camping inspirations from the Civil War itself like Frederick W. Gunn (see below). This was, after all, a period steeped in the Transcendentalist writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)\textsuperscript{30} and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862),\textsuperscript{31} as well as their apostles, like preservationist John Muir (1838-1914)\textsuperscript{32}. There were other writers like Nessmuk, the authors of the “Knockabout Series” of books for boys, John Burroughs, William Hamilton Gibson, Howard Henderson, Frank Beard, Horace Kephart, Edward Breck, Charles Stedman Hanks, Stewart White, W. C. Gray—writers who “arrested the thought of busy people long enough to have them see the error of their ways and are bringing them to repentance” (Gibson Camping 9).\textsuperscript{33} There was even growing scientific rationale for bringing youth in contact with the wild—in the genetic psychology and recapitulation theories\textsuperscript{34} of Granville Stanley Hall (1846-1924).\textsuperscript{35} And there were even warnings to encounter wilderness before it was too late: Huckleberry Finn had “lit out” for the wilderness for fear of over-civilizing (1884);\textsuperscript{36} the “original” wild men of America—the Native Americans—were in the throes of assimilation and annihilation attempts like Francis Amasa Walker’s reservation system (1870s) and the General Allotment Act (1887)\textsuperscript{37}; and Frederick Jackson Turner (1861-1932) nailed the lid on the coffin by proclaiming the end of the frontier as well as the end of American social development as we know it.\textsuperscript{38}

Historian Peter J. Schmitt in \textit{Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America} (1969) describes the ideological framework that would one day support organized camping, charting it back even before the Civil War to the Revolutionary War. “Fortified with European Romanticism,” Schmitt writes, newly minted Americans “took nature and not civilization as the common denominator of the new republic. . . . Thomas Jefferson wrote that sturdy yeoman farmers, shielded from the artificiality of commerce and city life, lived lives of quiet simplicity as the ‘chosen people of god’” (Schmitt xvii). Schmitt claims Romanticism was “a literary cult,
committed to a picturesque landscape ministering to men’s minds rather than to their bodies” (Schmitt 4-5). He describes the growth of a “back to nature” movement rather than a “back to the land” movement, for it was an “urban response” which “valued nature’s spiritual impact above its economic importance” (Schmitt xix). Schmitt argues that urbanizing Americans constructed a mythological “Arcadia”—a place which “lay somewhere on the urban fringe, easily accessible and mildly wild, the goal of a ‘nature movement’ led by teachers and preachers, bird-watchers, socialites, scout leaders, city-planners, and inarticulate commuters” (Schmitt xix). 39 The Arcadian Myth sounds vaguely like the Latter Day Saint notion of “being in the world, but not of the world”—being in nature, but not of it.

Organized camping—along with the playground movement, landscape architecture, even urban planning—emerged because some folks believed in Arcadia so completely they wanted to make it real. 40 While it is challenging to pinpoint which camping experience could be designated the first organized camp, Eleanor Eells’ History of Organized Camping: The First 100 Years (1986) describes a number of the “pioneers” of the movement:

- Frederick William Gunn, considered the father of organized camping; 41
- Earnest B. Balch, considered the father of the organized camping movement; 42
- Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock 43
- Laura Mattoon, director of one of the first summer camps for girls; 44
- Luther and Lottie (Charlotte) Gulick—perhaps the most famous camping pioneers; 45
- Reverend George Hinckley, credited with the first church camp; 46
- Dr. George Louis Meylan; 47
- Winthrop T. Talbot, the first to run a commercially successful summer camp; 48 and
- C. Hanford Henderson 49 (Eells 5-26).
While there are undoubtedly more pioneers—people Eleanor Eells calls “unsung heros” whose stories have been lost—the names of Gunn, Balch, Gulicks, and these others are guideposts along the way to creating a history of the influences, philosophies, milestones, and disagreements of organized camping in the United States (Eells 28). The thing that set them apart from those who organized conferences, athletics, homes, and institutes—even those in outdoor settings—is that they focused on “experiences that are indigenous to group living in the out-of-door setting”:

“The process of living together in groups out of doors is the major content of the camp ‘curriculum’—not discussion, instruction, training, or recreation imported into the outdoor setting” (Dimock 22).

We find this philosophy in the camping movement throughout its entire history. One student of camp, Hedley S. Dimock theorized in 1948 three fairly distinct, but overlapping stages in the development of camping in America: the recreational stage (late 1800s-1920s), the educational stage (postwar 1920s-1930s), and the stage of social orientation and responsibility (1930s-post WWII). In the early, recreational stage, the “emphasis was on rugged outdoor experience, and recapturing of the pioneer spirit and manner of life, the regaining by the city dweller of the liberating and refreshing contact with the resources of nature” (Dimock 25). We see this theme echoed in the above-mentioned pioneers of camping. In those days, “it was assumed that character was contagious and therefore was ‘caught,’ rather than ‘taught,’” and programs were “highly organized, almost to the point of regimentation” (Dimock 25).

The educational stage of camping in America was driven by advancements in “psychology, mental hygiene, sociology, progressive education and personnel administration” (Dimock 25). Program was enriched by the “inclusion of more arts and crafts, music, dramatics, and similar activities” to help develop “health, personality, character, and social adjustment”
(Dimock 26). With a new emphasis on clearly articulated camping objectives and principles of mental and physical hygiene, “regimentation gave way to individualization, and external rewards, to intrinsic incentives and motivation” and the staff were hired in the role of educators (Dimock 26).

By the 1930s, however, “the depression, the rumbling march of fascism in Europe and the Orient, and a growing social consciousness in the nation” created a sense of social responsibility to the camping movement (Dimock 26). The camping industry started to standardize its operations, engaged in cooperative planning with neighboring communities, and instilled the concept of democracy deeper into their objectives and organization of camps (Dimock 26-27). During the war years, some thought to reorient camps for war time service, but the industry decided their job was “to help keep alive in children and youth the attitudes, values, and habits of democratic civilian life” (Dimock 27).

The Beginnings of Boy Scout Summer Camping

Based upon Dimock’s chronology of camping philosophy, Camp Lakota developed during the third stage, the age of social orientation and responsibility, though I see no indication of its influence in the early statements about Camp Lakota. Camp Lakota opened its doors to long-term camping as recently as 1941 as part of the Shawnee Council, Boy Scouts of America—eighty years after the Gunnery Camp began. Under Scout Executive Kenneth A. Connelly, Camping Committee Chairman James A. MacDonell, and Council President Robert H. McDonald, Camp Lakota held a formal opening and dedication on Sunday, June 15, 1941 (Ashba files). According to an article in the Lima News, the dedication of the “new Shawnee Council Boy Scout camp near Defiance. . . . will climax five years of intensive effort to secure a camp available to all the scouts of northwest Ohio counties.” The ceremony would bring to
close a three-day camporee “which will attract about 1,000 of the scout membership of 1,400” (Lima News).53 “Camping on the new location will officially commence Sunday, June 22 and will not conclude until Aug. 10” (Lima News). That first summer, 34 troops with 345 Scouts camped at this new summer camp (Ashba files).54 Scout Executive Ken Connelly said, “Our first season at Shawnee Camps was a distinct success. The very wildness of the tract made it an adventure for every Scout camper”—a statement sounding more like Dimock’s first rather than third stage (Ashba files).55

This is not to say, however, that Boy Scout camping was not happening in the Defiance area before this. Some time between 1920 and 1925,56 L. L. McDonald, Director of the Camping Department at National Headquarters compiled a list of camps maintained by what he called “troop councils” (Sargent 2nd Edition 117). He lists an unspecified “Boy Scout Camp” in Defiance, Ohio. W. L. Buckholz was the Executive for Defiance Council as well as the Camp Director for this camp. They had a capacity of 60 boys a session, and the season was August 10-24 (a two week season). It cost $4.50 per week for “in-council” boys and $5.00 per week for “out-of-council” boys. The camp was listed as having the following amenities: they subscribed to the “Every Scout A Swimmer” program; Patrol Leaders’ School; Camp Museum; A B C Grading System;57 Handicraft Field; Official Photographer; Radio; and Medical Exams.58 This Defiance Council camp was not located at the present site of Camp Lakota.

It is likely that this first camp was not in Defiance at all. In 1922, the Council leased “Quo-Sac-Ca-Tin” which was located on the “north side of Grand Lake St. Marys” (“Shawnee Reservation History,” Ashba files).59 In 1926, the Council held summer camp at Fort Amanda near Lima, OH. And then, in 1941, they moved operations to the property in Defiance. It is
unclear which of these—or if some other camp—was what McDonald had recorded for the Defiance Council.

Irrespective of the camping operation which changed locations over the years, Camp Lakota was formally established in 1941 and is therefore a relatively young camp. The first official Boy Scouts of America encampment was held from August 16 to September 1, 1910, at Silver Bay, Lake George, New York (Eells 72 and Oursler 41)—which was during Dimock’s “recreational stage”. BSA historian Will Oursler described the scene:

Local people tramping over to see what was going on were startled not only at this Indian village sprung up in their midst but at the inhabitants—several score of scrawny kids and about two hundred men of assorted size and shapes, living in these tepees and cooking their meals over open fires. (Oursler 40).

Oursler describes how this Silver Bay encampment was originally planned by Ernest Thompson Seton for his Woodcraft Indian organization, “but after the amalgamation at the June meeting [of various Scouting organizations throughout America into one incorporated Boy Scouts of America] . . . he decided to turn this Adirondacks camping trip into an American “Brownsea”—a tryout of Scouting as he envisioned it” (Oursler 40).

“Brownsea” actually refers to the location of the original Boy Scout encampment which Baden-Powell organized three years earlier in England. Prior to unleashing his Scouting ideas in Britain in 1908, Baden-Powell wanted to create a “demonstration camp” to test his ideas and exhibit them to the general public. In 1907, he acquired permission from owner Charles van Raalte to use Brownsea Island outside Poole Harbor off the coast of Dorset for his first Scout camp experience (Rosenthal 86).
Baden-Powell began his experiment in an orderly and purposeful fashion. He had a plan as to how he would gather together his first set of campers:

Always insisting on Scouting’s classlessness, Baden-Powell wanted a constituency drawn equally from the ranks of the privileged public school boys and the less affluent working classes. For the former he chose twelve from among the sons, nephews, and contracts of his army friends; for the latter he invited the Bournemouth and Poole Boys’ Brigades to nominate deserving members. In the letter he wrote to the parents of prospective campers, he outlined the seven different subjects—woodcraft, observation, discipline, health and education, chivalry, life saving, and patriotism—to each of which he proposed to devote a single day’s instruction. (Rosenthal 86)

Baden-Powell ended up taking twenty-two boys ranging from 10 to 17 years old and broke camp on August 1, 1907.

At Brownsea Island, Baden-Powell combined all the models he had encountered—Seton, Beard, Smith, etc.—and combined them with his own personal experiences in the army during the Boer War and amongst the Zulu people in Africa. He gathered the boys and divided them up into four patrols—the Wolves, Bulls, Curlews, and Ravens—each with its own patrol leader, and proceeded to initiate them into the mysteries and joys of Scouting. They played games and practiced the skills of camping, cooking, tracking, and stalking; they listened to the great deeds of how the empire was won and learned the importance of loyalty to king, employers, and officers. They changed Zulu choruses, found their way through the woods without help, and studied how to observe people without themselves being seen. (Rosenthal 86)
Thus, every morning at Brownsea Island, Baden-Powell would awaken the camp with several blasts on his African koodoo horn:

This had them tumbling out of their bell tents for a quick glass of milk and a biscuit before half an hour of physical training. Then came prayers and the hoisting of the flag, followed by breakfast at eight. After that there were ‘scouting practices’, ‘games’ and swimming until lunch, which was followed by more ‘scouting practices’ until tea. The pace then was slackened, but some ‘camp games’ and a compulsory ‘rub down’ and change of clothes had to be fitted in before supper at eight. (Jeal 385)

Brownsea Island was the perfect place for Baden-Powell to test out the educational possibilities within his Aids in Scouting: engaging youth in fun outdoor activities while inculcating them into a life of discipline and honor. In “Lessons for a Life Time,” Baden-Powell described this tactic:

The whole scheme was then planned on the principle of being an educative game; a recreation in which the boy would be insensibly led to educate himself. What to call it? There’s a lot in a name. Had we called it what it was, viz. a “Society for the Propagation of Moral Attributes,” the boy would not exactly have rushed for it. But to call it SCOUTING and give him the chance of becoming an embryo Scout, was quite another pair of shoes. His inherent ‘gang’ instinct would be met by making him a member of a “Troop” and a “Patrol.” Give him a uniform to wear, with Badges to be won and worn on it for proficiency in Scouting—and you got him.” (Murray 8).

What’s more, Baden-Powell argued that you cannot “get him” through threats or even strict discipline. In Scouting for Boys, he told Scoutmasters, “Discipline is not gained by punishing a child for a bad habit, but by substituting a better occupation, that will absorb his attention, and
gradually lead him to forget and abandon the old one” (qtd in Jeal 395-396). He agreed with progressive educator Maria Montessori, claiming she had proven that by encouraging a child in its natural desires, instead of instructing it in what you think it ought to do, you can educate it on a far more solid and far-reaching basis. It is only tradition and custom that ordain that education should be a labour. . . One of the original objects of Scouting for boys was to break through this tradition. (Baden-Powell Manuscript)

Brownsea Island was a chance to see if the education he wanted to provide would coincide with the child’s natural desires.

At the end of the encampment on August 9, Baden-Powell considered the experience a rousing success, noting in his report on the experience: “‘The results . . . were such as to encourage the highest hopes as to the possibilities of the scheme when carried out on the larger scale’” (qtd in Rosenthal 87). His report concludes,

I now hope to be able to organize the wider distribution of that scheme and to issue a Handbook or ‘Self-Educator’ such as will assist schoolmasters, officers of Boys and Church Lads Brigades and Cadet Corps, and all others interested in the development of manliness and good citizenship among the rising generation by an adaptable and inexpensive means which is not only popular and attractive to the boys but is also intensely interesting to the instructors themselves. (qtd in Rosenthal 87)

As we can see, from the beginning, Scout camping was envisioned as a manliness project appealing to both boys and men.

Based upon the success of Baden-Powell’s demonstration camp and the inspiration of his “self-educator” Scouting for Boys, the Boy Scouting organizers in America held their first
encampment at Silver Bay in 1910 under the direction of Seton. However, summer camping was not yet fully formed as a Boy Scout program. One of the other organizers, Daniel Beard, attempted his own spin on summer camping in 1912 by opening the “School of Woodcraft” at Culver Military Academy in Indiana (Schmitt 99). “Under his care, thirty-six boys spent eight weeks mastering academic subjects along with camping, swimming, forestry and ornithology” (Schmitt 99). Beard left Culver and founded his own “Outdoor School” in 1916, offering all the advantages of the big outdoors, the strict discipline and regularity of the military camp, the high aims and ideals of the scout camp, the poetry, adventure and romance of a woodsman’s camp, the instructive qualities of a naturalist’s camp and the unique novelties and pastimes designed by a famous veteran in the world of American sports [himself]. (Beard)

Unfortunately, he found it very difficult to find more than forty or fifty participants (Schmitt 99).

Not long thereafter, the Boy Scout summer camp movement was given significant support by another of Baden-Powell’s camping schemes—this time, focused on adults. By 1920, Baden-Powell said he wanted to make “woodcraft” a more prominent focus of Boy Scouting. Apparently, he was listening to John Hargrave, the Boy Scouting Commissioner for Camping and Woodcraft, who had advised him that “the only way ‘for getting ahead with nature-craft’ was to ‘buy up chunks of nature and form open-air training schools.’” (qtd in Jeal 501). Soon thereafter, they discovered that rubber magnate Mr. W. F. de Bois MacLaren offered to buy Gilwell Park, “a decaying eighteenth-century house with over 50 acres of woodland” as a “camping ground for East End boys and as a training school for Scouters” (Jeal 501). They accepted MacLaren’s gift.
It was Baden-Powell’s vision that Gilwell Park would be for adult leaders—what are called Scouters as opposed to Scouts. Gilwell Park would be “where the Movement’s ‘boy men’ would guard ‘the fountain head of the Scouting spirit’.” At Gilwell, adult Scouters were to ‘learn boyhood as boy men’” (Jeal 501). This is yet another incongruity at the core of Scout camping: while boys were learning manhood at Brownsea Island, Baden-Powell wanted men to learn boyhood at Gilwell Park. I would contend that it is this image—that of a “boy-man”—which represents the core tension within Scouting masculinity of camp staff members in contemporary American Boy Scout camping.

The Fundamentals of Boy Scouting

While Scouting is perhaps one of the most widely recognized youth organizations worldwide, it seems prudent to outline some of the fundamentals of Boy Scout organization, ideals, and eccentricities.

Boy Scout Organization

The National Council, Boy Scouts of America is divided into four Regions which are subdivided into 309 local Councils. The Black Swamp Area Council (BSAC) is a council in what is called the Central Region which includes thirteen states considered the midwest: Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota, Kansas, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia, and Iowa. The BSAC is comprised of 13 counties in northwest Ohio including, Allen, Auglaize, Defiance, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Seneca, Van Wert, and Williams counties. This accounts for most of the northwestern-most counties in Ohio, except for Lucas and Wood counties—which make the up part of the Erie Shores Council (centered in Toledo, OH).
On the local Council level, the Boy Scout organization is broken down into geographical areas called Districts which are managed by a professional District Executive and a group of volunteers called the District Committee. At the present time, the BSAC has seven districts named after trees: American Elm, Black Walnut, Buckeye, Great Oaks, Hawthorn, Old Sycamore, and Tamarack. Each District has its share of program groups, though not all program groups are in every District:

- Tiger Cub groups
- Cub Scout packs (which include Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts),
- Boy Scout troops,
- Venturing crews and Sea Scout ships (high adventure-oriented),
- Varsity teams (athletics-oriented),
- Explorer posts (occupationally-oriented),
- Lone Cub Scouts and Lone Boy Scouts, and
- Learning for Life.\(^7\)

Each program group has its own membership requirements, forms of advancement, programs, forms of recognition, laws, oaths, promises, and codes.

Focusing on Boy Scout troops alone—since that is the focus of this dissertation—each troop has a specific structure and purposes. A troop is not simply a bunch of boys and a Scoutmaster to oversee them. Instead, on the adult level, there a Chartering Organization and chartering organization representative, a Troop Committee, the Scoutmaster and usually multiple Assistant Scoutmasters. The chartering organization is an existing community organization like a church, business, fraternal organization, union, etc., who owns and operates the unit. The Troop Committee consists of adults who help manage troop advancement, outdoor
programming, troop finances, and generally help the Scoutmaster run a good troop. While the Scoutmaster is the key adult leader of a troop, his job is to train the boy leaders to run the troop (Scoutmaster Handbook 17-22).

On the boy level, there is a Senior Patrol Leader who is the youth leader of the troop, and he has an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and a number of Patrol Leaders who help run the troop. Which brings us to the core of the Scouting organization: the patrol.

Every Boy Scout troop . . . is made up of patrols, groupings of six to eight boys who work together as a team. Each patrol elects its own leader. The patrol leaders, with an elected senior patrol leader as their head, form the patrol leaders’ council. It is the council’s job to plan and run the troop program.

Each patrol leader represents his patrol on the council, and interprets to his patrol the plans and decisions the council makes. Patrols also have their own meetings, elect their own officers, and plan and carry out their own patrol activities. (Scoutmaster Handbook 22-23)

These two paragraphs describe the “patrol method” which is the “heartbeat of the Boy Scouting program” (23). Within each patrol, there are various elected positions: Scribe, Quartermaster, Grubmaster, and Cheermaster (38). Beyond those roles, there are also a number of other positions for boys to fill: Den Chief, Quartermaster, Scribe, Historian, Librarian, Instructor, Chaplain Aide, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Guide, Venture Crew Chief, and Varsity Team Captain (45-47). Suffice it to say, there are enough positions of authority and responsibility for each and every boy in a unit.
Baden-Powell is often quoted as saying that Scouting is “a game with a purpose.” The “game” of Scouting is primarily the outdoor programming—camping, knot-tying, hiking, climbing, etc.—but these games all have clear purpose, outlined in various Boy Scout values statements as well as the Aims and Methods of Scouting.

One of the things a boy must do to become a Boy Scout member of the Boy Scouts of America is to understand and agree to six value statements: the Scout Oath or Promise, Law, Motto, Slogan, and the Outdoor Code (Handbook, Eleventh Edition, 4).

- **Scout Oath or Promise.** “On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”
- **Scout Law.** “A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.”
- **Scout Motto.** “Be prepared.”
- **Scout Slogan.** “Do a Good Turn Daily.”
- **Outdoor Code.** “As an American, I will do my best to be clean in my outdoor manners, be careful with fire, be considerate in the outdoors, and be conservation-minded.”

These are the value statements which the youth membership learns to recite back and to incorporate into their daily lives.

However, there is another set of value statements which most youth (and many adults) do not know about. According to the Charter for the National Boy Scouts of America, the organization’s purpose
shall be to promote, through organization, and cooperation with other agencies, the
ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to
teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods
which are now in common use by Boy Scouts. (Charter 3)

This general purpose has been fashioned into the following mission statement:

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to serve others by helping to instill values
in young people and, in other ways, to prepare them to make ethical choices during their
lifetime in achieving their full potential. The values we strive to instill are based on those
found in the Scout Oath and Law. (2005 Executive Board Guide 1)

Between the charter and mission statement, we begin to see some common themes which are
articulated in the three “Aims of Scouting.” These aims are what the organization professes to
instill in its membership:

(1) Participating citizenship,

(2) Growth in moral strength and character, and

(3) Development in physical, mental, and emotional fitness (Summer Camp Staff
    Training Guide A-17).

The organization has not only defined its three primary goals, it has also identified the
ways it will use to reach those goals. Other organizations may have similar aims, but the Boy
Scouts of America has identified eight “Methods” that it will employ to help reach these three
Aims:

1. Ideals—Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan

2. Patrols—Peer groups, elected representation, activities

3. Outdoors—All outdoor programs
4. Advancement—Self-reliance, ability to help others, challenge
5. Adult Association—Image, role model, example
6. Personal Growth—Good Turn, service projects, religious emblems
7. Leadership Development—Leadership skills and practice, citizenship
8. Uniform—Commitment to aims, identity (Summer Camp Staff Training Guide A-18)

There are undoubtedly a million other methods one could use to instill citizenship, character, and fitness, but the BSA has said these are the ways we will use.

_Boy Scouting Eccentricities_

While there are many different ways to order one’s movement, the Boy Scouts of America has the following practices which set it apart early-on and have been widely copied since:

_Volunteer Leadership_

As Murray (1937) points out, despite many admonitions that “it would be impossible to get men to give continuous and sustained leadership, unless they were paid for it,” the Boy Scouts of America has found many, many men and women who are willing to dedicate vast amounts of time, treasure, and talent to the movement (247-248). While there is a professional staff at the core of every Council, there are legions of volunteers making the program happen. In the BSAC, there are around 3,000 registered adult volunteers and only about a dozen professional staff members and a handful of support staff members.

_Active Membership_

Unlike Putnam’s “mailing list membership” organizations (63), Janowitz’s “communities of limited liability” (xvii), or Claude Fischer and Robert Jackson’s “personal communities” (201-203), the Boy Scouts requires its members to be “participating” members (Levy 38).
points out that a Boy Scout “does not merely belong to an organization” (38). While a boy can drop out at any time, “he cannot rise in the ranks, or even remain within them, unless engaged one way or another in the diversified program: attending troop meetings, joining in outdoor activities . . . or enlisting in other scouting enterprises.” For each rank in Scouting above Tenderfoot, there are requirements for participation in troop or patrol activities, for “demonstrating Scout spirit,” and being “active in your troop and patrol” for specified periods of time (see Handbook, pp. 438-449). I have spoken with Advancement chairmen who denied the Eagle award to Scouts who completed all other requirements but did not demonstrate “Scout spirit” or were not “active in their troop or patrol.”

Positive Rules

Baden-Powell created an ethical system for Boy Scouting which was positive rather than prohibitive. He argues,

Moses gave the ten commandments to the Jews as to how they should behave but these were laws which all said: DON’T do this, and DON’T do that.

Now I know that a real red-blooded boy is all for action, ready for adventure. He just hates to be nagged and told ‘You must not do this—you must not do that.’ He wants to know what he can do. So I thought why should we not have our own Law for Scouts, and I jotted down ten things that a fellow needs to do as his regular habit if he is going to be a real man. (qtd in Rosenthal 111)

While there are innumerable rules and regulations guiding Scout behavior (found in texts like the Guide to Safe Scouting and other program manuals), the core values tell a boy what to do rather than what not to do.
Power of the Outsider

On two distinctly different occasions, the Boy Scout organization requires outsiders to make decisions for insiders. First, the National Honor Society, the Order of the Arrow, does not elect its own recruits. Instead, non-members vote for who they feel should be honored by being included in the Order of the Arrow. Secondly and more fundamentally, troops are not created by the Scouting organization. Instead, community organizations like churches, businesses, service organizations, and the like actually “sponsor” a unit. Such a “chartering organization” owns the troop. An early BSA pamphlet titled “Fundamentals of the Boy Scout Movement,” describes this phenomenon:

When an institution undertakes to sponsor a Scout Troop, a Cub Pack, or a Sea Scout Ship, it says in effect, “We are interested in the boys in our neighborhood. We want them to grow into the right kind of man; in other words, men of character trained for citizenship. For this purpose we will use the program of the Boy Scouts of America and will assume definite obligation to provide [a variety of resources to the unit]. (33-34)\textsuperscript{74}

Rather than some self-sustained, stand-alone organization, Scouting is a program used by other organizations to meet their own needs.

In fact, when problems arise in a unit, it is not the obligation of the Council or the National organization to rectify the problem; rather, it is the right and responsibility of the chartering organization to oversee the success of the unit. According to the BSA Rules and Regulations (Article VI, Section 3, Clause 7), a representative of the chartering organization represents that organization “as a member of the district committee and as a voting member of the local council” (4). That means that “outsiders” run the local council.
There are, undoubtedly, other systems of ordering within the Boy Scout movement which set it apart from other youth-serving organizations. These four are fundamental to the organization and are perhaps the most oft-stated for they are a resource of pride for the membership who know their existence.

Boy Scout Summer Camp Basics

Boy Scout camps are not like chain-restaurants like McDonalds and Taco Bell or chain-stores like Sears and Walmart: when you “order” a Boy Scout summer camp experience, you do not always get the same experience. For example, some camps provide food service in a dining hall, while others provide a commissary where food is disbursed for troops to cook themselves, while others provide no food service and expect troops to bring and cook their own food. Similarly, some camps run 6-day sessions while others run 9 or 10-day sessions. Some camps provide cabins for their campers, while others provide tents on platforms and cots and shelters with electricity, while still other camps provide a small tract of land and a nearby latrine—the troop provides the rest. Some camps are heavy on the staffing while others go bare-bones. Some provide merit badge classes all day and night while other camps provide limited merit badge opportunities. There are some Boy Scout camps that do not even allow their troops to camp together; they split the boys up into new troops for the week and make them interact with other boys from other troops. And, it is worth noting that some camps provide a mixture of many of these options, offering various opportunities simultaneously.

According to BSA’s Camp Program & Property Management (2003)—a manual distributed at National Camp School (see below)—a council summer camp is the laboratory of Scouting, where the council camp leaders, the unit leaders (youth and adult), and the campers work together to learn the best that Scouting can offer in
developing better troops and crews, qualified Scouters, and skillful, self-reliant boys and young adults. (Camp Program 1-23)

How a particular camp decides to accomplish these goals is often site-specific and leadership-specific. My point is that Boy Scout summer camping is wonderfully diverse in how each respective summer camp abides by the structure which National provides:

_National Standards_

In 1911, when Dr. West became the first Executive of the movement, he knew it “demanded careful standards for its camping. Camping itself, i.e., the sleeping under canvas, the eating, the games, the camp fires, was not sufficient. A proper and a skilled leadership was essential” (Murray 424). He argued,

> It is the business of the Movement to utilize the boy’s interest in going to camp in a way that will make a man of him. The final proof of camp efficiency is the quality of the Scout it produces. (Quoted in Murray 424)

It was not until 1915 that the Boy Scouts of America established minimum camping standards (Eells 72). Such standards, however, did not say anything about camp leadership, staff training, or enforcement of these standards. In 1916, National created a Department of Camping, compiled of men like George D. Pratt, Daniel Carter Beard, Anthony Fiala, Dillon Wallace, John B. Burnham—to name a few. Then, in 1918, a nationally known outdoorsman and Scouter named L. L. McDonald was named director of organized camps for boys (Murray 428-430).

It was McDonald who created the first set of “Minimum Standards” adopted in 1919 for Council Camps and Troop Camps (Murray 430). These Standards provided much needed guidance on camp management, leadership, safety, inspections, and the like. Then, in 1923, McDonald began limited testing of a camp grading system; it was put into full effect in 1924.
Each Council “received its rating on the basis of its full compliance with the minimum standard requirements” (Murray 431).

Today, these National Standards are meant “to assist councils in conducting a quality camping program for youth in a safe manner throughout the year. These standards represent the minimum level of care expected” (2006 Standards). Each local Council—in our case, the Black Swamp Area Council—is “responsible for adopting, implementing, and maintaining all of the national standards at their camps” (2006 Standards). The Boy Scout camp standards are broken down into four main categories:

- **Plans and Procedures**—including certificates and written procedures for everything from emergency plans to communication systems; from a council strategic plan to required permits, licenses, and agreements; from an annual maintenance plan to procedures for handling hazardous materials; from a written exposure control plan to procedures for encouraging the buddy system at camp.

- **Camp Personnel**—establishing age, training, availability, uniforming, and registration requirements for the camp director, program director, Ranger, counselors in training, aquatics director, horseback-riding director, physician and health officer, food service personnel, and chaplain—including the adult leaders attending with the Boy Scout troops.

- **Facilities and Equipment**—standardizing everything from the number of toilet seats in camp (1 for every 15 campers) to the number of square feet of sheltered space for sleeping and storing personal gear for each camper (30 square feet); from what is required in each troop’s campsite to the temperature of the refrigerators; from requiring all dishes be air dried to all boilers and water heaters be vented within six
inches of the deck; from requiring all program equipment be in good repair to requiring that the horse corral is reasonably free of accumulated manure.

- Boy Scout Program—establishing standards for Project COPE courses (rope courses), monkey bridges, training for leaders, the number and training requirements for various programs—including shooting sports, archery, Leave No Trace, etc.—as well as standards requesting exposure to the Order of the Arrow program, at least three aquatics programs, at least two campwide programs, at least two programs for older campers, religious services, fishing, climbing, and Trek Safely training—to name a few.

A “nationally accredited camp” must meet all fifty-two “mandatory” standards and a minimum of thirty of the thirty-three quality standards. Sometimes, a mandatory standard requires corrective action; in which case, a camp could be considered “conditionally accredited,” and an agreement is constructed to correct the problem. In some cases, a “council that ignores or fails to take corrective action on one or more of the mandatory standards will be requested to close the affected program area until corrective action is complete. If one or more of these standards is not met, the council may be advised to close the camp until corrective action is taken” (2006 Standards).

National Camp School

In conjunction with their increased emphasis on leadership standards in 1919, the Camping Department also asked Columbia University to create and hold a course for camp leaders. That first year, 180 men enrolled (Murray 432). Now these courses are called National Camp Schools (NCS) and are held throughout the country, with faculty pulled from both the professional and volunteer Scouters in the region. These National Camp Schools are typically
seven-day sessions with training for “important” camp personnel, including Management (camp
directors and business managers), Program (program directors), Ecology/Conservation, Shooting
Sports, Outdoor Skills (previously called Scoutcraft), Aquatics, Project COPE, Ranger,
Commissioner, Trek Leader, Climbing, and Chaplain. The National Standards establish who on
staff must attend NCS.

Participants at NCS are given intensive training in their respective areas. For example,
someone in Aquatics will spend the entire week swimming, boating, learning lifeguarding
techniques, as well as staff training techniques, pool management skills, and equipment repair.
As someone who has completed Aquatics training, I can tell you, it is grueling: we were in the
lake by 6 a.m. to work on our swimming technique and paddle strokes, and we did not make it
back to our tents until after 11 p.m., after being schooled in all the national standards, merit
badge requirements, theories of instruction, and even campfire planning. On the other hand,
someone in Program or Management sections—which I have completed and taught--one sits on
one’s rear most of the day going over every single national standard, policy and procedure; all
staff training syllabi; emergency and risk management procedures; program development and
planning possibilities—and much more. It is equally as grueling, but much less strenuous.

Beyond such training and a list of—mostly health and safety-related—standards,
National does not impose much structure or program on summer camps. Therefore, Boy Scout
camps take on very local flavors and personalities all their own. Having said that, it is relatively
safe to say there are a few “staples” of Boy Scout summer camps and their programs which may
distinguish them from other sorts of summer camps:

- Boys attend camp with their troop, under their own adult supervision. Typically, Boy
  Scout camps do not allow random Scouts—much less random boys—to attend camp;
and, adult supervision consists of parents, guardians, and leadership from their hometown. While it is neither a mandatory nor quality standard, National’s Camp Program and Property Management manual states that Scout camping “should be organized on a troop and patrol basis” and that the “ideal for Scout camping is for the troop to operate under its own leadership” (Camp Program p. 1-4).81

- Staff members do not live with the campers. Staff members typically live in their own quarters, usually at a distance from campsites, though sometimes in their respective program areas.

- Merit Badge “classes” are the cornerstone of camp schedules. Every camp schedule I have seen is broken into one- or two-hour blocks—depending on the difficulty level or number of requirements for the merit badge—and Scouts sign up for however many “classes” they can fit into their schedule. Few Boy Scout camps have the internal fortitude to minimize the number of merit badge classes they offer, for most Boy Scouts and their leaders claim that earning merit badges is their single greatest interest in attending camp. This is also why most every Boy Scout camp provides very similar program areas for the teaching of merit badges—Aquatics, Shooting Sports, Outdoor Skills, Ecology/Conservation, Climbing, and Handicraft—even though National does not actually require these areas or even these programs.

- An increasing trend is that tents, cots, and sometimes even electricity are provided by the camp, and all a troop needs to do is move into their already set-up campsite. Simultaneously, camps are increasing the sizes of their dining halls (and sometimes even air conditioning them). Fewer and fewer camps now ask—much less require—troops to bring their own troop equipment (tents, etc.), set up their own campsites, and
cook their own food. Increasingly, I hear adult leaders argue that that sort of activity dettracts from what they have come to camp to do: have fun and earn merit badges.  

- Staff members run the program. While it is not standardized, National declares in *Camp Program and Property Management* that the camp is organized and operated in much the same manner as a council. The central staff parallels the council executive and commissioner staff, whose responsibilities are to aid in unit organization, to provide helps, to counsel with leaders on their problems, to secure and dispense information, to share experiences, to secure aid in solving problems, to give inspiration, to do cooperative program planning. (*Camp Program* 1-23)

Nowhere in this description does it even suggest teaching, merit badge instruction, or providing program, but this is what most camp staffs do. Increasingly, Boy Scout summer camps provide programs that a camper picks from rather than develops himself—the latter being the original intention, voiced in statements like, “The unit is responsible for its program in camp as it is at home” (*Camp Program* 1-23).

Certainly, there must be exceptions to these criteria (none I am aware of), but my point is that most Boy Scout camps practice these staples even though National does not require them.

*Summer Camp as Total Institution*

In general, summer camps gather together a prescribed population and break down the “normal” social barriers between sleep, play, and work, and places all three spheres under one authority, the camp administration. This is how Erving Goffman defines a “total institution” (*Asylums* 5-6). Goffman describes four basic characteristics of total institutions—all of which Camp Lakota realizes: First, “all aspects of life are conducted in the place and under the same
single authority” (6). While camp is a rather large place, all aspects of life are conducted on property and under direct control of camp administration. Staff, for instance, sometimes miss out on all sorts of historical and cultural happenings because they do not access news sources (beyond weather reports) on a regular basis. They are cut off.

Second, in total institutions, members’ “activity is carried on in the immediate company of a large batch of others, all of whom are treated alike and required to do the same thing together.” While there are multiple activities going on simultaneously around camp, everything is structured around buddies, patrols, troops, and the entire camp; and everyone follows the same basic rules.

Third, total institutions have “tightly scheduled” days “with one activity leading at a prearranged time into the next, the whole sequence of activities being imposed from above by a system of explicit formal rulings and a body of officials.” Staff create a schedule of pre-defined programs—with travel time between programs built into the schedule—which leaves relatively little unstructured if not unattended time.83

Last, in total institutions, “the various enforced activities are brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution” (Goffman 6). As expressed in the National Camp Standards and in the training at National Camp School, everything at camp aims to fulfill the Boy Scout mission.

While my summer camps may share similarities with Goffman’s mental hospitals—the focus of his study—there is a marked difference. While his hospitals are governed by a need to watch or maintain the population (7), my camps are governed by a need to transmit culture (skills, values, behaviors) to the population. The camping movement found that the same characteristics that are used for control in, say, mental hospitals can be deployed for educational
purposes. As such, according to Dimock, “the total individual lives his total life, for the time being, in the camp community. The advantage, educationally, of the whole person living and acting vigorously in a relatively unified environment is tremendous” (Dimock 29).

Summer camp “provides a most favorable environment for the development of children and young people” (Dimock 122) for numerous reasons:

- Camp is voluntary. For the most part, campers attend camp because they want to. “As the educational psychologist would put it, ‘there is readiness for the experience’” (Dimock 122).
- Camp is a controlled environment. No other “free” environment can create a “unified” experience to the degree that a camp can (122)
- Camp is small and simple. Everyone can get to know everyone else under relatively low pressure interactions.
- Camp is rich. Camps offer activities that children like. Camp is “where everything is within reach, is a child’s world” (122).
- Camp has a high ratio of adults to campers. No other educational setting can compare with camps 1:4, 1:5 ratio. Thus, campers receive increased individual attention (Dimock 123).

Summer camps combine a structured, controlled environment of the total institution with a voluntary population, and thus create a powerful educational tool.

Camp Lakota Boy Scout Camp: Staff Basics

Unlike many councils, the BSAC runs two Boy Scout summer camps: one of which is at Camp Lakota in Defiance, OH, where my study of summer camp staff culture was held, and the other is at Camp Berry in Findlay, OH. BSAC has two Boy Scout summer camps because it
used to be two different Councils. In 1991, the Shawnee Council (which owned Camp Lakota) joined with the Put-Han-Sen Council (which owned Camp Berry), and they became the Black Swamp Area Council.

Staff members at both camps mostly come from one of the counties in rural northwest Ohio: a smattering of really small towns—with high school football teams to divide them—amidst a checkerboard of family farms. This is bible-belt country, and thoroughly “white-bread,” though there is a significantly growing African-American population in Lima, OH, and a sizeable Mexican-American population in Defiance, OH. I think it is rather safe to say, this is what most folks would call the “center”: small town, white, Christian, conservative—with nary a “margin” in sight. However, even in the center, there are those closer to the center than others. Even in the heart of the hegemonic hetero-patriarchal America, characteristics like social and economic status, gender, age, and attractiveness mark differences within the center.

In Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy, and the Power of Address (1997), Elizabeth Ellsworth describes how these “subtle markers” were taken up by the teachers and students in her hometown as “bases for sorting and grading, rewarding and ignoring, celebrating and marginalizing, disciplining and stylizing” (Ellsworth 2). These markers, though, are neither blatant nor nameable: “The workings of power in my school were elusive, traditional, taken for granted, well intentioned, commonsensical, even unconscious” (Ellsworth 2). The workings of power in the center are more subtle than aggressive marginalization:

They include the power to suggest, subtly yet clearly, that some knowledges and aspirations are for boys while others are for girls. They include the power not to have to learn about the meanings and operations of race in the United States. They also include the power to invite passions for learning out to play or to squash budding curiosity and
ideas; to delicately discipline and stylize who I was as a “good” or “bad” student; to address me as a teenager as if everyone in the room and in the world is and should be heterosexual; to provoke interest and excitement in some promised moment of opportunity or learning, only to miss the mark when it came to delivering on that promise (despite all of the best of intentions, and often through no “fault” of teacher or student)” (Ellsworth 2-3).

It is within this sort of subtly organizing center that most Camp Lakota staff members grew up. In this environment, there are few opportunities to experience any urbanization beyond shopping malls, any “high” culture beyond field trips, any violence beyond domestic, or any Others beyond student exchange. There are expressions of ethnicity or diversity (mostly amongst those of German and Catholic heritage), but this population is as close to “red-blooded” America that I have found. This is where the vast majority of Camp Lakota staff members come from.

It is also important to note that staff members are typically culled from the ranks of campers. While some are pulled in “off the street” or from distant locations, the vast majority of staff members at Camp Lakota have come to camp as participants in the summer camp experience with their troop at least a couple times before joining the camp staff.

Boy Scouts do not attend summer camp as individuals like many private camps do. Instead, Boy Scouts attend summer camp with their troop. A troop is comprised of patrols: Each patrol has a Patrol Leader. The Patrol Leaders work with the Senior Patrol Leader to manage the troop activities. These youth leaders work with the adult leaders—Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters—to run their program. And where summer camp is concerned, the vast majority of leaders in the BSAC go to the same summer camp year after year (though there is some evidence to suggest this trend is changing).
A boy may attend a camp with his troop for 3-4 years until he is old enough to be on camp staff. And the entire time, camp staff members and camp administrators are constantly looking for the next crop of Counselors-In-Training (CIT’s) to pluck from their respective troops to bring on board as staff members. From the summer camp staff perspective at least, it may be easiest to think of Boy Scouting as a “farming league” for staff members: Like the Toledo Mud Hens baseball team is a farming league for the Detroit Tigers, so too is every Boy Scout troop a “farm team” for Boy Scout summer camp staff. Each troop is a breeding ground for prospective staff members.

**Staffing Categories and Organizational Structure**

According to organized camping historian, Hedley S. Dimock,

The camp staff should be viewed as a functioning organism within the larger community, rather than as a combination of individuals filling various positions. The camp staff possess—or should possess—a collective personality, conceived, not as the “sum” of the personalities of its members, but as an entity that is a blending of these individualities, resembling not a sales force in a department store, where each member handles a certain line of goods, but an orchestra or choir, where there is a fusing of the talents of the various members. (Dimock 93).

Camp staff organization, therefore, might best be understood in Geertzian terms, as octopussian, whose tentacles are in large part separately integrated, neurally quite poorly connected with one another and with what in the octopus passes for a brain, and yet who nonetheless manages both to get around and to preserve himself, for a while anyway, as a viable if somewhat ungainly entity” (Geertz Person 407-8).
That is to say, staffing is not like working at a department store, fast food restaurant, office cubicle, or construction site: as future chapters will demonstrate, staffing is organized and performed in what can only be described oxymoronically: loosely organized or perhaps rigidly flexible.

This is not to say that there are not systems of organization and understandings which attempt to corral the staff organism. In fact, there are many attempts to order:

For example, Boy Scout camp staff is divided into the following employee categories based on age:

- Fourteen year olds are considered Counselors-In-Training (CITs). They are volunteers for the summer: they do not get paid. CITs at Camp Lakota work a full day, but they typically get some time off to work on merit badges. It is perhaps their only compensation for working all summer on staff. Being on staff is an ideal time to get merit badges because your friends are the instructors, and you have all summer to complete the requirements. However, few CITs actually work on merit badges because of all the other distractions of working on staff.

- Fifteen-to-seventeen year olds are full-time, paid staff members. They are assistants in program areas and dishwashers and food-prep workers in the kitchen. Salaries are rather meager—ranging from $75-$125 a week for this age group. There are not many opportunities to spend these meager wages at camp, so many staff are able to keep most of the money they make in a summer (which is unlikely if they are living at home all summer, working at McDonalds, and hanging out with their friends). This age group is comprised of former CITs and new hires. This age group does not get time “off” to work on merit badges, but some find the time and energy to do so in their leisure time.
Eighteen year olds and older are considered adults in the Boy Scouts of America. Following the National Camp Standards put forth by the Boy Scouts of America, some staff positions must have someone over the age of 18 running program areas like Archery, Outdoor Skills, and Ecology/Conservation. Some staff in positions like Camp Director, Program Director, Aquatics Director, and Shooting Sports Director are required to be twenty-one years of age or older. At Camp Lakota, the vast majority of these staff members are either adult friends or family of the Camp Director, college students, and/or former CITs who have worked their way up the ladder.

This is the breakdown mandated by National. The only local variation is how much each of these positions gets paid and perhaps where they rate in the hierarchy of the camp. Camp Lakota has an organizational chart (See Figure 1) which reflects who supervises who, but also reflects the “chain of command”—who should be consulted to resolve problems or concerns.

While there is a formal organizational chart, there is also the informal system—how the staff members, themselves, understand how staff is structured. I was informed of this understanding after I performed what was considered a transgressive lunchtime program. The program was like a public service announcement about the dangers of dehydration: It included a way of testing for dehydration: go pee. If your urine is yellow, that means you are dehydrated. This “public service announcement” had been created by a staff member, Phillip, at Camp Pioneer in Oregon, but it was reminiscent of a program used at BSA’s Philmont Scout Ranch—touted as the “pinnacle of high adventure program experiences” in the BSA—where they are famous for telling their hikers that their urine should be “clear and copious.” Phillip’s invention and my redeployment at Camp Lakota was not a simple phrase; it a fairly serious discussion of dehydration and its causes and effects, followed by a call-and-response cheer:
Leader: What do we want?
Group: Clear pee!
Leader: How do we get it?
Group: Drink lots of water!

It does not rhyme; it is not sung to a tune; it is actually rather uncreative. However, it is wildly responded to and repeated. I had seen it work at Camp Pioneer: more kids were drinking more water, actually requesting more water at meal times. Its effectiveness and repeatability are due, seemingly, to its truthfulness (yellow urine indicates dehydration) and its transgression of potty humor: saying the word “pee.” It worked there, so I got up at lunchtime one day and performed it at Lakota.

**Figure 2: Camp Lakota Organizational Chart.** This is the basic hierarchy of staff positions at Camp Lakota in 2003, but it is not much different from any previous or succeeding year’s organizational chart.
After I finished the “Clear Pee” bit, I walked outside of the Dining Hall and ran into a group of staff warning me to watch out for Jake the camp director. “He’s gonna be pissed,” they told me. I was a bit befuddled, for I saw the public service announcement as a health and safety issue—a self-administered test to determine what course of action one needed to take to stay hydrated and healthy. I knew it was transgressive, but it was under the guise of health and safety. The staff descended upon me, warning me of Jake’s impending rage at my transgression.

A few days later, I told a few of them that Jake had never spoken to me. No disciplinary action at all. It was then that they realized my unofficial position on staff: I was told about a different organizational structure that the administration had allowed to develop. Due to my age and relationship with Jake the camp director (a long-time family friend), I was told by other staff that I had a “platinum card”—which allowed me to “get away with anything.” I was told about an older gentleman on staff (the Aquatics Director) also had a platinum card. He was allowed to come and go as he pleased, drive all around camp in his personal vehicle, and generally do anything he wanted. The younger staff told me that the typical 18 year olds and older had a “gold card” which allowed them to go into town after hours and such. They got extra privileges, but they were still yelled at and controlled by the camp director.

There was a third tier—the regular “credit card” staff member who got the privileges of being a staff member, but not much else. The credit card staff resented the privileges extended to the gold card recipients, and they downright despised the flaunting or flagrant breaking of rules by some of the platinum card users. As for me, they told me I should use my platinum card for good—to get away with stuff that benefited the camp, the program, or the younger staff. Either way, the staff understands the adage “rank has its privileges,” and they are not too happy about it.
Based upon the fact that Jake was the camp director during the first year of my study, this was the structure in place. During the second year of my study, I was the camp director, and this sort of “credit card” hierarchy was dismantled.

Independent of various privileges bestowed on staff members by the administration, the ideal “culling” and development of a staff member looks something like this: If all goes as planned, a camper will attend camp with his troop for a couple years until he has earned the rank of First Class or higher, and then he will join staff as a Counselor-In-Training (CIT). After his first year, where he finds out what it is really like to work on staff, he may return to work in the kitchen or in a program area as an assistant. If all goes well, he will work in a couple different program areas until he is 18 or 19, and then he will have a chance to be an area director in a low-risk program area like Outdoor Skills or Ecology/Conservation. Then, when he reaches 21, he may move into more high-risk program areas like Aquatics or Shooting Sports. And, if all goes well, he may then move into Administrative positions like Commissioners, Camp Director, or Program Director. The Camp Program and Property Management book supports this progression, suggesting that “incentives and training should be provided that will result in experienced staff members who have grown up in the camp” (1-33).

Obviously, this is not how it always happens. There is considerable turn-over amongst staff members, and relatively few actually work their way “up” the ladder as such. College, girlfriends, work—and various other personal obligations and alternative interests—pull people away from this low-paying, intensive summer camp staff job.

Administrative staff are typically hired after last summer’s season ended, so Camp Directors usually begin preparing for the next summer camp as soon as this summer camp is complete. In the BSAC, Camp Directors are allowed to choose their own Program Director and
to hire and train all their staff. Staff interviews are scheduled in January and February for the
“general” staff, but adult staff positions are typically filled as soon as possible. It is not easy to
fill some of the 21-and-over positions. While the net is spread large, there are relatively few fish
in the sea available for summer time employment in that age bracket.\textsuperscript{88}

The “assistants” positions are filled by rank-and-file Scouts who are old enough and
interested in getting paid for a summer job. In many instances, summer camp staff is a boy’s
first paying job. They are learning how to work for someone who is not related to them—how to
get up early, work long days, get a pittance paycheck.

This hiring and organizational structure tells us a great deal about the culture of summer
camp staff. For example, it tells us that “adults” are in controlling positions. While the Scouting
program is served primarily by youth staff members at Boy Scout camp, the camp system is
controlled by adults. Certainly, I would argue that 21 year olds are simply older youth (rather
than full-fledged adults), and it is true that staff members themselves make few distinctions
between the 21 year old and the 14 year old. However, men and women of legal adult age are
running the show at summer camp. Their interests and anxieties are being met (notice the
example of the credit card hierarchy), not necessarily the needs and desires of the youth.

This hiring and organizational structure also tells us that there are many years of training
that go into each staff member. Before becoming a staff member, before going to National
Camp School for specialized training, before even taking Youth Protection Training, CPR
training, or Blood-borne pathogens training, most Boy Scouts spend \textit{years} immersed in learning
the culture of camp. Certainly, they do not know what goes on behind the scenes amongst staff,
but they know what the staff is trying to portray, what program they are providing, what
experiences they are hoping to relay. They know the performance—script, score, turns, angles, and poses—if not the performing (how to work it).

*Staff Week and Staff Training*

One week prior to campers showing up at the door, staffing-hopefuls arrive, unpack, move in, and begin the arduous task of setting up the camp facility, developing programs, and figuring out how to become a staff. This is Staff Week. While I have seen some camps run a fairly mild-mannered Staff Week—even getting done “early”—I have never seen this happen at Camp Lakota.

First, the entire camp needs to be set up. Unlike some camps, Camp Lakota is not used much in the off season. Therefore, most everything has sat untouched for ten months. It all needs cleaning, fixing, and set up. Meecheway Lodge must be cleaned from floor to ceiling—and then cleaned again. All the boats need to be taken out of storage and transported to the boatdocks. There is no on-sight storage near any program area, and there are few-if-any permanent structures, so everything must be taken out of winter storage and reconstructed. All the program areas need to be fenced off; gateways and shelters need to be built; and all picnic tables, program equipment, storage devices, and the like must be transported out to the program areas. This transportation issue is complicated by the rather rustic nature of Camp Lakota: it is large (640 acres); it has no paved roads; and it is called the Great Black Swamp for a reason—it holds water and buries vehicles up to their axels in seconds. What is even more aggravating is there are only one or two vehicles in camp that can handle the swampiness. So, sometimes it is a lot of hurry-up-and-wait at Camp Lakota during Staff Week.

That would be manageable if that were all that needed to happen during Staff Week. But staff at Camp Lakota also have to develop a lot of programs. While some camps run the same
stylized programs year after year, Camp Lakota staff reuse the “shell” but put in new “guts”. Each year, the staff are involved to one degree or another in brainstorming, choreographing, staging, and practicing the following programs:

- **Campfires**—the entire opening Sunday night campfire, as well as material for the closing Friday night Intertroop campfire. Both are approximately one hour performances involving a repertoire of “folklore,” including openings and fire-lightings, skits, songs, run-ons, slow songs, jokes, stories, Scoutmaster Minutes, the Camp Lakota Fight Song, Scout Vespers, and sometimes a flag-raising and a flag retirement.

- **Dining Hall Programming**—After meals, there is some sort of programming: announcements, skits, songs, etc. While this was minimized during the first year of my study—due to the damping influence of the Camp Director and an edict to get campers quickly in and out of the dining hall—it was expanded on during the second year (when I was camp director). While there are some “staples” of dining hall programming—like singing the “Announcements” song when someone says the “A” word—but much of it has to be brainstormed and crafted during staff week.

- **Flag Ceremonies**—no matter how many years staff has been doing them, each year, the staff must learn how to raise and lower the flags, and perhaps how to embellish the ceremonies with commands, bugling, etc.

- **Chapel Services**—depending on the leadership of the Camp Chaplain, staff may plan chapel services in part or in whole. One camp I worked at, we thought of the chapel service in the same way we thought of campfires—they both need songs, skits, run-ons, and the like. One is just a bit more solemn than the other.
• Campwide Game—Friday afternoons are when Campwide Games are typically held, and the theme and content of the Games changes yearly. The Games are usually patrol-oriented (Scouts work in patrols to accomplish tasks) and involve a variety of Scouting skills (though not always).

• Afternoon Programming—Starting in 2002, the program schedule at Camp Lakota started to “open up” in the afternoons—to allow a wider variety of fun, inspiring activities rather than just more merit badge classes. By 2003, no merit badge classes were taught in the afternoons. This required staff members to plan and sometimes invent new program activities, trainings, and experiences for both youth and adult campers. This was challenging for staff members who were used to just teaching a bunch of merit badge classes all day long.

This sort of program planning takes a lot of time, which is at a premium during Staff Week. Typically, such planning sessions are held after dark, sometimes going late into the night.

For example, during both 2002 and 2003, staff spent three nights during Staff Week brainstorming skits and songs—to be used during campfires or in Meecheway after meals. These brainstorming sessions typically consisted of splitting the staff into different groupings and telling them to come up with 2 skits and 2 songs, or 1 skit and 2 songs, or some variation—in the next 15 minutes. Then, each group would get up and perform in front of everyone—sometimes very roughly—what their group had come up with. As Staff Week progressed, the instructions also became more difficult: the third night of 2003, staff were asked to come up with a skit and song that was completely original. Some of the material we created was rotten, but some of the material was absolutely brilliant (see future chapters).
Such sessions were incredibly rewarding. First of all, they gave the chance for staff to let
down their guard and play with each other. Nobody expected stellar performances during these
brainstorming sessions, so everyone was allowed to—actually encouraged and sometimes forced
to—get up and make a fool of themselves. Secondly, these sessions were entertaining. After a
full day of work and training sessions—through cold rain and blistering heat, ferocious
mosquitoes all day and rummaging raccoons all night—it was nice to sit back and play and laugh
with one another. Third, these sessions opened up a space for camaraderie to develop. Through
forced brainstorming, performing, and fooling around, staff got to know one another, got to
enjoy one another, got to share bits of themselves with one another. The other great thing that
happens is we get “new” material for our performances, as well as new performers. I worked at
one camp where they turned to the same staff members year after year, performance after
performance, to do everything. These Staff Week campfire planning sessions changed all that.

During my interviews, I would ask if staff could tell me a story about when they felt like
they really belonged here on staff. First year staff member, Rick told me about one of these skit
and song training sessions during Staff Week:

I’m in my show choir back home, and as we were doing tryouts . . . one of the kids taught
me one of the songs he learned at like 4-H camp, Super Camp. And he taught me that
song, and I thought, “Wow, that’s a pretty funny song.” And I just happened to
remember it and I was like, “That would be good for Boy Scout camp.” When I got on
staff, I didn’t really think about it until they were like, until they did the thing in Staff
Week where you had to sit down and think up stuff. I was like, “We could do the
“Buffalo Song.”
I remember what happened after he got up and sang the “Buffalo Song.” The staff went wild. It was a new song to most every staff member that year, and it was taught to them by a first year staffer. It became one of the standards. Rick knew he belonged on staff when all the other staff members welcomed his contribution to the camp songlore. He was welcomed as a culture producer—a critical change that campers must undergo to become a good staff member. Taking the time to plan programs together brings the staff together in very meaningful ways and actually opens up space for a staff member to prove himself as valuable, resourceful, and acceptable.

But program planning takes a lot of time. And, the National Council, BSA, does not include program planning into its minimum standards. I know some camps do not involve the general staff in serious program planning; instead, they roll out their traditional programs with long-standing staff members who recreate their tried-and-true Scouting recipe. These camps include their staff members in the bare minimum training that National requires. National establishes a standard set of topics which must be covered during staff training, no matter how long it takes. In the National Standards, “staff training” is defined as “at least 3 ½ days (a minimum of 28 hours) of staff training are conducted by key personnel trained at National Camp School. This training must be over and above any physical setup of camp” (2006 Standards 3). National says that camp staff must be trained in the following areas: intrusion of unauthorized persons, dangerous encounters with wild animals, Camp Leadership: Guidelines on Youth Protection, Youth Protection for Adult Leaders, the Aims and Methods of Scouting, appropriate advancement opportunities, universal precautions and implementation of OSHA’s Bloodborne Pathogens standards, as well as job-related skills.

National also provides a Summer Camp Staff Training Guide (2002) for “camp directors to use in precamp training of camp staff personnel” (Summer Camp cover). The Guide is filled
with syllabi for teaching a variety of subjects National recommends are covered during staff training:

- **Aims and Methods of Scout Camping.** Explains how Scout camping mirrors all nine methods of Scouting—troop and patrol method, advancement plan, adult association, uniform, outdoor program, leadership, personal growth, and Scouting ideals—to reach Scouting’s three aims: character development, citizenship training, and personal and mental fitness.

- **The Scout Uniform in Camp.** Explains why they should wear the uniform.

- **Why You Are Here.** Explains what staff are supposed to do: specifically,
  - Helping train troop leaders to make their programs fun and effective.
  - Counseling troop leaders for a complete understanding of the purpose of camping.
  - Counseling with troop leaders to make the patrol method work.
  - Providing instruction in aquatics, personal fitness, campcraft, woodcraft, and field sports.
  - Helping every boy, by example and through personal effort, to have a happy, memorable, and worthwhile camp experience (*Summer Camp 17*).

- **Exploration Tour.** Explains why campers should be given a tour when they arrive.

- **Heart of the Campsite.** Explains a philosophy that the “campsite is where Scouting really happens in the long-term Scout camp. It is the center of the Scout’s activity. He lives here, he gets much of his program here. It is both home and program center...” (*Summer Camp 23*).

- **Reviewing the Camp Staff Manual.** Explains what should be in the staff manual and why it is important.
• **The Scout Law as It Pertains to Camp.** Explains how the “principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Law are principles that guide every endeavor and action in camp” and that staff “become the prime motivators in exemplifying this way of life to each Scout in camp” (*Summer Camp* 29).

• **Customer Service and Total Quality Management.** Identifies customers for camp, features of TQM, and “recovery systems” when you mess up.

• **Camping for Scouts with Special Needs.** Explains different types of disabilities, inclusiveness, and acknowledging and making accommodations as necessary.

• **Cultural Diversity.** Explains, in the shortest syllabus of all, how it feels to be different and how “being perceived as different can result in confusion, anger, hopelessness, uncertainty, mistrust, loss of self-esteem, and loss of confidence. Explain how for “minorities,” being perceived as different is a constant and may account for misunderstood behavior brought on by these emotions” (*Summer Camp* 41).

• **The Chaplain’s Role in Camp.** Explains BSA religion policy and the scope of the chaplain’s position at camp.

• **Counseling.** Explains why, how, and when we counsel; and that staff are not supposed to give advice.

• **Emergency Procedures and Crisis Management.** Explains BSA policies and procedures for emergencies and unacceptable behaviors.

• **Avoiding Sexual Harassment in Camp.** Defines and induces discussion about sexual harassment.

• **Managing Youth Protection in Camp.** Explains the types of abuse, indicators of abuse, BSA policies, reporting requirements, and developing plans and procedures.
• **Camp Staff Morale and Discipline.** Explains what makes a happy staff and a happy camp, as well as the difference between discipline and punishment.

• **Effective Teaching/Learning Strategies.** Explains learning objectives, the discovery experience, teaching and learning, application, and assessment and evaluation.

• **Advancement in Camp.** Explains the role of advancement in camp and BSA policies and procedures for advancement.  

• **Safety and Health at Camp.** Explains the role of the health officer and everyone’s responsibility for maintaining a safe camp.

• **Management of Camp Inventory and Equipment.** Explains the role staff play in maintaining the investment that has been made in equipment and supplies and what procedures exist for inventory management.

• **Campfire Leadership.** Explains why we have campfires, the elements of a campfire, campfire standards, and campfire planning.

• **How to Hold a Retreat Ceremony.** Explains why staff should hold a flag retreat.

• **Order of the Arrow.** Explains the OA’s fourfold purpose and its mission.

• **Scouting as a Career.** Explains why staff should consider Scouting as a career.

So, between setting up camp, learning the skills to do your job, and developing programs, National says a staff should be trained in all these things prior to the arrival of campers. All this in seven days or less!

Suffice it to say, Staff Week is “hell week”: too many things coming at you while you are trying to learn how to do your actual job, how to fit in with the other staff members, and how to set up camp—no matter the weather, mosquitoes, creek floodings, broken equipment, lack of hot water in the showers, uncooked food, or, literally, the camp being under six feet of snow.  

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A Day in the Life of a Lakota Staff Member

Once Staff Week is over and campers begin to arrive, staff members get into a routine which varies little day by day. While the daily schedule changed significantly between 2002 and 2003, most of the interviews I have are from 2002 and reflect the following basic daily schedule:

8:00 ................Breakfast
9:00-11:45 ......Program Areas Open (merit badge classes)
12:30 ..............Lunch
1:30-2:30........Siesta/Troop Time (a rest time for staff and troops)
2:30-5:15.......Program Areas Open (merit badge classes and open programs)
6:00 ..............Supper
7:30-9:00.......Program Areas Open/Special Programs (campfires, etc.)
11:00 ..............All Quiet in campsite areas
11:30 ..............Taps (2002 Leaders Guide)

In this schedule, there are a number of “breaks” in the schedule: before lunch (between 11:45 and 12:30), after lunch (the new hour-long “Siesta” time), before Supper (5:15 to 6:00), and after supper (between the time supper ends and programs begin at 7:30). Since the camp is rather large, this time is used by campers to get back and forth between the program areas, their campsites, and Meecheway Lodge for meals. They also use this time for waiters to clean up the tables after each meal, and for the troop to work on some of their own campsite or campwide service projects (like cleaning the showerhouse or chopping firewood). For the staff, these “breaks” are opportunities to close down their program areas or set them up, walk from place to place, do paperwork, take a nap, sneak in a shower, or just to “hang out.”
At first glance, this may appear like an easy job: By the clock, staff members “work” only seven hours a day. However, they also “work” during meal times: they must eat with the campers—thus, they are “on stage”—and perform meal time programs. They also are called upon to do a variety of “extra” tasks not associated with this schedule. For example, staff members are called upon to support campwide programs (like chapel services, campfires, OA tap outs, etc.), work parties (when problems arise and a workforce is needed), counseling (boy and leader—and staff—problems do not stay politely in the schedule), and pretty much anything the camp director, program director, or ranger needs.

In the following pages, I will quote at length from my interviews with various staff members about their “typical day” on staff. These recollections do not include the “extras” that staff do day-in and day-out, but they are a window into how individual staff members organize their days on staff.

Individually, these recollections of daily events are fairly monotonous routines: “I get up at this time, I teach these merit badge classes, I hang out in staff area”—that sort of thing. However, each recollection divulges how the camp schedule is “lived” by real staff members. Here are a few examples, from the staff members’ perspectives:

Rick, Ecology/Conservation Instructor, 2002

As a first year staff member, Rick gives a good basic description of how staff members “live” the camp schedule: They awaken at the last possible minute, do breakfast, teach classes and do what their director tells them to do, eat lunch, more classes, eat supper, and stay up late. Rick describes his typical day, starting out,

I wake up just in time to get dressed and go up to eat. After I eat, I go back to the area and make sure that my stuff is around. Sometimes. Sometimes, I just hang out . . . .
Then, I sit around and maybe do paperwork or whatever Jerry asks me to do while he’s teaching his first class. Then I teach my Nature class which is, we do a lot of hiking and stuff like that. We go down to the slate beds and sulfur springs and things. Then Jerry teaches another class, and then after that, we sit around Eco until lunch.

Then we eat lunch. After lunch, sometimes, I come back to staff area for a little bit before I go and teach Fishing class, which we go fish for a couple days, and then a couple other days we sit around and talk about things. Then, Aaron has a class which sometimes I sit and help him with. But today I’m not. And then after that, hang out in staff area for a while, maybe take a shower or something if I have a lot of time.

Go eat supper. After supper, do whatever they’re doing that night, like maybe it’s a campfire, maybe it’s Family Night, [OA] tap out—whatever. And then come home—not home, I keep calling it home . . . but it’s home.

This newfound “home,” we can see, is visited time and again throughout the day. Rick goes on to describe how he spends some of this time at night:

Come home to staff area. After that, maybe stay up, listen to music with some other people, talk about stuff that happened today, other things like that. Listen to music mainly, and then we go to bed at god knows what time. . . . Last night, I got to bed around 1:00, 1:30. . . . That’s kinda late for me.

*Mitch, Frontier Patrol Coordinator, 2002*

Mitch is a second year staff member, and we hear from him some of the same issues that Rick spoke of—waking up issues, being tired, having some “hanging out” time, and so forth:

A normal day for me on staff is usually, I wake up at 7:00 to my first alarm. Reach over, try to find the switch because there’s about three different switches that feel the same on
my alarm clock. Switch it off, back on, wake up at 7:30 to my second alarm. Get
dressed, go to breakfast. Usually have not much fun at breakfast. Sometimes I do.
Because I’m so tired. Then after that, usually, I teach the kids about one session and then
take them somewhere a couple other sessions. I don’t mind the teaching. I have about as
much fun with that as I do when I take them to other areas.

After the morning is over, I let the kids go, go to lunch. I usually have more fun
at lunch than at breakfast because a lot of stuff goes on at lunch like songs and skits and
stuff.

Then in the afternoon, I usually head back to staff area or the Trading Post until
2:30. Then, I either go down to the archery range or the boatdocks or just hang around
staff until 4:00. I head back up to Frontier Patrol, teach the First Class [rank]
requirements. Do that until 5:15. Once I’m done with that, I usually stick around
Frontier Patrol, or if not, I head back to staff area. But I don’t have much time to stay
there. Head up to dinner. Dinner’s usually a lot of fun because it’s even crazier than
lunch.

After dinner, usually, it depends on the day. But since Frontier Patrol, we don’t
have open program area or anything like that. Usually, I just head back to staff area and
hang out there for the rest of the day.

One of the things that Mitch describes in some depth is what happens after dinner: the “live
entertainment.” He says it is very different from at home:

Yea, at home I don’t need to be the entertainment. At home, for one thing, we don’t have
live entertainment at every meal. So it’s totally unexpected. Also there’s other forms of
entertainment around. Some people might even get bored before I was done with the end
of the song. But here at camp, I’m definitely—someone—is expected to go up and sing, always a staff member is expected to sing or do something. At home, it’s more like, “Why are you doing that?” Here, it’s more like, “Why not!” “Why not you?!

At least for Mitch, staffing is a lot about taking responsibility; after all, “Why not you?”

Roy, Handicraft Assistant, 2002

Like Mitch, Roy is in his second year on Camp Lakota staff, but seems to know how to “work” the system a little bit. Like Rick and Mitch, Roy wakes up at the last minute, rushing around, getting dressed, and heading up to Meecheway Lodge for breakfast. But Roy describes how he orders his morning according to the Program Director:

It’s kind of [about watching] for Josh [the program director]. If Josh is still wrestling around in his tent, you got plenty of time. And if you see Josh going, you can walk behind Josh. You’re good because he’s always gotta go in and get his cup of coffee. . . .

Then there’s some mornings when somebody will bump the power and that whole side [of staff area] will go out . . . .

But, then flag. Like the few days that I was late, like, had to sneak in the back and help serve and, “Yea, yea, I was in here the whole time.”

Roy then describes how he “sneaks in the back” of Meecheway and acts like he was there the whole time, helping the cooks get the meal ready to go (which apparently is needed enough that the excuse works). However, sometimes Roy runs into some snags along the way:

If there’s already enough servers, then that doesn’t work. Or, if you know that it’s . . . a week where the scout masters are real active. Like, “Oh shoot. There’s already enough servers!” Then, kind of duck and run behind the Meecheway, and because Josh [is] kind
of dazed in the morning, you can usually get around the campers and end up in the end of the line down where you usually stand without getting caught real bad.

But then, Roy describes how the issues to organize are not just being present and on time; it is also about proper uniforming:

Class A’s are a pain. . . . I helped in the kitchen after supper last night, and it’s like, “Shoot, I need [my uniform] for vespers. I asked somebody to bring it and they were like, “Oh shoot, I forgot.” Of course, the phones weren’t up and running, or I would have called and like, “Hey, grab a class A.” But, usually for like dinner and stuff, if you don’t have your Class A, you can usually get away with throwing on a poly apron and serving [on the cafeteria line]. It’s another little way to get around that.

So, not only do we see how to “get around” uniforming requirements, but we also see how the communication system at camp is not always functioning properly. But such inconveniences are manageable for staff like Roy. He is so adept, for instance, that he is able to catch a ride back and forth from his program area rather than walk like everybody else:

And usually get a ride with Helen [the Trading Post manager]. Helen’s been wonderful. She gives us, Joe and I, rides up to our area since we’re connected to her [Handicraft is located next to the Trading Post]. And that’s added a little bit to my gut, but I still get to walk from staff area to breakfast and from dinner usually back to staff area. . . .

We got pottery and basketry first session. We’ve got leatherwork and wood carving second session. And then this week Ralph’s got, or the whole summer Ralph’s had Indian lore third session. But this week I’m sneaking over to Eco to take environmental science. That’s one of the Eagle requires [merit badges required for the
rank of Eagle] that I still need. And um. Then we mess around and try to clean up our area somewhat before Helen’s ready to go.

Catch a ride to lunch with Helen. Do a little grace, and, not flag at lunch, but grace and everything at lunch.

Usually catch a ride back to handicraft with Helen. And we usually get 10 or 15 minutes to get everything out and stuff before the kids start coming. And then we’ve got what they call open sessions, which is really screwed up. It’s like 50 little kids coming in, “I want . . . I want basketry! . . . I want pottery! . . . I want to do wood carving! . . .” And 2 guys, 6 merit badges, one period just doesn’t work.

And like, adult leaders have been sent from heaven because they will come down and help. Like, last week, we had a guy that, he had a knack for pottery. And we got some pretty cool looking stuff coming out of there. Because like, he’d sit and he’d demonstrate on the wheel. He even, he’s like, “You have any more powdered clay?” He’s like, “This clay really sucks. All lumpy and everything.” So he made a really good batch of smooth clay that was good for on the wheel.

We see how the staff are not always the “experts” at camp, and that adult leaders who come with their troops are sometimes more experienced in certain areas. And sometimes, staff members can learn a few things from the adult leaders:

And there was some good stuff that came out of there in that class because he’d sit there and . . . . He’d stand, like the wheels are here, and they’d be sitting here, well he’d stand across from them and he would tend to squat down and sit his knees on the table, and he’d fix it for them. And there was some really cool work and stuff. Like most of it
was done by the kids. But like, if they got something crooked or something, he’d fix it for them so they didn’t wreck the whole thing.

And then the coons decided, “Oh, let’s try clay!” . . . [The next morning] there was bite and claw marks on a bunch of pots.

And then, the last period of the day we’ve got another open session. And what we’ve been trying to do—and we figured this one out like the second day of first week—is see who’s in the different [sessions] for, like the first session, if there’s a mass of them for wood carving, do wood carving then. If there’s a few that come in for the fifth session wood carving, tend to squeeze them in, but.

We try to work around what [schedule] they have. Because we don’t want to deprive them of their Eagle requireds. I mean, these are just handicrafts. You can do these in like two days.

And in the end, Roy describes how nature (the raccoons) and trial-and-error (rearranging things after it goes badly the first day) often affect how staff live their daily schedules. We also see in Roy’s closing statements that all merit badges are not created equal: Handicraft merit badges—which include Leatherwork, Pottery, Basketry, Woodcarving, and Indian Lore—are relatively “easy” merit badges to acquire. And, at least in Roy’s perspective, staff teaching these badges should be accommodating to those campers taking “Eagle requireds”—those merit badges which are required to get your rank of Eagle.93

Anthony, COPE Instructor, 2002

In contrast to the previous descriptions of awakening, Anthony describes an elongated process: “I wake up at about 6:00. And I think about getting up for an hour. And about 7:00, I get up and I get dressed. Recently, I’ve decided to go to the religious services in the morning. I
go down there and do that.” After the morning religious services, called Morning Watch, Lockie describes a relatively brief time period before flag raising and breakfast:

We go out to the parade ground, which is a whole different area. The parade ground is fun. . . . We do crazy things. We have the hacky sack game which we have decided is probably the universal Scouting game. Everyone can do it, it’s not all that hard to learn, and you can pick up about anything and use it for a hacky sack. The Scouts play it with the staff. . . . We play some card games like euchre, which is also a universal card game . . . especially around Ohio. And conversations, we’ll talk to each other. Kinda mesh and figure out people, discuss things. Before Josh gets there.

Then, “Camp attendance!” and it all goes from there. And we always have something to say. Except this morning. I think we got caught off guard. . . . Long night.

Then all the campers go in, and [staff] usually keep[s] doing what we were doing before, usually playing card games or hacky sack or conversations. We’ll talk about, sometimes we’ll talk about what we’re going to plan for the day in our program areas. Like I’ll talk to Brent [his director], and we’ll figure out what we’re going to do. . . . People get general business things done as well, like we’ll talk about OA or ceremonies or we’ll talk about other people in other camps. How they’re not competent . . .

This parade ground activity takes approximately 15 minutes before Josh shows up and begins the flag raising, and perhaps 10 minutes after, waiting for the campers to get through the cafeteria food line. Staff always eat last.

Henry, Boatdocks Director, 2002

Like Anthony, Henry says he wakes up at 7:00 a.m. when his alarm goes off:
I don’t hit the snooze a million times like people do. . . . When I taught bird study merit badge, I would get up earlier. And if the shower was working right now I would probably get up early and make sure I got in and out of the shower. But I get up at 7:00 and um, you know, check how sweaty I am, those sorts of things. Usually by 7:30 I’m up and out. Lay there and think, or I roll over and read or maybe write a letter. Stuff like that.

Um. 7:30 comes. Hit some music, get dressed, come on down to breakfast, eat a little breakfast. Back to program area, teaching some merit badges here and there. Then, you know, on up until lunch.

After lunch, Henry mentions the new program feature, called Siesta Time, which allows him to spend a little time by himself or with staff. Henry is also known for playing guitar, and he can often be found playing it on the boatdocks between helping Scouts during open boating:

Lunch is over. Right now, we got that free period. I usually sit down and read again or maybe write another letter or two, or something, listen to more music, play a little guitar. Um, go back out to open boating where I, you know, watch the kids, help them with you know random things, questions they might have, getting them in and out of the water, doing some canoeing, some paddling stuff. Play a little more guitar, still doing a lot more reading. Get done. Come on up to dinner.

After dinner, we usually have a little open program area and do a little more reading. Then at night I usually hang out with the staff, play some D&D, play some guitar. Sit around. Chill. Um. And then I usually go to bed.

I’m usually one of the last people in bed and usually about 1 a.m. I’m always one of the last lights on because I have a little alone time and little me time by that time. But,
um. Then six hours sleep, waking up in the middle of the night for various raccoon reasons. And that’s about it.

And then they all wake up and do it all over again.

In these boys’ descriptions, we hear echoes of Patricia Atkinson Wells (1988) description of working on a Girl Scout camp staff: Staffing was a work environment that is isolated, stressful, and often hostile, and in which there is intense confinement and enforced communalism. Behavior and impulses were restricted both implicitly by Scouting codes and explicitly through organizational policies forbidding profanity, liquor, drugs, and sexual activities on camp property. Camp staff were required to wear a uniform . . . . [which] conformed neither to prevalent styles nor the contours of the average female body. Nor was it particularly well-suited to the physical nature of the work or work environment. . . . Staff generally worked three to six weeks of de facto 24-hour-a-day duty with little or no opportunity to leave the work site. . . . (112)

The long, hard work day—typically from 7:30 a.m. until 1:00 a.m.—also seems punctuated by numerous chances to relax, read a book, hang out with other staff members. Unlike other camps, Boy Scout camp staff do not have the responsibility to supervise campers—that is left to the adult leaders who come with the troops—so there is ample opportunity for staff to interact on a daily basis outside the view of campers. After 20 years of working on camp staffs, I can attest to the truth of Wells’ depiction complimented by these staff members’ descriptions. What is important to this study, though, is that during these hang-out times—as well as during Staff Week—a culture begins ordering amongst the staff, and the products of that ordering is what the rest of this dissertation will explore.
In an unpublished paper, I have described two common themes of loss in summer camp movies:

- Threat of losing the camp to an outside developer: Meatballs, parts II, III, and IV; Camp Nowhere; Ernest Goes to Camp; and Indian Summer
- Losing or loss at camp—as in losing one’s virginity (Little Darlings; references in American Pie; and I would even include Dirty Dancing and Lolita in this category), losing to a rival camp (Meatballs, Heavy Weights), and I suppose the loss of life (Bless the Beasts and the Children; all three Sleepaway Camp movies; Friday the 13\textsuperscript{th} parts I, II, and IV; Cheerleader Camp, parts I and II; and Piranha, parts I and III).

These themes of loss or losing are also common in non-film stories about summer camp, for example, in Eric Simonoff’s beautiful collection, \textit{Sleepaway: Writings on Summer Camp} (2005).

In early written accounts of this region, it was interchangeably referred to \textit{AuGlaize} and \textit{Grand Glaize}.

There’s another interesting story about a piece of property—an island—that is owned by the Council. It’s called Mick’s Island, and it’s perhaps a mile downstream from camp. Camp Chaplain and former camp director Terri tells a story of how it came to be part of Camp Lakota:

I remember last time I was there, it was before Mr. Mick died who gave the island to camp. And um, he come up here and wanted to go to the island. And I can’t remember who was here but we politely got a canoe out and put Mr. Mick in the middle of that canoe and we paddled up the island. And we got there and poison ivy, I tell you. I thought, “Boy, I’m gonna go back to camp and tomorrow I’m going to be so full of poison ivy.” It was huge stuff.

Mr. Mick gets out of that canoe and just goes like this. Took us all over that island, told us that he and two of his buddies used to get in their boat and go down to this island. They fell in love with that island. That’s where they spent all of their summers, was that island. And they decided they wanted to buy that island. And I don’t know who owned it. But, um. They went to whoever owned it and wanted to know if they could buy that island, “How much?”

And I can’t remember now what he said it cost them. But those 3 boys went back there and they dug a well. In fact, it was still there. They had dug a big hole in the ground and lined it with boarding so that they could put their food in there because it was really cool. They’d put their food in there and take their water with them. And fish.

And they raised melons and sweet corn back there on that island. And they’d bring it into town and sell it at a farmer’s market that apparently they had at that time here in Defiance. And that’s how they paid for their island.

And then as the men died off, they would leave their portion to the next guys and finally Mr. Mick was the last one and when he and his wife moved to Florida, he decided that you know, it was time to do something about the island. And so he gave it to the Boy Scouts.

From my perspective, this is just the sort of story a camp would want to tell it’s campers: “Look what a bunch of boys did of their own initiative! They bought an island which you can now
canoe to and have fun on!” But it’s another story untold at Camp Lakota. It is worth analyzing why some stories move into Lakota mythology and some stay individualized.

4 The version of Spencer’s story I have is not that original, but the following: Spencer, O. M. The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer. Ed. Milo Milton Quaife. NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995. A bibliographical note accompanies this version, stating, “This Dover edition, first published in 1995, is a slightly corrected republication of the work published in 1917 by The Lakeside Press (R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company), Chicago, which was itself a republication of the work first published serially in the Western Christian Advocate, Cincinnati, in 1834” (iv).

5 By Warren’s recollection, Camp Neil Armstrong opened in 1969, but he was only camp director there in 1978 and 1979. He was succeeded by Harry Buyer (spelling?), and the camping operation was closed in 1981 or 1982.


7 Brogan claims that Baden-Powell had prepared himself to meet the challenges which the Battle of Mafeking provided. For year, Baden Powell had “held a poor opinion of the British army’s training, and in a stream of pamphlets had argued for improvements. His specialty was field reconnaissance; Mafeking was his chance to vindicate his theories” (Brogan 20). However, even his success at Mafeking did not make Baden-Powell’s theories any more convincing to his superiors:

if the siege made him a national hero, it did nothing to endear him to orthodox military circles, where he was regarded as a dangerous eccentric who had never been to Staff College. As such he was excluded from all the really important army positions, where the planning for Armageddon was taking place, in the years following the peace in South Africa. (Brogan 20)

To this final point, Brogan cites Winston S. Churchill’s Great Contemporaries. London: revised edition, 1938, p. 365. It is also worth quipping here that the spirit with which the progenitor of new directions begins (eccentricity and arguing for improvements) is rarely what is carried on after his death.

8 Baden-Powell biographer Rosenthall claims that Baden-Powell leapt into the fray of social reformers bent on dealing with the problem of “Boy Nature”:

Responding in part to the questions of national preparedness raised by the Boer War, as well as to the potential threat to social stability embodied in the alarming growth of urban poor, “Boy Experts” grew up everywhere, devoting themselves to studying the plight of the lower-middle-class and working-class lad. The treatment of “Boy Nature,” indeed, became an almost distinct subgenre of early twentieth-century social criticism, and it is very much within the context that the Scouting movement must, in part, be understood. (Rosenthal 88-89).

These “Boy Experts” had very distinct views of boys, too, which fed the forefathers of Scouting. In one text, Boyology or Boy Analysis (1916), H. W. Gibson argues that adolescents is a revolutionary march manward:

Acceleration begins with the pubertal period. He now has an awakening. He is sometimes shocked by what he discovers, awed, sometimes stricken with fear. If there is any one time in his life when he needs a guide, a counselor, and a real friend, it is now. Up to this time he has been too busy being a boy. From three to thirteen he is an
interrogation mark, a sort of combination of dirt, noise and questions, mumps and measles, bumps and broken bones. It is claimed that “between eight and twelve, he is fighting for and adopting his constitution. The rest of the time till he is twenty-five, he is evidently working out his by-laws.”

In the olden days, twelve years of age was considered the “age of accountability,” when a boy was no longer considered a child, but as one who had seriously begun his march manward. (Gibson Boyology 5)

Gibson’s book opens with a picture of a bright, smiling, blond, white teenager, with the caption underneath, “Boy-Stuff is the only Stuff in the World from which Men can be Made.” Gibson quotes John Keats as describing the teen years as “the space between the boy and man, in which the soul is in ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain” (Boyology 7). He even quotes Shakespeare, in the mouth of Malvolio: “Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before ’tis a peas-cod, or a codling when ’tis almost an apple” (from Beck, Frank Orman. Marching Manward. NY: Eaton & Mains, 1912. 46; qtd in Gibson Boyology 7).

Jeal includes an interesting footnote that the first reference to “character building” in OED dates to 1886—in the midst of the emerging organized camping movement (642).

Also of interest is the unfortunate connection between this notion of character building and the eugenics movement (which sought to improve the race through genetic manipulation). Distinguished physician C. W. Saleeby wrote widely on the importance of eugenics, declaring that the supposed opposition between eugenics and social reform did not exist: “The eugenist must welcome all agencies that make for better nature, alike for rich and poor, born and unborn” (24). Saleeby lauded the Scout movement for its eugenics: Scouting was “the greatest step towards the progress of eugenics since 1909” and that,

If national eugenics is ever to be achieved in Great Britain it will come through the Boy Scouts and the Girl Guides, who almost alone, of all our young people, are being made ready, by ‘training in citizenship, character development, and patriotism,’ for education for parenthood, which must be the beginning of national eugenics. This movement is what national education in Great Britain has tried and failed to be for forty years. (Saleeby 88)

9 According to Rosenthal, Baden-Powell had indicated that between 1906 and when he started revising Aids in Scouting into Scouting for Boys, he consulted the following resources:

- Epictetus, second century proponent of Stoicism (Epictetus);
- Titus Livy, author of Ab Urbe Condita—“From the Founding of the City”—about the rise of the Roman Empire (Titus);
- Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, an informal Swiss educator who believe in learning through activity and spontaneity (Johann);
- Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, considered the father of modern gymnastics, combined nationalism with physical regeneration theories (Friedrich);
- Kenelm Digby’s Broadstone of Honour, a volume whose subtitle reads, “Rules for the Gentleman of England” (Kenelm Digby). Digby linked chivalry with gentlemanly actions (Kenelm Henry Digby);
- Zulus and other African tribes;
- Ancient British and Irish;
- Bushido of the Japanese;
• John Pounds, the Portsmouth shoemaker who created informal and somewhat skill-based “ragged schools” for those excluded from other schools for being poor (History);
• And contemporaries like William Smith, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Dan Beard. (Rosenthal 64)

Rosenthal also suggests looking at page three of Baden-Powell’s “deposition, taken on 17 December 1924 for the Supreme Court of New York County, concerning the origins of Scouting” (found in British Scout Archives, quoted in Rosenthal footnote from p. 64.). Murray’s The History of the Boy Scouts of America (1937) also quotes a letter by Baden-Powell where he states,

The whole scheme is an evolution of ideas gathered from all sources, of which the following are a few: Doctor Hahn; Cuhulain and his Boy Knights; Codes of the Zulus, Red Indians, Pacific Islanders, etc. and their customs; Kenelm Digby’s “Broadstone of Honour”; Code of King Arthur; Sir W. A. Smith and the Boys’ Brigade Organization; Dan Beard’s Pioneer Work; Seton’s Camp Games, and so on, but mainly from my own experience in training young soldiers and the South African Constabulary” (Murray 5).

In this rendition of his inspirations, he settles on his own experiences as the main inspiration.

Concerning the inspiration for Scouting, it is worth noting that the Scouting program itself emerged from a group of artists: Seton, Beard, and Baden-Powell were all avid artists. It is how Beard made his living, and all three illustrated their own books. As Peterson has said, both Seton and Beard’s organizations were “products of artists—men of vision and imagination with little interest in administration or record-keeping” (23). Perhaps Baden-Powell’s penchant for administration is why his version of the movement won out.

10 Daniel Carter Beard had published a couple books by this time on frontiernanship: The American Boys’ Handy Book (1882) and Boy Pioneers and Sons of Daniel Boone (1909).

11 Ernest Thompson Seton is perhaps the most interesting character in Scouting history: every step of his journey with Scouting is rife with conflict.

It starts with the controversy over the origins of Boy Scouting itself. In the 20th edition of Seton’s Birch Bark Roll, he describes the origin of the Woodcraft idea as one which had “possessed” him his entire life:

In 1875 when I was a boy of 14, I founded in Toronto a “Robin Hood Club” whose object was to practice outdoor life, combining the woodcraft of Robin Hood and of Leather Stocking. Among other things its rangers were to use only bows as weapons and abstain from use of matches in fire lighting. The club did not last long but the dream never left me and from time to time I made attempts to realize it. (Seton, 20th Edition ix)

This dream evolved into the Woodcraft Indian movement which was growing in popularity when Baden-Powell was researching his ideas for what became Boy Scouting.

Rosenthal describes in detail the arguments—voiced by Seton himself—accusing Baden-Powell of thievery. Seton had sent Baden-Powell a copy of his Birch Bark Roll in June 1906, and what he saw when he opened the pages of Baden-Powell’s Scouting for Boys was that “there is not an important idea in ‘Scouting for Boys’ that I did not publish years ago in ‘Two Little
Savages,’ ‘The Birch Bark Roll’ and my Woodcraft and Scouting articles of which I furnished you with copies. The only important change you make is to give things new names and assume their authorship for yourself.” (qtd in Rosenthal 70-71.) Another resource dealing with the controversy (and offshoots of Seton’s movement like Dr. Ernest Westlake’s Order of Woodcraft Chivalry, John Hargrave’s Kibbo Kift Kindred, and Leslie Paul’s Woodcraft Folk) is Morris, Brian. “Ernest Thompson Seton and the Origins of the Woodcraft Movement.” Journal of Contemporary History 5(1970): 183-194.

With this controversy left unresolved, Seton accepted the role of Chief Scout of the Boy Scouts of America. In 1915, however, he attempted to resign. On December 5, 1915, Seton gave a press conference where he criticized the direction executive officer Dr. James E. West was taking the movement: Concerning Scouting, he argued, “Seton started it; Baden-Powell boomed it; West killed it”; and concerning West himself, Seton said he was “a man of great executive ability, but without knowledge of the activities of boys; who has no point of contact with boys, and who, I might almost say, has never seen the blue sky in his life” (Peterson 82).

Dr. West and the BSA organization did not take these assessments kindly. West responded to Seton, arguing that Seton “contended that the Boy Scouts of America should not undertake to have boys pledge allegiance to their country, but should leave them free to support our country when they thought it was right and to damn it when they thought it was wrong”—a notion West argued “was in harmony with the views of anarchists and radical socialists” (Peterson 82). Soon thereafter, it was discovered that Seton was not an American citizen, and he was asked to step down.

12 Actually, boys had already picked up his Aids to Scouting in the pages of the popular magazine Boys of the Empire, where in 1900 they reprinted parts under the title, “The Boy Scouts.” According to Freedman, this was apparently the first use of the term “Boy Scout” (Freedman, 148-149).

13 Biographer Michael Rosenthal argues that Baden-Powell had worked out the fundamental structure and program in December 1904, months after his return from his experience with Smith. He quotes the entirety of a letter Baden-Powell published in the Eton College Chronicle (22 December, 1904, p. 600) about “the need for a youth organization and the functions it might perform for the country” as evidence (Rosenthal 54-57).

However, another story exists about the beginning of Boy Scouting which leads to more interesting questions. Supposedly, Baden-Powell took pleasure in telling this story of an eye-opening experience a field marshal gave him:

The field marshal, then only a brigadier general, was riding home from military maneuvers when from the branches of a tree overhead he heard his young son call out, “Father, you are shot. I am in ambush and you have passed me without seeing me. Remember, you should always look up as well as around you.”

When the startled General did look up, he saw his son in the branches of the tree and, somewhat above him on another branch, was the boy’s new governess, lately imported from Miss Charlotte Mason’s training school in Ambleside.

The nurse explained that the newest methods in education involved training in observation and deduction, and that the best practical steps for such training were to be found in the little handbook for soldiers entitled Aids to Scouting.

Baden-Powell liked to point out that the governess’s explanation must have opened the general’s eyes, at least in regard to his own future security against ambushes.
“But when the general told me of it,” he added, “it also opened my eyes to the fact that there could be educative value underlying the principles of Scout training.” (Oursley 28) Based upon this story, it is a governess, not the founder of the Boys’ Brigade, who could be attributed with the inspiration for the Boy Scout movement.

14 Biographer Tim Jeal points out yet another incongruency within Scouting: “At the heart of Scouting lay a whole series of incompatible aims, not the least of which was an undertaking to produce self-assertive independent young men who would nevertheless remain loyal supporters of the status quo” (381).

15 Van Wyk’s book is a biographical novel, which means it includes quotations and conversations which Van Wyk himself must have created. It also has no citations (although correspondence is quoted at length and dated).

Van Wyk claims that we had to wait until Burnham’s papers were unsealed from the Howell Wright archives of the Sterling Memorial Library at Yale University to find out the true inspiration for Scouting, for “Olave Lady Baden-Powell had combed through her husband’s personal papers and burned anything that didn’t positively deify the Chief Scout” (568, 564).

16 According to Van Wyk’s review of Baden-Powell’s diaries, there is no mention of “scouting” prior to his reconnaissance mission with Burnham. His July 14, 1896, entry, however, begins with the heading, “Scouting,” and is often quoted as the origin of his thinking on the topic; Baden-Powell talks about “peacetime training” in scouting and describes the game-like detective work of scouting:

It’s almost impossible to describe all the little signs that go to make up information for one when scouting. It’s like reading the page of a book. In scouting, the tiniest indications, such as a few grains of displaced sand here, some bent blades of grass there, a leaf foreign to this bit of country, a buck startled from a distant thicket, the impress of a raindrop on a spoor, a single flash on a mountain side, a far-off yelp of a dog—all are letters in the page of information you’re reading. If you’re a practical reader, you can grasp the sequence and aggregate meaning all at once, without considering them as separate letters and spelling them out. That’s what goes to making scouting the interesting, the absorbing game it is. (quoted in Van Wyk 258)

From the very beginning, Baden-Powell imagined scouting as a game. His most succinct definition of Scouting is, “It’s a game with a purpose.”

Burnham’s influence on Baden-Powell was not solely to inspire a movement; his influence was immediate. Upon return from his mission, Baden-Powell made suggestions to his superiors to change their military clothing to more American, scouting clothing: “He endorsed battle dress of khaki instead of red coats, and he came out in support of the American cowboy hat in place of the regulation pith helmet” (Van Wyk 273). Baden-Powell received a lukewarm response from his superiors, but Burnham’s Montana-peak Stetson headgear eventually became the Boy Scout’s “Smokey Bear” hat (Van Wyk 273). Van Wyk points out that in one organization, “Baden-Powell had managed to combine the ideals of medieval knighthood, the skirmishing of African tribal wars and the dress of the western plainsman. It was a splendid achievement for a graying polo player from India” (466).

17 Van Wyk describes the irony of Baden-Powell’s role in South Africa after the Boer War: Baden-Powell was charged with gathering up all the Boer women and children and placing them in fenced camps; that way, “they couldn’t plant seeds, harvest crops or cook meals for their
menfolk. The irony of Baden-Powell’s new job was this: The man who would found the Boy Scout movement would first organize concentration camps” (397).

18 Another example of this trans-Atlantic movement of ideas and practices, in 1913, Baden-Powell biographer W. J. Batchelder remarked:

One of the most interesting experiments of the movement is that of “The Scouts’ Farm” at Buckhurst Place, Wadhurst, Sussex. It is a scouts’ republic administered and worked by boys. For some years past in North America boys have laboured in small colonies of their own. Such colonies are called there George Junior Republics, after their originator, Henry George: but the idea in England is quite in the experimental stage. At Wadhurst each of the five patrols of eight boys has its own little farm of four acres and its own stock. The training will be invaluable to any of them who shall seek a career in one of our colonies. The boys elect their own mayor, and have entire control of their internal policy. They have also workshops, where they learn carpentry, blacksmiths’ work, leather-work, laundring, baking, and cooking. So far the venture has proved an unqualified success. (Batchelder 246).

Imagined and designed in the United States, these farms inspired Baden-Powell, so he took them back to England with him.

It is worth noting that Batchelder was mistaken. Eminent political economist Henry George (1839-1897) was not the founder of George Junior Republics. Instead, Henry George noticed that poverty seemed to grow simultaneously with affluence and wrote Progress and Poverty (1879), promoting social action and the single tax. “During his lifetime, [Henry George] became the third most famous man in the United States, only surpassed in public acclaim by Thomas Edison and Mark Twain” (De Mille). While he did amazing things, he did not create the Republics.

Instead, American philanthropist William Reuben George (1866-1936) created the first Republic at Freeville, New York, in 1895. The “self-governing Junior Republic was a rural haven for delinquent, dependent, and immigrant youth. At the same time, it became an important laboratory for educational and penal experiments”—a common interrelationship during the Progressive Era between 1890-1916 (Holl viii). In conjunction with Jacob Riis and then New York City police commissioner Theodore Roosevelt, George transformed the Freeville’s Fresh Air Camp into a “year-round camp for destitute and delinquent children” (Holl 2). Based upon the motto, “Nothing without Labor,” the Republicans were self-run communities, run entirely by the youth inhabitants—including farming and carpentry, the courts and jail, banking and industry. The Junior Republic “sought to introduce its citizens to the inescapable responsibilities and obligations of membership in a self-governing and self-regulating rural community” and “was designed to check the dissipation of social responsibility which came with industrialism and urbanization in the nineteenth century” (Holl 102). William George’s ideas were widely copied or adapted throughout the United States.

Baden-Powell visited the Republic and “remarked that the Junior Republic was the most interesting sight he had seen in America” (qtd in Holl 3), that it was “one of America’s most significant contributions to social reform,” and he promptly returned to England and established his own self-governing Scout camp in Sussex”—referred to by Batchelder above (qtd in Holl 212). To hear the story from the “horse’s mouth,” see George, William R. George. The Junior Republic: Its History and Ideals. NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1912.
It is worth noting that Baden-Powell’s genealogy also reflects this yo-yo pond-jumping between America and England: His father was Reverend Baden Powell, a scientist and professor of geometry at Oxford who did pioneering work in the natural sciences and evolution (Oursler 21, Jeal 6-12). Reverend Powell died when young Stephen was only 3 years old, so his mother Henrietta Grace Baden-Powell raised him (Jael 12). It is Henrietta’s lineage which is most pertinent here: She was the daughter of Admiral William Smyth—“Mediterranean Smyth” as he was called in the British Navy—who “claimed descent from the founder of the Jamestown settlement in Virginia, Captain John Smith. The admiral’s grandfather had been a loyalist in America and surrendered valuable lands in New Jersey rather than fight against England in the Revolution” (Oursler 21). As such, if Reverend Powell’s evolutionary theories can be believed, the founder of Boy Scouting had American blood in his veins.

This version of the story comes from an early, 1936 edition of the Boy Scout Handbook titled the Revised Handbook for Boys because the story is told more dramatically and with more detail than the present, Eleventh edition. The present edition tells the story in an unremarkable seven sentences.

In yet another connection to Ohio (the site of the camp in my study), William D. Boyce may have been born in Pennsylvania and became rich in Chicago, but he received his education from Wooster Academy, Wooster, OH (Dean 23).

BSA historian Will Oursler makes this claim because Edgar Robinson sent orders in the spring of 1909—“even before there was a Boy Scouts of America”—“to all units of the Y.M.C.A. to give full support and aid to any boy or boys seeking to organize or join Boy Scout Troops” (Oursler 36). Robinson was “deep in plans for developing a full Y.M.C.A. Scout program when he heard of W. D. Boyce’s incorporation of the Boy Scouts of America (Oursler 36-37).

BSA historian Murray states very clearly that “Troops preceded Councils” and indeed, “led to the necessity for Local Councils . . . [as] a device to aid and further the activities of the Troops operating by the sponsoring organizations” (Murray 248). Murray provides a few examples of early troops in the United States:

• “Frank F. Gray organized his first Scout Troop in Montclair, N.J., late in 1908” after passing “a year, 1907, in Scotland absorbing the Scout methods in Baden-Powell’s famous camp at Brownsea” (from Price, L. E. Boy Scouts of Glen Ridge, qtd in Murray 248).

• “The Genesee Y.M.C.A. Troop of Buffalo was started in 1909 by J. F. O’Brien, who had been a Scouter in Ireland” (Murray 248).

• “Troop 1 of Columbus, Ohio was organized early in 1910, by E. S. Martin, and in the fall of that year, he was retained by the Council as its salaried executive officer with the title of Commissioner [sic]” (Murray 249).

• “Deputy Commissioner Roy Zoeller . . . in 1908 organized a Troop of Scouts among the officers’ sons at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and received a commission direct from London—years before Leavenworth area had a Council” (Murray 250).

Interestingly, William D. Boyce became dissatisfied and left the Boy Scouts of America fairly early-on, and in 1915 started Lone Scouts of America for those who were isolated or who couldn’t join a Scout troop. It was publication-based (Lone Scout, weekly paper) and was extremely successful. Even it merged with the BSA in the early 1920s. Boyce’s dissatisfactions with the National organization trickled down to his homosexual grandson

24 There are two interesting stories surrounding this first printing of the Scout Handbook. First, according to Applebome,

Seton prepared a first edition of the Scout Handbook, which was two-thirds his own The Birch-bark Roll and one-third Baden-Powell’s Scouting for Boys. Published in 1910 it named Ernest Thompson Seton as its author. You can still go to a Scout shop and buy what’s billed as a reprint of the first version of the Scout Handbook, but it’s not the one Seton prepared. Seton’s attempt to function as the voice of the B.S.A. was immediately overruled—one year later the book was rewritten, newly titled The Official Handbook for Boys, and Seton’s name was taken off the cover. (152-153)

The politics of Scouting at its beginning—and perhaps even more so today—is as muddy as any other large-scale organization. Today, in day-to-day Scouting, very little mention is made of Seton’s influence.

Secondly, there is a story surrounding that first publication which is worth reiterating here: this story is told by the Chief Scout Executive, Dr. West:

In the publication of this book, I asked the publishers to do something which they said had never been done before. I asked for 5,000 proof copies. I wanted the psychology of the first introduction to be just that. We printed 5,000 copies from type... There was such great anxiety on the part of those who were waiting for it, that I had to ask Doubleday Page & Co., the publishers, to do something which they said had never been done before, and they actually turned over to me the key to their plant. They said they couldn’t get it out when I asked them to, but that if I could, I should go ahead. I organized a group of men who worked with me at night, supplementing the group that worked there in the day. I organized a secretarial staff and transferred my office to Garden City, and eleven days from the time I gave them the manuscript, I had my 5,000 books in complete form, and I got them in the mails, and we got our replies. (Quoted in Murray 395-396)

Despite his supposed faults, West was unquestionably resourceful, driven, and perceptive.

25 Daniel Beard was very active in Scouting, playing influential roles in some of the staples of Scouting. For example, Murray claims,

To Daniel Carter Beard, with his keep American patriotism, and James E. West, Chief Scout Executive, and Clifford H. Berryman, the famous cartoonist for the Washington Evening Star, we owe the famous Eagle super-imposed upon a modified form, of the British First Class Badge. Mr. Beard, in conference with Dr. West, developed a rough sketch, with Dr. West took to his friend Mr. Barryman in Washington and, with this rough sketch, he and Dr. West developed the first pen and ink drawing of our First Class Badge which was registered in the patent office, and the design patent secured on July 4, 1911. (Murray 462).

26 The National Council, Boy Scouts of America, went head-to-head with William Randolph Hearst’s American Boy Scouts (later called United States Boy Scouts) to establish the right to the name. National obtained “through a commission in England, testimony of Lord Baden-Powell, backing the Boy Scouts of America’s claim that it was the direct and authorized development from Baden-Powell’s own movement in England” (Oursler 42). Nearly a decade
later, an injunction was granted which forbid Hearst’s group from using the name “The Boy Scouts” or “Boy Scouts” (Oursler 42).

It is worth noting what an incredibly influential group these folks were: Major General Leonard Wood (then, Chief of Staff for the U.S. Army); John Wannamaker (businessman, considered “father” of the department store and modern advertising); Judge Ben B. Lindsey (founded the American juvenile court system); Nicholas Longworth (politician and son-in-law of Theodore Roosevelt); Oscar Strauss (Teddy Roosevelt’s Secretary of Commerce and Labor); Charles Abbott (astronomer, then director of Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory); David Starr Jordan (ichthyologist, then president of both the California Academy of Sciences and the World Peace Foundation; also, a eugenicist); J. Horace McFarland (preservationists, worked closely with John Muir); Daniel Carter Beard (founder of the Sons of Daniel Boone); Ernest Thompson Seton (founder of the Woodcraft Indians); Jacob Riis (photojournalist, author of *How the Other Half Lives* in 1890); Luther Gulick (pioneer in organized camping); G. Stanley Hall (author of *Adolescence* and proponent of recapitulation theory); Admiral Dewey (Admiral of the Navy), Theodore Roosevelt (left Presidency in 1909), William Howard Taft (sitting President of the United States of America), Gifford Pinchot (conservationist and first Chief of the U. S. Forest Service), Henry Van Dyke (author, clergyman who chaired committee that wrote the first Presbyterian printed liturgy, *The Book of Common Worship of 1906*), Charles Scribner II (publisher of children’s magazine, *St. Nicholas*), and Hamlin Garland (novelist, poet—wrote about Midwestern farmers). The descriptions of these people come from wikipedia searches.

It is interesting how this group formulated the Scout Law: They took the original Law which Baden-Powell had fashioned and added three laws. According to West, the Chief Scout Executive,

> We took the nine English Laws and analyzed each of them. We had before us recommendations, including some fifty laws including many suggestions by Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton. We agreed finally to add one for cleanliness, which the English did not then have. We added one for bravery. They did not have this. My judgment of the Twelfth Scout Law is that it is one of the very finest things in the whole scheme of Scouting and one of the reasons we have had such outstanding success . . . . and I advocated that this be included in the Twelfth Scout Law, “A Scout is reverent.” (Murray 54-55)

It is fascinating that there were recommendations for 50 different Scout laws. The laws were not written in stone: they have a history and advocates in high places.

Another interesting point about the early years of this organization is the many things they chose not to do. In the early years, the Executive Board declined the following “invitations”:

> That we use armories for meeting places; that we cooperate with the Santa Claus Association; that we unite with the movement of Camp Fire Girls; that we adopt an official song; that we take part in the Buffalo Bill movement; that we join in the organization to abolish capital punishment; that we permit our name to be used in connection with a particular school; that we have a national tag day; that we join the Allied Patriotic Society. We were asked to cooperate with the American Fox Terrier Club, and to intercede with Governor Pinchot for a man who had been condemned to death; that we endorse the American Guardian Association, and unite in the movement to
save Old Ironsides. We were asked to help in establishing the metric system, and to join the American Green Cross. (Murray 144-145).


30 Transcendentalism maintained “the belief that a correspondence or parallelism existed between the higher realm of spiritual truth and the lower one of material objects. For this reason, natural objects assumed importance because, if rightly seen, they reflected universal spiritual truths” (Nash 85). Ralph Waldo Emerson is considered the founder of Transcendentalism as well as the father of American literature (Carr 1467). His writings including essays on topics like “Nature,” “The American Scholar,” “Self-Reliance,” “Circles,” and “Experience”—to name a few. He wrote what is probably the manifesto of Transcendentalism in “Nature,” when he wrote, “nature is the symbol of the spirit . . . the world is emblematic” (Emerson 31). Ironically, this was the same belief held by Lord Baden-Powell’s father, Professor R. V. Baden-Powell, who believed “all nature was a revelation of the handiwork of the Creator” (Oursly 22).

31 Henry David Thoreau is one of the most widely recognized Transcendentalists, with such works as “Resistance to Civil Government” (1849), Walden (1854), and “Walking” (1893). Thoreau recognized in himself “an instinct toward a higher, or, as it is named, spiritual life . . . and another toward a primitive, rank and savage one”; and he believe in expressing both (Thoreau Walden 246). He attempted to make himself only “half-cultivated,” for he would have “every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth” (Thoreau Walden 327). (Thoreau Walden 246, 397). Throughout his life, Thoreau often felt the necessity to “go off to some wilderness where I can have a better opportunity to play life” (Thoreau Journal 519). This notion of “playing life” is most interesting in the context of the Boy Scout movement which is considered a “game with a purpose” and within the context of this dissertation which is about “passing”. That is to say, to “play” life implies it is not entirely real, that it is a bit of a performance.

32 After a short stint at the Wisconsin University under the tutelage of classics professor Dr. James Davie Butler, geologist Dr. Ezra Slocum Carr, Mrs. Jeanne C. Carr, and the writings of Asa Gray and the Transcendentalists, John Muir lit out for the “University of the Wilderness” (Muir Story 1). Muir was inspired by Emerson and Thoreau, but he became disenchanted upon finding Emerson an armchair naturalist and Thoreau a half-cultivated man of the wild (Nash 126-127). Muir threw off “the galling harness of civilization” (Wolfe 82) and purged himself of the “sediments of society” in order to become a “new creature” in the wilderness (Muir Thousand 11-12, 71, 211-212). Muir is known for his extensive nature writings—for example, The Mountains of California (1894), My First Summer in the Sierra (1911), The Story of My Boyhood and Youth (1913), and A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf (1916), to name but a few of
his books, not to mention his essays and letters—but also his preservation work, helping to save Yosemite Valley and the leadership of the Sierra Club, to name a few highlights (John Muir).

This list came from Gibson’s book. A short primer on these writers: Nessmuk (a.k.a. George W. Sears) published Woodcraft, “a book for the guidance of those who go for pleasure to the woods” was one of the first authoritative books on camping as a recreation” (Sargent Handbook 24). Nessmuk’s Woodcraft and Camping (NY: Dover Publications, Inc, 1963, slightly abridged and edited reproduction of Woodcraft NY: Forest and Stream Publishing Company, 1920) ends with the following quotation which seems to articulate his basic message about nature and man’s relation to her: “Wherefore, let us be thankful that there are still thousands of cool, green nooks, beside crystal springs, where the weary soul may hide for a time, away from debts, duns and deviltries, and a while commune with nature in her undress” (101).

The “Knockabout Series” of books were published in the 1870s and 80s, describing “the joys and adventures of such a wild life in a way to stimulate the imagination” (Sargent Handbook 24). Knockabout authors included Charles Asbury Stephens (Main Writers) and Frederick Albion Ober (Hulme), among others.

John Burroughs (1837-1921) was an American naturalist and nature essayist. William Hamilton Gibson (1850-1896) was a naturalist and illustrator. Horace Kephart (1862-1931) was a travel writer. And I have not been able to locate solid descriptions of Howard Henderson, Frank Beard, Edward Breck, Charles Stedman Hanks, Stewart White, nor W. C. Gray.

G. Stanley Hall produced the definitive work on adolescence—actually making it a household word—in Adolescence: It’s Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education. Volume 2. (NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1905). He is perhaps the most often-cited proponent of the recapitulation theory. In the introduction to Volume 1 of Adolescence, Hall describes the theory:

The child revels in savagery. . . . These nativistic and more or less feral instincts can and should be fed and formed. The deep and strong cravings in the individual to revive the ancestral experiences and occupations of the race can and must be met, at least in a secondary and vicarious way, by tales of the heroic virtues the child can appreciate, and these proxy experiences should make up by variety and extent what they lack in intensity. . . . So, too, in our urbanized hothouse life, that tends to ripen everything before its time, we must teach nature. . . . But we must not in so doing wean still more from, but perpetually incite to visit field, forest, hill, shore, the water, flowers, animals, the true homes of childhood in this wild undomesticated stage from which modern conditions have kidnapped and transported him. These two staples, stories and nature, by these informal methods of home and the environment constitute fundamental education. (Hall xi)

Looking through old camping manuals, I found statements that seemed inspired by recapitulation theories. For example, in Camping Out: A Manual on Organized Camping (1924), you read lines like, “The fundamental cause of this return to a more or less primitive form of living is that it appeals to some of the oldest and deepest racial experiences” (Weir 1). Weir was the Field Secretary for the Playground and Recreation Association of America.

Historian Peter Schmitt claims that Hall “disturbed American educators” when he published “The Content of Children’s Minds on Entering School” in 1891 (Pedagogical Seminary 1(1891): 146-150, 155-156). In the fall of 1880,
Hall tested the awareness of nature and country life that two hundred children brought to the first grade from middle-class homes in Boston. He hoped to evaluate object-lesson techniques and text-book assumptions, but he uncovered among these city children a frightening ignorance of the simplest nature lore. Ninety per cent of this group had no understanding of an elm tree or a field of wheat or the origin of cotton or leather. Eighty per cent could not identify the common trees of pasture and woodlot. . . . City children imagined a world in which spools of thread grew on bushes, meat was dug from the ground, and cows were the size of mice, a world in which potatoes were plucked from trees, butter came from buttercups, oats grew on oaks, stones were made of brick and cows said ‘bow-wow.’ (Schmitt 77-78)

Schmitt describes Hall’s influence: “Many educators were impressed with G. Stanley Hall’s genetic psychology. Hall argued that children must recapitulate human development from primitive rural stages to complex urban life as they matured; denial of this process in the cities bred social immaturity, crime, and chaos” (Schmitt xxi).

36 Mark Twain (1835-1910) had published the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1884), encouraging every adventurous young boy to “light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she’s going to adopt me and sivilize me and I can’t stand it” (Clemens 429)

37 While the Plains Indians had been “relocated” on reservations since the 1850s, Francis Amasa Walker, commissioner of Indian Affairs during the 1870s, expanded “relocation” to all tribes and added “assimilation” to the policy. In a fetching archetype of hegemonic praxis, Walker combined his belief in social engineering—the ability to scientifically manage people—and his desire to avoid armed conflict with the Indians, in order to assimilate Indians to “the white man’s road” (Munroe 135). And then Walker’s policy was reversed by the General Allotment Act (1887), known as the Dawes Act for the Massachusetts senator who sponsored it (Milner 174), and as the “Indian Emancipation Act” by those who thought assimilation was taking too long (Takaki 234). The General Allotment Act broke up the reservation system, decreased the amount of land owned by Indians, and attempted to speed up the process of making individual Indians land owners and U.S. citizens (see Takaki and Milner).

38 After hearing the Superintendent of the Census for 1890 declare “there can hardly be said to be a frontier line,” Turner declared in 1893 in Annual Report of the American Association for the Year 1893 (Washington, D.C., 1894) that, “now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier is gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history” (Turner 60). Turner argued:

The result is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom—these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier. . . . But never again will such gifts of free land offer themselves. For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of customs are broken and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not tabula rasa. (Turner 59)

39 An interesting bit of Arcadian trivia: Baden-Powell boarded the S. S. Arcadian on January 3, 1912, on a round-the-world review of Scouting, beginning with a cross-country
lecture tour of the United States, and then Japan, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (Freedman 177-178). It is also on board the Arcadian that Baden-Powell met his future wife, Olave Soames. She was twenty-two years old; Baden-Powell was fifty-four (Freedman 178-179). This was remarkably similar to his own parents’ marriage: Henrietta was 22 and Reverend Powell was 49—and on his third marriage (Jeal 6-7).

Historian Peter Schmitt argues that organized camping and the Boy Scouts of America actually “compromised” rather than reflected the Arcadian ideal: “Spontaneous communion with the out-of-doors and building naturalists patient contemplation were bound at every turn by the military precision which seemed necessary to manage two hundred campers and a hundred counselors scattered over the landscape” (101). Schmitt criticizes the Boy Scout movement for similar overly-organizing influences:

The centralized control that appeared so necessary for executive efficiency and financial stability increased in the 1920’s. The national staff coordinated not only the literary image of Scouting but many Scouting activities as well. For example, a special Department of Camping established standards for “leadership, equipment, commissary, and sanitary provisions, program and health regulations” [(Murray 429, 138, 238)]. It deemphasized patrol and even troop outings by authorizing only approved Scout Camps, to which individuals or patrols might apply; the spontaneity of unsupervised Scout Camps gave way to sanitary and educational guarantees. (Schmitt 113)

Schmitt gives examples of how Scouting turned away from Arcadia: the merit badge system was “focused on urban needs” and vocational interests as early as 1915, and the “ranking” of Scouts according to “classes” was just more schooling (113). Schmitt quotes Carlos Ward in 1935 as saying, “Uniform, insignia, badges of rank and achievement were means of recognizing growth” and “‘learning by doing’ was hardly made easier for the Scout when ‘most of what he was to do was prescribed for him’” (Ward 42, quoted in Schmitt 113). In a footnote, Schmitt also quotes Porter Sargent’s critique of organized Scouting: “The ‘patrol’ unit, originally designed to give educational purpose to the ‘gang instinct,’ seemed to have lost its place under ‘an increasing tendency to standardize activities and suppress initiative’” (Sargent 104, quoted in Schmitt 209).

Frederick William Gunn (1816-1881)—considered the father of organized camping—started The Gunnery Camp at Welch’s Point on Long Island Sound in August 1861, taking the entire Gunnery School in Connecticut on a two-week encampment (Eells 5-7). Frederick Gunn was inspired by the enthusiasm in the boys at his school aroused by news of the Civil War. They “dreamed of a chance to march and camp out in tents or sleep on the ground as did the soldiers” (Eells 5). An alumnus of the Gunnery School described how such experiences were

Longed for in the fervent spirit with which the Mohammedan thinks of Paradise . . . . As boys we felt in all the sports and trips only direct pleasure. The Master’s deep plan of character structure, now revealed to our maturer sight, was masked then . . . the hazards, emergencies, and challenges were the symbols of a system whose fruition lay in solid self-reliant manhood. (Gunnery School)

From the inception of organized camping for boys, they were organized both to hide their true intention of character construction and to bring forth “solid self-reliant manhood.”

While Gunn holds the claim to fame for the first organized camp, Ernest B. Balch (1860-1938) is considered the father of the organized camping movement because he is considered the first to have distributed a set of written objectives for his camp (Maynard 6, Eells 8). In 1881, Balch started Camp Chocorua on Burnt Island in Squam Lake in New Hampshire
He claimed that his camp existed “for 1) the development of a sense of responsibility in the boy, both for himself and others, and 2) appreciation of the worthiness of work” (Benson and Goldberg 7).

He began the camp because he wanted to heal “the miserable existence of wealthy adolescent boys in the summer when they must accompany their parents to fashionable resorts and fall prey to the evils of life in high society” (Eells 7). His camp was organized so there would be “no servants, no class distinctions, and no snobbery in this small, democratic, sharing community” (Eells 7). Elizabeth Balch, Ernest’s wife, described her own impressions of camp life:

“Freedom without license” might almost be the camp motto, so careless, happy and untrammeled were the lads, yet so perfect is the discipline. One of the first principles of the camp system is that in every way the faculty shall live the same lives as the boys themselves, sharing their work as well as their pleasures; the spirit existing between the two is therefore far less that of master and pupil than that of good comrades who are at the same time helpful friends. (Balch Boys Paradise 604-607)

Ernest Balch, himself, wrote to Porter Sargent on May 18, 1916, discussing some of the practices he endorsed at Chocorua:

[A]ll work should be done by the men and boys of the camp. . . . There was thorough rotation through all work. We eliminated absolutely a servile class. . . .

All boys at Chocorua were limited as to money . . . and received from home twenty-five cents a week for ten weeks, and not a cent more. The environment was planned so that the boys needed more money. When he discovered this unpleasant fact and desired to send home for more money, he was told to go to work and earn it. There was no humbug about this. They did earn at real rates the money they spent on pleasure or charity by real work, winter and summer. . . .

In those days to merely collect a group of boys for outdoor life did not seem to me so wonderful a thing, but to engage in education of the highest type—that was what I thought we were doing at Chocorua. (Balch First Camp, quoted in Eells 31)

Chocorua was closed after only eight years, perhaps because of the $8,000 deficit which had accumulated—a common theme in camp lore—but Balch claimed it was because he had proven his theories of education were correct and did not need a camp anymore (Eells 8).

In 1876, Dr. Joseph Trimble Rothrock (1839-1922) founded the Mountain School of Physical Culture in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania (Eells 9). Dr. Rothrock—who had been a sickly youth—was deeply concerned with health and physical fitness. He once wrote that he had “the happy idea of taking weakly boys in summer for camp life in the woods, and under competent instruction, mingling exercise and study so that the pursuit of health could be combined with the acquisition of practical knowledge . . . outside the usual academic lines” (Kelly, 210). Thus, perhaps we see the beginning of outdoor activity “outside the usual academic lines”.

Laura Mattoon (1873-1946) founded Camp Kehonka in 1902 in New Hampshire and revolutionized women’s ability to interact in the outdoors (Eells 12-13). The camp “was literally natural and down-to-earth, with earthen floors for the tents, beds of balsam boughs in rough log frames, and simple outdoor plumbing” (Eells 12). Matton “knew well the place women were to occupy in the twentieth century and the many ways in which the camp experience could provide preparation” (Eells 13-14).
Eells suggests that a full story of Kehnoka is told by A. Cooper Ballentine who “went to Kehnoka as a youth of 17 and became director after Miss Mattoon’s retirement” (Eells 14).

45 All histories of organized camping must pay homage to the incredible work of Luther and Lottie (Charlotte) Gulick. While Lottie Gulick (1865-1928) is credited with being the founder of Camp Fire (see Buckler), Luther Gulick (1865-1918) is credited with playing significant roles in the YMCA, the Playground (later National Recreation) Association, James Naismith’s creation of basketball, and the founding of the Parks and Recreation Association of America (Eells 16-19). Together, Luther and Lottie opened a family camp at Gales Ferry, Connecticut in 1887 and Camp Wohelo in Maine in 1911. Lottie had met with Ernest Thompson Seton—one of the co-founders of Boy Scouts in the United States—to write up a program of Indian lore and ceremonials at Camp Wohelo. Of special note, Luther Gulick worked with James West, Dan Beard, and Ernest Thompson Seton in 1909 on a national organization for boys which became the Boy Scouts of America (Eells 16-19).

46 Reverend George Hinckley (1853-1950) and his mentor Reverend W. H. H. (Adirondack) Murray (1840-1904) are seemingly best known for their influence on other camping folk. “Adirondack” Murray wrote several books, describing himself as “an old camper, a wood lover, an aboriginal veneered with civilization” (Gibson Early 26). Rev. Hinckley, too, wrote several books, which warned that the “race was dying; dying of its own stupidity; dying from in-doorness” (Gibson Early 26). Hinckley, himself, is also credited with founding the first church camp in 1880 on Gardner’s Island, Wakefield, Rhode Island and founding the Good Will Farm for boys in Hinckley, Maine, and the Good Will Encampment as an extension of the farm school (Eells 22).

47 Rev. Murray’s philosophies and Rev. Hinckley’s friendship influenced Dr. George Louis Meylan (1873-1960) to create the White Mountain Camp for Boys on Sebago Lake, Maine in 1907, and much later, Camp Arcadia for girls (Eells 22-24). Dr. Meylan was also influenced by Pestalozzi’s philosophy, “Let nature be your teacher” (Eells 22), and he “believed in Dewey’s philosophy of learning by doing and in Gulick’s emphasis on the sound, well-trained body and the education of the whole man” (Eells 23). Dr. Meylan believed

the camp director was an educator and camping a contribution to education. Camp life was ideal for inculcating social and moral virtues, developing responsibility and self-reliance, as well as offering an experience in democratic living. He was very critical of the luxuries found in many camps for boys and ridiculed the excesses of marble baths, servants, fancy food, candy stores, and city entertainment. Camp was to be education and simple living. (Eells 23-24).

Despite the fact that many of the influential organized camping pioneers despised the urbanization of camps, it appears that many were class-constructed and constructing.

48 Winthrop T. Talbot (1866-1938) took over Camp Harvard (founded in 1882 by two students from the Harvard Theological Seminary at Cambridge) and changed the name to Camp Asquam in 1884 (Eells 24-26).

Though other camping pioneers like Balch disagreed with Talbot’s methods—accusing Talbot of catering to the rich and the dastardly act of employing a professional cook—Talbot is considered the first to run a “commercially successful” summer camp (Sargent 80). If Talbot catered to the wealthy, it did not come out in his later camping philosophy. Instead, he disparages the city-boy. Talbot writes,
The city-boy is afraid at first of what seems to him silence—silence, because his ear is too ill-trained to hear the music of the soil and dwellers; he talks much, objects, argues, discusses—a sign of nervous instability and long-continued strain; gradually he grows into harmony with the calm about him, and cheerful good nature replaces ill-temper and peevishness. . . . he finds that it is the trappers and farmers who alone can teach him the things he wants to know . . . and he realizes that these slow-speaking, slow-moving, roughly-dressed men have learned truly to be self-reliant and independent, and he must respect them. (Talbot 6, 172)

Talbot certainly romanticizes trappers and farmers, but also argues for respect for them.

Talbot was not only interested in making his own camp successful, he was also interested in making the movement successful. In 1902, he argued for the need for an organization, through which the camps could cooperate in a democratic manner, correlate existing situations, gather and distribute information, establish standards as well as safeguard the principles in camping developed by the pioneer camp directors . . . and . . . afford a fellowship. (qtd in Eells 26)

Talbot’s urging created the first Camp Conference and Leadership Institute in April 1903 and led to the creation of the General Camp Association. After 1910, Talbot dedicated himself “to improving the conditions of the factory workers, illiterates, and foreign-born, and to adult education” (Eells 32).

49 C. Hanford Henderson (1861-1941) started Camp Marienfeld in New Hampshire in 1896 and is considered to have laid the “foundation upon which the educational program of the progressive camp of today is built” (Gibson Private 19). He was “one of the greatest educators of the twentieth century” who ended up “almost forgotten even before his death. Just as the times welcomed [John] Dewey, so they rejected Henderson” (Melvin 328). According to Eells, “Henderson was an educator who might have been as famous as Dewey had he not been so self-effacing and unobtrusive” (35). Amazed by such a statement, I checked out her source to find Melvin’s quote above. Melvin didn’t equate Henderson and Dewey, but he was highly impressed with Henderson. Henderson wrote about some of the same ideas as Dewey, for example,

Since art is to do, and science is to know, one would think that science must come first, that we must first know how before we can do the thing. But historically this has not been the observed sequence. Men everywhere have first done things, and then, by reflection and experiment, have learned to do them better. For the best achievement, science and art must go together,--we must learn by doing. (Quoted in Melvin, 333-334)

Like many other camping pioneers, Henderson started his summer camp “to save the boys from slipping backward” (Henderson 1925, 49). He saw boys in his high school slipping backward during the summer months and wanted to do something about it. However, unlike other educators and some camp directors, Henderson “emphasized what a boy was and what he could do, not what a boy knew” (Eells 26). He argued that a summer camp “is the place not to improve ideals in boys—but that it is especially a great opportunity to help a boy to himself develop habits which are wholesome” (Gibson Private 16). Rather than institutionally shoving values down the throat of a boy, Henderson thought it would be better to help the boy develop his own ideals and habits.
Dr. C. Hanford Henderson wrote a chapter in Porter Sargent’s A Handbook of Summer Camps: An Annual Report (1925) titled “The Boy’s Summer” in which he makes his argument about being and doing, about “too narrow homes” and the “more exacting atmosphere” of camp:

It was not simply what a boy knew—it was even more what he was and what he would do. . . . It is an illuminating experience to camp out with anyone, just as it is to cross the ocean with him. Boys accustomed to having everything done for them are suddenly called upon to do thing for themselves; accustomed to having pretty much their own way they are suddenly balked by the somewhat imperative demands of the group. Life at a summer camp discovers the real stuff of which a boy is made; and often it reverses the judgment of the home. Boys accounted models at home,--models in the eyes of their mothers and maiden aunts, models perhaps because nothing is asked of them, often show themselves in the more exacting atmosphere of a summer camp to be essentially poor creatures,--selfish, petty, inconsiderate,--while original boys, troublesome in the atmosphere of a too narrow home, prove in a camp to be the fundamentally good boys, the genuine sort of fellows who can be depended upon. It is an education in social virtue to live in a summer camp, for the test is the world-test of a man’s relation to his fellows. (Henderson “Boy’s Summer” 49-50)

Unfortunately, this philosophy has not survived in modern Boy Scout camping: most Scouts and Scouters are interested in summer camping almost solely because of the merit badge acquisition machinery which has replaced the “process of living together in groups out of doors.” They come to Council-organized summer camps to acquire merit badges.

From an invitation sent out to the “original donors” whose generosity “made possible the acquisition of this wonderful camp site situated at the confluence of Powell Creek and beautiful Auglaize River”.

Robert (Bob) Ashba’s files are a three-ring binder with notes from his actions on the Shawnee Council Board, and it includes other Camp Lakota paraphernalia. Unfortunately, at the time of the writing of this dissertation, I have not had the chance to interview Mr. Ashba about these contents.

His files include an invitation to be on camp staff. The letter says that “Junior Staff will serve for two weeks (in return for their camping experience and board) and have some opportunity to complete outdoor merit badges for their Eagle Award. The work will cover a wide range of staff service: construction, clerk, trading post, kitchen and dining hall, handicraft, etc.” (Letter dated May 13, 1941, from Art L. Coutant, Camp Director). It is interesting that the letter closes with the statement, “Hope you will be at Shawnee Camps this summer.” The plural “Camps” implies the Shawnee Council had other camps in operation that summer. A note from 4/11/40 says, “Decision made to hold council camporee at new camp—but summer camp would still be at other council camps” (Ashba files).

Another note in Ashba’s files, dated 1938, says, “Authority to acquire and develop a campsite near Defiance was given the Camping & Finance Committees at the annual Scouters’ Convocation (?) in November. The proposed site has been visited and approved by Scouters from all districts and its development will remove a serious handicap in our camping programs.” There is another note about a 1/15/41 Audit for year 1940, saying, “$4,164.35 expended for camp property”. Interestingly, from Board minutes dated 7/25/40: “still need between 600 and 700 to complete purchase. Pres. Nellis [unsure first letter of name] expressed doubt regards
purchase in view of apparent indifference. Lima had produced more than fair share.” Then, there was a listing of money raised by city:

- Lima: 2795.00
- Wauseon: 85.00
- Hicksville: 50.00
- Wapakoneta: 281.00
- Van Wert: 410.00
- Defiance: 250.00

The president of the Council thought cities like Wauseon, Hicksville, and even Defiance itself were demonstrating “indifference” toward the purchase of a summer camp. The overwhelming majority of the money was coming from one location: Lima. This was not the only problem with the sale. A note dated 1/28/41 says, “Mr. Wilhelm has been very slow and unwilling to sign the petition for a suit to quiet title for a long time” (Robert Ashba files). Seemingly, the owner was not willing to give up the land very easily or quickly.

“Scouts Will Dedicate New Camp Next Sunday.” Lima News, June 8, 1941. From Bob Ashba’s files. The article suggests that during the June 22-August 10 camping season, the scouts “will have opportunities to explore the island, with its Indian burial mound and the rest of the 225 acre tract, with its forest, cliffs and abundant wild life.” The camp is now 640 acres, the so-called Indian mound is still in existence, but the camp no longer promotes its “cliffs”.

According to 7/25/40 Board Minutes in the Ashba files, “In spite of the spotty weather there were 250 in attendance . . . . district campfires first evening, explored campsite Sat. morning [asterisk referred to a note lower on page: “the Scouts invariably pronounced the site is OK.”] . . . big campfire Sat eve. Sunday services held in morning. The Camporee ended with rain, but everyone enjoyed it thoroughly.”

According to Ashba files, “13 troops furnished own leadership” out of the 34 that attended. This is unusual for modern standards in which troops camp under their own leadership. It is unclear the fees for camp that first summer, but a note dated 5/4/44, the rate for summer camp was $9.50 per week,” but only $1.25 per Scout if “troop furnishes everything and does own cooking.” Provisional leadership cost $1.00 per Scout (Ashba files). During 1944, there were 574 Scouts in camp (Ashba files).


Porter Sargent does not tell when McDonald created his list of camps, but Sargent’s book was published in 1925. BSA historian Murray claims, “In 1920, the first attempt was made to secure a definite census of the summer of Scouts in summer camps. The figures indicated that 167,677 Scouts had spent at least one week each in 1,529 camps, organized by local groups of the Boy Scouts of America” (Murray 431). It is unclear if this 1920 census was McDonald’s list that Sargent printed in 1925.

This mention of an “A B C Grading System” is the only factor which makes me think McDonald did not create his list in 1920—because according to Murry, the “system of camp grading” was tested on a limited basis in 1923 and went National in 1924. That would mean the Boy Scout Camp in Defiance, OH, could not have had a grading system prior to 1924.
Sargent says that in 1925, there were 12 regions which were divided into local councils—either first or second class councils. There were approximately 450 first class councils, with about 400 with permanent council camps (2nd Edition 98). I can only assume that the Defiance Council—since it was named—was a first class council. Another source on camping, Weir’s Camping Out: A Manual on Organized Camping (1924), claims that during the 1923 season, about 2,700 camps “were conducted by the Scouts” with a “total enrollment of approximately 200,000” (Weir 7). There does seem to be some discrepancies in numbers between Weir, Sargent, and Murray, but suffice it to say there were a lot of camps with a lot of Boy Scouts at them.

“Shawnee Reservation History” is a handout found in Ashba files. A series of notations on the handout claim that the source of this information is unknown but was received from Harold Fee on 4-12-00 (Jake worked with Harold Fee to create this document, date unknown). The notations include a series of corrections to the handout (inserted below). The handout contains on one side a map of camp (titled, “Shawnee Council Reservation Leaders’ Guide”) and the “Shawnee Reservation History” on the other side. It reads as follows:

Shawnee Reservation History

1922—First Camp leased located at Ft. Amanda approximately 20 miles south of Lima. [Ashba handwriting: “Note that first two items do not agree with council records.” He put arrows flipping the two camps, putting the leased Quo-Sac-Ca-Tin camp as the first camp and the Ft. Amanda camp as the second.]

1926—Second camp leased Quo-Sac-Ca-Tin located on the north side of Grand Lake St. Marys.

1939—The Shawnee Council camping committee recommended the purchase of land for a campsite just south of Defiance. It was then an accepted proposal and once again Scouters put their shoulder to the wheel. It was necessary to raise money for the procurement of this land. Everyone saw the need, stepped out, and helped raise the money. The first year that Camp Lakota was in operation saw more than 220 Scouts and 14 Troops. [Ashba handwriting: “Third item has incorrect date. The purchase was approved 1938.”]

June 14, 1941—225 acre site was dedicated to the task of helping boys retain their Scout ideals for the guidance of their adult lives. [Ashba handwriting: “Fourth item—actual date was Sun. June 15, 1941 <from “Lima News” article> and actual invitation from Council.”]

1951—A contest was held to name the camp. Camp Lakota was selected as the camp’s name over Nowata and Little Turtle.

1963—The Council purchased another tract of land—126 acres for $46,960 to make Camp Lakota a total of 459 acres.

1966—116 acres were purchased from the Methodist Church Conference as an addition to the camp.

1967—A capital campaign was organized for the purpose of building a new Service Center and development of camp program. [Ashba handwriting: “The Executive Board paid for the Service Center. All money from others went to the camp.”]

1968—The Council purchased the Dirr property adjacent to camp to the south. The Camp Development program began.
1969—Development of Glengary Lake began. The Council purchased an additional 80 acres of land. This making Camp Lakota total 655 acres. Also the out post camp development began and the name Camp Neil Armstrong was chosen [sic] in recognition of our local Wapakoneta Eagle Scout’s accomplishment in stepping on the moon.

Today the Shawnee Council Reservation consists of 2 camps—Lakota and Armstrong. Covering 650 acres including a 48 acre lake. Our reservation has always and will continue to have a quality summer program. In 1977 we received the area’s top award for a quality camp and first place in number of Scouts experiencing a long-term outdoor program in area 5.

On the back of the page containing this history is a map of the camp which is equally as interesting. While it looks as though the campsites are in the same basic locations as today (though Six and Seven are switched), the map lists very different names. Nowadays, the names are almost all based on Indian chiefs (listed in parentheses), but at some time in the past they had the following names:

1. Bate’s Camp (now: Tarhe)
2. Rabbit Run (now: Blue Jacket)
3. Dear Run (now: Little Turtle)
4. Foxe’s Den (now: Logan)
5. Crow’s Nest (now: Blackhoof)
6. Arrow Head (now: Tecumseh)
7. Buzzard’s Roost (now: Pipe)
8. Dan Beard (now: Blackfish)
9. Bunyan Site (now: Killbuck)
10. Trail’s End (now: Cornstalk)
11. Pioneer Point (now: Red Hawk)
12. Wayne’s Walk (now: Buffalo Swamp)

And Camp Neil Armstrong had the following campsites:
1. Dwyers Retreat (now: 13. White Eyes)
2. Lord Baden Powell (now: 14. Wingmund)
3. Raccoon Run (now: 15. No name--unused)
4. Oak Shade (now: 16. No name--unused)
5. [B]oor’s Camp (now: 17. No name--unused)

According to David L. Eby’s “America’s Oldest Boy Scout Camps,” the oldest Boy Scout camp in the United States is Camp Owasippe (Chicago Area Council, near Whitehall, MI)—bought in 1910, built in 1911, first camp in 1912. Eby makes the point that he started the search for old Boy Scout camps, thinking he would find them in the eastern United States—which is where most old organized camps were found—but instead found many in the upper Midwest: “Six of the nation’s oldest Boy Scout camps are located in Michigan and Ohio with two more located in Indiana and Wisconsin.”

Eby lists these very old Boy Scout camps and includes historical information when possible: Camp Teetonkah near Jackson, MI, in Great Sauk Trail Council (1913); Treasure Island Scout Camp near Philadelphia in Cradle of Liberty Council (1913); Camp Delmot in Delaware County, PA, in Cradle of Liberty Council (1916); Yawgoog Scout Reservation near Rockville, RI, in Narragansett Council (1916); Indian Mound Scout Reservation near
Oconomowoc, WI, in Milwaukee County Council (1917); Camp Miakonda in Sylvania, OH, in Erie Shores Council (1917); Camp Agawam near Auburn Hills, MI, in Clinton Valley Council (1918); Camp Belzer near Indianapolis, IN, in Crossroads of America Council (1918); Camp Russel near Woodgate, NY, in Revolutionary Trails Council (1918); Scouthaven near Arcade NY, in Greater Niagara Frontier Council (1918), Camp Wakenah near Salem, CT, in Connecticut Rivers Council (1918); Camp Cuyasuta near Pittsburgh, PA, in Greater Pittsburgh Council (1918); Camp Acahela near Blakeslee, PA, in Northeastern Pennsylvania Council (1919); Camp Conewago near New Oxford, PA, in York-Adams Council (1919); Camp Friedlander in Cincinnati, OH, in Dan Beard Council (1919); Camp Parsons on the Hood Canal in Washington state in Chief Seattle Council (1919), and Camp Stambaugh near Canfield, OH, in Greater Western Reserve Council (1919).

The history of Brownsea Island makes it a wonderful choice for the birth of Scouting. The Island has been home to such color and adventure, any boy would be inspired:

- Roman galleys landed here two thousand years ago when Britain was a remote outpost of the Roman Empire. Later, King Canute of the Danes used the little island as a base to attack and conquer the mainland beyond. Then the island became a refuge for some of the most notorious pirates and smugglers along the Channel coast.

- King Henry VIII put an end to the smuggling. In 1520 he had a fortress built on the island’s eastern tip, so his royal guards could watch all ships entering and leaving Poole Harbor. Brownsea Island remained Crown property for the next two centuries and was finally sold to private owners. (Freedman 156)

One thing about Baden-Powell, he was methodical and calculating. Interestingly, one old biography makes note of a couple nicknames that had been bestowed upon the Founder of Scouting:

- The first title was conferred during his early career, when he was assisting in the operations against Dinizulu and commanded a column in attack. The Zulus knew him as M’Lala-Pahnsi, which is rendered best as “the man who does not hurry things,” or more liberally as “the one who sits tight.” . . . A second pseudonym, which is likewise typical of his habits and character, was Impeesa, the Matabele word for wolf, or expanded inot its full picturesque meaning, “the beast that does not sleep, but sneaks about all night,” an evident compliment to his solitary nocturnal scouting expeditions. Taken together, the two nicknames describe Baden-Powell as he has ever been—cool and watchful. (Batchelder 8).

Another historian, Russell Freedman (1967), uncovered another nickname, one which the Ashanti people knew him by: Kantankye, which means “He of the Big Hat” (196).

The biographer, W. J. Batchelder also told about Baden-Powell’s family motto: “Ar nyd yw pwyll pyd yw” which is literally translated as “What is not prudence is danger” (8). Batchelder adds,

This insistence upon safety rather than danger reveals the attitude of the family towards the difficulties of life, which is a capacity for dash and daring tempered with caution. . . . the family motto bears a striking resemblance to the West Coast maxim, “Softly, softly, catchee monkey,” . . . which Baden-Powell himself has construed into “Don’t flurry! Work up to your point quietly and steadily. In a word, ‘Patience!’” (Batchelder 8-9).
Despite the fact that Baden-Powell sought equality, he structured Scouting around a distinctly upper-class notions of conduct and behavior exemplified in the Public Schools they sent their own children to. In an address titled “Scouting in Schools,” Baden-Powell argues, I pointed out that in the Boy Scout Movement we are trying to give the mass of boys something of the sense of honour and tone that are at present the attributes of the Public School boy. It will be the highest form of brotherhood and service for Public schools men ultimately to take up and impart this training to their less well to do brothers. I don’t consider scouting necessary for Public School boys themselves, but their membership in the movement and their subsequent spreading of its principles among our young citizens and their use of its ideals in their relations with employees, subordinates, etc., will have a great national value. (qtd in Rosenthal 91)

While Murray claims this quotation comes from “Lessons of a Lifetime,” Rosenthal claims it comes from Varsity of Life (p. 278). Either way, biographer W. J. Batchelder quotes (source not cited) Baden-Powell’s contradictory or complementary ideals of Scouting: From the boys’ point of view, scouting puts them into fraternity-gangs, which is their natural organization, whether for games, mischief, or loafing; it gives them a smart dress and equipment; it appeals to their imagination and romance; and it engages them in an active, open-air life. From the parents’ point of view, it gives physical health and development; it teaches energy, resourcefulness, and handicrafts; it puts into the lad discipline, pluck, chivalry, and patriotism; in a word, it develops “character,” which is more essential than anything else to a lad for making his way in life. . . . The method of instruction in “Scouting” is that of creating in the boy the desire to learn for himself. (Batchelder 236-237).

Notice, again, the use of absorption—not coercion or force—to solicit participation and engagement. Baden-Powell is a master of hegemonic practices! In the forward to his book on the Ashanti Campaign of 1895-96, Baden-Powell wrote “A smile and a stick will carry you through any difficulty in the world, more especially if you act upon the old West Coast motto, ‘Softly, softly, catchee monkey’” (Batchelder 7). Is there any clearer articulation of hegemony? Apparently, Maria Montessori felt similarly about Scouting. She wrote of Scouting as freeing children “from the narrow limits to which they had been confined” (qtd in Jeal 413.).

It is worth noting what happened after this first encampment: According to Rosenthal, Baden-Powell’s friend and publicity magnate C. Arthur Pearson came up with a scheme to advertise his magazine The Scout and generate interest in Scouting. In the first issue of The Scout (1908), he started a competition:

The April issue announced, without specifying details, that Baden-Powell would run a summer camp for those thirty boys who received the highest number of votes qualifying them for the privilege. Each issue of the magazine contained a coupon that could be submitted for a single vote, and boys were exhorted to get their friends to vote for them: ‘You must show us that you are sufficiently popular amongst your friends to justify being selected’ [(Back cover of The Scout, 18, April 1908.)]. While dutiful Scouts cutting out individual coupons was one way of amassing votes, another, rather more efficient way existed. Subscriptions to The Scout itself were translated into votes, a three-month subscription … worth fifty, a twelve-month … worth three hundred. One’s popularity therefore had less to do with the number of one’s friends than with their solvency—or the solvency of their families. (Rosenthal 84)
Apparently, Baden-Powell’s classless aspirations did not provide all the means to his ends of spreading the Scouting movement. His own feelings about this “Coupon Competition” are ambivalent: In the August 1909 Headquarters Gazette, Baden-Powell remarked, “personally I do not at all like the system, but recognizing the end to which it is the means, I have felt bound to sink my personal objections for the greater good, and I may add the results have justified my action.” (qtd in Rosenthal 84).

Baden-Powell did not rest upon his laurels after his demonstration camp on Brownsea Island. Instead, in August 1908, he organized a “second experimental camp for boy” at Humshaugh in Northumberland; and in 1909, formed another “large summer camp” at Buckler’s Hard, “and part of the course was taken on the training-ship Mercury” (Batchelder 237).


Baden-Powell was a model for such boyish-manhood. I would have to agree with Tim Jeal in his assessment that Baden-Powell perhaps never received a warmer tribute that cut to the core of the man than from John Hargrave, Baden-Powell’s right-hand man until he splintered off of Scouting, creating the more outdoorsy, naturalistic Kibbo Kift movement. Speaking of Baden-Powell, Hargrave said,

He was a mental ‘psychic’, although he never knew it. . . There was a Huck Finn hidden in Baden-Powell—a kind of backwoods’ urchin, or maybe gremlin—that tugged pretty hard and might easily have upset the whole jamboree. . . It broke loose in small exuberances and tricksy quirks. . . it was the Boy-Poltergeist in Baden-Powell—that made rapport with the primitive fraternity gang spirit of boyhood. Like a true poltergeist it rang a bell and rapped on the door. . . And thousands of boys . . . ran after it to camp. They made their escape from a dreary, half-dead commercialized and deadly dull civilization, and during the weekends anyhow pretended to be backwoodsmen. . . Baden-Powell tapped the primitive urge that is cribb’d, cabin’d and confined by civilized herd-conditioning and convention. He tapped it and unlocked it. And for a while . . . it ran free. (qtd in Jeal 416)

The Black Swamp Area Council covers thirteen counties in northwest Ohio, approximately 5,788 square miles. According to the 2000 Census, BSAC covers an area with a population of nearly 600,000 people. The population is 94% white, 3% African-American, and 3% Hispanic. Nearly 30% of the population is between the ages of 6 and 25—the target market for campers as well as staff members. The median household income is $41,396, and the per capita personal income is $26,701. The population has fewer people living in poverty than the average for the state of Ohio: 7.5% for the area, compared to 10.6% for the state. Similarly, there are fewer people over the age of twenty-five who have a bachelor’s degree or higher: 13% for the area, compared to 21.1% for the state. Interestingly, the area boasts a fairly active population of voters: 73.3% of registered voters participating in the 2004 election (Ohio Department of Development Office of Strategic Research).

The following program groups are co-ed: Venturing, Varsity, and Exploring—all for 14 year olds and older, with Venturing and Exploring members going up to 20 years of age.

Few realize that the Boy Scouts of America corporation created an “affiliated separate corporation” called Learning for Life “to work in cooperation with our nation’s schools and businesses” (Rules & Regulations 21). Learning for Life is a “nontraditional, nonmembership educational outreach program that takes place during or after school hours and is not part of the
traditional Scouting program” (21). Exploring is a part of Learning for Life, not part of the traditional Scouting program. It is my understanding that Exploring and Learning for Life do not have the exclusionary membership requirements that traditional Scouting has.


Monsignor Edward Roberts, the National Director of the Catholic Committee on Scouting in 1942, claims that

It is the genius of the Boy Scout Movement, that, in order to save its life it must lose it; that is, in order to accomplish its purpose in service to boys, it must submerge itself in the parent institutions which administer its program with boy groups. It is only on this basis that Scouting has been useful to the Church in its work with boys. . . . (Moore ix-x).

This paradox of survival through submersion seems to be the structure at the core of hegemonic practices. If the Boy Scout program did not take this submerged, somewhat submissive stance, it would cease to exist in the Church, according to Monsignor Roberts’ view. As in hegemonic equilibrium, dominance exists because it responds to the needs of the dominated.

Jay Mechling cites another characteristic of the Boy Scouts of America which sets it apart: “No other youth movements for boys—not the YMCA, not the 4-H, not the Future Farmers of America—trained the boy in the full range of domestic skills, from cooking and sewing to home gardening” (Manly Art 68). This is doubly remarkable considering the fact that the BSA was created amidst a flurry of re-masculinization sweeping America during the early 1900s. Mechling finds it a bit of paradox in “the Scouting program’s apparent philosophy that teaching the boy domestic skills can actually enhance his masculinity” (69). However, later in the piece, he suggests that the BSA offered a “relaxed androgyny” or a “non-feminine masculinity of care” to boys and men, making them “less dependent on women” for domestic as well as emotional care (77, 86).

Pagination in this manual is Section-dash-page number. Therefore, “1-23” is not pages 1 through 23; rather it is Section 1, page 23.

It sounds as if these first minimum standards were equivalent to the present-day Guide to Safe Scouting: A Unit Leader’s Guide for Current Policies and Procedures for Safe Activities. According to the 2003 printing, the Guide’s purpose is “to prepare adult leaders to conduct Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. The policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards that have been identified through eighty-plus years of experience” (Preface).

It is also worth noting that this was decades prior to the American Camping Association (ACA): “In 1941 it published a booklet entitled, Marks of Good Camping. Many sections of the Association have adopted standards of their own an at the Association’s annual
meeting in California in March of 1948, a set of national standards for summer camps was adopted” (Dimock 8).

Carol Gulick Hulbert, President of the ACA wrote the introduction to Hedley S. Dimock’s book, Administration of the Modern Camp (1948). In it, she interprets the newly minted ACA standards: “Thus the husky infant, born with the century, has grown to man’s estate, with a form and structure all its own” (Dimock 8). Oddly, even the standardization of summer camps is couched in manly terminology!

The 2006 set of standards are not the same as the ones used during my 2002-2003 study, but they are very similar. The National Standards are updated annually, but no radical policy or program changes have occurred in the last 5-6 years.

Personally, I have attended NCS for Aquatics, Program, Climbing, and Management; and, I have taught NCS three times for the Program section (1998, 2004, and 2005). Scouting have not always attended “troop camp.” Until 1918 when National created the Department of Camping, “Scout camping had been done almost universally on a troop camp basis, without council supervision or any specific standards” (BSA 22nd Annual, 135). The results were bad in many communities, and there was a “strong reaction against troop camping.” Council-organized, multi-troop camps were organized “on the appeal that the council would be able to provide a safe and satisfactory form of camping program for boys of all troops in the council territory” (135).

In 1920, National produced a training program for leaders in campcraft and the basic scouting program. This program was designed to be “offered while scoutmasters were in camp with their boys; this as a means of attracting more scoutmasters to spend more of their time in the council camp with their own Scouts” (135). Camp directors were also being trained to give emphasis to troop and patrol methods in their summer camp programs: “There is now a distinct effort in the Scout movement toward making each Scout camp consist of actual troop and patrol units. The loyalties and friendships within the troop are, in this way, continued and strengthened” (136).

I find it interesting that this trend was really begun when Scouting started up in the United States. Biographer Jeal describes how Baden-Powell disapproved of how the BSA was shaping up:

And the direction in which James E. West (soon to be Chief Scout Executive) began to take the Boy Scouts of America was one Baden-Powell deplored. West was not an outdoor man, which was not his fault since he had been born with a deformed foot, but his obsession with bureaucratic control was a different matter. In Baden-Powell’s opinion the organization of Scouting ought to be free of “red tape,” and as little like the management of a business as possible. Yet business seemed to be the model on which West based his entire operation. By paying all his Scout officials as members of “an organized profession,” West—according to Baden-Powell—had lost the altruistic spirit of a community. Almost as bad was West’s encouragement of vast “community gatherings,” which left no scope for a sense of adventure. American boys were hampered too by numerous regulations governing the amount of equipment which had to be taken on expeditions and the exact ratio of adult supervision. Baden-Powell described such highly organized camps as “Parlour Scouting.” (Quoted in Jeal 489)

Baden-Powell thought all those nasty National Standards, National Camp Schools, large-group gatherings—even organized camps, one might infer—were getting in the way of the adventure of
Rather than creating “Peace Scouts,” such activity and regulation was creating “Parlour Scouts”—ones who might write on summer camp evaluations—like I received as a camp director—that they would like “Less hiking, more Scouting!” or “I prefer Camp X because they set up your tent and cot and feed you meals in the dining hall—which leaves more time for Scouting!”

In fact, some have argued that the changes over the last couple years in the Camp Lakota schedule to provide more “free time” or at least more “campers’ choice” opportunities may actually open up space for sexual abuse and harassment. Some have argued against descheduling for health and safety reasons.

This is one of the oddities of staffing: In all other arenas of Scouting, the merit badge counselors are adults. But at camp, the counselors are youth. Despite the Scouting method of Adult Association—getting youth in association with a variety of adults—camp culture puts youth in association with other youth. The youth’s mentors, role models, and instructors are primarily age-mates rather than elders. This makes summer camp a unique island of youth-orientation within Boy Scouting.

This event actually happened in 2001, the year before I did my study. I was an area director in charge of the Frontier Patrol—the first year camper program. I had worked at Lakota in the mid-80s and the early 90s, and had just returned to the area and to Camp Lakota—after working in Oregon at Camp Pioneer for the previous five summers.

This quotation comes from the Philmont Scout Ranch Seasonal Staff Application. It also says that Philmont is situated “in the heart of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range of northern New Mexico” and “is owned and operated by the Boy Scouts of America.” Philmont “annually hosts more than 25,000 participants in backcountry hiking/camping programs and training conferences for Scouters and their families.” Philmont Scout Range is one of four National High Adventure Bases: the other three include, Northern Tier (mostly canoeing) in the boundary waters in northeastern Minnesota, Florida Sea Base (mostly sailing and SCUBA) in the Florida Keys, and Double H (mostly hiking and GPS land navigation) in south central New Mexico. For many Scouts, taking a trip to one of these High Adventure Bases is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.

Since over 90 percent of staff at Camp Lakota are male, I will use the male pronoun in most places. Female staff members do not usually follow this “typical” track onto staff. Instead, they usually get hired because of age or expertise, though some come to staff through spouses and other family relations or because they have a relationship with another staff member.

There is an age gap within the Scouting organization: Youth typically participate full-till until approximately 14 or 15 years of age, and then numbers drop drastically. If a youth stays in Scouting after that age, I wager it is because they are on a summer camp staff. Then, if they stay involved on staff through college, they are rare. And then, post college, Boy Scouting loses young men for a number of years—typically until they have young sons themselves. That means there is a gap of between 20 and 35-40 years of age. Then, those fathers start bringing their sons to Scouting. But they’re not available for summer “employment” or volunteering until retirement. There’s really a small pool of available people to fill the 21-and-older positions.

In Chapter 6, I will discuss at greater length these Youth Protection standards, their logic, and their implementation in Boy Scouting and at Camp Lakota.

A very quick primer on Advancement in the Boy Scouts: As opposed to Cub Scouts and Venturers—which have different philosophies and types of “advancement” programs—Boy
Scouts are recognized for individual achievements by awarding badges of “rank”. There are six ranks in Scouting: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and then Eagle.

The requirements to earn each rank are more challenging than the one before it. Each prepares you to be a better camper, hiker, Scout, and citizen. When you complete the requirements for a rank, you will find that you can use your new knowledge on patrol and troop outings. You will also have the background you need for achieving even more as you begin the next rank. (BSA Boy Scout Handbook, 11th Edition 14).

Scouts work on basic Scout skills for the first three ranks, but then begin working on merit badges for the higher ranks. Merit badges are small patches (badges) which recognize achievement in various areas. There are over 100 different merit badges, including occupational interests (Atomic Energy, Dentistry, Engineering, Journalism, etc.), academic subjects (Chemistry, Reading, Scholarship, etc.), hobbies (Coin Collecting, Golf, Skating, etc.), nature study (Oceanography, Reptile & Amphibian Study, Weather, etc.), as well as basic Scout skills (Cooking, Pioneering, Wilderness Survival, etc.).

To earn the rank of Eagle, a Scout must fulfill a variety of other requirements including demonstrating leadership, showing “Scout spirit,” and implementing a service project, as well as earn a total of 21 merit badges. The Boy Scout Handbook, though, makes it clear that “badges are not the most important part of Scouting. Of greater value is what the badges represent. The skills you master, the wisdom you gain, and the experiences you enjoy are what really count” (Eleventh edition 14).

This actually happened when I worked at Camp Pioneer in the Cascade Mountain region of Oregon. We opened camp with six foot of snow on the ground. We sent staff on the lake with pick-axes to break up the ice so we could do boating. We dug out the tent platforms for staff and campers alike—digging down and around them. The camp must go on!

In the past couple years, the National Council, BSA, has declared that there are basically two different Boy Scout uniforms: the activity uniform (consisting of troop or camp t-shirts, Scout shorts, belt, and socks) and the full or ceremonial uniform (consisting of Scout shirt, shorts or pants, belt, and socks—the neckerchief and hat are now optional). For many years, these were referred to as Class B and Class A uniforms, respectively. National seems to have wanted to distance itself from military terminology, but most Scouts and Scouters still use the Class A and B terminology.

In Scouting, there are merit badges referred to as “Eagle Required Merit Badges” or “Eagle Req’s”: To achieve the highest rank in Scouting—Eagle—a Scout must complete the requirements for at least 21 merit badges. Individual Scouts choose which merit badges they want to work on as well as the order in which they complete them. However, there are 12 merit badge which are required for the rank of Eagle: First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling, Camping, and Family Life. These required merit badges are typically challenging. It is worth noting that not all Eagle “requireds” are offered at Camp Lakota.
Chapter Three Summary: In this chapter, I will theorize hegemony, mode of address, and how staff members “pass on” Scouting masculinities. The Boy Scouts of America has a distinct array of masculinities which they support, and this chapter will explore how staff members order and attempt to transmit these Scouting masculinities through role modeling, storytelling, dramatization, and discontinuity onto the next generation. In the end, I will answer the question, “Who does summer camp think Scouts are?”

“What Kind of Boy Scout Are You?”

Over breakfast one morning, my grandfather could hold it in no longer: “I thought you were a Boy Scout!”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” I responded defensively. Even though I never got past the rank of First Class (which most boys now surpass in their first year in the program), I had spent the previous fifteen years working on Boy Scout and Cub Scout summer camp staffs. I may not have as many years in Scouting as he did—he was a Scoutmaster back when my dad was a Scout—but I felt pretty good about my Scout-ability.

“Apparently, I wasn’t a very good one!” I sarcastically added.

“What kind of Boy Scout are you?” He shot back, accusingly.

He was referring to what had happened the night before. I was living with my grandfather, and I was late getting home from work. By the time I drove up his driveway, he was anxiously waiting for me. As I rolled to a stop, he flipped on the porchlight. There, laying across the steps leading up to the porch was the biggest opossum I had ever seen. At first, I thought it was a small dog.

As I walked up the sidewalk, I thought, “Can’t go around it.” The steps were not wide enough for the both of us. “Can’t go over it,” I figured, for it truly was a large specimen.
Peering out from behind his screen door, Grandpa offered a solution: “Get a club and beat it over the head!”

Looking around the front yard, I said, “Where am I going to find a club?” Gathering my sense, I added, “And anyways, I ain’t gonna beat it over the head.”

“Kill it,” Grandpa demanded, “Beat it over the head with a stick!”

“Guess I’ll have to go through him,” I decided.

By now, I had acquired a sawhorse and was wielding it as both shield and 4-bladed sword. As I approached, the opossum flipped off the steps and scurried underneath the bottom step. I used one of the legs from the sawhorse to wedge him out and push him to the side. The wholly mammoth of a opossum scurried around the corner and into the nearby brush.

Over breakfast the next morning, then, Grandpa wanted to know what was wrong with me: “Why didn’t you kill it?” I explained that I was not about to kill a opossum just for hanging out on the steps. It did not seem like a crime deserving corporal punishment.

His response? “I didn’t know you were that way”

To this day, I am not sure what Grandpa meant by “that way”—whether he figured I was a lilly-livered, bleeding-heart wimp, or whether he figured I was queer just because I would not kill a opossum, I will never know. But, this I am sure of: That entire day and numerous days since, I have wondered if I really knew what a Boy Scout was—and more importantly, if I were a “real” Boy Scout. Something about that opossum incident created divergent interpretations: while it made Grandpa doubt my Scoutishness, the incident reaffirmed it for me. Since I did not really go that far in Boy Scouting—barely getting to First Class and effectively dropping out of Scouting when I was 14 and joining summer camp staff—had I missed out on the opossum
bashing rite of passage into “real” Boy Scouting? What had I missed out on in Scouting by joining staff?

Hegemony and Passing On

In 1906, prior to publishing Scouting for Boys and motivating the Scouting movement, Baden-Powell sent a letter to various English leaders titled “Boy Scouts—A Suggestion.” In the letter, Baden-Powell set forth the principles that would wind their way into the official version of the organization. He said that his Scouting “scheme” is “offered as a possible aid towards putting on a positive footing the development, moral and physical, of boys of all creeds and classes, by a means which should appeal to them while offending as little as possible the susceptibilities of their elders” (qtd in Oursler 29). Masterfully weaving ideology and activity, Baden-Powell devised an organization which would appeal to the young and the old, and it truly was wildly attractive.

Scouting was the most popular of the organized youth movements that established institutions of authority created to provide structured diversions for the energy and ambitions of younger generations. The success of these movements depended on their ability to make the programs relevant to the lived experience of adolescence. Scouting was particularly popular because adults believed it extended their control over youth while convincing boys that the movement actually increased their autonomy. The Scout canon thus became an effective means of transmitting established norms and values to succeeding generations. (Parsons 22)

Taken a step further, I suggest, the Scout canon is an effective means of transmitting established norms and values to succeeding generations because it exercises hegemony.
Scouting does not force a boy or adults to accept its canon; instead, they are pulled to it, compelled and called to it. Force, imposition, dominance: these are perhaps effective and expedient methods of transmitting established norms and values; however, their structures are costly, require intense monitoring, and necessitate a secondary system of repercussions. In their discussion of culture as ordering, Kendall and Wickham define ordering as any attempt at “control or management” (27). As mechanisms for ordering, force and imposition are more on the “control” side while hegemony is more on the “management” side. While hegemony is perhaps slower, it is at least equally as effective as dominance in transmitting culture. However, hegemony significantly decreases the costs and structural requirements. Hegemony inclines, disposes, tends—with care, attention, suggestion, and “soft” imposition. Gramsci does not consider hegemony as dominance; instead, hegemony is the ‘spontaneous’ consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is ‘historically’ caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (Gramsci Selections 12)

Certainly, he uses the term “imposed” to refer to the general direction that the dominant groups provide to the masses; however, I would interpret this as a “soft” form of imposition. It is, perhaps, the difference between imposing with a stick versus imposing with a carrot. Gramsci talks about dominant groups, but they are not dominating. Instead, they exercise characteristics like “prestige” and “confidence” and “position” to persuade or incline rather than to impose consent. While I am prone not to agree with folks like Stalin and Lenin, I am beginning to see how they could have used the word “hegemony” as a synonym for “leadership” (Bates 352).
Admittedly, hegemony is not as simple as choosing the carrot instead of the stick, and it is not simply about seeking consent, acquiescence, and agreement. Instead, hegemony is really about choosing both: consent and dominance are “mutually dependent phenomena” (Bates 354). Gramsci claims that hegemony is a “combination of force and consensus variously equilibrated, without letting force subvert consensus too much, making it appear that the force is based on the consent of the majority” (Gramsci, Note 103). Hegemony makes a threat of force—or holds it always in its back pocket—as if to say, “If you don’t properly consent, you’ll be in big trouble when your father gets home.”

It is a mistake, however, to read hegemony as control and domination. It is my contention that hegemony can be a mechanism for cultural transmission rather than just control. Gramsci, himself, states very clearly, “Every relationship of ‘hegemony’ is necessarily an educational relationship” (Gramsci, Language). He explains that

the educational relationship should not be restricted to the strictly ‘classroom’ relationship by means of which the new generation comes into contact with the old and absorbs its experiences and its historically necessary values and ‘matures’ and develops a personality of its own. . . . This form of the relationship . . . exists between intellectual and non-intellectual sections of the population, between the rules and ruled, elites and their followers, leaders and led, the vanguard and the body of the army. (Gramsci, emphasis added)

Every hegemonic relationship is an educational relationship. Information is being transmitted and acquired between both the leaders and the led.

This is not, however, a one way street whereby only the leader/educators monopolize the transmission. The leaders do more than shovel established, received knowledge into empty
vessels called students. Rather, leaders are also heavily engaged in educating themselves as well as the others. According to Gramsci, it is critical for the leader/educators to be “co-ordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups [followers/students]” and be continuously in the process of “formation and superseding of unstable equilibria . . . between the interests of the fundamental group [leaders/educators] and those of the subordinate groups [followers/students]” (Gramsci Analysis 205-6). If the teachers are not coordinated with the interests of the students, they will cease to be hegemonically convincing. At that point, they could lose their authoritative position in the face of a more persuasive hegemony, or they could resort to the violence and force they have had in their back pockets all the while. But that is only when hegemony fails.

It is important to note that I am not saying that the follower/student educates the leader/educator. The transmission of culture and knowledge is not exactly a reciprocal relationship or necessarily a mutually beneficial endeavor. Hegemony is about the “passing on” of ideologies, cultures, interests from a more dominant group to another less dominant group (top-down). To accomplish hegemonic passing on, though, requires the dominant group to keep their ear to the ground, metaphorically speaking, and pay close attention to interests and cultures of the less dominant group (a version of bottom-up).

Following this path of thinking about “cultural hegemony” as “passing on culture,” I have been inspired by the work of anthropologists of learning, starting perhaps with Margaret Mead’s (1942) contrast of “learning cultures” and “teaching cultures”. A “learning culture” refers “to a small, homogenous group that shows little concern for transmitting culture because there is virtually no danger of anyone going astray”; whereas, a “teaching culture” refers to “societies that regard it as imperative that those who know inform and direct those who do not know”
Anthropologists of learning seem most interested in the second group, the teaching cultures. Anthropologists of learning are interested in creating “accounts of learning to be or become something or someone in a particular place, time, and setting” (Wolcott Anthropology 47). They are not interested in the growth and development of individuals the way a child psychologist might be; rather, they are interested in the exercise of persuasive hegemony: “how young humans come to want to act as they must act if the cultural system is to be maintained” (Spindler 303, emphasis added). What’s more, these students of enculturation acknowledge the messiness of culture. As Spindler points out, “the transmission of culture is complicated by discrepancies and conflicts, for both the pattern of idealizations and the patterns of actual behavior must be transmitted, as well as the ways for rationalizing the discrepancy between them” (Spindler 321). In other words, none of these behaviors are inherent, so all of these discrepancies, conflicts, and rationalizations must be transmitted somehow, somewhere, by someone in the culture.

Therefore, I will use the next four chapters to examine these three different transmissions:

In this chapter (Chapter 3), I will explore the “patterns of idealizations”—the messages that are attempted to be taught in Scouting. This is the top-down side of hegemonic transmission, focusing on what the National organization—as well as the local camp staff—want boys to learn and become. This chapter is about “passing on”.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I will explore the “patterns of actual behavior,” that is, what the staff members have actually acquired. Staff members are arguably the most acculturated Scouts in the area, so I will examine their acquisition efforts: how those who have acquired a great deal of Scouting have acquired it, and what they have discovered. This is more of the bottom-up side of the hegemonic transmission and will look at what staff “pass as”.

(Wolcott Anthropology 27). Anthropologists of learning seem most interested in the second group, the teaching cultures. Anthropologists of learning are interested in creating “accounts of learning to be or become something or someone in a particular place, time, and setting” (Wolcott Anthropology 47). They are not interested in the growth and development of individuals the way a child psychologist might be; rather, they are interested in the exercise of persuasive hegemony: “how young humans come to want to act as they must act if the cultural system is to be maintained” (Spindler 303, emphasis added). What’s more, these students of enculturation acknowledge the messiness of culture. As Spindler points out, “the transmission of culture is complicated by discrepancies and conflicts, for both the pattern of idealizations and the patterns of actual behavior must be transmitted, as well as the ways for rationalizing the discrepancy between them” (Spindler 321). In other words, none of these behaviors are inherent, so all of these discrepancies, conflicts, and rationalizations must be transmitted somehow, somewhere, by someone in the culture.

Therefore, I will use the next four chapters to examine these three different transmissions:

In this chapter (Chapter 3), I will explore the “patterns of idealizations”—the messages that are attempted to be taught in Scouting. This is the top-down side of hegemonic transmission, focusing on what the National organization—as well as the local camp staff—want boys to learn and become. This chapter is about “passing on”.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I will explore the “patterns of actual behavior,” that is, what the staff members have actually acquired. Staff members are arguably the most acculturated Scouts in the area, so I will examine their acquisition efforts: how those who have acquired a great deal of Scouting have acquired it, and what they have discovered. This is more of the bottom-up side of the hegemonic transmission and will look at what staff “pass as”.
And, in Chapter 6, I will explore the ways for rationalizing the discrepancies between idealizations and actualities. I will explore how disconnects are managed when what was acquired was not what was sent. This chapter will seek to understand what staff “take a pass on” within Scouting’s idealizations.

Mode of Address and Ordering a “Who”

To examine culture and cultural transmission at Boy Scout summer camp, I find educator Elizabeth Ellsworth’s notion of “mode of address” helpful. Ellsworth borrows the concept of “modes of address” from film criticism where they use it to ask, “Who does this film think you are?” or “who does this film address you to be within networks of power relations associated with race, sexuality, gender, class, and so on?” (Ellsworth 1-2). She explains that

Mode of address in film . . . is about the necessity of addressing any communication, text, action, “to” someone. . . . it is about the desire to control, as much as possible, how and from where the viewer reads the film. It’s about enticing a viewer into a particular position of knowledge towards the text, a position of coherence, from which the film works, makes sense, gives pleasure, satisfies dramatically and aesthetically, sells itself and its spin-off products. (Ellsworth 28).

A filmmaker, then, will address (entice) an audience in a way that attempts to incline or dispose the audience to read, understand, experience, and enjoy the film in a particular way. Interestingly, Ellsworth finds that all such efforts at address fail. Ellsworth claims that the ways we shape, anticipate, meet, or change who someone thinks he or she is “misfire one way or another. I never “am” the ‘who’ that [an] . . . address thinks I am. But then again, I never am the who that I think I am either” (Ellsworth 7-8).
Ellsworth argues that “modes of address” can apply to teaching just as easily as to film, and she applies it to educators and pedagogy, asking, “Who does this curriculum or pedagogy think you are?” She uses “modes of address” to “make visible and problematic the ways that all curricula and pedagogies invite their users to take up particular positions within relations of knowledge, power, and desire” (Ellsworth 2). She wonders if education is more about such modes of address than about subjects of study or even pedagogical techniques. She wonders if, “maybe some pedagogies and curriculums work with their students not because of the “what” they are teaching or how they are teaching it. Maybe they are hits because of the who that they are offering students to imagine themselves as being and enacting” (40). Like Althusser, Ellsworth wonders if addressing students in ways that students want to become is what engages them. And, or,

Maybe they are hits because of the meanings students give to the difference between who a pedagogy’s attitude or tone of address thinks they are or wants them to be, and all the other whos that are circulating through power and knowledge at the moment, competing for those students’ attention, pleasure, desire, and enactment. Maybe they are hits because this difference of address—the address change—moves its audience from a place they don’t want to be anymore (but maybe hadn’t even realized that) to a place they want to try out for a while (even without knowing for sure what they will make and find there).

(Ellsworth 40-41).

If Ellsworth is correct—that an “address change” is what makes a “hit”—then pedagogical focus should change from what is taught and how to teach to who to offer. In other words, the pedagogical focus—for films, classrooms, and even summer camps—should be on the ways
institutions and authorities order and offer desirable and appropriate whos and the ways in which
whos are ordered by the audiences, students, and campers.

The main question of this chapter is this: what, how, and most importantly who do the
Boy Scouts of America—and specifically the staff members at Camp Lakota—think its campers
are?

Boys to Men, Passing of Idealized Masculinity in Scouting

American illustrator Norman Rockwell (1894-1978) is perhaps best known for two
things: painting Americana for the covers of the *Saturday Evening Post* and illustrating iconic
images of Scouting. In 1912, at the age of eighteen, Rockwell walked into the offices of *Boys’
Life* magazine looking for a job (Peterson 115). Over the next 60 years, he created a body of
artwork that contains the quintessential images of Scouting even today: the young man charting
his course with compass in hand in *Tomorrow’s Leaders* (1959), the almost fatherly boy who
rescues the girl (and cat) from flooding water in *A Scout Is Helpful* (1941), the strong weariness
of *The Scoutmaster* (1956)—are all iconic, not just nostalgic images of Scouting.5

One of Rockwell’s lesser known images shows two boys on top of a lookout tower
looking toward you the observer, but just over your head. One boy is knelt down peering
through binoculars, while the other very serious boy is standing outstretched, with semaphore
flags in each hand, signaling a message to a far-off recipient. The painting “salutes Scouts who
acted as lookouts and signaled messages for the Navy along the Atlantic Coast during World
War I” (Peterson 120). With a dark shadow cutting the image in half horizontally, it appears as
though the sun is rising behind you and the two boys are looking unflinchingly into it.

According to Peterson, this image is titled *Scouting Makes Real Men Out of Boys* and aptly
names and reflects what Jay Mechling has called the “agenda” of the Boy Scout movement.6
Jay Mechling, the only cultural studies scholar who has consistently written about Boy Scout culture, has correctly argued that while “the particulars of the Boy Scout movement have changed over the decades, responding to larger cultural forces, the 1910 agenda remains essentially intact” (139-40). And according to Mechling, that 1910 agenda was the “social construction of the male sex class in America” (Male Gender 140). We hear this proclaimed, for example, in the 1932 Annual Report of the Boy Scouts of America: “The aim of the Scout movement is to inculcate character. . . . The Scout movement endeavors to supply the required environment and ambitions through games and outdoor activities, which lead a boy to become a better man, a good citizen” (1). Mechling argues that Scouting initiates boys into the “male sex class.” He quotes Frank Young’s (1965) argument that a boy is initiated into a sex role by learning the definition of the male situation maintained by the organized males. It is more than learning how to hunt or to plow, how to take heads, or how to deal with women. Rather, he must learn to view the world from the adult male standpoint. . . . It is only by being backstage that a boy can appreciate the full import of the male role. (Young 30)

The Boy Scout movement emerged during a time period when many different “organized males” were trying to show boys the “backstage” of manhood, making all sorts of attempts to order new ways to be a male and to view the world as a male.

Historically, as the nineteenth turned into the twentieth century, America was immersed in movements like muscular Christianity, the emergence of professional sports, the playground movement, and new thinking about youth development and childrearing. Scouting was really just another ordering project, looking to express a particular kind of masculinity at a time when masculinity seemed to be under attack, in question, floundering.
Although they would have objected strenuously to the suggestions that gender was socially variable, Baden-Powell and the founders of Scouting were consciously aware that they were promoting a specific form of masculinity over a range of less desirable masculine identities. In their eyes, manliness meant physical courage, patriotism, stoicism, chivalry, and sexual continence. They viewed the early feminists’ demands for greater social and economic autonomy as a serious threat and sought to confine women to the private domestic sphere. Scouting became a tool for staking out the public arena of middle- and upper-class men. (Parsons 18)

Boy Scout apologist Hans Zeiger (2005) argues Scouting was a response to feminism and equality and a response to two different definitions of manhood which were “fixed in a bloody fight to the death on the stage of modern culture” (52). On the one side is a “fantastical new man for a utopian world” which Zeiger suggests is exemplified in philosopher Herbert Marcuse’s 1967 address to the Congress of the Dialectics of Liberation in London. Marcuse argues that we need a man who

rejects the performance principles governing the established societies; a type of man who has rid himself of the aggressiveness and brutality that are inherent in the organization of established society and their hypocritical, puritan morality; a type of man who is biologically incapable of fighting wars and creating suffering; a type of man who has a good conscience of joy and pleasure, and who works collectively and individually for a social and natural environment in which such an existence becomes possible. (quoted in Donohue 43)

must be chivalrous, manly, and gentlemanly. He should be unselfish. He should show courage. He must do his duty. He must show benevolence and thrift. He should be loyal to his country” (7). Zeiger ends the discussion by quoting Baden-Powell as saying, “God made men to be men” (Baden-Powell Rovering 24).

The fathers of the Boy Scouting in the United States felt the same way. Ernest Thompson Seton, Daniel Beard, and Dr. James E. West developed their outdoor youth development programs with the same intentions of promoting hyperphysicality and hypermasculinity which undergird all the other masculinity movements of the time.

Seton, for instance, founded the Woodcraft Indian movement prior to helping to develop the Boys Scouts because he wanted “to give the young people something to do, something to think about and something to enjoy in the woods, with a view always to character building” (Seton 31). He began the Woodcraft movement to “combat the system that has turned such a large proportion of our robust, manly, self-reliant boyhood into a lot of flat-chested cigarette-smokers, with shaky nerves and a doubtful vitality” (Peterson 17). He wanted a “manly” boyhood, “for manhood, not scholarship, is the first aim of education” (Seton 31, emphasis added).

What’s more, Seton sought a very specific sort of manhood. He claimed that the aim of the Woodcraft Indians was “to make a man” in the same vein as the Shawnee chief Tecumseh:

No one now questions the broad statement that Tecumseh was a great athlete, a great hunter, a great leader, clean, manly, strong, unsordid, courteous, fearless, kindly, gentle with his strength, dignified, silent and friendly, equipped for emergencies, and filled with a religion that consisted not of books and creeds or occasional observances, but of desire to help those that had need of help. . . . (qtd in Rosenthal 64)
These characteristics—almost word for word—are what contemporary Boy Scouts recite as their Law: “A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.” Seton provided a “who” for these characteristics, calling them Tecumseh, and from the start, engendered the BSA as a distinct manhood project, albeit also one which was anti-intellectual and opposed to organized religion.

Similarly, when Beard founded the Society of the Sons of Daniel Boone prior to helping to build the BSA, he sought the “elevation of sport, the support of all that tends to be healthy, wholesome manliness” (Peterson 26). Beard wanted to “awaken in the boy of today, admiration for the old-fashioned virtues of American Knights in Buckskin and a desire to emulate them” (Peterson 26). Instead of titles like president, treasurer, and the like, Beard provided identities: “Officers bore titles redolent of the frontier. The president was Daniel Boone, and others were called Simon Kenton, Kit Carson, Audobon, Johnny Appleseed, and David Crockett” (Peterson 26).

Beard was undoubtedly influenced by the writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, the author of the famous “end of the frontier” thesis. Turner argued that the frontier was the mechanism for Americanization, and Beard suggested it was that as well as the mechanism for manhood. In an unpublished manuscript submitted to Youth Companion, Beard claims,

The Wilderness is gone, the Buckskin Man is gone, the painted Indian has hit the trail over the Great Divide, the hardships and privations of pioneer life which did so much to develop sterling manhood are now but a legend in history, and we must depend upon the Boy Scout Movement to produce the MEN of the future. (Hantover 189)

Having lost all other environments, models, and privations, America had but one recourse to mold manliness: the Boy Scouts of America!
Even the very first Chief Scout Executive of the BSA, Dr. James E. West described a manliness young boys should be molded to. He described in detail what a “real” Boy Scout was:

The REAL Boy Scout is not a ‘sissy.’ He is not a hothouse plant, like little Lord Fauntleroy. There is nothing ‘milk and water’ about him; he is not afraid of the dark. He does not do bad things because he is afraid of being decent. Instead of being a puny, dull, or bookish lad, who dreams and does nothing, he is full of life, energy, enthusiasm, bubbling over with fun, full of ideas as to what he wants to do and knows how he wants to do it. He has many ideals and many heroes. He is not hitched to his mother’s apronstrings. While he adores his mother, and would do anything to save her from suffering or discomfort, he is self-reliant, sturdy and full of vim. (West 448)

What is most striking about West’s depiction of a real Boy Scout is that he offers not only what to stay away from—anything that made you a sissy, bookish, or a momma’s boy—but he also offers what should be sought out: being creative, full of action and fun, seeking the heroic.

There is little ambiguity in West’s vision of manliness.

However, in the case of Baden-Powell, Boy Scouting’s midwife, there is a bit of ambiguity. Baden-Powell, himself, expressly stated that Scouting was “not a brigade of officers and privates for drilling manliness into boys and girls” (Baden-Powell Scoutmastership 13). However, he turns around in the opening pages of Scouting for Boys and declares, “Every boy ought to learn how to shoot and to obey orders, else he is no more good when war breaks out than an old woman” (Baden-Powell, Scouting 3). He continues, claiming that Scouting consisted of real men in every sense of the word . . . they understand living out in the jungles, and they can find their way anywhere . . . they know how to look after their health when far away
from any doctors, are strong and plucky, and ready to face any danger, and always keen
to help each other. They are accustomed to take their lives in their hands, and to fling
them down without hesitation if they can help their country by doing so.

They give up everything, their personal comforts and desires, in order to get their
work done. They do not do all this for their own amusement, but because it is their duty
to their king, fellow-countrymen, or employers. (Baden-Powell, Scouting 5)

Dutiful and plucky “real” men, Baden-Powell argued, would emerge from training in deductive
reasoning and observation skills. Before he worked out all the details in Scouting for Boys,
Baden-Powell postulated the following regimen:

The instructor should read to the would-be scouts a detective tale from Gaboriau or
Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes), laying special stress on the clues to the crime, and the
deductions therefrom [sic]. He should examine the Boys to see that they have grasped
the idea of drawing conclusions from small signs.

He should then give instruction in noticing details and remembering them; such as
looking in a shop window for one minute and then moving away—to try and state all the
articles in the window; noticing the difference and details of passers-by, and deducing
their occupation and character; points of the compass by the sun, moon, stars, etc.;
learning in the country or parks the tracks of people, horses, carriages, etc., their age and
meaning; the art of lighting a fire and cooking; judging distance; knowledge of first aid,
revival of apparently drowned persons; personal hygiene; ability to swim; writing brief
reports, etc.; the place of Great Britain among the nations; the British Colonies; the Union
Jack and its meaning. Duty to your country and to neighbours, to be first guide in taking
any step, your own pleasure or convenience to come second. Need of good citizens.
Using your power of noticing details to spot people in every day who are wanting help, and to help them in however small a way. (Baden-Powell “Scouting” 150)\textsuperscript{15}

Such training would help the boy notice things around him, make sense of them, and act accordingly: in a plucky and vim-ridden way.

Thus, we begin to see Boy Scouting attempting to articulate a particular form of masculinity: On the one hand, Scouting was a repelling and reactionary movement to thwart the feminizing, infantilizing, and over-civilizing of boys. On the other hand, Scouting was also a compelling and progressive movement in education, in outdoormanship, in creativity and self-reliance.

In 1916, Dean James E. Russell of the Teachers College of Columbia University declared “the Boy Scout Movement to be the most significant educational contribution of our time” (Murray 363). Russell claimed that for an educator, Scouting “has marvelous potency for converting the restless, irresponsible, self-centered boy into the straightforward, dependable, helpful young citizen” (Murray 459).\textsuperscript{16} Scouting started where the boy already was and “converted” him into the appropriate citizen. But citizenship was not all it was after. Russell continued, arguing,

Every task in Scouting is a man’s job cut down to a boy’s size. The appeal to a boy’s interests is not primarily because he is a boy, but particularly because he wants to be a man. . . . It is the man in the boy that is emphasized, and the type of manhood idealized is that which strives ‘to stand for the right against the wrong, for truth against falsehood, to help the weak and oppressed, and to love and seek the best things of life.’ (Qtd in Murry 459-460)
Scouting, therefore, emphasized the “man in the boy”—calling him out, saying “Hey, you!” And this hailing, this who, became a huge hit worldwide.

Taking this into account, I would like to refine Mechling’s claim slightly: The original intention of the BSA was the ordering of an adult male sex class in America, not just a generic male sex class. The founding architects of the BSA sought to pass adult masculinity on to boys: their agenda was a man-making project, not just a “male” project. In the 1990 edition of The Scoutmaster Handbook, the BSA clearly states that it “helps boys grow into good men.” (3, emphasis added). This is not a generalized masculine who, and Scouting is certainly not interested in opening the door to the vast array of possible masculinities circulating in the culture. If I were to be more specific, the BSA is an ordering project attempting to pass on adult, heterosexual, Christian masculinities to young boys. There are, after all, many masculinities; and the Boy Scouts is not interested in constructing all of them. Based upon its policies, the BSA does not want to construct gay male identities, atheist male identities, female-bodied masculinities, or even youth masculinities.18

How National Orders Summer Camping

According to the Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Boy Scouts of America (1932), “Camping centers are recognized as man-training centers and as morale-building centers” (16). The more contemporary statements about summer camp dismiss with the “man-training” lingo, but maintain the same purpose: According to Camp Program and Property Management—the official guide to running Boy Scout camps—the purpose of the Boy Scouts of America is to “provide for youth effective programs designed to build desirable qualities of character, to train them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and to develop in them personal fitness, thus to help in the development of American citizens” who:
1. Are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit.

2. Have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness.

3. Have personal and stable values firmly based on religious concepts.

4. Have the desire and skills to help others.

5. Understand the principles of our American democratic society and apply them.

6. Are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand America’s role in the world.

7. Have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people.

8. Are prepared to fulfill the varied responsibilities of participating in and giving leadership of American society and in the forums of the world. (BSA Camp Program 1-2)

Once again, the architects’ vocabulary is reiterated: fitness, self-reliance, courage—and new words are added: stable values, pride, respect, and participation.

With these goals in mind, the Boy Scout summer camp is considered “the laboratory of Scouting” where “adult and junior leaders and youth work together to learn the best that Scouting can offer” (BSA Camp Program 3-5). The manual describes how teaching basic Scout skills has important ulterior agendas: “Scout leaders take pride when boys apply Scouting skills to real-life situations. Public attention is drawn to spectacular events—‘Scout saves two companions in ice rescue’; ‘Quick-thinking Scout applies first aid to accident victim.’ Know-how is respected” (3-34). “Scouting skills are not taught to put boys in headlines, but these skills do help make useful, participating, confident citizens” (3-34). Usefulness is important. Participation is important. Confidence is important. Citizenship is important. Also, even
handicrafts—or, as they call it “craftwork”—“can also teach the perseverance to finish a job once it’s started” (3-46). “Many of the projects will teach self-reliance” (3-46).

The success of a summer camp program “should be measured by the extent to which the troop has learned to stand on its own feet, to use its boy leaders, to train its own instructors in various skills, to acquire new interests that may serve to stimulate the building of a vital program for the ensuing year, and to strengthen the individual boys” (BSA Camp Program 1-4). A Boy Scout camp is designed “to provide experiences for the troop that will make it better able to plan and conduct its own program. The services of the camp staff, therefore, are of a counseling, coaching, and supervisory nature” (1-4).

It is the camp staff members who are charged with the responsibility of providing this sort of educational experience. Oddly, this is incongruent with another ordering practice in Scouting. One of the eight “methods of Scouting” is Adult Association. According to The Scoutmaster Handbook, “Boys learn from the example set by their adult leaders. Troop leadership may be male or female, and association with adults of high character is critical at this state of a young man’s development” (75 emphasis added). Similarly, the Camp Program manual states that the Boy Scout summer camp is a place where boys can “learn by adult example” and by practice such characteristics as a sense of duty to himself and his community,” “a feeling of responsibility for his acts and the need for self-control,” an “ability to stand on his own feet—self-reliance and personal confidence,” “knowledge of and ability to use leadership skills,” “a willingness to assume leadership when qualified,” “ability to meet emergencies,” “ability and willingness to accept direction,” “ability to get along with others,” and so on (3-2, emphasis added). All of these characteristics are meant to be transmitted from adult to youth, but summer camps are not primarily staffed by adults. Camp Lakota certainly is not.
In fact, National only requires that “at least 50 percent of the camp staff personnel are 18 years of age or older”—which is merely the legal age of adulthood (2006 Standards 8).19 Having been to and worked at a number of other camps, I can vouch for the fact that Camp Lakota is a fairly “young” staff. There were more “older” adults on staff in 2002, but for both years of this study, there were less than a handful of adults over the age of 21. I am not disagreeing with the practice of hiring youth to work on staff; I am only suggesting it is not the official stance of the BSA.

With all these youth staff, however, the Camp Program manual claims their “personal example” is “the most dynamic and convincing influence they can exert” (3-9).20 These staff are encouraged to provide their own personal example—“the very best in terms of personal appearance, uniforming, language, enthusiasm, skill practices, and the friendly approach to all persons” (3-9). What’s more, staff members must not only demonstrate his or her loyalty to the Scout Oath and Law as well as Scouting skills and behaviors, he or she must also display a manliness:

These things happen when the staff individually and collectively presents a manly, straightforward, happy appearance to all. Staff example of helpful friendliness sets the tone of the camp. Most boys are quick to sense the pattern set by responsible adults. Admiration for these adults prompts boys to follow them. (1-8)

Following, that is, not only by being cooperative and attentive to the boy-man staff members, but also following in their footsteps toward manhood. What sort of manliness? Well, even those qualities are detailed out by National:

- a “sense of duty to himself and his community,”
- a “feeling of responsibility for his acts and the need for self-control,”
• an “ability to stand on his own feet—self-reliance and personal confidence,”
• the “knowledge of and ability to use leadership skills,”
• a “willingness to assume leadership when qualified,”
• the “ability to meet emergencies,”
• the “ability and willingness to accept direction,” and
• the “ability to get along with others,” and so on (BSA Camp Program 3-2).

That is to say, staff’s position in the ordering process is to pass on masculinity as defined as self-reliance, leadership, bravery—tempered by duty, responsibility, obedience, and friendliness.

The youth staff members are the role model for Boy Scouting—even more so than adult leaders and professional Boy Scouters (district executives, National representatives, etc.) At one camp I used to work at, the staff had a saying which reflects this notion perfectly: “You are the living, breathing example of the Boy Scouts of America—right off the cover of the Boys’ Life magazine!” Staff members—mostly youth themselves—are the overseers of the transference, the passing on and ordering, of masculinity to younger boys.

Why would the National organization give this responsibility to youths? If Gary Alan Fine is correct, it is because folklore is often transmitted from youth to youth rather than adult to youth. Fine argues,

Often folklore is diffused from a child in a higher grade, whose peer community shares the material, to a child in a younger grade. This transmission may occur between siblings or neighbors, but frequently does not involve close friendship. Relationships that transcend grade are particularly crucial for keeping children’s folklore alive over time. Once the original transmission occurs the younger child then spreads the folklore among
friends and as a result may gain status among peers for being mature and knowledgeable. (Fine Children 175-176).

Fine argues that it is fundamental to all children’s folklore that they are motivated to perform it “to be seen by their peers as mature social actors” (176). Therefore, putting slightly older staff members in the position to pass on “more mature” lore to younger campers would be incredibly enticing not only to the staff but also to the campers. The staffers acquire mature status as knowers of knowledge, and the campers acquire status by being associated with the knowers. It helps that staff are not much older than the campers. They can look the part and play the game of Scouting more convincingly than adults; and as such, what better model of a Boy Scout than a real, live Boy Scout!

I agree with anthropologist Sol Tax who suggests that “we glean most of our cultural knowledge from those only slightly older and in turn convey to those only slightly younger most of what they will learn” (Wolcott 40). Tax claims that “the chief way—not an incidental way, but a chief way—the traditional adult culture is transmitted in all or most societies is through the peer group” (Tax 50). I would even follow Tax a step further when he suggests that it is probably “an illusion of our culture and other cultures that parents, teachers, learners and others teach anything to people 20 or 25 years their junior” (Tax 50-51). At a certain point, the staff member changes from a big brother-type to an adult-type, and the educational experience changes accordingly. The hegemonic relationship changes even though it is the “same” people involved. When the relationship moves from peer-to-peer and potentially persuasive to asymmetrical and potentially dominating, the educational relationship changes. And if Tax is correct, it is actually foreclosed.\textsuperscript{21}
As famed educator Marie Montessori once said, “it is the child who makes the man, and no man exists who was not made by the child who once he was” (Montessori 26). No man became such without being a boy, and it is that younger self who builds the older self: a boy’s mind, a boy’s experience, a boy’s intellect orders what becomes a man. This is not to suggest that the boy does this all alone, for as Kendall and Wickham point out, a “human being is always-already enmeshed within a routinised [sic], contingent, fragile, (temporarily) ordered network” (156). However, Montessori’s admonition does suggest that what is received from this routinised, contingent, fragile ordering network is ordered by a boy. It is the boy who puts it together, who translates, understands, and tries to order what is given to him to become a man.

Not only is the ordering of an identity constrained and influenced by external ordering projects, but there are also internal ordering projects imposed by the capabilities and capacities of a younger identity coping with the external projects. From a hegemonic standpoint, there is perhaps no more persuasive teacher for identity ordering for manhood than other boys—just barely further along the path of manhood.

Camp Lakota Staff Members and Consciously Passing Masculinity

Most staff members emerge from the troops that attend camp. Counselors In Training (CIT’s) are the youngest staff members, being 14 years old; and they volunteer their services for the summer. They come right out of the troops attending camp. While older, adult staff members sometimes come from college and the like, they too generally came to camp with their troop when they were younger. However, once they arrive for Staff Week, they begin to work on entirely different levels of camping and Boy Scouting.

Staff members take on a somewhat higher level of ordering in the Scouting movement. At summer camp—and at no other Boy Scout function—these staff members become the
authority figures—even the youngest 14-year-old becomes somebody. The vast majority are Eagle Scouts as well as members of the Order of the Arrow (the honor society within the Boy Scouts of America). They have gone through a week of intensive staff training and camp set-up. The area director staff have been trained at National Camp School. And as such, they are viewed by campers (and themselves) as the key role models at camp. They are critical agents in ordering all activities and behaviors at summer camp.²²

Summer camp is described as the “laboratory of Scouting,” and the “scientists” in charge of this laboratory know their mission well. ²³ When staff were asked what they thought the real job of a staff member was, nearly everyone claimed it had something to do with passing something on—and some are very clear that it has to do with masculinity or manhood. A number of the older (no longer youth-aged) staff members were profoundly articulate on these points.

For example, Warren, the senior commissioner and an older staff member, first explains why parents have told him they want their boys in Scouting, but then he talks more about staffing itself. He explains:

I know many parents specifically choose to have their son involved in Boy Scouting because this is a program that allows their sons to become involved in a value oriented program where there are usually positive role models. You know, granted exceptions to that, but usually positive role models. And I know a number of them that have expressed that to me personally—that they have had their son involved in Scouting so that he could have contact with other men and have a better idea of how he should act as a man. Not only will the boys be surrounded by “usually positive” male role models, but they will also receive a “better idea of how he should act as a man”. Some of these men who are showing
campers how to act as a man are actually boys. Warren explains how these boys provide this “better idea” of how to be a man:

I think staff members even today, exemplify living role models of the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. We try to do our best. We try to live out the principles of duty to God, others, self. Try to be those aspects of the Scout Law of Trustworthy and Friendly and Courteous and Kind and Reverent and so on. And usually possess skills in the out-of-doors that enable us to be an example to younger boys who would like to have some of those same skills. Enable us to have a lot of fun in the out-of-doors.

As living examples, not just words or icons or images, but living examples, even young staff members can share “out of door” skills and Scouting values with boys who, Warren says, are clamoring for it. He claims that “if we consistently put before ourselves that those are the rules that we play by, then I think it brings them alive to an 11 year old boy.” And bringing it to life for them is what staff members do.

Perhaps the most articulate staff member was Terri the Camp Chaplain. She is another older staff member. During her interview, she started out by suggesting that staff “needs to be geared to encourage the boys. See that they get the program. Make sure that they are getting the work done the way they should, not just slough through it. And have fun.” But then, Terri told the story of how she got involved in Scouting in the first place. First, she was involved in Girl Scouting,

and one of the questions was why do you want to be a Girl Scout leader? And I thought about that. And so, my answer was, simply because somebody was my leader. And I felt that I needed to repay that person for what she taught me. To pass it on to the girls who I had in that troop, so that they graduated from high school, that they would continue that
tradition. And I guess that’s what I hope that the boys here at camp who are on staff will do. That they’ve done it because somebody done [sic] it for them when they were Boy Scouts and they came to camp. I think that every boy who comes to camp, there’s always somebody, maybe not everybody on staff, but there’s at least one or two staff members that they will remember.

She talks about staff doing it for others because “somebody done it for them.” Along with all the Scout skills and values, Terri also was taught to pass it on, to continue doing the work of ordering with the next group that comes along. She said, “I could not let what Mrs. Prism had given to me not go forward.”

Then, Terri read a couple poems she had written during the night of her “Vigil.” The Vigil Honor is bestowed on individuals who are members of the Order of the Arrow (OA), the National honor camper program. Vigil is the third and highest level of membership in the OA. I am not a Vigil Honor recipient, so I do not know what happens the night one goes on their “Vigil,” but I know one must build and tend a campfire all night long, reflecting upon your Scouting experiences. Terri spent some of that time writing poetry. One is titled “A Woman of Scouting”:

I am a woman of scouting.
I am the planter of seeds.
From the harvest, many gather the grains of my teaching.
My heart holds many stories and my mind bright pictures.
I am a woman of scouting.
I am the lilt of legend and of song.
I can be jubilant and silent.
My eyes hold tiniest wisdom.

My face memories of pain and joy.

I am a woman of scouting.

I am the maker of trails and in my footsteps many follow.

Over my silent paths the traffic of youth moves.

I am the pioneer on the frontier.

I am a woman of scouting.

A servant to others. (Terri, July 19)

It is the last few lines that focus on her view of her own role at camp: the “maker of trails” where the “traffic of youth move”. She sees herself as a pioneer on the frontier—perhaps because she is a woman of scouting—a woman in Boy Scouting where the men are plentiful and the women are scarce. Or perhaps it is because she is leading the way of boys to manhood, as a woman. She talks very bluntly about her role as a woman in Scouting: “I broke the ice for women in this Shawnee Council”—by being the first woman in the Council to fill just about every position in the council.

The second poem is a narrative. Terri begins by talking about the sun going down on Camp Lakota—or perhaps the end of her leadership of the camp—and then she reflects upon her surroundings:

I hear in the night sounds the voices and the laughter of the many cub scouts who over the years have learned new skills and discovered knowledge in this very spot. In the embers of my campfire are their eyes bright with excitement and anticipation for the next events to begin. My wish is that someone will always be there when they have hopes to
be shared, knowledge to be carried on with, and dreams for a successful future in all of
their endeavors.

Her goal is to prepare for the future generations, namely, the generation of staff members who
will be there to hear the hopes, to spread the knowledge, and to fulfill the dreams. She clearly
articulates her goal to pass on skills and knowledge—perhaps even masculinity—to the coming
generations. The fact that she is a woman does not seem to differentiate her role, her motives, or
her effectiveness from the other, male staff members. Just as youth are put to the task of passing
manliness onto other boys, so too are women.²⁷

I was not shocked to discover older male staff members saying some of the same sorts of
things as Terri. Camp director Jake, for example, says that he comes back on staff year after
year for many reasons, not the least of which is because he likes “the challenge of being part of
the summer camp experience in the Boy Scouts of America. I still firmly believe that the Boy
Scouts of America is the best training ground we can give a young man to make him an honest
citizen as he grows into adulthood. And I want to be part of that” (Jake, July 18). Jake goes on
to state it even more bluntly:

We’re molding boys into men and . . . our American society needs good quality citizens
who understand how to run this world today and to keep our, our sanctity so to speak.
The power that we hold I guess in the world. And I want our kids to, you know. My
time on earth is short. Theirs is still long. I’m hoping that they’ve learned some valuable
lessons to make their lives better and keep America the way it is.

If we read a bit between the lines, we see that staff is about molding men: men who understand
how to run things—competent men—and men who will make their lives better—proactive
men—and men who will keep America as powerful as it is—nationalistic, conservative men.
Jake has a clear vision of the type of man he is trying to mold. He says, “I think we are molding a man that thinks, [one that] can think on his feet and react to different situations in a positive manner.” Jake, along with Warren and Terri, have chosen to return to camp staffing year after year, explicitly to help boys to become rational, positive, quick and adaptive men.

But what of the younger staff members? Are they as philosophical about their reasons for being on staff? Do they talk about passing on things, teaching how to better act as a man, and so forth? Warren thought not: He says he came to these notions “later as an adult, an older adult really” and that probably only the older staff members would see staffing “as a chance for me to touch a kid’s life.”

Some younger staff begin by denying they are passing anything on, but this knee-jerk reaction gives way to stories about showing the backstage of manliness to young campers. Office manager Marcus, for example, is 18 years old and has been on staff for a few years. Marcus defiantly begins his interview by denying any ulterior, lofty goals behind staffing. He says staff is all about getting to “chill” with his friends:

It’s not about seeing younger scouts become older scouts. Which some people give you BS answers like that. Or you know, seeing kids year after year. It’s hanging out with the guys I’ve grown up with because of my brother. It’s hanging out with my friends I’ve created through camp, through school, through various activities. It’s just a place to hang out and chill. Have fun is my major reason why I’m here.

Later in the interview, however, this “chill factor” drops out of his description of what it is like to be on camp staff.

Marcus remembers from his first year on staff a camper by the name of Tom Tooningson. Tom was “the random guy that followed you around” and actually called Marcus on the phone
after camp was over. He would say things to Marcus in his high pitched voice, “Man, Marcus, you the hometown hero!” Marcus said,

It was just kind of crazy. It’s just, I don’t know. I’m sure there is some sort of influence through summer camp to little guys, little guys that might turn into camp staff members. . . . If we are making an impact on somebody, some little boy’s life that’s like, “Oh, I want to be on camp staff.” Well he’s going to, if he’s going to eventually come on camp staff, he’s going to see how it is. You know what I’m saying? And he’s thinking, he’s thinking of perceiving all those years as what it actually is.

For example, Tom Tooningson looks at his hometown hero and thinks they are pretty “cool guys”—until, that is, the first day they come to camp as a staff member when he goes behind the scenes:

Well then the first day of Staff Week comes and it’s like work, bad. Like. You get to see the behind the scenes of everything. And, and how people are. Like. Hey, Henry, yea. He’s a nice guy that sings great songs on Friday night. But then he plays “Die America!” songs the rest of the time. And they’d just be like, what the crap?

Going behind the scenes can be confusing and even scary. Marcus tells how he was “kind of prepped for the whole thing with the bro[ther]” on staff, “but it’s definitely a change. Whenever you get behind the scenes or whenever you become the person that’s running something, you are just like, ‘Holy crap! I didn’t know this is how things worked.’ Or how things are so shitty . . . or so good.” Marcus says some staff do not deal with this revelation very well. Some get “wigged out” by it; but for him, he says, “I’d rather be a staff member than be a camper again.” Why? “Because it’s more interesting.”
Second year staff member Mitch describes the same sort of eye-opening experience when he started on staff. He describes how being on staff feels like maybe, not like you’re on a higher level then them, but maybe you know a little bit more of what’s going on behind the scenes. You kinda appreciate what’s going on more than they do. It feels like you’ve got a lot more privileges, even though maybe I can’t think of any examples right now—it feels like you have a lot more privileges. You know that you have a lot more responsibility than just showing up for class. When interacting with staff, of course, you’re on the same plain, you know what’s going on. As a Scout, I can remember interacting with a staff member, it was like “Wow, what’s it like to be on staff” There was always that in the back of your mind. And you could tell that they knew that they appreciated what was going on more than you did too. Now I’m seeing the flip side of that, and it’s weird.

Mitch’s “flip-side” is the side of appreciation of, not just participation in, the Scout program.

Some young staff members understand their own experience with the flip-side as an opportunity to offer that experience to others. Assistant COPE director Anthony feels this way. When he started on staff, he “saw a whole other side of people, to the people I’d once envisioned as ideal.” He saw what was “beyond the show” and saw it as more “real.” He started to question the ideal and the “show” and thought, “[M]aybe there isn’t somebody who can live that way. Living that way was crap. If I wanted to live that way, I’d end up like T.J.—I’d be a bad staff member.” And he changed his view of summer camp. It was not about the ideal or the show, or even about the chill factor. Instead, Anthony argues,

our number one job on staff is to give these kids an experience. Someday, I’m not going to be a staff member. Someday you’re not going to be a staff member. Someday Henry
and all those kids are not going to be staff members. Who’s going to take their place? They’re [the] kids who we are teaching now. Who’s going to be the next Marcus? Who’s the next Matt? Who’s going to take their place? And what are they going to be like? Is it going to be the same or is it going to be different?

Anthony starts to talk about replicating the experience he was given as a camper by the staff members, about replicating himself:

I think it’s cool the thing we have going out here: it’s probably the best system we have. Staff, I mean, enjoying the whole summer and not being grouchy and all that, and arguing and fighting and all that. I think what we have is special. If we can keep that going by teaching these little kids, giving them all a little piece of what we are… I would say that we are passing on the special part of ourselves that is a staff member. Like in each staff member, there is something we gain. Like I gained a whole bunch. It was planted in me in my 6 years of camp before I came here. Slowly but surely it got there. And then it came out. It broke soil…. It was slowly but surely planted, and then when I joined staff, it took root and finally came out: “So this is what it’s all about! This is what it’s like to be behind the scenes.”

Anthony suggests that his job is to provide an experience—to plant the seeds—so that others might experience what it is like to be behind the scenes.

Other young staff members do not take such a “big picture” view of summer camp staffing, but they still understand that their job is to give back. First year Frontier Patrol Coordinator Thomas clearly articulates his desire to pass something on to others. He says he wanted to work with the first year camper program because “I figured that I had people help me
out along my way through Scouting, so I figured I would help them out too. Especially the first year Scouts. They don’t know what to do most of the time.”

Another staff member describes how his goal is to give back a particular kind of masculinity. Boatdocks Director Henry wants the campers to, “Come out here and be a damn Boy Scout. Be a kid!” “Be a Boy Scout,” he says, “Don’t be a man scout.” Some campers would come into camp all tough and manly, and he would think,

I don’t want you to be a man. “Oh I’m a man. And I’m tough.” Don’t give me that shit. Be a boy scout! Go get your hands dirty! Play in the fucking mud. Sleep through breakfast and see who cares. You know. But while you are doing it, be cool with what I’m doing and be down with what’s going on. Be down with everybody else that’s here. And let’s all have a good time.

He seems to define boy Scouting as playing around, getting involved and “dirty” and simultaneously accepting others—tolerate them, do not harp on them, etc. This is the sort of masculinity Henry wants to pass on.

Even younger staff describe their job as passing on. Roy, for example, is a Handicraft Assistant, aged 16, talked about teaching the scouts the skills—that is his job. However, he describes those skills as providing a Scout with useable life skills, as making them competent and self-controlled. He says his job is to teach the scouts, like, [in] scout crafts, [to] get the basic scout skills and handicrafts.

You’ve got the craft things that they can take home and show mom, “Mommy I made a basket!” It looks cool. And like Eco, they teach them stuff, nature stuff so a scout can walk out and be like, “I’m not going to step on that plant because it’s poison Ivy.” And, the boat docks, so their troop ever goes on like a canoe trip or something . . . . That way
if you ever do end up in a boat or something, you can at least have a fighting chance. I think our main job out here is just to teach the scouts and give the scouts a good time. So that they can go home and be like, “Hey, summer camp is a good time! And scouts is a good time. So, we’re going to stay in it.” And if we do our jobs right, it will. We might touch that scout that says, “I want to come back and be on staff some day. To do the same things that a staff member did for me.”

Roy ends by saying, “And around staff area that’s kind of the vibe around the whole place. It’s like, you come back for the scouts. Not for the money. Not for us.” It is all for the Scouts.

Passing On Masculinity at a Boy’s Paradise

In 1931, the Boy Scouts of America was looking for a way to grow its membership. National said this new program “must enhance the ability of the whole movement” to do three things:

1. Get boys for scouting.
2. Get scouting into boys.
3. Produce men adequately trained for participating citizenship. (BSA 22nd Annual, 186)

Thus, this man-training project called Scouting had to find the boys, but once it found the boys, it had to figure out how to “get scouting into” those boys. One method was to send them to summer camp.

Boy Scout staff members know what they are supposed to be doing at camp: they are well aware that the Scout is the focus and passing on manly skills and masculine identity is the purpose. However, I would suggest than none of them do any of this with conscious intent. In fact, I have no recollection, recording, or notation that shows explicit transmission of masculinity. The work of hegemony is informal, implicit, unconscious, un-reflexive, and for
lack of a better word, “normal”: it is just part of the job. It is everyday, nothing special. Take for example, how Mechling describes passing on masculinity:

masculinity is defined and constructed by means of hundreds of small verbal and physical interactions throughout everyday life at camp. Every time an adult or boy orders a boy not to chicken out in an activity, every time a boy calls another boy a “fag,” every time a boy tells his friends a dirty joke, every time a boy brags about a real or imagined sexual encounter with a girl, every time a boy is asked to continue playing a game despite a twisted ankle, every time a boy is called a “crybaby” when he is homesick or loses a contest, every time a boy experiments with how many ways he can get the word “fucking” into a sentence, the group is socializing the boy into what it means to be a man.

(Mechling Honor 226-227)

Such examples, though, are only scraping the surface of how staff members order masculinity at Boy Scout camp, but with each “fag,” “fuck,” and “crybaby,” we see the educational system at work. It is not simply with organized, formal educational systems, but in all established cultural systems . . . the major functions of education are recruitment and maintenance . . . recruitment to membership in the cultural system in general . . . and recruitment to specific roles and statuses, to specific castes, or to certain classes . . . [and maintenance] by inculcating the specific values, attitudes, and beliefs that make this structure credible and the skills and competencies that make it work. (Spindler 327, emphasis added)

With every dirty joke, professed sexual exploit, and transgressed boundary, a boy is recruited into all the values, attitudes, and beliefs that support sexist, homophobic, nationalistic, numbing, violent manhood. Such informal education has—to a certain extent—already ordered the boy
To examine how staff members pass masculinity on to campers, I would like to pick a few examples—starting with the most informal and progressing to the most formal ordering projects—under the headings of (a) role modeling, (b) storytelling, (c) dramatization, and (d) discontinuity.

*Learning by Role Modeling Versus Learning by Doing*

First year staff member Thomas tells a very common story among staff members—a time when he showed campers how to act at camp:

> We’re down at the fire ring yesterday. I’m teaching them Fire m’n Chit. I started to do the Outdoor Code... Okay repeat after me, “As an American” and they kinda mumble it. I’m like, “Guys, this is Scout camp here, you can be an idiot, and nobody is going to know except the people here.” So here, watch this, I yelled at the top of my lungs, “I’m an idiot!” When they saw me doing that, they were like, “Well, he’s acting stupid, so we can act stupid too.” So they started talking louder and everything, like screaming it... When they started doing it, I think they felt like, “Okay, we can do this here and he’s not going to yell at us. He’s not going to say, “Okay, be quiet!”

Rather than just telling the campers that they should speak up or that they should enunciate their words, he shows them how to do it: he models appropriate behavior.

Role modeling is perhaps the most persuasive mechanism of cultural transmission. Replication or imitation of modeled behavior is a way we recognize achievement of the transmission. It is how we assess the ordering we have attempted. There are various theories attempting to explain modeling. Reinforcement theories claim that “responses are shaped
automatically and unconsciously by their immediate consequences” (Bandura 17); \(^{32}\) that is, “behavior is organized into new patterns in the course of performance,” and thus, “learning requires overt responding and immediate reinforcement” (Bandura 35). In this theory, role models are required to provide feedback and reinforcement in order for learning to occur.

An alternative theory, social learning theory\(^ {33}\) refutes reinforcement theory. Social learning theory finds that people learn before they actually perform a behavior:

By observing a model of the desired behavior, an individual forms an idea of how response components must be combined and sequenced to produce the new behavior. In other words, people guide their actions by prior notions rather than by relying on outcomes to tell them what they must do. (Bandura 35)

Solely through observation of a model, a person can pick up not only actual behaviors to replicate but also messages about how to combine and sequence new behaviors. Folklorist Ann Richman Beresin recognized how “kinesthetic and intensely visual” the training was for double dutch jumping in her study of urban school yard play; the girls she interviewed described training that was often “observation without direct participation,” but that was how they learned to jump rope (Beresin 90, 91).\(^ {34}\)

Social learning theory does borrow slightly from reinforcement theory in the notion of “vicarious reinforcement.” Vicarious reinforcement is when an observer has watched someone else be reinforced for their behavior. Psychologist Albert Bandura argues that “rewarded modeling is more effective than modeling alone in fostering similar patterns of behavior” in observers. What’s more, when “others engage in enjoyable activities that are ordinarily inhibited by social prohibition, seeing the behavior go unpunished increases similar conduct in observers to the same degree as witnessing the models rewarded” (Bandura 119).\(^ {35}\) Observing modeling
“not only informs, it also motivates. Seeing others reinforced can function as a motivator by arousing expectations in observers that they will receive similar benefits for comparable performance” (Bandura 125). That is to say, if campers observe a staff member performing a behavior which solicits reinforcement—from either authority or peers—chances increase that campers will be motivated to replicate the behavior but also acquire some of the knowledge required to actually perform the behavior.

Therefore, it is enlightening to examine what happens at summer camp where staff members have taken control over program development and performance—and receive applause and public adulation for doing so. Staff are modeling behavior they want campers to learn, but not necessarily allowing them to perform themselves. Staff members lead the songs. Staff members perform in the skits. Staff members teach all the classes. Staff members cook all the meals. Perhaps the only outlet for camper expression or performance is “off stage” in their campsites or at the prescribed times like Intertroop Campfire on Family Night. Fascinatingly enough, if the social learning theorists are correct, the campers actually learn behavior faster and better if they are observing it rather than performing it.

This is, after all, the way that staff replenishes its ranks: recruitment through modeling. Many of the staff members tell the same story that Roy the Handicraft Assistant told: I attended camp, met a staff member I wanted to be like, and I became that staff member and tried to be that way for the Scouts that followed me. We heard the same story from Terri the Chaplain—who vicariously observed Mrs. Prism who aroused in Terri the expectation to give back. Roy the Handicraft Assistant explains the process in this way:

I think some [people join staff] because there was one staff member here while they were a camper that . . . they really clicked with and got along with really well. And their
thought of that was, “I want to be like him someday—and be that staff member that can connect with this kid and be like, just great buddies.”

Rather than some huge oppressive, monolithic institution bearing down on weak, blank slates, boys pass on masculinity to other boys through the sometimes vicious tools of friendship, idol worship, role modeling, and belonging.

Take the example of Josh the program director in 2002 and his way of responding to what could be considered inappropriate behavior—even disrespect:

It was lunch, and I’m doing the calls, going through the roll to see who’s around me. And [Troop] 75 runs out and is like, “Group Hug!” . . . . It’s like dogpile. And of course the fear of God is in me. These are big kids! But they still jumped on me. And the whole time I’m thinking, “Please dear God, don’t let Jake [the camp director] be back there.” Because I was waiting to hear him yell [at them]. But he wasn’t there. I didn’t get hurt. Kids fell. Kids are gonna fall. They did it themselves. And even if I fell, yes, some people would say that was just inappropriate. But if they didn’t break a bone or something, or whatever. I didn’t care about that. I was like whatever, they’re just having fun. And they’re showing the rest of them that I’m not just standing out there, I can’t be touched. . . .

Unlike the camp director that year, the program director wanted the campers to be able to “touch” him, to come up beside him and be like him. The camp physician, Travis says that the staff member’s job is to be a “role model of a Scout . . . maybe not the ideal Scout, but a good Scout.” He says we “help” the campers, we “guide” them in a particular direction; and “it usually rubs off” on them. Seemingly, Travis is talking about bringing down to the level of being a touchable the Platonic Ideals of Scouting. He suggests that staff may not offer the ideal
Scout, but instead a Scout in whom the ideals have become flesh, have been made reachable by the average Scout, have been made passable.

Of course, touch-ability has its downsides. For instance, Josh now had to worry about “how many other troops are going to try to do that. I don’t know how many more I can take.” But he said he did not mind the dogpile on him:

I didn’t care. And I came in and they were all laughing about it. And was, “Yea, you guys surprised me, I didn’t know what was going on.” Cause I didn’t. . . . That was like the biggest thrill for them—that they surprised me. They could have never done that with Jake [the camp director].

Unlike more authoritarian or dominating strategies, Josh subscribed to the power of modeling the “touchability” of authority, of manhood. To “surprise” the authority figure—that was a technique to bring the campers “in”.

Admittedly, some staff step into this role model position with a stereotypical power-grab. One such example is first year staff member Thomas. Thomas describes how it feels to be a Scout, and how being a staff member “ups the ante”:

It’s like, when you’re a Scout, you have pride in your soul, and everybody is like, “Okay, I’m kinda at a higher level because I know what to do to help people out.” For a staff member, it’s like, raise the bar a bit more. You get more pride about yourself. You’re walking through camp, walking along by yourself. And people notice that you’re a staff member. It’s kinda cool. They look up to you a little bit more.

Thomas seems to thrive when he is noticed as superior. He says that his favorite part of being on staff is when kids are breaking the rules, and he gets to yell at them, “’Don’t do that.’ Or like other Scouts, coming into staff area, ‘Stay out of staff area!’ ‘No running in camp!’ ‘Put that
Thomas says that he was the worst when it came to this: he was always being told, “Do this! Thomas, don’t do that!” And so, he argues, “I had to do it, so why can’t you do the same thing too? Everybody follows the same rules.”

Thomas is the only staff member I interviewed who expressed this relationship to campers. It is as if he is fulfilling what Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) calls a “patriarchal bargain.”36 Kandiyoti claims that we willingly suffer and endure oppression by trading it for something else like security, access, presumed respect, stability, or in some cases to be able to control those who are even lower than we are. Thomas is reaping the benefits of years of being told “Do this! Don’t do that!” He is making everyone beneath him follow the same rules, accept the same bargain he did: “Accept my rule so that one day, you may rule.”

Almost every staff member (besides Thomas) refused the notion of role modeling as a top-down, patriarchal bargain proposition whereby the role model stands high above the wannabe, benevolently shining down their brilliance and authority. Instead, staff typically use joking or even ridicule techniques to gently inform campers how to act. However, modeling ridicule is a fairly complex activity—one which is not exactly modeling behavior that one wants imitated. Take, for example, Boat Docks Director Henry’s description of a process he likes to use to facilitate passing on masculinity:

So, step one is you break them down in front of each other. You show everybody that you are the same person no matter what age you are. Step two is you carry that outside the merit badge class. You go out there on the parade field and you make fun of them in front of their troop. You know, one kid is in the back going, “God, if I can get through Environmental Science nobody has to know. Nobody has to know.” And you know what, you go out there on the parade field and you say, “Hey, what’s up Billy? Did you
tell them you fell in the lake today? What a dude.” Or, “What a clutz. You wash your clothes yet? Because you have a lot of mud on them today.” You know, you find out the 17 year old in the back of the class who hasn’t showered in 5 days and you just rip his balls off. . . . Just get him up and down.

With an aggressive, almost predatory, approach, Henry seeks out a prey and attacks. This is very dangerous territory, for it is unclear to the camper what he is observing: Is Henry modeling the sort of behavior he wants the camper to exhibit? If so, you would expect campers to return such aggression. But they do not. Why not? Perhaps because they know he is not modeling ridicule and aggression, but attention and reinforcement.

Henry claims he does this breaking-down thing to treat them “more like a friend.” He claims that this is how friends treat each other: harping on each other, dogging each other. And through this process, “You just kind of make them feel like they are a whole person. They are not just a scout. Nobody out here is just a scout.”

Henry makes a distinction between how he does this and how other, more militaristic staff members (he points to Jake the 2002 camp director as an example) would model it:

I’m not doing this to make myself look good. I’m not doing this to say I’m better than you. I’m doing it so that you stop thinking that you are better than me. I’m doing it so that you guys stop thinking you are the coolest shit on earth and I’m just some loser who couldn’t get a real job this summer. I’m a nerd. I’m a staff nerd. I do it so that they don’t think that. So that they see me as a friend and a human being. And you know, once that happens, by Wednesday or Thursday I’m not making fun of them as hard core anymore. You aren’t stepping on their toes all the time.
Henry describes how he uses his authority position to equalize—to equalize the campers with each other as well as equalize the relationship between him and them: breaking them down so they do not feel superior to him. He claims that these techniques get them to “appreciate you not as a staff member or as a boat docks director but as a person. Once they appreciate you as a person you can teach them anything.” Hegemony is not some insidious tactic; instead, it is everyday, ordinary role modeling by attractive role models—namely, one’s peers.

*Storytelling and Interpellation*

Lacking many of the entertainments of home—no television, radio, videogames, movies, etc.—camp opens up a space for the performance of much more verbal art, that is, folklore. As with most summer camps, Camp Lakota has a relatively wide range of storytelling—or the telling of folk narratives. There are two distinguishing features of folk narratives: (1) they circulate primarily in the oral tradition and (2) they are performed face-to-face (Oring Folk 122-123). Staff members performed such folk narratives at

- religious services (parables),
- at campfires (skits, run-ons, ghost stories, Scoutmaster Minutes, even attached to some songs),
- in the dining hall (skits and run-ons),
- as well as extemporaneously along the trail, in the campsite, on the parade ground, etc.—including jokes (“A pirate walks into a bar. . . .), personal experiences (“I remember this time when . . . .), life histories (“Well, it all started when I was about your age. . . .), and so forth.

Campers may have performed such narratives in their campsites or extemporaneously, but only publicly at the Intertroop Campfire on Family Night.
Having declared their popularity at Camp Lakota, I must add that I have no record of any “traditional” folk narratives at Lakota. Unlike some songs—like “Scout Vesper,” “The Bluejay Song,” and even “The Little Brown Mouse”—there are no stories which are part of the oral tradition, passed down amongst the staff, at least not beyond the tenure of any particular staff member or “clique” of staff. All the narratives I have recorded or heard are specific to the teller and have not yet moved into the oral tradition.

However, the story with the most ordering and transmission potential is also the most complex one. It is the “Legend of Oliver Spencer” which is based on an actual written autobiography. Oliver’s story is an Indian captivity tale which is centered in the town of Defiance where Spencer lived amongst the Shawnee people. In fact, in downtown Defiance, along the waterfront, there are historical markers with references to the characters, commemorating and historicizing the narrative. What adds to the “weight” of the story is that Oliver was also only 10 years old when he was kidnapped, making it easily transferable to our first year campers (who have completed the fifth grade or are 11 years old).

I was able to record a performance of the telling of the “Legend of Oliver Spencer” as it was told in 2003 near the end of the Opening Campfire on Sunday nights. As the opening campfire burned down and the tempo had slowed down a bit, the Senior Commissioner Warren would stride out of the dark woods surrounding the Council Ring to tell the story. Warren was a former camp director at Camp Lakota and a history teacher, and he had read the Oliver Spencer autobiography and was familiar with the Defiance area history.

Most interestingly, Warren often dressed in full Indian regalia to tell the story. When he emerged from the darkness of the treeline, he looked like the spirit of an old Indian chief—a full headdress flowing all the way to the ground, off-white leather shirt and leggings, loin cloth, and
a large “Eagle feather” fan. Only when the weather was oppressively hot did he ever opt out of the heavy regalia and just wore the Scout uniform.

Indian impersonation is nothing new to organized camping, to Scouting, or to American culture in general. The Boston Tea Party, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, Mardi Gras Indians in New Orleans, New Age appropriations, Thanksgiving Day celebrations: these are but a small sample of various ways Americans play at being Native. As early as 1890, audiences were flocking to see Indian impersonators. At the same time, newly emerging youth summer camps made Indian programming for children a standard throughout the industry (Wall 513-516).

Inspired by muscular Christianity, recapitulation theories, and romantic notions of nature, the founders of camps viewed Indians as a “moral, spiritual, and physical ideal entirely consistent with the publicly avowed values of the culture” (Mechling Playing 20). Children were encouraged to emulate Indian role models. However, they were not encouraged to “go native.” “Camp enthusiasts were not seeking true change of status, but a revised, more pleasing image of their own racial character” and by “playing Indian,” they “claimed an identity that was vaguely countercultural but, at the same time, still clearly white” (Wall 532). “When playing Indian, children were offered the emotional outlet of intense experience not frequently promoted by modern child-rearing experts, and in contrast with camps’ simultaneous preoccupation with order and control” (Wall 515).

The Boy Scouts did not simply follow this trend of “playing Indian.” In fact, they most likely took a leadership role, mostly due to the influence of Ernest Thompson Seton. While the YMCA’s John L. Alexander supported knight culture, and Dan Beard supported woodsmen culture, it was the influence of Chief Scout Seton and his love of Indian lore that fused Scouting in the United States with Indians (Mechling Playing 19-20). As one early advocate of Scouting,
Charlotte Mason, suggested, Scouting was a good alternative for actually being an Indian. Mason wrote in *Home Education* (1926) that every family “should possess *Scouting* in default of the chance of going on the war-path with a Red Indian” (qtd in MacDonald 23). Indian themes, costuming, and dance have been intimately interwoven into the National honor society known as the Order of the Arrow (OA), though recent years have seen some modest moves toward respectfully decreasing caricatures of Native Americans. The National BSA organization actually has an American Indian Scouting Association (AISA) which works with an American Indian community to host an annual seminar for “councils to gain knowledge and resources for supporting Scouting in the American Indian community” (Daniels 11). There are Boy Scouting and Venturing units completely devoted to “playing Indian,” for example, the Koshare Indians (Troop 2230 of La Junta, Colorado) that Mechling writes about and the Kwahadi Dancers (Venture Crew 9 of Amarillo, TX) who stop almost yearly in the Black Swamp Area Council along their summer-long tours. At camps across the country, Indian-themed ceremonies, stories, legends, camp names, and the like are told and enacted every summer. The campsites at Camp Lakota are named after prominent Indians; the dining hall holds the Indian name of Oliver Spencer; every Sunday night, Warren tells his story in full Indian regalia, and every Thursday, the OA perform their calling out ceremony replete with spears, thumping drums, and huge fires. Rather than be surprising or considered strange that Warren would walk out in Indian regalia, it inspired awe and created a certain level of mystique in the camp, its history, and the staff who worked there.

The following is the only written version of his telling of the story, for he never wrote it down; instead, he compiled and reordered the story anew each week. In the years since this
recording, he has made an effort to invite younger staff to learn how to tell the story (i.e., to pass it on).

The Legend of Oliver Spencer

The Indian Chief storyteller begins formulaically: “Listen my Scouting brothers and sisters. For the flames of your fire now speak softly. The streams murmer, and the trees whisper, and I too would have a tale to tell you. It is a tale that began before your father’s father ever lived.” He tells the story from the perspective of the Native Americans who lived in this territory. He never mentions the “whitemen,” and calls them “settlers”. He talks to the Scouts as if they are the new inhabitants of this land:

At about the time of when American colonists rose up in rebellion against their English rulers, there was a war chief named Ka-coon-diatha and his wife Cooh-coo-cheeh who fled from that eastern land and came through the Great Lakes, eventually up the river to the North that you call the Maumee, seeking to preserve a way of life for their children, and their children’s children, that their father’s fathers had known before them.

Interspersed in the telling of the tale, Warren sprinkles geographical references and historical occurrences. He goes on to introduce young Oliver Spencer—“a twelve year old boy, much like you”—who settled with his family in “a place where the present city of Cincinnati stands”. The entire story is directed at the campers, trying to connect Spencer’s story to their own, trying to encourage them to step into young Oliver’s shoes for the week they are at Camp. And then he builds the drama:

At just about this time, during the leadership of that first president named Washington, a small warparty moved south from this land to that river from the south. It was led by the son of Ka-coon-diatha and Cooh-coo-cheeh, a man named Wawpawmawqua—the White
Loon. Wawpawmawqua’s goal was again to try to put fear in the hearts of those settlers so that they would not come into this land where his father and mother had brought him.

And so in that raiding party, they captured young Oliver Spencer.

This is a kidnapping narrative. In Spencer’s autobiography, he gets pretty descriptive, talking about slitting throats, cutting off scalps, bodies shot through with arrows, slumped over the edge of the canoe, etc. But none of that gore makes it into this telling. Nonetheless, as Jan Brunvand argues urban legends articulate “many of the hopes, fears, anxieties and submerged desires of our times,” so too might this kidnapping legend articulate some of the anxieties of the campers and the desires of the camp staff (Brunvand 2). This first night of camp, when young boys have just left their homes—some for the very first time ever for a prolonged period of time—and it would seem plausible that some might feel kidnapped. And it seems equally plausible that this is precisely what staff want campers to feel like: to open them up for adventure that lay ahead.

The old story-teller chief goes on to tell what happens to young Oliver after his companions have been killed and savages have escaped with him in tow:

And they brought him north, through the swamps, forests, and in the process, he lost his shoes and for a time went barefoot. Until Wawpawmawqua gave him a pair of moccasins. And finally they reached the confluence of the rivers to the north where Wawpawmawqua’s mother Cooh-coo-cheeh lived. And he placed the boy in her care. He tells of how lost young Oliver was, how he knew nothing: “He did not speak the language. His clothing was in tatters. He was in ill health after such a difficult journey. And very hungry.”

But the old woman, Cooh-coo-cheeh took care of him: she gave him a name—Meecheway—which is the name of the Lodge where we eat meals at Lakota.”
He goes on to tell that Cooh-coo-cheeh and the rest of the village expected “that he would stay among them as one of them, for the rest of their life, and his life. But that was not to be.” The confluence of the Maumee and Auglaize rivers was not only home to Wawpawmawquaw’s people; it was also where British traders did business. And these traders heard about young Oliver and passed the word back until it finally got to Oliver’s parents. When they heard he was still alive, they set out to ransom him.

And in what is possibly the most amicable relinquishment in all of legend, they let Oliver go:

In the early months of spring, when the sap began to rise in the trees, old Cooh-coo-cheeh took Meecheway to the camps to make sugar from the maples. And while they were in the sugar camp, she recalled all of the legends and stories of her people, of how the Great Spirit had given her people these lands. And of how she and Ka-coon-diatha fled from the east so that their children might live in peace, in the way of their father’s fathers. She recalled the tales of all of the animals of this land. Of how they played such an important life in her people.

And then she told Meecheway—Oliver Spencer—that on the next day, he would be taken east to eventually return to his family.

Though he was only in the Native village for about eight months, the return trip to Cincinnati took two years:

He went east to Detroit, and then by canoe through Lake Erie to Niagra, where eventually the ransom was payed. And he was transferred to another party who took him to New York. Time passed, and eventually he came back west to Pittsburgh. And finally down the Ohio river to his family.
The storyteller then pauses to reflect on Oliver’s experience, “This experience changed Oliver Spencer tremendously. He was the first boy—like you—to walk through these woods. He learned the ways of the red man. He learned their language in the short time that he was here. And he came to respect these people highly.” These are the exact same goals the Boy Scouts has for young Scouts at summer camp: summer camp is meant to engender a change, to teach woodcraft and campcraft (the ways of the red man), to teach new language, and to develop respect in your fellow man. Not only that, but as if it were a rite of passage, the kidnapping vignette parallels the act of adult leaders taking the boys from their families and bringing them to this encampment for a week of learning manhood.

But the story is not complete. The story teller goes on to tell how “harvest season passed to planting season and again to harvest season and still again to planting season, and the years passed.” He tells of how the last red man “left this land because it had changed so much that it was hard for them to carry on the way of life that they had known.” This is the second time the theme of being reluctant to change, to evolve is injected into the story: once, describing Kacoooh-diatha’s attempt to find a place to preserve his way of life; and again, describing the Native American’s inability to adapt. But for the boy/listener who identifies with young Oliver, they notice that he is able to overcome the Native inability to adapt. In fact, Oliver not only adapts to the Native way of life, but then he is ultimately able to readapt to the white world.42

Then, the storyteller opens page two of this story: “And then still more time passed. And eventually, a group of leaders sought to find a place where Scouts might come and camp and learn the ways of the forest as Oliver Spencer had.” Like a Christ figure—half human, half God—Oliver Spencer bridges the gap between the Native American and the young white boy who sits around the campfire in 2003. He shows us the way.
And the storyteller provides us with another bridging figure—though this time, it is perhaps more oriented to the future than the past. He explains:

And from the South came another boy, much like Meecheway, who was caught up with the story of Oliver Spencer, and he aspired to become an Eagle Scout, and he did. And he served on the camp staff of this camp called Lakota. He too walked the way of Meecheway in these forests and along these streams. And then in time, Neil Armstrong placed his foot where no one had ever placed their foot before.

And then comes the final connection to the camper: “And now you have come here. Many of you for the first time. And like Meecheway and like Neil Armstrong, you will walk the paths of this forest, through these trees, by the streams.” You too, can be like Neil Armstrong. You too can be like young Oliver—though, notice this time he uses the name Meecheway, perhaps to signify that transitional figure.

But then, the storyteller ends with a challenge to the audience members. He wraps the story up by saying it is not yet complete:

And there is a challenge set before you. A challenge to learn the land and to live the principles of your oath and your law. A challenge to become different people than you were when you came here this day. You need to look high as the moon rises into its fullness tonight, and remember that other Scout who came here before you. And as he dreamed to do things that had never been done before, that is the challenge also before you: To dream to do things that you have never done before.

And with that, the story is ended, the storyteller turns and disappears back into the darkness of the treeline. After he is gone, the program director steps forward to close the campfire with the traditional closing song, “Scout Vespers.”
As a narrative, this performance accomplishes what all good narratives do: it “ensnares” the audience, placing them within the story; it “engages the emotions,” from fear to hope, from despair to triumph; and, it communicates “experience,” lighting the path which Scouts can walk the coming week at camp (Oring Folk 122).

The storyteller masterfully attaches every level of the story to the boy at camp: this story is that boy’s story; this story is this camp’s story; this story is about the past and about your future—if you accept the challenge. I know of no clearer example of Louis Althusser’s (1971) “hailing” or interpellation in which individuals are recruited to take particular subject positions: this story is hailing each boy, telling him that he too can be like Neil Armstrong and walk on the moon!

As an educational piece—as a mechanism for ordering Scouts into a particular masculinity—this performance of the “Legend of Oliver Spencer” is a masterpiece. First of all, it clearly hails the boy to become Oliver, to become Neil Armstrong, to live and complete the story being told. Second, this performance resonates with traditional Boy Scouting motifs—the use of Native American themes, the age of Oliver, the footprint on a trail metaphor, the references to the Scout Oath and Law, and so forth. Third, this performance exemplifies the idealized masculinity that the organization wants transmitted: the adventurous, adaptable boy; the outdoor spirit and the acquisition of woodcraft knowledge; the will to persevere and the pull-yourself-up from small-town Ohio attitude and you can reach the stars dream. It provides the message, the images, the model, and even the first step; all the boy has to do is acquiesce to want to be someone different than who he came as.
Dramatizing Masculinities

It is one thing to tell a young Scout that they should walk in the footsteps of great, adventurous, outdoorsy men; but it is something entirely different to actually act it out in front of him, demonstrating it with body and breath. The performance of the “Legend of Oliver Spencer” was dramatized by the Indian regalia and the telling of it from the Indian’s point of view, but the storyteller did not act out any of the scenes, did not demonstrate for the audience what happened.

The other difference between the storytelling and the dramatizations at camp is that the dramatizations—skits and run-ons—are humorous. I cannot think of an example of a skit or run-on that was not at least meant to be humorous, though I can think of a few that did not “work” as comedy. While story telling at the end of campfires is “supposed to be” serious, skits and run-ons during the campfire are meant to be funny.

At Camp Lakota, humorous dramatizations are primarily performed by staff members in two contexts: in Meechway Lodge after a meal or at the Council Ring during a campfire (see more on campfires in the next section). Staff members prepare for these dramatizations during Staff Week, although sometimes the best material is created just prior to performance or actually in the midst of performance. With the influence of the television show “Who’s Line Is It Anyway?,” we have begun to see more of these ad-libbed, improvisational, or theatrical games during campfires. However, staff are typically encouraged to work out the specifics of a skit, practice it, and perform it week after week. In this way, the program can be efficiently regularized, can fit into prescribed time blocks, and can be honed to perfection.

To illustrate the how, why, and who of dramatizations, I will analyze a skit created during the Staff Week of 2003 by staff members who were charged with coming up with a skit that had never been done before. They developed a skit called “Hard Core Flag Corps.” The staff who
developed it were mostly second and third year staff members—those who were experienced with Camp Lakota lore and performing skits at campfires. The skit was a hit with the staff as well as the campers—until, that is, I (as camp director that summer) banned it.

**Hard Core Flag Corps**

The skit is simple enough: A table is placed on center stage with a model railroad set on top. There are two groups: One group is a bunch of “average”, loud, obnoxious teenagers, and the other group is the famed Hard Core Flag Corps. As the loud teenagers enter from one side of the stage, they are excited and boisterous about attending the Annual Model Railroading Convention.

Then, one member notices the famous Hard Core Flag Corps. On the opposite side of the stage stand four uniformed Scouts (staff), rigidly at attention. They appear to be militaristic, but also a bit geekish because of their ultra seriousness—like Boy Scouts or marching band members who have gone off the deep end. The leader of the teenagers tells his friends that these guys are “crazy serious” about being in the Flag Corps. He tells them that no matter what you do to these guys, they will not budge. “They’re like those English guards outside the Royal Palace.”

Then, the teenagers try different things to distract the Hard Core Flag Corps. They get in their face, make noises, call them names. The Flag Corps stare straight ahead as if nothing happened.

The teenagers knock off their hats and try to jostle the Flag Corps. The Corps continue to stand at attention.

Then the teenagers get squirt guns and spray the Flag Corps down with water—including in the face and down the shorts. The Corps does not budge.
The teenagers keep trying to take it up a notch, trying more and more harsh actions to break the Hard Core Flag Corps. They even give the Corps wedgies—pulling their underwear up from both the back and the front. The Hard Core Flag Corps regain their footing and get back into formation. Nothing deters them.

Then, over the sound system, an announcer says that the flag ceremony is about to begin. The Corps is called to attention, and they march toward the table in the middle of the stage. They are obviously uncomfortable because their underwear is yanked out of their pants, they are soaking wet, and they are generally disheveled. But as a Hard Core Flag Corps would be, they dutifully go about their job. There, in the middle of the model railroad set is a small flagpole, and the Hard Core Flag Corps raises a small flag on the 3 or 4 inch tall pole. They do so with all the property commands, and then march their way off stage.

The End.

As one might imagine, laughter sprung up as the taunting got progressively more aggressive, watching the Corps members attempt to maintain their composure. The more outlandish the taunting—or the more disheveled but unmoved the Corps member—the greater the laughter. And then, there was another huge laugh at the end when the audience realizes that the Corps is over-the-top serious about raising a flag about the size of a postage stamp.

I would like to use these points of laughter as a way to enter the dramatization of the “Hard Core Flag Corps” to better grasp how staff members use this format to pass on Boy Scout masculinity to the campers. I will use Jeannie B. Thomas’ understanding of humorous narrative in *Featherless Chickens, Laughing Women, and Serious Stories* (1997) to help interpret the laughter. Thomas borrows from incongruity theories, social-behavior theories, and suppression-
repression theories\textsuperscript{43} of humor and argues that humorous narrative can be distinguished by three characteristics which I will address one at a time:

First, Thomas argues that a humorous narrative’s “content can create perceptions of incongruity, ambivalence, or superiority or the recognition of a taboo topic. I call these the mechanisms of laughter” (Thomas 43). Humor arises from “disjointed, ill-suited pairings of ideas or situations or presentations of ideas or situations that are divergent from habitual customs (Keith-Spiegel 7). Such incongruities can sometimes help create feelings of superiority between the actors in the drama or between the audience and the performer (Thomas 45).

In the beginning of “Hard Core Flag Corps,” the setting and characters are coherent, recognizable, and normal: Campers would recognize a group of boisterous teenagers—perhaps much like themselves. They would recognize a uniformed flag corps—something they have seen at mealtimes at camp and have probably participated in, themselves, in their home community. After all, the Boy Scouts are often called upon to do flag ceremonies and to walk in parades. And the notion of a model railroad convention is recognizable because they have seen model railroad set-ups at the zoo, at Scouting events, in the mall, etc. A convention is understandable as well.

In other words, at the beginning of the skit, there is nothing incongruent, ambivalent, superior, or taboo. When the teenagers start to taunt the Flag Corps, though, a couple lines get crossed. First, we see incongruity between the normal boys and the geeky Boy Scouts—between the boys we are supposed to be in Scouting and the boys we probably really are. We also witness the ill-suited response by the Flag Corps to being hosed down, ridiculed, and embarrassed. This is highly “divergent from habitual customs” which would allow for defensive maneuvers or some sort of response to taunting. Similarly, we see the superior feelings of the
teenagers over the Flag Corps in their willingness and ability to abuse them, but interestingly, we witness incongruity (or is it ambivalence) when the teenagers stop and respect the Corps and their flag ceremony at the end of the skit. The teenagers are superior and respectful of the Corps’ duties. The respectfulness may be in part because they are treading on taboo territory: disrespecting a flag ceremony by disrespecting the Flag Corps. As Thomas points out, though, these incongruities, ambivalences, superiorities, and taboos do not in and of themselves cause laughter (Thomas 43).

Second, Thomas argues that the mechanisms of laughter “will somehow be based in or linked to a challenge to convention or expectation. A recognition of this threat, whether great or small, is sounded through laughter; specifically, the laughter is caused by the recognition of the challenge to convention or expectations” (Thomas 43).

In the skit, laughter accompanied the taunting of the Corps by the teenagers. On the surface, it could be argued that the audience laughed because they recognized the teenagers were not following expectations, that they were crossing the line and treating Scouts in un-Scouting behavior. But the laughter is probably more for the Flag Corps than for the teenagers: Under increasingly harsh taunting, the Corps would not respond, would not do what any one of us would have done: fight back. Their manhood was being challenged, and they failed to meet that challenge. Release theory might explain the audience laughter because the audience members freed repressed energy “in a socially acceptable disguise” (Gray 28) which was keeping “something forbidden under repression and away from consciousness” (Grotjahn 256). That is to say, the audience laughed to release their anxiety about what would they, themselves, do if attacked in such a way . . . and fearing they might do nothing.
Interpretation of laughter at this point in the skit should be informed, too, by the types of masculinity dramatized in this skit and the context of these masculinities at Camp Lakota. Look at any summer camp film and you will see some of the archetypal masculinities dramatized in “Hard Core Flag Corps”. In camp films, there is the fat, gluttonous kid; the smart, nerdy kid; the “cool” kid—sometimes nice but usually a pretty-boy who gets all the girls; the bully—usually a jock; and so on. In northwest Ohio, these are pretty much the same masculinities available to boys, though those in Boy Scouts tend to be less of the jock, cool kid and more of the nerdy, fat kid. In the skit, we see the cool teenagers bully the nerdy Scout Flag Corps. There is relatively little incongruity between cool kids picking on nerdy Scouts and the nerdy kids doing nothing about it—I wager the vast majority of campers have felt that way when kids at school find out they are Boy Scouts. However, the campers will want to identify more with the teenagers—seeing them as either cool or at the very least having the most fun. Nobody wants to be like the Hard Core Flag Corps guys: they are wound too tight and get picked on. Through modeling this behavior, the staff are passing on messages about acceptable and unacceptable masculinities which may appeal to campers.

So what messages are they sending in the display of these archetypal masculinities? Perhaps this is answered better by reframing the story into real, lived models of masculinity at Camp Lakota. In real life, Camp Lakota has its own array of masculine types:

- The Cool Cowboy Man. The camp ranger and his staff fit in this category. The Ranger wears cowboy boots and a cowboy hat with his Boy Scout uniform. He is outdoorsy and drives a pickup truck or tractor. He is brawny: slim, muscular, and his hands are rough from work. He has a slight twang in his voice and a strut to his walk.
He is a lady’s man and a man’s man: he can fix anything, loves NASCAR, and chews tobacco. He is inviting and open to everyone, and is a calm, friendly presence.

- The Rigid Military Man. The camp director in 2002 fits this category. The Camp Director was in Vietnam and supposedly killed some men while there. He is tall, wears shades, angles his hat sharply on top of his head and pulls it down over his eyes. He generally frowns, stands rigidly, arms crossed. He drives a Blazer. He is also a man’s man: He points, makes orders, threatens, and scratches his crotch a lot.

- The Geeky Academic Man. The program director in 2002 and the camp director in 2003 (me) fit this category. The program director has long hair, smokes cigarettes, and has somewhat feminine affectations. He is more odd than cool. He is definitely not a man’s man, but he is quirky and philosophical. His hands are soft, and his humor is sarcastic. He drives a beat-up foreign-made car. I was not much different.

- Cocky Teenager Man. The boat docks director in 2002 fits this category. He is into loud punk music, wears a Mohawk (when it is allowed), and drives his dad’s truck. He is loud-mouthed, opinionated, not skilled with his hands, but he can work a crowd, and improvise any situation. He prefers chains and studded jackets and poking fun.

There are undoubtedly other archetypes at summer camp, but these are the four that stick out. Many of the staff either fit one of these archetypes, or they lean toward particular people who do.

When we consider the masculinity passed on in the “Hard Core Flag Corps” skit, we must take into account these archetypes: the skit is a confrontation between Cocky Teenager and the Smarty Academic.

But if we take into context when this skit was created, it perhaps explains why the staff saw this as such a great skit. This skit was created the year after Jake the Military Man left
camp, the same year I the Academic Man became camp director. In 2002, I doubt this skit would have ever been developed beyond the initial idea, because the Military Man would not have accepted the mocking of patriotism and military behavior. This is where the second major laughter came from the audience: the recognition that all this hoopla was for an itty-bitty little flag raising. It was ridiculous to be so serious and to take punishment for that. In 2003, there were a number of returning staff members who had some issues with how the Military Man had run things, so I wonder if the skit was actually a statement about—a not so nice parody of—the Military Man and what he stood for.

Taken a step further, this skit dramatizes not only the mockery of the Military Man’s rigidity and righteousness while simultaneously dramatizing a confrontation between the Cocky Teenager Man and the Geeky Academic Man. It may be a response to the previous camp director Jake as well as a warning to the new one, me. The Cocky Teenager is the wave of the future!

Third and finally, Thomas argues, “For a narrative to be considered humorous, the participants must have some emotional distance from the topics in the story (Oring, Jokes 13) but not so much that the topic holds no interest for them. The story must not be either too painful or too boring” (Thomas 43). “Often the key to distinguishing a narrative as funny or not funny is the distribution of tension”: too much tension, too much pain, and it is not funny; too little tension, too mundane, and it is also not funny (Thomas 47).

Despite the fact that many Scouts have experienced being picked on for being a Boy Scout—so the topic is recognizable—apparently, the vast majority have some emotional distance between their own respective experiences. Otherwise, they would not have laughed; certainly not when the taunts became more aggressive. The context of the skit, though, seems to help
distance the experience: Surrounded by hundreds of other Scouts and Scouters, the skit is more of a recognition of a shared experience—"something we’ve all been through"—rather than an isolated attack. There is an incredible capacity to laugh at pain when you are among friends who have shared that pain.

Having said that, I admit that I, as camp director, was not emotionally distant from what was being dramatized on stage in “Hard Core Flag Corps.” After the first week’s performance, I recommended to the actors that they change what they do to the Flag Corps because it was getting a bit abusive on stage. As camp director, I stood there and watched a number of my staff publicly taunt and abuse other staff members—as part of a skit. I became upset when I realized that the actors were divided between two groups on staff: the teenagers were basically a group of friends from one town in the Council, and the Hard Core Flag Corps were the more geek-ish staff members—the odd balls, the anal, uptight staff members. The skit appeared to me to be a public forum in which one group could pick on the other group. I did not look at the skit from a safe distance and instead walked right up to it: the staff members were not simply humiliating the Hard Core Flag Corps, but were humiliating actual, specific people in the skit. I recognized what Thomas calls the “challenge to convention or expectation”—so I recognized the laughability of the skit—but I wanted them to tone it down.

The second week, the message apparently did not get through, and they performed it the same way as the first week; they did not change it as I had requested. I watched as members of my staff suffered on stage—the looks on their faces reflected controlled anger, frustration, and even physical pain—and the audience laughed even harder. Whether or not the tension was too much for them, it was too much for me.
After the campfire had ended and the campers had returned to their campsites, the staff gathered around the fire for debriefing and announcements as usual. Somewhat enraged, I banned the “Hard Core Flag Corps” from our campfires, arguing that the rest of our campfires were violence-free, and that this skit stood out as overly violent. I would not stand by and watch staff members do that behavior to each other.

Upon reflection, I banned the skit because it dramatized a dynamic between masculinities which I personally disapprove of. And, as camp director, I had the power to re-order public performances to remove dramatizations which were deemed inappropriate. Publicly, I resorted to the National Standards to re-order the campfire program, ridding it of the “Hard Core Flag Corps” for being too violent. The Standards are clear on this point. However, I must admit that this was an arbitrary choice. I rarely look at those Standards to judge our performances: if the material is funny, I have been known to turn the other cheek toward the Standards. I was comfortable with the parody of the Military Man and patriotism gone awry. I was not comfortable with the abuse of the geek, also known as the Academic Man.

In the “Hard Core” situation, I personally identified with the geekishness of the guys in the Corps. Outside the summer camp environment, I had been—and probably still am—one of them. Just as the previous camp director probably would not have allowed the skit to reach the stage because he identified with what was being parodied, I could not bear to watch a dramatization of the other more “popular” or “cool” masculinities beating up on me. That abuse happened outside of camp, but that was not going to happen at camp. I did not care about the Scouting culture, staff culture, or the boy culture in this situation. Instead, I refused to play a part in dramatizing what I considered the wrong model of masculinity to the staff and campers. It was too “real” for me, and that reality would not be dramatized at my camp.
The staff were not happy with me. I have heard that some staff members still talk about that night and what a “dick” I was. Perhaps that is what was dramatized after the “Hard Core Flag Corps” ended that night: My own dramatization of how the Academic Man orders space differently from the Military Man, but he still orders. The change in camp directors simply changed the ordering of the hegemonies, but the hegemonies continued ordering.

_Discontinuity, Silence, and the Boy Scout Campfire_

Perhaps the most formal and most complex way that staff members pass masculinity on to campers is through campfire programs. But it also the most rare. It only happens a couple of times a week, rather than daily. Interestingly, even G. Stanley Hall—the great recapitulist—felt that a “big fire” was immensely important at camp:

The fireplace is one of the greatest schools the imagination has ever had or ever can have. It is moral, and it always gives a tremendous stimulus to the imagination, and that is why stories and fire go together. You cannot tell a good story unless you tell it before a fire. You cannot have a complete fire unless you have a good story-teller along. (Hall Conference 40).

Campfire programs are ordered in a way to induce a “tremendous stimulation of the imagination,” which in turn orders a particular array of masculine characteristics and ordering tactics.

_Notes from National, BSA._

According to National, campfires are “more than just a program around a leaping flame”; after all, some of “the most memorable hours in camping are spent around a campfire” (BSA Camp Program 3-60). National claims that, “Boys never seem to tire of the magic of firelight at night”—but they do not explain why that is (3-60). Campfires should have purpose and
direction, including fun, entertainment, fellowship, action, adventure, education, inspiration, and even leadership development (when it is a youth led activity) (3-60). To these ends, National suggests incorporating four “elements” to a campfire:

- **Short Takes.** This includes stunts and skits—what National calls “the main event of the campfire”—as well as cheers, (rounds of) applause, and run-ons (very short skits) (BSA “Campfire Leadership” 40). Such “short takes” are recommended to be less than five minutes long, any “longer than that and the crowd loses interest regardless of what the punch line is” (40).

- **Songs.** “Songs help build enthusiasm and excitement at the beginning of the campfire program or help to slow the tempo at the end to set the right atmosphere for the Scoutmaster’s Minute” (40).

- **Stories.** These could include adventure stories—“Scouts like stories of adventure and action” (41)—humorous stories (including “American folklore with its tall tales and impossible exaggeration”), hero stories (“The Bible is an outstanding source”), ghost stories (“the most-requested type,” but, “In Scouting we try to make Scouts feel at home in the woods. . . . so don’t make your ghost stories too tough—and always explain away the ‘supernatural’ parts”), and miscellaneous stories—including the “moral-tipped short stories used in the Scoutmaster’s Minute” (42).

- **Showmanship.** Showmanship includes “the way the fire is lighted, the costumes of the performers, the special lighting, the element of surprise in the program” (BSA Camp Program 3-60). “Showmanship is the real gravy of the campfire stew. All campfire acts must be practiced so that they can be performed well. Plan the order of acts so the pace of the campfire flows smoothly” (42).
All four components come together in an example National provides, in what it calls an “intertroop get-acquainted campfire” at the beginning of the week: “The staff stages a good skit or two, several good Scout songs, and the traditional song of the camp. Introductions of leaders will play an important part. Finally, there is a closing Scoutmaster’s Minute—a thought for the week and a dramatic closing ceremony” (Camp Program 3-61).

National provides very few examples of these campfire elements: while there are numerous skit and song books and websites out there, National has not produced anything beyond a Scout Song Book for many years. Having said that, National does standardize what is not appropriate in campfires. In its training materials, National repeatedly warns of inappropriate material and the need to screen all campfire programs—including staff campfires. “In Scouting we teach positive moral values,” National argues, so campfire “programs should be the place where the positive example is set” (Camp Program 3-61). National provides this list of “don’ts”:

- Toilet humor—anything that involves bodily functions, toilet paper, etc.
- Water—where the audience or participants get wet
- Embarrassing an audience member
- Racial put-downs, making fun of mental or physical disabilities, religious groups, and others
- Portraying violent behavior
- Anything with sexual overtones
- Anything that is not in keeping with the ideals of the Boy Scouts of America (Camp Program 3-61)
I cannot think of a single campfire program I have seen that did not contain at least one of these “don’ts,” however, water and embarrassment are the typical rule-breakers and are typically employed on staff members who have pre-approved the offence.

If, however, inappropriate content does slip into the program or gets inserted into a previously screened performance, National provides suggestions for what to do:

One camp uses a “tree check” to take care of the situation. When a senior staff member recognizes an unacceptable act, he yells, “Tree check!” All the staff members yell, “Tree check!” and start checking the trees around the campfire bowl. This creates enough confusion in a humorous way that the camp or program director can go to the stage and quietly explain that the skit is not appropriate and move the group off the stage” (Camp Program 3-61).

In an effort to avoid offending the performers or dampening the energy of the campfire, staff create a lively, staff-focusing diversion which removes the offending party while maintaining energy.

From these suggestions and example, we begin to see an underlying purpose to the Boy Scout program: Just as Baden-Powell said that Scouting is “a game with a purpose,” so too is the campfire program. It is specifically not about singing songs and telling stories: such performances are just another way to “get them.” Notice, for example, how every description National provides includes admonitions for “control” (controlling tempo, pace, interest, and flow) and “planning” (for performance quality as well as to “set the right atmosphere”). Notice as well that despite the fact that most every staff member knows what is appropriate and inappropriate at a campfire, it is the “senior” staff member who decides what is inappropriate—
making the call for a “Tree check”—and it is the camp or program director who provides the explanations. Adults are attempting to control ordering here.

From its own descriptions, National describes how the entire campfire program is an elaborate mechanism for focusing boys’ attentions: From the opening ceremony—which “must arrest and then hold the attention of the audience”—through the carefully organized “flow” of pre-approved skits, songs, stunts, and run-ons—the barrage of attention grabbers and emotional stimuli slowly funnel campers’ to experience the “real” purpose of the campfire: hearing the Scoutmaster’s Minute. It is as if the campfire is a sword or spear, ending in a “morally tipped” story told by the authority figure. This is hegemony at work: inclusiveness within a structure so that even inappropriateness is allowed and responded to with humor, and it all ends up at a predetermined, culturally controlled, ordered message from the authority figures.

**Cultural Discontinuity and Campfires as Rites of Passage**

At summer camp, the campfire is used by staff members in much the same way as National suggests; however, it is accomplished almost unconsciously, and it is actually accomplishing much more than focusing attention toward a Scoutmaster’s Minute. A rich cultural event like a campfire is not to be relegated to a final message. Instead, every single song, skit, and applause is transmitting culture.

Folklorist Jay Mechling constructs a description of Boy Scout campfires which reflects more of the warmth and significance of the campfire as a whole event:

The Boy Scout campfire . . . is . . . a folk event that strikes a balance between adult definition and teenage subversion, between traditional formula and liminal spontaneity, between interpersonal aggression and powerful affirmation of brotherhood. The campfire
event is a ritual dramatization of male solidarity and male world view. It helps provide the adolescent personality integration and identity formation. . . . (Mechling, “Magic” )

Admittedly, Mechling is referring to campfires performed by members of a single troop on their own three-week summer encampment while I am referring to campfires performed by hired staff members as well as Scouts from various troops—in front of adult leaders and sometimes parents and siblings. However, based upon my experience and research, Mechling’s descriptions apply to both contexts: Campfires at Camp Lakota involve a tangle of constraints, impulses, improvisations, and traditions—focused (perhaps unconsciously) on passing on particular notions of masculinity.

Campfires are more complex than they may appear to the casual observer: they are more than just a jumble of roughly (if not poorly) performed skits, songs, run-ons, stories, and stunts. On one level, as National points out, the contents of a campfire must be organized in a particular fashion, controlling the flow of energy from start to finish. Placing a boisterous song at the end of the campfire ruins the mood and intent of the campfire. The same would happen if a sad or slow song were used to start the campfire.

On a much deeper level, though, campfires are a complex web of constantly “shifting lines” between three types or levels of performance:

1. performer and audience
2. collective and individual performance, and
3. genuine spontaneity and carefully rehearsed drama (Mechling, “Magic” 37).

In any one campfire, we witness performers coming out of the seats, audience members dragged on stage to join in the performance. Campfires have a bit of the carnival in them: like carnival, campfires are “not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates
because its very idea embraces all people. . . . During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom” (Bakhtin Rabelais 7). A former staff member once talked about the “three-dimensionality of campfires”: some people are sitting, some are standing, some are flailing about—there is activity all around you; you are immersed in it; you join in.

Similarly, during campfires, we see performances weave in and out of one, two, three, a dozen, the whole crowd of people performing. At one moment, the entire crowd is jumping up and down and waving their arms to a song like “Hello, My Name is Joe,” and the next minute, a few staff are performing a skit where they bring audience members on stage to help with the punchline. Sometimes half the staff is involved in a performance, and other times, it is one solitary Scout.

What’s more, when one helps to organize the program for a campwide campfire, one soon realizes that what is actually performed is not nearly what was planned: the best laid plans fall apart in often beautiful ways in the heat of the campfire moment. Somebody forgot they were supposed to be on next, so someone else steps in with a run-on. Or, someone forgets the words to the song they are singing, or the audience keeps repeating every word that comes out of your mouth, even after the “repeat-after-me” song is over. Or, sometimes someone trips and falls down and blurts out an obscenity—but the show goes on.

In 2002, there were three campfires: the Opening Campfire on Sunday night, the Intertroop Campfire on Wednesday Night (Family Night), and a Closing Campfire on Friday night. The opening and closing campfires are primarily performed by staff members while the Boy Scout troops handle the campfire in the middle of the week. In 2003, the schedule changed a bit, and only two campfires were performed: the Opening Campfire was performed by the staff and the Closing Campfire on Friday became the Intertroop campfire. That is, Family Night was
moved from Wednesday to Friday, and we thought it would be prudent to have the boys perform in front of their parents rather than have staff do it. Either scenario, the campfires at Camp Lakota are usually highly anticipated events by both campers and staff alike. It is showtime!

What we see happening in campfires is the gradual initiation (ordering) into a particular way of being—into a particular “who” that staff members want the campers to become. Simply put, the campfire is a masterful plan to take a camper who is thinking about how badly he wants to get back home to his PlayStation, and slowly commences on an emotional rollercoaster, first nudging and cajoling, then more directly leading the boy toward the closing message and introduction into the summer camp world. I would argue that campfires are examples of what Mechling has called "rituals of incorporation" and "rituals of separation" (Children’s 283). The opening, Sunday night campfire can perform as a ritual of incorporation, likened to an orientation session or an initiation ceremony. The closing, Friday night campfire can perform as a ritual of separation, likened to a graduation ceremony or retirement party. The opening campfire incorporates the campers into what is expected of them in this new, camp kind of normalcy; while the closing campfire separates them from this realm, so they can extract themselves from camp and reenter the real world sort of normalcy.

Most cultures create such rituals, what some anthropologists call “discontinuities of experience,” to enable or force a person to make a break with things as they used to be to how they will be, and the management of discontinuities is one of the most important teaching and learning techniques a culture has (Spindler Transmission 306, 332).

Discontinuity occurs at any point in the life cycle when there is an abrupt transition from one mode of being and behaving to another, as for example at weaning and at adolescence. Many cultural systems managed the latter period of discontinuity with
dramatic staging and initiation ceremonies, some of which are painful or emotionally disturbing to the initiates. They are public announcements of changes in status. They are also period of intense cultural compression during which teaching and learning are accelerated. (Spindler Transmission 332-333)

When there is little time for (or patience with) protracted and progressive education, a people will compress time and pedagogy into an event, often called a rite of passage. This is what a campfire accomplishes: it compresses camp cultural transmission into a very short event—perhaps little more than an hour—but passes on so very much information and role change. With song, skit, and story, camp staff manage cultural compression and discontinuity—taking a Scout from the outside world and showing them how to behave in the camp world—and thereby “enlist new members in the community and [maintain] the cultural system” (Spindler Transmission 333).

What is most amazing is that discontinuity works: most orderings include a certain degree of disordering, specifically to maintain the order. While there is considerable research on rites of passage, unfortunately, there is relatively little focus on the question of how learning so effectively occurs during these sometimes threatening, traumatic discontinuities. After all, what do initiates learn as a result of being torn from their families, enjoined to avoid all contact with females, whipped, smoked, starved, circumcised, subincised, forced to act as partners to eager fellateds, and subjected to hours and days of esoteric symbols, unfathomable mysteries, and bull roaring. (Spindler, Do Anthropologists 61)

As the Spindlers point out, “We particularly want to understand better why such educational management seems to be highly successful as measured by retention of what is learned and
commitment to it” (Spindlers, Do Anthropologists 61). Why is it that discontinuity breeds continuity?

Discontinuity in cultural transmission . . . is a process that produces cultural continuity in the system as a whole. The abrupt and dramatized changes in roles during adolescence, the sudden compression of cultural requirements, and all the techniques used by preceptors, who are nearly always adults from within the cultural system, educate an individual to be committed to the system. The initiation itself encapsulates and dramatizes symbols and meanings that are at the core of the cultural system so that the important things the initiate has learned up to that point, by observation, participation, or instruction, are reinforced. The discontinuity is in the way the initiate is treated during the initiation and the different behaviors expected of him (or her) afterward. The culture is maintained, its credibility validated. (Spindler 326-327)

While a Boy Scout campfire does not involve whippings, circumcisions, or fellatio as some rituals do, a campfire does treat the camper to discontinuity, including them into a new world, encouraging them to act in ways thought crazy in the “real” world. The campfire uses dramatized symbols and stereotypes to reinforce camp ideals. He is told in so many ways that he should act differently at camp. As such, the Scout is recruited as a Scout through this discontinuity experience called a campfire. He is recruited as a Camp Lakota Scout: “Welcome to the system! Now, play your part in keeping it going!”

Ordering Masculinities through Silence at an Opening Campfire

I have argued elsewhere that a “Boy Scout summer camp campfire is a social interaction structured by silence [more] than by vocalization” (Vrooman 7). Despite the fact that campfires
are a careful compilation of vocalizations—songs are sung, words are spoken, jokes are told—the critical educative component of a campfire is silence and how it is used.

Depending on the theorist, there are all sorts of different types of silence: there are voluntary and involuntary silences (Olsen 1978), deliberate and unintentional silences (Grant-Davie 1998), unexpected and expected silences (Brummett 1980), situational and topical silences (Dauenhauer 1980), and activity and stately silences (Jaworski 1993)—to name a few. In my “Silences” piece, I described four major kinds of silences employed during two campfires at Camp Pioneer in central Oregon, each exhibiting a different educative effect:

- **Contextual Silences.** Campers start out in silence, and are returned to silence after the campfire is over. Contextual silence is what National talks about: everything about the campfire program is to move campers to a calm, listening state. Psychologist Sidney Baker explains how this is actually the goal of all speech: "The underlying (i.e., unconscious and unpremeditated) aim of speech . . . is not a continued flow of speech, but silence . . . This silence is one in which arguments and contention, whether expressed or not, have vanished, to be replaced by understanding acceptance of the part of the hearer . . . and satisfied contentment on the part of the speaker" (Johannesen 30). The campfire is a method to remove vocalizations through what could be considered a compression of vocalizations.

- **Call-N-Response Silences.** While this is a type of song, it is also a type of silence. The song leader says something like, “This is a repeat after me song,” and the audience responds, “This is a repeat after me song.” Sometimes, the song leader will say, “This is a repeat after me song, and a do as a I do song.” And the audience repeats that phrase and mimics all the motions and gestures the leader makes. The key here is that
the leader makes a statement and invokes a silence. It is a risky proposition, for the audience could fail to fill that silence. However, the audience is given the freedom to respond—certainly in a controlled, “called” way—but freedom to voice back. It “opens a space” for “silent audience members to break their own silence and join the campfire and participate in the performance” (Vrooman 5).

- **Esoteric Silences.** There are two kinds of “broken silences”: esoteric silences and “silences denied.” Esoteric refers to those things which an “insider” understands or knows. In the “Silences” piece, I demonstrated how very few esoteric silences were present at the opening campfire, but they were rampant at the closing campfire—because campers had been “let in” on the jokes during the week. “The closing campfire . . . is rife with innuendo, recollections from earlier campfire skits and songs, remembrances from the week's events, as well as commentaries on particular campers and staffers” (Vrooman 5). The “humor is much less reliant upon what is said and more on who is saying it and how it is said. It is dependent upon nonverbal queues and experience[s] that occurred during the week at camp” (Vrooman 6).

- **Denied Silences.** Working in tandem with esoteric silences are “denied silences”—when “something that shouldn't happen happens” or a “rule is broken or a special space is opened that only insiders would recognize” (Vrooman 6). An example is when someone falls down and hurts themselves and says a cuss word: the silence is denied, refused. The silence on cuss words is broken, and is usually laughed at rather than scolded.

Surely, there are numerous other silences in a campfire:
Silences are used in almost every run-on to lead up to a pun. There are topical silences which suppress public reference to sex, drugs, alcohol, excessive violence, or potty humor. There are also disciplinary silences where a simple lack of vocalization by a performer quiets the audience. There are even more silences—even in the emcee-less campfires—than participants might admit to or even consciously recognize. (Vrooman 7)

Taking all these silences together, it becomes clear that there are perhaps more moments of silence in an average campfire than there are vocalizations. However, it is the vocalizations that are planned, manipulated, coordinated, and remembered. So it begs the question, how are silences used if they are almost incidental to campfire planning and almost always unconsciously experienced?

I will examine one of the Camp Lakota Sunday night Opening Campfires, exploring its silences and describing how staff use them to transmit lessons of masculinity to the audience. In the following chart (see Figure 3), I show the program as it was performed, along with the special, educative silences which took place throughout the campfire program. Unlike the opening Camp Pioneer campfire, this opening campfire example from Camp Lakota includes more esoteric silences and even a couple broken silences.

In this Opening Campfire at Camp Lakota, we see every song—except the very traditional Scout Vespers sung at the very end—is taught using call-n-response techniques. It is interesting that there are no actual call-n-response songs—like “Alligator,” “The Blue Jay Song,” or “Flea,” all of which are in the staff repertoire—but they do use the technique to teach the audience the songs. The song leader sings the song through once, breaks it down into bits, asking the audience to repeat the lines back, and then they put all the pieces back together again into one song. In the case of “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” this was a very useful
technique since the foreign exchange Scout named Polo taught that very simple song in
Taiwanese. These call-n-response techniques are used to bring campers into the know-how of
the song. Spaces are opened up for them to interact with the staff leader, and wonderfully
enough, they always respond.

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Figure 3: Camp Lakota 2003 Opening Campfire Schedule. This table categorizes the types of silences used throughout the campfire program.

What I find surprising is the number of times esoteric silences are employed in the
Lakota campfire. Mind you, it is employed in two distinctly different ways: During the Opening
and the “O’lay” cheer, esoteric silence is invoked because the campers simply watch and listen
while the staff perform in front of them. This is odd because cheers, for instance, are a great
call-n-response opportunity (to get audience interaction), but in this case, the staff call-n-respond
to themselves. You had to be a member to be included.
However, the second type of esoteric silence is as inclusive as the former type was exclusive. The most commonly used esoteric silence is one where the audience knows what is really going on while the actors do not. This harkens back to the “superiority” mechanism of laughter which Thomas describes (in discussion of the “Hard Core Flag Corps” skit). All three run-ons (Captain Obvious), the “Banana Bandana” skit, and “Dog Doo” skit made it obvious to the audience that they were included in the joke while some of the actors were not. In the “Banana Bandana” skit, for example, a staff member is teaching the audience all the uses of a bandana: you can unfold it and wear it on your head to keep the heat off; you can wipe the sweat off your brow; or you can fold it up and carry it around in your pocket until you need it. Unbeknownst to the instructor, all his students behind him are using a banana rather than a bandana. They smear the banana all over their heads and faces and eventually fold up the banana and stuff it in their pockets. Nobody says gross is against National Standards.54

Another example of esoteric silence is during the Captain Obvious run-ons. In the first of three, a staff member walks on stage and says, “On a nice hot day, I need something cold to drink,” and he lifts a bottle of pop to his lips, but nothing comes out. It is obvious to the audience that he has not taken the lid off, but the character is stumped: “It’s not coming out.” Then, from out of nowhere, a caped-crusader leaps onto stage. He declares, “Hello there. It looks like you’re in some trouble, son. What seems to be the problem?” The staff member says, “I can’t get my pop to come out.” The caped-crusader replies, “Well it’s a good thing I’m Captain Obvious. I’m here to help. Look: when you want pop, simply twist off the top. Look, here, enjoy.” The staffer says, “Thank you Captain Obvious. You’re the best!” And Captain Obvious knowingly replies, “Obviously.” As he rushes away, he adds, “And remember to recycle.”
It is as if the staff exclude audience participation at the beginning of the campfire (“Opening” and “O’Lay” cheer), but then bring the audience in with nearly every other skit. The audience is clued in on the joke—even at the expense of the actors. Sometimes, as in Captain Obvious, it even appears as if the actors are real staff members, and the audience is treated as if they know more than the staff member character. That is, the campers are given a knowing “who”: “You know more than some of the characters in this skit. You’re smart. You know things.” Even going so far as to say, “You know more than the staff do!”

This inclusiveness is perhaps deepened by the silences “denied” throughout the campfire. In three of the four broken silences, the staff include material that breaks National standards: In the “Opening,” a staff member on the sound system announces the staff as if it were a big basketball game. The staff come out of their huddles to cheering and clapping by other staff. There are “suggestive” epitaphs attached to some of the staff, for example, the camp director (me) was announced as “Your camp director, who has more hair than George W. Bush, Patrick P-diddy Vrooman.” Since the President lacks significant hair on his head, I think this may have been a vague reference to “bush” on a female body. In the “Dog Doo” skit, there is a blatant breech of Standard, for it is all about toilet humor—resulting in someone actually tasting the dog doo. And, in “Old Blue” skit, we see another breech of Standard when the main actors make fun of others, including those with mental disabilities. “Old Blue” starts out with the recording of “You Might Be a Redneck If” from Joe Foxworthy, where he makes fun of southern white folks who do or say “incorrect” things. Then, the actors pick on a person who has died due to a vehicle accident: One says, “He’s ugly.” The other says, “That’s just the ugly running off.” The first one responds, “Sure he didn’t hit the ugly tree instead of the ground?” Such allusions and
put-downs are probably not in accordance with the values of the Boy Scouts of America; however, they sure did get a laugh from the audience.

The last of the four denied silences is part of the “Lakota Justice League” skit in which a group of unknown super heroes attempt to save the day at Camp Lakota. I will go into more detail about this fascinating skit in Chapter 4, but in this context, the skit breaks the silence between the audience and the actors—more so than in most. As Mechling said, there are shifting lines between the audience and actors, but the “Lakota Justice League” takes those shifting lines to new heights. Rather than just bringing members from the audience to participate in a skit, or rather than employing call-n-response technique to include the audience, “Lakota Justice League” allows the audience to determine what happens in the skit. First of all, the narrator of the skit asks the audience to assign identities to the super heroes; so, with hat in hand, he allows audience members to pull identities out of a hat. A staff member is “Slippery Man” this week, but he could get an entirely different identity at next week’s campfire. Then, as the actors begin working through the storyline, the narrator will interrupt the plot and ask the audience what should happen next: “Should the League do X or Y?” And the actors pick up the action, doing whatever the audience has told them to do. It breaks the silence between audience as observer or follower to audience as active participant in guiding the direction of the skit. The audience is no longer silent; they are setting the course.

Considering all these silences together—call-n-response, esoteric, and denied silences—it appears that “silences indicate control or power exchanges” (Vrooman 7). Some silences keep campers from power relations (esoteric silences in the Opening and the “O’lay” cheer) while other silences welcome campers into powerful positions (denied silences in the “Lakota Justice League” skit). Still other silences open up spaces for the exchange of voices—which is truly an
exchange of power (call-n-response silences). The most fascinating silences to me are the ones which show campers the truth while keeping the actors/staff ignorant. All these silences are inviting, or at least offer inclusion. The vocalized part of the campfire—like all communication—“is fundamentally an act of exclusion, for it involves a necessary violence to silence and resist[s] the outsider: the barbarian, the intruder, the stranger” (Chang 57). But what of the unvocalized parts of the campfire? Lacan asks and answers this question: “Ask yourself what the call represents in the field of speech. It represents—the possibility of refusal” (Quoted in Felman 118). A call, a silence, a question—those open up spaces for the audience to refuse to answer, they open spaces for barbarians, intruders, and strangers to enter and have their way. Silence opens space for power-sharing.

In effect, throughout the campfire, staff are transmitting to campers the rules and roles of power exchange, even teaching them how to “hegemonize”—how to persuade without coercion or force, how to solicit willing participation. Singing a call-n-response song shows how fun ordering can be. Showing campers the truth which lay behind the actors of a skit shows campers how compliant the unknowing are. Giving campers the opportunity to take control of parts of a skit—at the opening campfire—surely compresses cultural transmission, telling campers they need to actively participate and take charge of their own week. And then, cap it all off with a morally tipped story about Oliver Spencer, laced with allusions to Neil Armstrong and the challenge of filling those shoes—the Camp Lakota campfire is a masterful recruiting tool: recruiting campers into the Camp Lakota world where campers are players, not just followers; where campers order culture, not just observe it; where campers are approaching manhood, right alongside the young staff members.
Who Does Camp Think You Are?

We know what staff members do: they teach merit badges; they sing songs; they do paperwork; they pass on masculinity. And, we know how they do what they do: they role model; they facilitate discontinuity; they tell stories. Just as Ellsworth can apply “modes of address” to pedagogy in the classroom, so too can we apply it to the pedagogy of camp. We need to ask, “Who does Camp Lakota staff think its campers are?” and “Why does staff want them to be that?”

A simplistic answer would be a “Boy Scout” and because “that’s what we (the staff members) are!” However, that is far from precise and a woefully incorrect reading of the question. What sort of Boy Scout are camp staff offering? It is certainly not the manly-man Scout that the forefathers of Scouting wanted to create. While Cowboy Man and Military Man at Camp Lakota may come closest to Seton’s, Beard’s, West’s, and Baden-Powell’s notions of manliness, that is not the sort of masculinity we see in the “Hard Core Flag Corps” nor in the “Legend of Oliver Spencer.”

Similarly, Camp Lakota staff are not offering the who that National is offering. Perhaps the clearest articulation of the contemporary who which National is offering a boy is found in one of the appendices from the Summer Camp Staff Training Guide which camp administration and program directors receive at NCS. The handout is titled, “Difference Between Children and Adults as Learners” and is meant to be used (without any directions in the syllabus) during the “Effective Teaching/Learning Strategies” lesson during Staff Week. The handout provides what I consider to be two of the most shameful lists in all of Scouting:

Children

- Rely on others to decide what is important to be learned.
• Accept the information being presented at face value.
• Expect what they are learning to be useful in their long-term future.
• Have little or no experience upon which to draw—are relatively “clean slates.”
• Have limited ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the teacher or fellow classmates.

Adults

• Decide for themselves what is important to be learned.
• Need to validate the information based on their beliefs and experiences.
• Expect what they are learning to be immediately useful.
• Have much past experience upon which to draw—may have fixed viewpoints.
• Have significant ability to serve as a knowledgeable resource to the trainer and fellow learners. (A-15)

From my own experience, I think the headings are reversed (with children demonstrating more of the list on the bottom and adults demonstrating more of the list on the top). More to the topic of my study, these lists offer a set of whos that few children would want to become: The first list is degrading and patronizing and suggests that children are passive, available, and gaping—which reflects few youth that I know. The second list is equally telling of what sort of who contemporary Scouting is offering its adults: pompous, decisive, authoritarian manliness. Luckily, we do not see this sort of who being offered by Camp Lakota staff members.

In A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America (1993), ethnic studies professor Ronald Takaki tells an usual story about America: Rather than repeat Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis of westward expansion, Takaki describes America as written and rewritten by not only westward expansion by Europeans, but also eastward expansion by Asians,
northern expansion by Mexicans and Africans, and a southern expansion by Native Americans. In one instance, he describes how folks were “pulled by a powerful liminality” across the country (341). To some, this compelling liminality was called “the North,” to others it was called “freedom,” and to others it was called “riches.” Independent of the name, it is the force that matters: the “pull” rather than a “push.” Liminality—Arnold van Gennep (1960) and Victor W. Turner’s (1969) phase or persona of in-between-ness that occurs during rites of passage. Turner describes a liminal state as one comprised of ambiguity where people are “neither here nor there,” “betwixt and between,” status-less, naked, and passive (Liminality 512-513). At the same time, liminal states also confer communitas, an intense feeling of community and undifferentiated identity with one’s peers (513). Liminality is the simultaneous experience of ordering and un-ordering.

In Takaki’s framework, this ambiguous, not-yet-ordered liminality powerfully pulls people. Perhaps it is the feeling of belonging and togetherness (communitas) which pulls them. Perhaps it is the raw possibility—the unanswered may-be—that pulls. Reading Ellsworth’s “who” through Takaki’s liminality helps to clarify that the compelling “who” is most likely a liminal who, a who that is undecided, that is stripped of embellishment, that is filled with possibility.

This is precisely the sort of who that staff members at Boy Scout camp try to offer to campers. Rather than authoritative masculinity, Camp Lakota staff address campers as if they were incomplete participants: that is, still developing, not fully operational agents of masculinity. While the National organization offers a more complete manhood, the staff offer a little less decided form of masculinity. The use of silences—many inclusive silences—during the opening campfire indicate that the staff want the campers to come, follow, do as we do, say as we say:
participate. Admittedly, the staff do not allow the campers free reign—thus, campers are incomplete agents. However, staff do allow campers considerable agency in, for example, the “Lakota Justice League” skit—considerably more agency than, say, in a call-n-response song. It is a who reminiscent of Montessori’s boy who is in process of making a man.

And consider, too, the friendliness offered to campers by the role model staff members: The staff may break the campers down a bit through ridicule, but they do this to shave off the macho edges of masculinity. The staff think the campers are just barely subordinate: not quite equals, but almost. It is a remarkably inviting who to offer!

However, what is offered is not always what is accepted. Ellsworth argues that all modes of address fail in some fashion: the campers may not accept what is given, the staff may not offer it clearly, the campers may not interpret it in the same way as the staff meant it to be interpreted—there are a million ways for addresses to fail. Ellsworth argues that no matter how the film’s mode of address tries to construct its audience, “actual viewers have always read films against their modes of address, and ‘answered’ films from places different from the ones that the film speaks to” (Ellsworth 31). So, the next question is how do staff members—perhaps the most enculturated, most addressed Scouts at camp—read, answer, and order the whos they have been provided? In other words, what would make “incomplete participant” a who campers would want to become? And, why would Camp Lakota staff want campers to be incomplete participants?
Notes

1 Bates describes the interdependence between the exercise of hegemony and dominance—as if the latter is the safety net for the former:

Civil society is the marketplace of ideas, where intellectuals enter as “salesmen” of contending cultures. The intellectuals succeed in creating hegemony to the extent that they extend the world view of the rulers to the ruled, and thereby secure the “free” consent of the masses to the law and order of the land. To the extent that the intellectuals fail to create hegemony, the ruling class falls back on the state’s coercive apparatus which disciplines those who do not “consent,” and which is “constructed for all society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command . . . when spontaneous consensus declines.” (Bates 353)

Thus, dominance is always looming over the horizon—threateningly, perhaps. (In the closing quotation above, Bates is quoting Antonio Gramsci’s *Gli intellettuali e l’organizzazione della cultura* (Turin, 1966, 9).)


5 I am familiar with only two other artists who consistently created Scouting art: Hy Hintermeister and Joseph Cestani. Cestani actually studied under Rockwell and eventually took his position as the official artist for the Boy Scouts of America in 1977 (Joseph Csatari).

6 According to Peterson, the name of the image is “Scouting Makes Men Out of Boys”; however, when I sought more information about this painting online, I found that it’s title was listed as, “Scouting Is More than Games” (1918). It was commissioned by the Red Cross for their monthly magazine to commemorate the service Scouting had done for the Red Cross during the War.

7 It has been argued that Scouting came to America when Americans—and specifically American males—were ripe for such a masculinity project. Many historians (Nash, 1967;
Hantover, 1978; Macleod, 1983; MacDonald, 1993) have argued that those who created the BSA were

Reacting to a number of troubling modern developments—the ‘feminization’ of the culture, represented both by the increasing responsibility of the mother for the moral education of the child (Douglass 1977) and by the increasing exclusivity of women in the teaching profession; the presence of large numbers of immigrant children who did not share an American primary socialization; the dramatic urbanization of America which, in conjunction with foreign immigration and the migration of postemancipation blacks, created the ‘problem’ of juvenile delinquency; and their Progressive Era sensibility that America was undergoing in ‘inner revolution’ of values, a crisis of capitalism, and a fundamental threat to democratic community. (Mechling Male 139)

According to this narrative, hegemonic masculinity was in crisis, was under attack. People sought relief from this downward spiral and sought to create stronger, better men.

Personally, I’m increasingly skeptical of all this “masculinity crisis” rhetoric. It is promoted by some of the most prominent “masculinist” works, like Michael Kimmel’s Manhood in America: A Cultural History (1996); Gail Bederman’s Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (1995); Susan Faludi’s Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man (1999); along with the whole wave of “how to raise boys” books which have flooded the market during the last decade. I fear this crisis narrative has become a convenient narrative perhaps more than an appropriate narrative, for it too easily allows us a tension-filled backdrop for whatever we scholars wish to argue. Is masculinity—and the Boy Scouts—so reactionary? Must all identity be reactionary?

Sometimes, the Boy Scouts of America states very clearly that they are about inculcating boys to become better men. In other cases, however, they take a more tempered approach. For example, in the October 1984 issue of Boys’ Life, the organization identified proper sources for gender instruction in an insert titled, “Youth’s Frontier: Making Ethical Decisions (For Youth): A Guide to Help Youth Meet Today’s Challenges”:

- Instruction on what it means to be a man or woman should come first from parents.
- When parents feels uncomfortable doing that, religious counselors are the next best source of help. The information you need includes information about your roles as a responsible adult. You can’t get that information from your friends, television, movies, or magazines. (8)

Perhaps somewhere after parents and religious counselors and before friends and television, the Scoutmaster may be an appropriate instructor for manhood.

Muscular Christianity is a movement which emerged in the “wake of the Civil War” when

styles of masculinity grew more abrupt and self-assertive—it was an era of beards and boots—but also more narrowly practical, as former reformers opted for unreflective action in place of broad idealism. In line with this cult of action and in an effort to play down the negative implications of Protestant asceticism, men turned to muscular Christianity. (Macleod 45)

Michael Kimmel claims that this brand of Christianity was imported from England through the novels of Charles Kinsley and Thomas Hughes. “Books such as The Harvest Within (1909), Building the Young Man (1912) . . . The Manliness of Christ (1900), The Manly Christ (1904), and The Masculine Power of Christ (1912) portrayed Jesus as a brawny carpenter, whose manly
resolve challenged the idolaters, kicked the money changers out of the temple, and confronted
the most powerful imperium ever assembled” (Kimmel 177). The most famous Muscular
Christian was former professional baseball player Reverand Billy Sunday. Sunday would say
things like, Jesus was the “greatest scrapper that every lived” (Kimmell 177) and “I’d like to put
my fist on the nose of the man who hasn’t got grit enough to be a Christian” (Kimmell 180).

Another proponent of muscular Christianity was Luther Gulick himself (pioneer of
organized camping):

Gulick holds that the reason why only some seven per cent of the young men of the
country are in the churches, while most of the members and workers are women, is that
the qualities demanded are the feminine ones of love, rest, prayer, trust, desire for
fortitude to endure, a sense of atonement—traits not involving ideals that must stir young
men. The Church is just beginning to appeal to the more virile qualities, as evidenced in
the Sunday School Athletic and Baseball Leagues. (Gibson Boyology 18-19).

While not every sport went “professional” within a decade of the turn of the century,
many did. For example, according to Wikipedia, the first American football match (between
McGill University of Montreal and Harvard University) was in 1874; and the National Collegiate
Athletic Association (NCAA) was developing in 1905 and 1906. Baseball was not much
different, with semiprofessional play in the 1860s, and the first professional team (another Ohio
precedent: Cincinnati Red Stockings) in 1869. Various baseball professional associations
formed soon thereafter: the National Association (1871-1875), the National League (1876-
present), the American League (1901) which developed out of the minor’s Western League
(1893). Hockey also went professional about the same time as the Boy Scouts: the National
Hockey Association (1910), the Pacific Coast Hockey Association (1911), the National Hockey
League (1917). Even the age-old sport of tennis became professionalized during this time
period: The United States Lawn Tennis Association (now the U.S. Tennis Association) began in
1881, with the first professional tennis tour in 1926 (Professional Sports).

In the midst of all this development of organized sports, organized camps created a bit of
a backlash against using athletic activity at summer camp:

Dr. John B. May, director of Camps Winnetaska an Wawbewawa, writes in his booklet:--
“Spring and fall are the seasons for baseball, football and athletics in general; summer is
the time for water sports and camping out. It has always been our desire to emphasize
real camping activities at our Camps. . . . It has seemed to us that canoeing, swimming,
hiking,—woodcraft, scouting, nature lore,—should form the major part of the program of a
summer spent in the woods. Athletics, competitive games, manual training, and similar
activities may well have a place on the program, but it should be a minor place.”

Dr. Frederick H. Wilson, director of Camp Wyonee, expressing the same opinion,
writes in his booklet:--“The director believes that true camping means not so much a
quantity of baseball games and other athletics, as it does the practice of actual camping-
out and cooking by the boys themselves.” It is interesting to knot, in this connection, that
in a large Boy Scout camp an entire summer passed without a baseball game being
played and the only reason for this was that the boys were so busily occupied in doing
other things they did not even think of baseball the whole season. (Sargent Handbook 65)

Even Charlotte V. Gulick—who helped invent the game of basketball—
would not tolerate basketball in her camps:
What we do want to do during the summer is to make our boys and girls love the natural sports which are available in the country alone—all water sports, hiking and gypsying from place to place and love of nature. . . . If we give them the same kind of athletics and sports which they have at home in their schools, we are taking the easier course but are not making proper use of our opportunities. Of course, the love basketball and will hail it with delight. But that is so with many other things which we do not think best to give them” (Sargent Handbook 67).

11 The playground movement began to develop during the mid-1890s when settlement house workers, progressive educators, and child psychologists sought to create “breathing spaces” for youth to “play under supervised and controlled conditions” (Playground Movement). Also see Cavallo, Dominick. Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform, 1880-1920. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981.

12 These new thoughts about youth development and childrearing, focusing mostly on G. Stanley Hall’s recapitulation theories and youth development work, were discussed in Chapter 2.

13 What he says in total is,

Experience in different fields shows that there are certain shoals to be avoided in launching Scouting, lest it get stranded in commercialism or diverted into deadend channels that never lead to the open sea.

Here, then, are some of the things that Scouting is not:--

It is not a charity organization for people in society to run for the benefit of the poor children.

It is not a school having a definite curriculum and standards of examination.

It is not a brigade of officers and privates for drilling manliness into boys and girls.

It is not a messenger agency for the convenience of the public.

It is not a show where surface results are gained through payment in merit badges, medals, etc.

These all come from without, whereas the Scout training all comes from within (13).

Two points about the “manliness” line: First, he indicates—by naming girls—that manliness can be drilled into boys and girls, implying that manliness is not restricted to male bodied individuals. Secondly, he clearly warns against military-like tactics in Scouting.

14 Rosenthal claims, “The fortnightly edition of Scouting for Boys makes Baden-Powell’s contempt for such a type even stronger. Not only is he no better ‘than an old woman,’ but ‘merely gets killed like a squealing rabbit, being unable to defend himself’” (128).

15 Baden-Powell, R. S. S. “Scouting for Boys.” Boys’ Brigade Gazette (June 1906): 150. This is an article Baden-Powell wrote prior to revising his book Aids for Scouting into Scouting for Boys. I find it fascinating that Harvard President Dr. Charles W. Eliot spoke similarly of the need for training in observation:

One of the most valuable contributions of camp life is the training of the powers of observation and of accurate inference. One of the greatest and most lamentable defects in the educational system found in our schools and colleges is the lack of training that forms habits of seeing straight, describing straight, and correct inferences. Camp life can overcome this defect. (Quoted in Gibson, Camp Management 5)
Levy (1944) points out that Russell’s article was published as a pamphlet by the BSA in December 1930 (23).

Remarkably, in September 1961, Boys’ Life published a short piece by famed anthropologist Margaret Mead titled “Youth Is A Time.” Mead describes various culture’s methods of initiating boys into manhood—including the way Americans group children by age—and then asks, “Can’t we invent new ways for boys to become men?” (52). Mead encourages the youth to ask, “Should age determine what you can read, or see, or hear—or where you can go? Is youth nothing but a period to be got through, as quickly as possible so as to be a man?” (52). Then, she offers an alternative question: “Or isn’t possibly youth a time—a time for things that can never be done again?” (52). Mead argues that youth “is a time to let your mind wander afar, to experiment, to make mistakes, to keep opening one door after another” (52). In an unpublished article titled, “Verifying Youth Masculinities in Boys’ Life Magazine, 1950s to the 1990s,” I argue that this piece by Mead seems to mark the turning point in the representation of masculinity in Boys’ Life: after this, masculinity is depicted differently, less manly and more youthful.

The Boy Scouts of America has never been interested in incorporating all youth, much less all people. Simply put, girls, gays, and atheists are excluded from membership; not to mention numerous other identities which find it very difficult to participate in the primarily white, middle-class, Christian, heterosexual, male organization. There are a few good and insightful texts about the history of the movement and its inclusiveness and exclusiveness. I have found the following to be most generative: David Macleod’s Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Their Forerunners, 1870-1920 (1983), Robert H. MacDonald’s Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918 (1993), and Jay Mechling’s On My Honor: Boy Scouts and the Making of American Youth (2001).

National Standard M-30 says that at least 50% of staff must be over the age of 18, but the standard then says parenthetically, “not including CITs, food service staff, and den chiefs” (2006 Standards 8). At Camp Lakota, this would mean that approximately 6 youth CITs, 4 adults in the kitchen, and 3 youth in the kitchen would not be counted in the 50%. For a 40-member staff, 13 uncounted staff makes a difference. Suffice it to say, there are more youth on staff than adults.

A wonderfully detailed description of the ideal staff member—distinguishing between the “virile, red-blooded gentlemen” and the “effeminate” or “crooked” man—is found in Gibson, H. W. Camp Management: A Manual on Organized Camping (Revised Edition. NY: Greenberg Publisher, 1923):

A counselor in a boys’ camp must be resourceful and adaptable in order to meet exigencies as they arise; must have patience in abundance; must have the spirit of justice and fairness; must control his temper; must have the quality of friendliness with which to temper discipline; must be unselfish; must inspire respect and confidence; must have sane optimism; must have a genuine love for nature and the out-of-door life; must have decisiveness, his “yes” must be “yes” and his “no” must be “no,” and no decision should be made carelessly or thoughtlessly; must be a virile, red-blooded gentleman; must have good habits, preferably a non-smoker; must be loyal to the camp management; must be imbued with the idea that he is to expend his best effort in realizing the camp objectives. Aim to secure as counselors young men of unquestioned character and moral leadership,
college men if possible, men of culture and refinement, who are athletes, and who understand boy life. They should be strong, sympathetic, companionable men. Beware of effeminate men,—men who are morbid in sex matters. The alert director can spot a "crooked" man by his actions, his glances, and his choice of favorites. Deal with such a man firmly, promptly, and quietly. Let him suddenly be "called home by circumstances which he could not control." (8)

Another interesting side note comes in the form of Wilbur Jackman and the educational methods he worked out at the Cook County Normal School (published in Nature Study for the Common Schools (1892)). Jackman "insisted that adult knowledge could not be meaningfully impressed on childish minds" and he "threatened to substitute chaos for the ordered transmission of textbook learning":

He resolved the dichotomy between booklearning and direct experience by arranging an ingenious series of problems and related questions without answers which forced both pupils and teachers to "learn by doing." But these ideas were too revolutionary for most practical educations. In his 1898 volume, Nature Study for Grammar Grades, Jackman retreated to such comfortably abstract problems as computing the leaf content of a single tree, furnace control and similar experiments. (Schmitt 81).

In this, and in many other ways, I see summer camp as a liminal space and the job of staff members is to initiate young boys through manhood-producing rituals. I believe I will benefit from the work of Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner on liminality and communitas, as well as other ritual scholars and their understanding of initiation.

I will not be doing "reception" analysis, but I will make random references to how the Scouts actually receive the messages which staff members send; however, my focus in this project is on cultural production by staff members, not the campers.

Terri had worn a lot of different hats in Scouting through the years—including Den Leader, all sorts of district-level positions, Shawnee Council vice-president (1980-1985), manager and receptionist in the Scout Office, Cub Scout Camp Director (8 years), Boy Scout Camp program director (2 years), camp director (10 years), to name a few—but she told me the story of how she came to be a minister:

Oh, back when I was in my early 60's, I decided that I wanted to become a lay minister. And so I took, I don’t know, several courses over here at Defiance College because they were courses that I could do at home and mail my work in, and it was cheap and I done a couple of courses over at Bluffton College. And got very good grades. But somewhere along the line during those 3-4 years, I suddenly realized that um, that wasn’t what I really and truly wanted. And um, I sort of sat back and evaluated everything that I had done as a volunteer and here at camp. And suddenly I realized that I had a ministry. And it had always been a ministry here at camp, along with some kind of scouting event that I was involved in, and that was my ministry. And so, as far as I was concerned, I was a lay minister. Had been for a long time. And I didn’t need a certificate to tell me that. And so that’s the way I feel.

Women may have been involved in Scouting since its inception, but female membership and women in positions of authority in American Scouting is relatively new. According to “The Changing Role of Women in Cub Scouting: A Sociological Evolution,” originally women were not allowed to register with the BSA, and they could not hold the role of
Vrooman 258

Cubmaster, Committee members, or Commissioner. In 1936, “Den mothers could register with BSA, but registration was optional” until 1948 when it became mandatory.

It was not until 1965 that the first woman professional Scouter was hired—Eleanor Parsons Pratt—and it was 1969 when the first women were named to the national Cub Scout Committee: LaVern W. Parmley and Elizabeth C. Reneker.

Interestingly, in 1971, the Silver Fawn Award for women was introduced for use at the Council level (seemingly equivalent to the Silver Beaver, given for outstanding Council service), but was discontinued by 1974.

It was not until 1976 that women were allowed to serve as Cubmasters, assistant Cubmasters, and all commissioner positions, even though in 1973, they had been allowed to serve as institutional representatives, Cub Scout roundtable commissioners, Cub Scout unit commissioners, unit chairmen, and unit committee members, den leaders, assistant den leaders, and den leader coaches (The Changing Role).

In February 1988, the National Boy Scouts of America dropped all gender restrictions on volunteer positions, in part because of the legal action taken by Connecticut Scouter Catherine Pollard when her application for Scoutmaster was denied in 1974 and 1976 despite the fact that she had assumed the role when no men would volunteer (“After 14-Year Battle” 1).

On the international Scouting stage, however, the dates were even more recent: the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) officially became open to both genders in 1977, but it did not seek an explicit stance toward “equality” between the genders until 1999. Prior to that year, WOSM maintained a stance of “equality and complimentarity” for males and females in Scouting (Nielsen 3, emphasis added).

26 Terri tells how she was first called to be the camp director of Boy Scout summer camp at Camp Lakota. She was rather taken aback by the call:

It was the first time that I had ever been asked to take on a position that I was not sure how the scout masters would accept me. Because there had never been a woman camp director before. . . . It was the first time I ever felt I wasn’t qualified. And so, you know what I done? I got on the phone and I called some guys who had been scoutmasters for awhile. Sam Wellingham was one of them. And I said, “Sam, I got a question to ask you.” I said, “How would you feel if you went into a camp and there was a woman camp director there?”

And he said, “Well, Terri, first of all it would depend on who it was and what kind of background she came with. Why?”

And I said, “Well, I’ve just been offered that position at Lakota.”

And he said, “Go girl.”

And it was, I guess, at that point my first year as camp director here that I suddenly realized that the scout masters who came to this camp did not look at me as a woman. They looked at me as a scouter. And that made me feel good.

When I asked her what the difference was between being a scouter as opposed to being a woman, Terri said,

I don’t know what they think. I guess they thought maybe a woman was a person that was somebody that couldn’t handle the job, be boo-hooing and whining and not doing their end. I don’t know. But it was then that I realized. In fact some of the scout masters actually said to me, they couldn’t have chosen somebody better because you are a scouter first.
It seems important to the males that you are one of them—a Scouter—whether or not you’re a woman. Or, as Warren put it, one must become “part of the movement.” Admittedly, her acceptance may have more to do with her longevity in the Council, and her grandmotherly persona; but men of Scouting didn’t exclude her for her femininity.

Terri also tells a story of how she once took her first den to tour a fire station. She had called ahead and knew the fireman who was going to give them a tour. When they arrived, the fireman asked the first boy in line, “Who’s the lady you brought with you fellas?” The first boy, Tommy says, “She’s no lady. She’s our den mother.”

While there are other women on staff, Terri is perhaps the most experienced, respected, and articulate. The role she chooses to play at summer camp is very similar to Cooh-coo-cheeh’s, the Native woman who taught Oliver Spencer the ways of her people (referring to a story told later in this chapter). Terri’s stories and life illustrate the complexities of doing masculinity work for women in general, but her role as an older woman—an elder female—in Scouting is also interesting for its problematizing of the tradition of men and boys passing masculinity onto boys. She is neither, but she is able to pass. The topic of women in Scouting would make for a wonderful study all to itself—perhaps a follow-up volume to this study—but I will wait a while to enter that dialogue.

Calvin Lewis of the Brooklyn Manual Training High School wrote in June 1905 that summer camps were relatively new, but increasingly popular. He says that summer camp is a “boy’s paradise.” Summer camp offers the opportunity that every boy longs for—to be in the open air, to tramp and swim and angle and sleep out of doors; no artificial restrictions of dress or society to hamper him. No needlessly severe or demoralizing lax discipline menaces his respect for authority. No late hours or unsubstantial diet retards his growth. Here is a boy’s paradise where he can get every good thing out of life and where he is removed from most of its evils. He is given the means of enjoying every wholesome sport; he grows big and brown and strong; he is with a lot of carefully chosen associates, who like to do and do and do, what he wants to do; he eats regularly plenty of wholesome food and gets full quota of open air sleep; he learns a hundred secrets of nature that books could never reveal; his mind kept constantly alert by his new surroundings and experiences and friends who do what is right and adjure what is wrong and he learns to love the one and despise the other (Lewis 378)

I am impressed and a bit befuddled by the humility, almost embarrassed realization of the following excerpt from the 1931 annual report of the Boy Scouts of America by H. W. Hurt, Director of Research Service:

While Scouting in America has a fuller, wider, and more definite knowledge of itself, statistically, than in any other country, the facts are largely those which relate to volume and registration and tenure and related factors. Investigations have been few concerning boy needs, boy interests, program content, program operation, results achieved. Perhaps this is natural and to be expected. The emphasis during these first two decades has been largely on expansion, covering the field or organization financial struggles—the program was taken for granted . . .

So rapid has been the advancement in educational theory that it is important that we validate our whole approach to our work. Education is now seen not as a formal training process imposed upon the individual from without, but rather as a process of
inner growth in which the individual reacts to, interprets, discovers value in and selectively evaluates the experiences out of which he is learning. The individual we now see is not a passive recipient of information or fixed training, but rather is a person, a personality adjusting himself to life, sharing personal and race experience with his leaders who are not commanders but companions. Education thus becomes not something done to the boy as much as something done by the boy. Our problem, then, is not to do things for or to boys, but rather to encourage and facilitate them to do things for themselves.

This is but one example of important modern principles with which the movement must be attuned in its practice. . . . If character can be formally indoctrinated, then we might do certain things; but if character is a growth, then our procedure is profoundly different. . . . The movement has a heavy responsibility to be certain that what it does or encourages shall not only be valid but that it shall be the best of which we and our scientific advisers are capable. Anything less is unfair to boyhood. (Hurt 110)

I have not seen anything in contemporary Scouting that resembles this sort of inquiry, hesitation, and self-reflectivity. Hurt raises fantastic questions. However, based upon documents I have quoted in this chapter, it would appear that the BSA has maintained its notion that character can be formally indoctrinated.

Along with the Boy Scout Oath and Law, the Boy Scouts also have the Outdoor Code—a lesser known, but still prominent set of ethics in Scouting. The Outdoor Code goes like this:

As an American, I will do my best to
Be clean in my outdoor manners,
Be careful with fire,
Be considerate in the outdoors, and


A significant social learning theory is Miller, Neal E., and John Dollard. Social Learning and Imitation. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1941.

Beresin suggests in the end of her article that the girl’s “process is more than aural, it is kinesthetic and intensely visual, and our process as fieldworkers can parallel it” (91).

Bandura (1977) claims that when “anticipated consequences exist, observed nonreward is likely to operate as a positive reinforcer in the context of expected punishment, and as a punisher in the context of expected rewarded” (119). Bandura cites the following studies: Bandura, Albert. “Influence of Models’ Reinforcement Contingencies on the Acquisition of Imitative Responses.” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 1 (1965): 589-595. Walters, R. H. and R. D. Parke. “Influence of Response Consequences to a Social Model on Resistance to
Kandiyoti uses the term “bargain” with certain reservations, admitting that there are some problems with the notion:

It is intended to indicate the existence of set rules and scripts regulating gender relations, to which both genders accommodate and acquiesce, yet which may nonetheless be contested, redefined, and renegotiated. Some suggested alternatives were the terms *contract, deal, or scenario*; however, none of these fully captured the fluidity and tension implied by bargain. I am grateful to Cynthia Cockburn and Nels Johnson for pointing out that the term *bargain* commonly denotes a deal between more or less equal participants, so it does not accurately apply to my usage, which clearly indicates an asymmetric exchange. However, women as a rule bargain from a weaker position. (286)

The autobiography has actually been published in a variety of formats—some with nice woodcut artwork plates include, others more simply written. One version is Spencer, O. M. “The Indian Captivity of O. M. Spencer.” Ed. Milo Milton Quaife. NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995. This version is “a slightly corrected republication of the work published in 1917 by the Lakeside Press (R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company) Chicago, which was itself a republication of the work first published in the Western Christian Advocate, Cincinnati, in 1834” (iv).

The very first Boy Scout campfire, July 31, 1907, was filled with story telling. Sir Humphrey Noble was there as a Scout. Noble describes Baden-Powell as “a wonderful teller of tales . . . and he had had the most exciting adventures and escapes during his army life. He had a very clear resonant voice which arrested attention from the very first. So you can imagine us sitting there in the darkness around the fire, listening spellbound to some thrilling story” (Quoted in Freedman 159). Then, it was army stories; now, it’s Native American stories, albeit stories about the time period when Europeans were encroaching on Native lands.


Wall (2005) claims that “playing Indian” started to diminish in camping programs as early as 1946 with “a changing climate of racial politics, but also with the rise of more permissive, emotional approaches to child-rearing in the postwar period. Perhaps as children were treated less as machines and more regularly encouraged to be ‘their own natural selves,’ the catharsis of playing Indian was deemed a more dispensable frill” (543).
It is interesting to note that Cooh-coo-cheeh was not Shawnee. She was actually a Mohawk (Spencer 41).

While not part of the campfire program, it is worth noting that Oliver Spencer writes in his autobiography about what happened when he returned to the white world. He describes how people came from miles around to see him, “from mere curiosity, as they would flock to an exhibition of wild beast, expecting, no doubt, to see something at least half savage” (86). At first, Spencer tells,

I took pleasure in giving an account of my captivity; in answering the numerous inquiries that were made of me, and in singing and dancing Indian and uttering the various Indian yells; performing so naturally, as they supposed, and exhibiting as they fancied such a wildness in my looks and manner, that some frequently remarked in an undertone, ‘How much he looks like an Indian!’ (86)

It did not take long, however, for Spencer to tire of retelling the stories, and he soon stopped answering questions and putting on displays.

Thomas borrows her breakdown of humor and laughter theories from Regenia Gagnier (1991) who divides the theories of laughter and humor into three general theories . . . . the first falls into the realm of cognitive and perception and is commonly called incongruity theory; it is associated with the work of Kant (177), Schopenhauer (76), and Bergson (84). The second is a social-behavioral theory commonly called disparagement or superiority theory; it is associated with the work of Hobbes (27), Aristotle (229), and Hegel (302). The third comes from psychoanalysis and is known as suppression-repression or release theory, and Freud is its most famous proponent. (Thomas 42)


There are an inordinate number of summer camp films that emerged after Meatballs (1979) and Friday the 13th (1980) started the genre. Most camp films fall into two categories: slasher/horror movies and comedies, though sometimes it is hard to tell the difference because camp films tend to be “campy.” The darker, horror summer camp films include but are not limited to the following: Friday the 13th and some of its nine sequels, Bloody Murder, Summer Camp Nightmare, Sleepaway Camp and its two sequels, Happy Campers, Bless the Beasts and the Children, Cheerleader Camp and its sequel, and Piranha and its two sequels. The lighter, comedy summer camp films include but are not limited to the following: Meatballs and its three sequels, Little Darlings, Oddballs, Party Camp, SpaceCamp, Heavyweights, Camp, American Pie Presents Band Camp, Wet Hot American Summer, Camp Nowhere; Ernest Goes to Camp; and Indian Summer.

Being picked on for being a Boy Scout—a common experience.

Notice that there is only one youth masculinity mentioned here: except for the Cocky Teenager Man, they are formalized adulthoods.

These lesson plans are given to faculty members at National Camp Schools. Some of the faculty’s lesson plans are also included in Summer Camp Staff Training Guide, a “guide for camp directors for use in precamp training of camp staff personnel” which is distributed at NCS.
to camp directors and program directors (cover, Irving, TX: Boy Scouts of America, 2002 (#20-155A)). The faculty’s lesson plan is identical to the lesson plan included in the camp director’s version (in the Summer Camp Staff Training Guide, it is pages 83-96).

The BSA produced a number of editions of the Boy Scout Song Book (1913, 1920, 1942, 1956, 1963, 1984, 1991, and the present 2005). The site also lists other campfire-oriented publications: Boy Scouts Book of Campfire Stories (1921), The Boy Scouts Book of Stories (1929), Fun Around the Campfire (1952), Troop and Patrol Skits (1953), and Fun Around the Campfire: Over One Hundred Campfire Program Ideas (1959) (Scout Songbooks). There are council-sponsored song and skit books (the most famous being The Canyon Camp Campfire Companion (1986), but National does not seem to have officially sanctioned through publication anything beyond the song books since the 1950s.

Referring back to Baden-Powell’s description in Chapter 2 of how he uses Scouting to “get them” (the boys) to accept moral training.

This practice seemingly goes back to some of the first Boy Scout campfires held on Brownsea Island. Another campfire was observed by visitor Percy W. Everett—the editorial manager for Baden-Powell’s publisher—and he described what he saw:

I can see [B-P] still as he stands in the flickering light of the fire—an alert figure, full of the joy of life, now grave, now gay, answering all manner of questions, imitating the call of birds, showing how to stalk a wild animal, flashing out a little story, dancing and singing around the fire, pointing a moral, not in actual words but in such an elusive and yet convincing way that everyone present, man or boy, was ready to follow him wherever he might lead. (Freedman 162).


In “Do Anthropologists Need Learning Theory?” the Spindlers suggest some learning theories that have potential for answering why discontinuity is so successful in breeding continuity:


This is one of the interesting things about National: they don’t want potty humor, violence, sexuality, or embarrassment, but they have no restrictions on grossness. I am not sure what this means about Scouting, but it is an open page for Scouts to write on. Mechling states, “Parody and grossing-out are two powerful weapons in the child’s folklore repertoire” (Mechling Magic 40). He also suggests looking at Knapp (1976) pp 161-190. When talking about “shocker” jokes and rhymes, the Knapps claim, “Children enjoy a brief escape from social restraint—a ritual rebellion—when they recite shockers, and they gain a certain kind of prestige among their peers. Shockers also help educate them, not just about sex, but about language. And, paradoxically, shockers help reinforce existing social taboos” (Knapp 179). They argue that “a child who actually uses a taboo word in a song is thereby also affirming the rule against using it. To mention such words casually, without recognizing anything unusual about them, would weaken the power of the taboo, but to introduce them in the formal context of a song that is meant to be shocking affirms that the taboo still exists—and is worth violating” (Knapp 183).
CHAPTER IV. BOY SCOUT STAFF MEMBERS PASSING AS MASCULINE

Chapter Four Summary: In this chapter, I will explore how staff members simultaneously “pass as” masculine (because they aren’t yet “fully” masculine) as they are trying to “pass on” masculinity. I will also examine their folklore to discover what notions of Scouting masculinity staff members—the most enculturated Scouts at camp—have received from Scouting culture. I will attempt to answer the question, “Who does a staff member think he is?”

“A Better Man Up Here”

It was somewhere in the mid-1990s, and I was the program director at Camp Pioneer in the Cascade Pacific Council, BSA. The camp was literally in the middle of nowhere in the foothills of Mount Jefferson in central Oregon. The tagline for Camp Pioneer was that it was “The Jewel of the Cascades”—mountains that is—and it truly was. Standing on the edge of Pine Ridge Lake, Mt. Jefferson reflecting off the water, an osprey swooping down to pluck a meaty fish right before your eyes—this was about as good as it could get. I would walk around the corner of the office, see that sight, and be moved to vocalize, “Can you believe we live here!”

Every morning, I said those words.

We ran eight weeks of Boy Scout camp at Pioneer, and the staff really came together over that stretch—far more intimately and profoundly than a camp that runs half as long. In all honesty, the camp staff at Lakota are only just beginning to scrape the surface of coming together . . . and then it’s time to pack it all up and go home. They don’t know what they’re missing.

So, one night, a small group of guys were sitting around a fire outside my tent. When there had been a larger group, we had talked about our days: the campers, the incident with the CIT, the crap in the shower stall—literally—and I remember we talked that night about all the bad things we’d done. One guy told about his nights in jail. He was the only one around the fire that night who had done something bad enough go to jail—so he won points there—but we all
had dirty little secrets we wanted to share. We were Boy Scouts, but we wanted everybody to
know we were not that goody-two-shoes.

But now, it was late—very late—and most of the younger guys had left the fire and had
gone to bed. One of the guys spoke up: “Ya know something? I’m a better man up here than I
am down there.” He was talking about up here on the mountain—at camp—as opposed to
“down there”—back home.

There was a general mumbling of consensus.

And then we all started to share the versions of ourselves, and how we liked ourselves
better up here at camp. We were kinder. We were hard on each other—we picked on each
relentlessly—but we were also more affectionate. We hugged a lot. We wrapped our arms
around each other and walked down the trail together. We could talk up here. We could sing up
here. And the refrain to each of these lines was that we couldn’t do that down there. . . .

I remember telling them that I had grown up at camp. My parents had been on staff at
this camp called Camp Lakota, and I used to run around camp all summer long. I told them
about how I was pretty rambunctious in grade school, but when I went to high school, I turned
into the quiet kid who always sat in the back corner of the room and never spoke up. Something
changed in me when I went to high school.

But that’s also when I started on camp staff. I would go to camp and be the
rambunctious, lively, spirited, singer of songs, actor in skits, all around model staffer. Then, I
would go back to school and be the quiet, nerdy, submissive, nobody-likes-me dweeb.

Sitting around that fire, I told my friends that in high school I had come up with this
Barbie notion of my own self: Just as there was a Barbie doll for everything—Rollerskating
Barbie, Hottub Barbie, Circus Barbie—there was Camp Pat and there was School Pat. And I
told them that it took me until I was a senior in high school before I made the decision to choose one over the other. I liked the Camp Pat better than the School Pat, and so at the end of the summer right before my senior year, I decided to bring Camp Pat to school with me.

I was still smart—I was getting better grades my senior year than I had my freshman year—but I was more resolutely me: I would drop onto the floor and roll down the hallway with my friend Chris. I would raise my hand and challenge the teacher. I would make a fool of myself in classes. I did not care as much what the others thought of me, and it was good.

I liked the man I was out at camp a whole lot more than the man I was back home. There was something about who I was able to be at camp that I wanted to be all year long.

Groping for Culture and the Impossibility of Passing On

The Scouting organization is not much different from other organizations: it believes that culture is passed from one person to another, as Ellsworth describes it, believing that “learning develops linearly, cognitively, cumulatively, progressively, on a one-way road from ignorance to knowledge” (Ellsworth 64). In the previous chapter, I described some forms of production, some of the lore and techniques staff members use to pass—among other things—masculinity on to campers. The Boy Scout organization subscribes to the common notion that knowledge, values, even behaviors are modeled and thereby passed from one person to another. Surely, the Boy Scouts are more sophisticated than to assume that such a cultural transmission is direct; instead, they seem to understand hegemony as the most effective, efficient educational procedure. They understand that one must acquire the consent of the student/camper. They understand that one must appeal to the consenter’s interests, even allowing “wiggle room” for trespass and even resistance—all for the larger educative purpose: to create the sort of individual and social identities which will best serve the status quo and those in power positions. After all,
discontinuity, or the intentional use of chaos to induce continuity and commitment, is one of the primary educative processes deployed by nearly every known culture.

However, we must question whether or not their techniques work: are knowledge, values, and behaviors passed on from one generation to the next in Scouting. Or, is it only an assumption that culture is in fact transmittable? There is considerable evidence that suggests a negative answer.

Eminent anthropologist and linguist William Sapir hit the nail on the head back in 1966 when he suggested that students of culture are “victimized by a convenient but dangerous metaphor” which persuades us that “culture is a neatly packed up assemblage of forms of behavior handed over piecemeal, but without serious breakage, to the passively inquiring child” (Sapir 205). He describes this misunderstanding of culture as the “givenness” of culture. “Culture is not, as a matter of sober fact, a ‘given’ at all,” he argues. “Culture is then not something given but something to be gradually and gropingly discovered” (Sapir 205).

Sapir goes on to argue that this gradual and groping discovery is individual: “elements of culture that come well within the horizon of awareness of one individual are entirely absent in another individual’s landscape” (Sapir 205). Not only that, but “the child will unconsciously accept the various elements of culture with entirely different meanings, according to the biographical conditions that attend their introductions to him” (Sapir 205-206). Just as I have written an entire chapter (Chapter 1) in an effort to expose some of the different meanings I have and the biographical conditions in my own life that influenced these meanings, so too does every child, every staff member, every person: they know things because of how they were presented and the whos they were when it was presented. These things they know are not necessarily—and most likely are not—the things they were taught.
Anthropologist Anthony Wallace echoes Sapir’s notion that culture is hardly passed on.¹ Coming from the “culture and personality” school of anthropology, Wallace goes a step further, arguing that cultures provide “plans”—instructions, processes, or rules—but these plans can only hope to be “rediscovered” with each new generation (101):

[M]uch of every culture must be literally rediscovered in every generation because of the impossibility of describing, and therefore communicating the relevant plans in sufficient detail for their effective execution. The best a culture can do is communicate the general framework of “its” plans and ensure that the new generation is placed in situations in which they will have to reinvent the details, probably with minor modifications. No lecture, training manual, film, or demonstration can fully “get across” all the skills involved even in driving a car; a few rules for manipulating a small and finite set of objects, in order to control the vehicle in certain ways in certain situations, is about all that can be done by instruction; the art must be continuously relearned by practice. (Wallace 109).²

Organizations like the Boy Scouts, then, intentionally place boys into situations where they can reinvent traditional culture. Culture, hegemony, even resistance are not handed over to the boys; rather they grope for, rediscover, and reorder it.

Indeterminancy in Communication

Educator Elizabeth Ellsworth goes even a step further than the linguists and anthropologists: for her, describing, communicating, and educating are all impossible. I appropriate Ellsworth’s notions as they apply to education to how they apply to cultural transmission and acquisition. Ellsworth claims that all modes of address—all attempts to provide whos—fail in their efforts. Ellsworth says,
The power of address, then, is not the power to deliver on demand predicted and desired responses from students or audiences. It is not the power to place students precisely on some desired map of social relations. The power of address is not something that teachers can harness, control, predict, or technologize. ... in teaching, the power of address lies in its indeterminancy. (Ellsworth 38).

By indeterminancy, Ellsworth means that we cannot know what “spaces opened up by imperfect fits between what curricula say we are supposed to be and what we have in actuality not become” (50). Ellsworth claims there is an “impossibility of fits between what a teacher or curriculum intends and what a student gets; what an educational institution desires and what a student body delivers; what a teacher ‘knows’ and what she teaches; what dialogue invites and what arrives unbidden” (Ellsworth 52). There is too much of what James Donald calls “oscillation, slippage and unpredictable transformations” between the curriculum and student understanding; that is, between the whos that are offered (subjects) and the whos that are accepted (individual subjectivities) (Donald 2).

There is nothing new about this notion of the impossibility of education. As far back as Plato’s Meno, Socrates responds to the question of whether or not virtue can be taught, claiming, “I am so far from knowing whether virtue can be taught or not that I do not even have any idea of what virtue itself is. ... Here you are asking me to give you my ‘teaching,’” I who claim that there is no such thing as teaching, only recollection” (Plato 3, 14). Sigmund Freud also contributed to the discussion on educability, claiming education was one of the three “impossible professions” (healing and government being the other two)—professions in which “one can be sure beforehand of achieving unsatisfying results” (Freud 248).
Comparative literary scholar Shoshana Felman builds upon Socrates and Freud, claiming that “in one way or another, every pedagogy stems from its confrontation with the impossibility of teaching” (Felman 20). Just as summer camp curriculum was developed because the schools were not getting the job done—just as Scouting was developed because education was failing—every pedagogy, every curriculum stems from an urge to order, to accomplish what is not being accomplished and perhaps what cannot be accomplished. Felman argues that learning proceeds “not through linear progression, but through breakthroughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions, and deferred action . . . [questioning] the traditional pedagogical belief in intellectual perfectability, the progressistic view of learning as a simple one-way road from ignorance to knowledge” (Felman 23).

Building upon Donald, Alan O’Shea notes the impossibility of identity: we can never achieve or “complete” the identities society requires of us—“the good citizen,” “the free and rational individual,” “the educated and informed scholar,” “the good parent,” “the ideal man/woman” (O’Shea 504). What we think of as “culture” (ordering) can be produced: ideologies, identities, and knowledges can be produced and offered. But one can never achieve completeness of these productions. One can never fully consume what is on one’s plate, for however carefully goals are set out, curricula designed and implemented, there is no guarantee that the knowledges and social subjectivities [whos] offered the pupils are appropriated as intended. For not only are subjectivities always only ever problematically occupied, but they also have to pass through “the messy dynamics of desire, fantasy, and transgression.” (O’Shea 504)
Identities are only occupied—problematically—not inhabited. We are, seemingly, transients, squatters, and nomads in identity, hunting and gathering (groping) for knowledges and cultures, driven by unconscious desires and transgressions.

But in this knowledge of indeterminancy, there is power. We are not helpless and hungry wanderers. Instead, Ellsworth claims,

Unfinished societies and individuals, and failed fits between the social and the individual are necessary if agency, creativity, passions for learning, and transgressions of, rather than conformity to, relations of power are to be possible.

What if we teachers become as curious about the *productiveness* of our continuously remodeled ignore-ances, lacks of fit, and limitations of knowing as we have been about how to achieve full and complete understanding? (Ellsworth 52-53)\(^5\)

Ironically, this is an adequate description of how hegemony works: While Ellsworth is suggesting that power—agency, creativity, transgression—emerges in the “failed fits between the social and the individual,” this is precisely the same location that hegemony locates its power. Gramsci argues this when he says that

the dominant group is co-ordinated concretely with the general interests of the subordinate groups, and the life of the state is conceived of as a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria . . . between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups—equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e., stopping short of narrowly economic-corporate interest. (Gramsci Analysis 205-6)
By paying attention to the productiveness of unstable equilibria—ignores, lacks of fit, limitations of knowing—the dominant group prevails. And, seen from the flipside of the coin—in Ellsworth’s description—this is what makes agency possible.

_Beyond Twin Laws_

While I do not see this as a weakness of Ellsworth’s argument—that she is simply replicating hegemonic practices—I do think it was for her an unintended correlation between her radical pedagogy and hegemonic practices. Rather than a critique of her argument, though, I envision her effectively reiterating two “laws” of culture, reminiscent of Barre Toelken’s “twin laws of the folklore process” as well as Mikhail Bakhtin’s dialogic forces—even as far back as Socrates and his notion of the light horse and the dark horse driving the man.\(^6\)

In folklore studies, Barre Toelken developed the notion of the “twin laws” of the folklore process: conservatism and dynamism (Toelken, *Dynamics* 39).\(^7\) The folklore process is motivated by _conservatism_, on the one hand, which “refers to all those processes, forces, and attitudes that result in the retaining of certain information, beliefs, styles, customs, and the like, and the attempted passing of those materials, essentially intact, through time and space in all the channels of vernacular expression” (9). On the other hand, the folk process is simultaneously motivated by _dynamism_, which “comprises all those elements that function to alter features, contents, meanings, styles, performance, and usage as a particular traditional event takes place repeatedly through space and time” (40). The folklore process—the process by which folklore is expressed or performed—sustains itself because of the interplay between these two forces: retaining, re-producing forces and altering, modifying forces.

Toelken suggests that we will want to know two things about folklore: “what features of content and style have been carried through from earlier sources (conservatism). And we will
need to know the extent to which the bearers of the materials, or the context in which they
operate, have worked upon those materials in such a way as to change them (dynamism)”
(Toelken, Dynamics 39). Interestingly, he suggests we should be interested in how a consumer
receives cultural materials (conservatism) and how they enact change on those materials
(dynamism), for these are the processes which determine cultural production. In effect, Toelken
is saying that straight-forward cultural transmission is impossible: there are conservative forces
at work, so some parts will be maintained word-for-word; but there are also dynamic forces at
work which allow for and create change.

Mikhail Bakhtin witnessed similar forces in his notion of dialogism. In “Discourse in the
Novel,” Bakhtin recognized the existence of “a ceaseless activity, an enormous energy, which is
constantly in the process of being produced by the very forces that it drives” (Clark 7). This
energy is created by the struggle between two uninterrupted forces: centrifugal forces of
“decentralization and disunification” and centripetal forces of “verbal-ideological centralization
and unification” (Bakhtin Discourse 272). Focusing on linguistics, Bakhtin describes centrifugal
forces by showing how even the most unified national language is incredibly “heteroglossic” and
stratified:

The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects,
characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of
generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of
various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical
purpose of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its
own emphasis)—this internal stratification present in every language at any given
moment in historical existence. . . . (Discourse 263-263)
In direct opposition to—or more appropriately, in collaboration with—diversified forces, Bakhtin describes centripetal forces as,

the generative forces of linguistic life, forces that struggle to overcome the heteroglossia of language, forces that unite and centralize verbal-ideological thought, creating within a heteroglot national language the firm, stable linguistic nucleus of an officially recognized literary language, or else defending an already formed language from the pressure of growing heteroglossia (Bakhtin Discourse 270-271)

Bakhtin saw these forces at work not only in linguistics, but also in nature, in the human body, as well as in society and culture, making them all “a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies” (272).

Ellsworth, though, takes the discussion beyond the dualities of these other theorists. In her field of education, she agrees with their initial impulse, arguing against a teacher-student dynamic “in which it is supposed that learning develops linearly, cognitively, cumulatively, progressively, on a one-way road from ignorance to knowledge” (Ellsworth 64 my emphasis).

Toelken, Bakhtin, even Gramsci, in their own fields—folklore, linguistics, history—demonstrate the discontinuity within the contiguous. However, Ellsworth does not see only two forces at work (teacher/student, conservatism/dynamism, centripetal/centrifugal). She quotes Felman’s interpretation of Lacan when she posits a “third participant” in the supposed dual structure between teacher and student. This third participant is the unconscious. Betwixt and between the teacher and the student, the unconscious “speaks,” complicating the relationship in two distinct ways:

First, it brings a passion for ignorance, that is, resistances to knowledge and refusals of one’s own implication in it—it brings forgetting.
Second, it brings a discourse that is neither the teacher’s nor the student’s. That is, it brings into the pedagogical situation social and cultural norms and prohibitions that have required that I and my student code knowledge and desire into the licit and illicit. (Ellsworth 63-64)

The way the unconscious “speaks,” though, is indirectly:

All learning and knowledge takes a detour through the discourse of the Other—through the unconscious and opaque dynamics of social and cultural prohibition. And it is because of the presence of this third term that speaks not directly, but through substitutions, displacements, dreams, and slips of the tongue, that learning cannot proceed directly. (Ellsworth 64)

Thus, the norms, prohibitions, knowledges, and interests emerge in the relationship between teacher and student in the form of “asides, stand-in substitutions, denials, forgettings, prohibitions, feelings of fear, shame, pleasure. It returns to the teacher-student interaction the repressed of a society, a culture, and the individual lives lived there” (Ellsworth 64). That is, the unconscious, speaking through indirect media (like folklore), reintroduces all sorts of repressed notions, desires, and transgressions which are not or cannot be consciously spoken.

Surely, the unconscious can be seen within Toelken’s law of dynamism, Bakhtin’s centripetal forces, and Gramsci’s subordinate interests; however, Ellsworth draws it out as its own player with its own repertoire of tactics and strategies—which even the conservative, centrifugal, dominant forces must contend with in themselves. I will sidestep a deeper discussion of the unconscious and its role and conclude from the arrival of this third participant that culture is not simply passed from transmitter to receiver. It scurries about, emerging through asides and stand-ins, only half transmitted and half received. Identity, ideology, knowledge,
lore, behavior, characteristics are all impossibly transmitted; and all culture bearers must seek it out, wrestle with it, grope for it. This is how hegemony works, but it is also how culture and identity work.

The main question of the previous chapter was to discern who the Boy Scouts of America—and specifically the staff members at Camp Lakota—think its campers were. The main question of this chapter is to discern just who the staff members think they themselves are.

Scouts, Know Thyself: The Complexity of Passing On

It is not as if we have to listen to a bunch of theorists describe the impossibility of passing on. Study after study of Scouts and Scouting demonstrates that what the organization seeks to “pass on” is hardly what is “taken in” by the membership:¹⁹

Edwin Nicholson produced a study in 1940—his doctoral dissertation—titled, Education and the Boy Scout Movement in America. In this study, Nicholson opens with an accusation against the Boy Scouts lodged “a number of years ago” by Judge Benjamin Lindsey of the Juvenile Court in Denver in which he says that “a group of Eagle Scouts had come through his court, and that, in a subsequent study which he made, he could find no difference between Scouts and non-Scouts so far as conduct was concerned” (Nicholson Education ix).¹⁰ At least partially based upon these accusations, the National organization put Dr. Henry P. Fairchild of New York University in charge of a study.¹¹ In another version of the story, it was when Hugh Hartshorne and Mark A. May wrote in Studies in Deceit (1928) that Boy Scouts were “neither more nor less honest than non-scouts” that National commissioned the Fairchild study (Levy 74).¹²

Fairchild was asked to find answers to two questions: “Are Scouts as a whole superior in character to non-Scouts?” and “If so, to what extent is Scouting responsible for the difference?”
Fairchild found that Scouts were superior to non-Scouts in character development, but the role of the Scouting movement in that superiority was inconclusive:

Scouts as a whole are a selected group, enjoying many initial advantages in social setting and cultural influences which should conduce to desirable conduct habits. . . . It is just as possible that high character may be the cause of Scout membership as that Scout membership may be the cause of high character. It is just as possible that favorable influences may be the cause of high character as Scout membership. (Fairchild 50)

Fairchild goes on to provide further underwhelming conclusions:

There is no proof that Scout membership is in any degree a cause of the superior character development of Scouts. A reasonable, commonsense assumption might be that Scouting is one of several favorable factors that combine to produce a high general level of conduct habits among boys who share in it, whose social situations cover a wide range, but on the average is distinctly above that of boys who are not Scouts. (Fairchild 99)\(^\text{13}\)

With Fairchild’s study, critic John Dean points out, the National Office discovered “they couldn’t put Scouting in a test-tube and distill character” (Dean 50).

In Nicholson’s *Education* study (1940), he examines the “Boy Scout theory of morality, the Boy Scout philosophy of social improvement, and the Boy Scout conception of the educative process in its psychological as well as its sociological bearings” (xi). Nicholson’s intention is to re-examine these “foundations” of Scouting in light of the “rapidly shifting events of the day” to ensure their appropriateness for contemporary demands (xi). In the end, Nicholson enthusiastically endorses Scouting’s “pioneering work in educational activity programs” (107), Scouting’s opening up possibilities in “the play-way” (107), and Scouting’s potential for testing
new educational theories (109). However, Nicholson is not as enthusiastic about aspects of the Scouting program which detract from Scouting’s potential:

In moral and social philosophy, habituation rather than flexibility and adaptability seems to be the guiding purpose of the Boy Scout movement. In these realms, acceptance by authority takes precedence over thoughtful judgment; manipulation by emotional stimuli holds a more dominant position in the movement than does the cultivation of intelligent and critical thinking. Deviation from the norm in any of the deeper issues of moral and social life is not encouraged. Moral and social nurture essentially follow a pattern of conformity. Originality and uniqueness in reconstructing new patterns of experience in the moral and social spheres of existence are subordinated to a consolidation of the traditional and the old, which, per se, are deemed the greater good. Proceeding from the premise that the traditional and the old constitute moral and social good, the task in some aspects of the Boy Scout program seems to be conceived as a process of transmitting the cultural heritage, especially as it bears upon social philosophy, by method of indoctrination rather than by method of intellectual insight. (107-108)

Nicholson provides some suggested “theoretical orientations” and “logical applications” which the Scouting movement could take which would help it “develop into a quality movement rather than a quantity movement” (110). In brief, he suggests:

More emphasis will be placed upon ideals gained through intelligent consideration of experience and less emphasis upon ideals acquired by emotional conditioning. Greater stress will be placed upon the slower inner growth through intrinsic activity and less upon required verbalization. Greater dependence will be placed upon being and less upon seeming, inward transformation of the character rather than outward show. (110)
Nicholson whole-heartedly supports the possibilities inherent in Scouting, but suggests it reorient itself before it goes too far down the wrong path.

Between the Fairchild and Nicholson studies, BSA Executive Board Member Dr. Ray O. Wyland led a study of the relationships between Scouting and schools titled, Scouting in the Schools (1934). Wyland surveyed 957 school superintendents, 1,252 school principals, and 436 Scout Executives, and included questions about comparative records between Scouts and non-Scouts.

He concluded that the percentage of Scouts staying in high school is slightly higher than non-Scouts. The scholarship marks were practically equal. Certainly nothing significant came out of this study to prove that Scouts were of higher character than non-Scouts.

(Dean 50)

This seems to be the common denominator in Scouting research: the relationship between Scouting and the research findings is either negligible or inconclusive in scholastic achievement, reputation, and even Scouting values:

**Scholastic Achievement**

While many studies show that Scouts are higher achievers academically than non-Scouters (Hawkins, 1935; Bourgeois, 1939; Monson & Douglas, 1937; and Farnworth, 1933), a number of other studies contradict or problematize these findings. For example, Baker Hindman (1937) refutes the studies which say that Scouting attracts the more intelligent boys and shows that by the time Scouts have reached the advanced ranks, both the high and low intelligence groups are gone (47). And, Clyde Lewis (1937) suggests there is no evidence connecting Scouting to scholarship.
Reputation

While Ridenour (1929) demonstrated that Scouts had worse reputations than non-Scouts (45), Paul Hawkins (1935) demonstrated that they had better reputations than non-Scouts (58). In 1940, scouters associated with the Greater New York Councils initiated a poll supervised by Dr. George Gallup to understand “(1) why more men do not contribute money to the Boy Scouts of America; (2) why more boys do not join the movement; and (3) why many Boy Scouts drop out of the ranks before reaching the age limit” (quoted in Levy 78). One quarter of the men interviewed did not recognize character-building and citizenship-training as core motives of Scouting and instead thought “companionship, pleasure, and sports” as the only benefits of Scouting (Levy 78). According to the boys who were interviewed, almost “two-thirds of all scouts are not completely satisfied with scouting as it now exists, even though many of them cannot say what they would like to have changed or added to the program” (Levy 79). Apparently, not only are the Scouts’ reputations questionable, but so too is the organization’s—when a sizeable portion of survey results do not coincide with organizational propaganda.

Scouting Values

There is similar uncertainty in studies about the role of Scouting in passing on its values and ideals. Surely, there are studies which demonstrate Scouts are more industrious, honest, courteous, obedient, possess more personal pride, have a larger number of bank accounts, and are more religious (Bourgeois 37). Others show that Scouts are slightly more courteous and honest than non-Scouts (Lewis 89), that Scouts are more reliable and honest (Hawkins 58), and that Scouts are more industrious (Gorman 52). Adrian Lebold (1933) claims that 400 Eagle Scouts in his study (from 20 Councils in Region IV) are more emotionally stable, extroverted, more self-
sufficient, dominant, religiously loyal, more open to denominationalism, socially responsible, and have a greater sense of integrity than non-Scouts (47). All in all, Scouts look pretty good.

However, there are a number of studies that show a more complicated picture of Scouts. For example, Bert Edgar (1936) shows that Scouts get along better with others and have a better sense of civic responsibility, but he also shows that Scouts demonstrate less respect for authority—and that there is no difference between Scouts and non-Scouts in their “responsibility toward home, use of leisure, and the selection of a hobby or vocation” (39) Similarly, George Miller (1938) sees no difference between the two groups in reference to obedience, dependability, effort, courtesy, and thrift (47). Strangely, Gordon Ridenour (1929) found that even within their own ranks, older Scouts tested worse than the younger Scouts on the Good Citizenship Test (45). And, Edward Gorman (1929) found that Scouts were less faithful in their church attendance (52). In the end, David Carpenter (1938) tried to measure the influences of the Boy Scouts of America on its membership and found that “the effect of Scouting on social attitudes is apparently negligible” (85).

Some studies start out positive, like Bradford Datson (1935) who studied Eagle Scouts and found them to be more intelligent, higher achievers in school, and better leaders than non-Scouts and younger Scouts (145). However, Datson’s picture is not so clean-cut: he also found Eagle Scouts to have a wide range of mental and achievement abilities—like the general population—and (a) it is unclear where his leadership ability comes from—“native” or “acquired,” and (b) that Eagle Scouts come from “better than average families and homes and are probably given better than average cultural opportunities at home,” which implies that Scouting is not necessarily the cause of their superiority (145).
Another example of a good review gone bad is Wallace H. Maw (1948) who studied the interests of Eagle Scouts from the Cincinnati Area Council and their relationship to the merit badges they earned along the way. He evaluates the merit badge program based upon nine “internal” and eight “external” criteria. Maw found that while the Merit Badge program “is an active program in which a boy may pursue many of his interests or develop new interests” and it “may be the outlet for an already established hobby or new hobbies and leisure-time activities,” it did not contribute significantly or at all to any of the other criteria—including developing intellectual independence, proper heterosexual interests, emancipation from home, emotional maturity, or a philosophy of life (Maw 85-88).

A more recent study in the early 1970s commissioned by the national Executive Board and carried out by the research firm Daniel Yankelovich, Inc., found that Scouting was “highly regarded by an overwhelming majority of Americans” (Quoted in Peterson 194). However, they received many comments like, “Scouting teaches a lot of things you never get to use afterward,” “Scouting gets boring,” “Scouting is too organized,” and “Scouting is kind of out of date.” What’s more, “many boys and young men believed that Scouting’s programs pointed not toward adulthood but backward toward childhood. The older the boy, the less likely he was to find Scouting’s programs compatible with his interests and view of the future” (Peterson 194). Apparently, Scouting was not passing on whos that the boys wanted to become anymore. So, in an effort to become more “relevant,” the BSA made a “sweeping overhaul of the Boy Scout program” in 1972, including dropping “Boy” from the name on most communications, publishing the 8th edition of the Scout Handbook, revising the advancement plan, emphasizing decision-making by the boys, deemphasizing outdoor skills, a focus on home and community,
and creating leadership corps for older boys (Peterson 195-196). These changes were not well-received, and within the decade, the organization reverted to its tried-and-true tactics.  

### Passing As While Passing On

According to a recent study commissioned by the National Council conducted by the research firm Harris Interactive (2005), for a Scout or a man who was a Scout for five or more years:

- 83% say “the values they learned in Scouting continue to be very important to them today”
- 87% “attribute some of my self-confidence in my work to having been a Scout”
- 83% say “having been a Scout helped me to be a better leader” in “real-life situations”

And compared to those who have never been a Scout,

- 91% completed high school (non-Scout: 87%)
- 35% earn a college degree (non-Scout: 19%)
- “on average” have larger household incomes ($80,000 compared to $61,000)
- 74% own their own homes (non-Scout: 65%) (Boy Scouts Values 5-6)

Repeated throughout the report, “five or more years” of immersion in the Scout culture seems to reach some sort of critical mass, after which Scouting shows lifelong impact. That is to say, after five years, a person can be said to have been enculturated as a Scout—incorporating Scout values into their lives, reaping the benefits of being a Scout, etc. As such, it would seem that while direct passing on does not work, prolonged exposure to what is passed on does seem to have a significant impact.

Hopefully, it is not too much of a leap to transfer these findings to what happens at summer camp. That is to say, if summer camp is meant to be a pinnacle experience in Scouting,
a person who has been immersed in Boy Scout summer camp for five years or more could be called enculturated in not only Boy Scout summer camp culture but truly Scout culture in general.

Realistically speaking, summer camp staff members account for a large number of youth in Scouting who have five or more years of experience at summer camp. A model Boy Scout has his first Boy Scout summer camp experience at the age of 11. After two more years as a camper, he would be old enough (14 years old) to spend his fourth summer as a CIT on camp staff. Participation at Boy Scout summer camp drops off precipitously after the fifth year (or after a boy is 15 years old). Based upon research done in the Black Swamp Area Council in 2004, it was found that 63.7% of eleven year old Scouts attend Boy Scout summer camp. And the numbers hover in that same area for 12 and 13 years olds: 62.6% of 12 year olds and 59.2% of 13 year olds attend summer camp. There is another slightly lower plateau for the 14 and 15 year olds—56.7% and 56.1% respectively—which is perhaps best understood by two factors: (a) there are more 14 year olds registered in the Council in 2003 (314 total) than every other age group except 12 year olds (382 total), and (b) the fact that this age report also includes staff members, so a portion of the percentage is staff members not campers. There is more significant decrease in participation thereafter: only 39.9% of 16 year olds (91 out of 228 registered 16 year olds) and 23.5% of 17 year olds attend summer camp (56 out of 238 registered 17 year olds). These numbers include the staff members who are 14-17 years old, which accounts for perhaps 20-30 boys between the two Boy Scout camp staffs. There are not a lot of older boys attending summer camp if they are not on staff.

As such, I would like to use camp staff members as the source not only of what is passed on at summer camp, but also as a resource for discovering what has been taken in. By all
standards, these staff members are the most immersed Scout population at summer camp: they are living Scouting twenty-four hours a day, six days a week, for five weeks. On average, staff members at Camp Lakota have spent three summers as campers prior to coming on staff. Not only that, but staff members at Camp Lakota have spent an average of four years on staff. Added together, the “average” staff member has spent nearly 6 months at summer camp. And counting hours, “two months at summer camp is the equivalent of a whole year in school,” they have had the equivalent of 3 full years of schooling in camp culture (McBride 6). These campers-cum-staffers were “raised” on Camp Lakota culture and somehow experienced what they call “Lakota Magic.” Staff members “consumed” Camp Lakota culture as campers, then they chose to put themselves in a position to re-produce it. I would argue that the culture hasn’t changed all that much in between times. While the stories have changed, the themes have remained. While the daily schedule may have changed, the core events have remained. While the staff comes and goes, they continue to perform many of the same skits, sing many of the same songs, perform many of the same roles and duties at Camp Lakota.

*Passing As as Identity Ordering*

One of the most striking things about summer camp staff members is that while they are the most enculturated Scouts at camp, they are relatively culturally disordered. Their whos as staff members are not already all ready; instead, they are still becoming. Anthropologist Harry F. Wolcott recalls a conversation with an old Kwakiutl man which demonstrates the “still becomingness” of whos:

Having been struck by how uninformed my Kwakiutl pupils were about the ways of their people (and having thereby forfeited a golden opportunity to observe cultural acquisition in process), I was wondering about the circumstances under which my elderly informant
had become so knowledgeable. I asked him when he had learned what he was now explaining to me, fully expecting him to say that his grandfather had passed this knowledge on to him while he was a young boy. Instead, to my disappointment, he confessed that only recently had he learned much of what he was telling me.

Wolcott assumed that one became a full-fledged Kwakiutl at some point during one’s life, endowed with all the knowledge one possessed. Instead, Wolcott found he “had become so intent on learning how it was to be Kwakiutl that I had failed to realize that my most informed informants were still ‘becoming’ Kwakiutl as they assumed new roles as elders and guardians of their heritage” (Wolcott 43). The way I interpret this “still becomingness” is that that old Kwakiutl—just as my staff members—are all passing as what they are becoming but are not yet.24

Boy Scout staff members “pass” as masculine in the same way that a light-skinned African American might pass as white or how a homosexual might pass as heterosexual. Like any other individual, staff members are attempting to pick from the vast array of whos circulating in their various culture groups and organize a self-concept from them. When the individual finds a who that appeals to them, they try it on. They attempt to pass as it. And, in the context of Boy Scout summer camp, these staff members find themselves immersed in a gendered-masculine institution. They attempt to fit in and fulfill the obligation of their role at camp by passing as any number of different masculinities available at summer camp. Staff members pass as male—as men—by performing masculinity. Since identity in general and gender identity in specific is really nothing more than an imperfect wedding between an individually-organized self-concept and socially-ascribed notions of gender, while there are constraints, hierarchies, and limitations, there is nothing set in stone about masculinity.
I am sensitive to the fact that some scholars, like feminist Sara Ahmed, suggest that “we must resist the temptation of generalizing passing as simply a condition of identity formation” (92). Unfortunately, I do not heed Ahmed’s warning, for I do view passing as a condition of or mechanism for identity ordering. Individuals, groups, even institutions pass as someone they want to be in an attempt to become it. However, I agree with the rationale Ahmed uses to support her argument. She argues that viewing passing as a condition of identity formation oversimplifies passing and treats all passing as the same. Ahmed argues that we can and should “differentiate between a black subject who passes as white, and a white subject who passes as white” (93). To dissolve the differences into a generalized notion of identity formation ignores the “politics of passing” and refuses “to recognize the constraints which temporarily fix subjects in relations of social antagonism” (93). I recognize that a girl passing as a man is not equivalent to a boy passing as man. To generalize these two identity orderings into one notion of passing disregards the inherent constraints, dangers, histories, and politics of the former which hardly exist with the latter. Surely, there are constraints, dangers, histories, and politics to negotiate when a boy passes as a man, but Ahmed claims the danger of “being seen” and the chance of suffering from a “crisis of not belonging” are less for a boy passing as a man (94). I am not sure that I agree with Ahmed on this point, for the failure to pass as what one is passed as—that is the risk taken when ordering any identity. To recognize the different ways one might pass does not diminish the fact that passing is a critical way to order identity.

Scholars like Ahmed would be right to accuse me of appropriating the definition of passing. Traditionally, the notion of passing is reserved for light-skinned black subjects passing as white, and more recently, homosexual subjects passing as heterosexuals. There are many definitions of passing, but at its core, passing is “a cultural performance whereby one
member of a defined social group masquerades as another in order to enjoy the privileges afforded to the dominant group” (Leary 85). From that basic premise, connotations abound: Pamela L Caughie claims that passing “carries certain pejorative connotations of deception, dishonesty, fraudulence, or betrayal. It designates an effort to disguise or suppress one’s racial heritage, racially marked body, or sexual orientation” (20). Catherine Squires and Daniel Brouwer describe how some see passing as tragic (Davis, 1991; Horton, 1994; Ramsey, 1976), accusing the passer of “self-hatred and disloyalty,” while others see passing as “playful and subversive” (Ginsberg, 1996; Robinson, 1994; Tyler, 1994), while still others view passing as ambivalent (Beriant, 1993; Helvie, 1997; Sheehy, 1999), recognizing that passing “can enact psychological or physical suffering and creative identity play . . . as well as elicit painful rage and surreptitious joy from the in-group” (Squires & Brouwer 286).

For this dissertation, I borrow a rather ambivalent notion of passing from Erving Goffman’s Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (1963). Goffman works up to a notion of passing based upon his notion of stigma. He defines a stigma as “an undesired differentness from what we had anticipated” (Stigma 5). Goffman sees himself as one of the “normals”—those “who do not depart negatively from the particular expectations at issue” (Stigma 5). I argue that all people carry a stigma within them—at the very least a perceived stigma. By this, I mean that all people experience what Goffman describes as a “discrepancy between an individual’s actual social identity and his virtual one,” between who we are and the who others offer us to be (Stigma 41). He suggests that these discrepancies may exist (in any who), while I argue they do exist (in every who).

Goffman claims that discrepancies can take two forms. There are the discredited—those whose differentness is known or readily noticed, like “abominations of the body” (physical
deformities), “blemishes of individual character” like unnatural passions and weaknesses, and
the “tribal stigma of race, nation, and religions” (Stigma 4). Goffman seems to suggest that the
discredited cannot pass: they cannot hide their differentness.30

More important to my study, Goffman also describes what I would think is a much larger
group, the **discreditable**—those whose differentness is not known or readily perceived by others
(Stigma 5). This group, I argue, is the vast majority of the population. Rather than manage
tension like the discredited do, the discreditable manage information: they are in the business of
“the management of undisclosed discrediting information about self” (Stigma 42). This is what
Goffman calls passing. “Because of the great rewards in being considered normal, almost all
persons who are in a position to pass will do so on some occasion by intent” (Stigma 74).31

Journalist Dr. Brooke Kroeger describes three main reasons why people pass—for
opportunity, safety, adventure—or some combination of the three: “They have done it by
mistake or they have done it by design. They passed to avoid conflict or personal rejection or to
fulfill serious professional aspirations. They passed full-time, part-time, or only on occasion”
(Kroeger 7). Kroeger claims passing is when “people effectively present themselves as other
than who they understand themselves to be. *Effectively* is key because an ineffectual effort to
pass is just that, a failed attempt” (Kroeger 7). According to Carole-Anne Tyler,

> the mark of passing successfully is the lack of a mark of passing . . . . In fact, passing can
only name the very failure of passing, an indication of a certain impossibility at its heart,
of the contradictions which constitute it . . . . Passing is the effect of a certain affect, an
uncanny feeling of uncertainty about a difference that is not quite visible, not quite
known, not quite there” (Female 189)
The visibility of a passing is the abolishment of that passing: the notice of others is a threat to being undone. To go without recognition is the goal of any passing.

In Kroeger’s definition, passing “involves erasing details or certain aspects of a given life in order to move past perceived, suspected, or actual barriers to achieve desired results” (Kroeger 8). She suggests,

In deliberate acts of passing, not only must passers withhold or camouflage revealing personal information that could damage or destroy their prospects, but they also must take deliberate steps to stop outside sources from telling on them. The point is to be blend in with the surroundings. Passers make an art of appearing in all respects—speech, gestures, attitudes, conversation, mannerisms, expressions, associations, interests, apparent lifestyle, and dress—to be bona fide members of the group or situation in which they seek admittance or acceptance. (Kroeger 104-105)

Sander Gilman claims that passing is a way “of trying to gain control” (391). Gilman considers passing from the perspective of those seeking aesthetic surgery. He argues that passing “is a means of restoring not ‘happiness’ but a sense of order in the world. We ‘pass’ in order to regain control of ourselves and to efface that which is seen (we believe) as different, which marks us as visible in the world” (391). To be seen is to be disordered.

Finding and Passing as Another Who at Camp

At Boy Scout camp, staff members are familiar with this sort of passing, this sort of controlling of visibility. There are, seemingly, discreditable behaviors which would lower staff standing if they were witnessed. For instance, second-year staff member Mitch argues that a good staff member is also a good actor: “If you’re in a bad mood, you need to act like you’re not. A bad staff member would probably, you’d be very able to tell that they were ticked off.” Mitch
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adds that a bad staff member “isn’t so good at keeping it away from the Scouts.” He claims that
“camp is just one big stage”—one seemingly of unending improvisation, for he gives thanks for
staff area where he can take a “break from having to think up things to do.”

Mitch also mentions that he is heavily involved in his church youth group at home. And,
he feels a barrier between the two worlds. He claims, “camp life is separate from noncamp life.”
“As soon as I’m outside the gates, I’m in a different life almost. Like in my memory, it’s kinda
like this is my life at camp, [outside of camp] is the rest of my life. You just put it behind you
the rest of the year.”

When he’s at camp, however, Mitch finds a different who. He says he sees himself as a
“mediator” on staff, “someone who is outside the groups.” But at home, he’s very different: at
home, “I have a group of friends I hang out with, and there’s certain people I just really don’t
like. But here at camp, I seem to get along with everyone on staff. At home, I’m more of a
clique person.” The clique back home is his church youth group, and he admits, “we’re less the
cool kids or the popular kids or the jocks, than just the older kids.” But he thinks the difference
is significant, attributing it to the fact that at camp, the boundaries between groups are not strictly
enforced: “Here at camp, they don’t seem to be as rigid about, “Hey, you can’t hang out with
us!” or “You’re not part of our group”—as they are at home. Not nearly as strict.” But perhaps
the biggest thing that happened to Mitch was when he returned home after camp:

I noticed that I was just a little bit more capable of leading. Being a leader instead of a
follower. I wasn’t as afraid to do physical things. I was never any good at basketball, but
last year after I got back from camp, I decided, ya know what, I’m going to learn how to
play basketball and I’m going to do it well. And now I’m actually one of the best people
at my church. Also I think I was a lot more confident when I got back from camp. And a lot less afraid to stand out or do something crazy, out of the blue.

He attributes this to the fact that things work differently at summer camp:

Once you’re at camp, you realize that by standing out, by not being part of the crowd, it isn’t going to make people, it might make a few people think you’re dumb or stupid or whatever, [but] the majority are going to say, “Wow, I wish I could go up and do that” or “I wish I had thought of that” or “I wish I’d have the courage to do that.”

Oddly, in seeming opposition to Goffman’s notion of stigma—where one tries to efface difference—Mitch says, “Here, standing out is a good thing.”

Program director Josh attempts to explain the difference between the two worlds: “Here, they can be, they can create who they are with relatively little effort, they can be someone very different. And maybe it’s not anybody different. Maybe that’s who they actually are.” Josh suggests that staff members are, “I wouldn’t say geeks, but we’re all, I don’t want to say outcasts. We deviate from societal norms.” He describes how we all come from backgrounds where maybe we were tormented or whatever at school, and we come to camp, and we can pick out things about each other, but we’ve all been in the same situation. We’re not here for that. This is like an escape from like reality, if you will. We’ve created our own fantasy world, through summer camp. Which I think is funny because you have school life and then you’re doing your fantasy life—summer camp.

This fantasy life, however, opens up the avenue for a new “real” life. Josh gave the example of the speech a young staff member, Harold, gave the year before at the closing Staff Banquet. Josh describes how Harold talked about how
he had his friends at home, but he realizes now that they’re not the real friends that they claimed to be. Because real friends don’t make fun of you and talk about you and hurt you. And, he now knows his real friends are here, and when he gets back he’s going to let them know—along those lines. Had he never come here, that would have been completely different—that he didn’t get to develop… he didn’t have friends for twenty years. But it’s nice to know that for two years, he did. Unfortunately, they were the last two years.

After last summer, Harold died. It was an event that shook many returning staff members: they all talked about Harold, and a number of them remembered the speech he’d made the year before. Josh remarked, “he didn’t even realize that’s who he was until after he finished summer week.” Camp allowed him to experience a who—a Friend, a Man—that he didn’t know he could be.

Marcus experienced the same thing his first year on camp staff. He says that he “found himself at camp.” That first year, he explained how he “was like, ‘Hey, this is Marcus. This is who I am.’ And then brought that back to the real world.” He described how his first year of camp staff changed him from someone who “let things happen” to someone who tried “to get involved with lots of things as far as people-wise.” It is as if he changed from a passive to an active participant in his life, saying, “I’d rather be doing than sit here and watch. I’d rather walk past somebody and be like, ‘Yo, what’s up?’ instead of being like looking at the ground and not say anything.” It is a shift in confidence: walking around like he would at camp as a staff member: “I am the one who says hello. I welcome you to this place.” The prestige and resultant confidence of being on staff makes him want to stay in this world. Since he cannot, he takes it home with him and passes as his new who there as well.
It is worth noting that taking one’s new who back home is not always easy. In what is probably the most challenging aspect of staffing—the return home after camp—we see how the rules change. Mitch talks about returning home the previous year after camp and having “conflicts” with his parents “because I had a sense of I was supposed to be calling the shots.” He describes how before summer camp staffing,

I was like “Hey I wanna spend the night at my friend’s house, can I?” When I got back [from camp] it was more like, “Hey, Thursday night I’m spending the night at so-and-so’s house.”

And then [his parents] were like, “And when did you ask this?”

“Oh, I forgot to ask, I just figured Thursday night’s free, I’ll just go ahead and do it.” Got used to managing my own time.

He said he didn’t have much problem with his friends, but his parents’ culture was a bit different than what he had been living out at camp. I worked with a staff member in Oregon by the name of Billy who had the completely opposite problem: his parents applauded his increased maturity, but his friends back home became “lame.” Billy wrote me an email after summer camp in 1997, claiming “camp withdrawal symptoms.” He said, “I have been thinking after camp my life was going to be so exciting and new but instead it is just as boring as it used to be. Camp raised my expectations for life and now my expectations are as they used to be.” Sometimes, who we pass as at camp does not pass at home.

Passing as Camp Director through the Legend of Phaethon

Studying the Hopi Kachina dances, Dorothy Eggnan (1956) found the children sometimes had a difficult time understanding the violence and abuse perpetrated against them by their
relatives during their initiation rituals. However, she found that “repetition is a powerful conditioning agent”:

[A]s the youngsters watched each initiation, they relived their own, and by again sharing the experience gradually worked out much of the bitter residue from their own memories of it, while also rationalizing and weaving group emotions ever stronger into their own emotional core. (Eggan 364)
The more they witnessed and then participated in the rituals, the more they came to understand and appreciate the initiation rituals. Repetition recruited them to participate in an activity and ideology which originally repulsed them.

The same was true for me. I would like to use the performance of a particular narrative legend to demonstrate some of the characteristics of passing as and passing on amongst staff members at Camp Lakota. This narrative is the “Myth of Phaethon.” Similar to the “Legend of Oliver Spencer,” this story is performed in front of the campers on Sunday night—the day they arrive in camp—but prior to the Opening Campfire as opposed to the end of the campfire. As the camp director, I told this story during the 2003 summer camp season. To my knowledge, this was the first time a formal narrative was performed at the gathering place prior to the Opening Campfire.

“Phaethon” is a Greek myth which I had learned about in a college English class, and I had been inspired by the way that Dr. Nancy Warr had teased out a twist at the end of the story. I felt that that twist described what the campers and staffers could and should do while they were at camp. As such, I told this Greek myth more like a fairytale: it had not really happened, but the story had a good moral to it.
The Legend of Phaethon

Right before the entire camp headed down to the Council Ring for the Opening Campfire, I met the campers at Meecheway Lodge (the dining hall). Meecheway is like most other camp dining halls: old, wooden timbers, with wagonwheels hanging from the rafters with bare lightbulbs encircling the wheels. On the walls are plaques from every troop that has ever come to camp. Some random pictures, deer heads, flags, and trophies are scattered throughout as well. Outside is where the huge flag pole and large Liberty Bell-like dinner bell sit—and this is where the troops gathered for flag raising before breakfast and flag lowering before supper. This is the parade ground. Here is where the campers gathered before Opening Campfire, and here is where they heard the Legend of Phaethon:

I walked out to the flag pole and stood upon the concrete base of the flagpole. I raised the Scout sign to gain attention. The Scout sign is made by raising the right arm in a ninety-degree angle and raising the three middle fingers while touching the thumb and pinkie finger. It sounds more archaic than it is, but in Scouting, when the sign is raised, people who see it raise their hand in the same sign. When I worked at Cub Scout camp, the staff had a saying, “When the sign goes up, the mouth goes quiet.”

“How many of you know Greek legends, like with Zeus, Apollo, Athena and such?” I would ask. This was meant to be a performance, but somewhat interactive. Many hands would go up: boys from northwest Ohio are apparently taught their Greek legends somewhere along the way.

Then I would ask, “How many of you know the story of Phaethon?” Few if any hands shot up in the crowd.
I went on: “I’m going to tell you the story of Phaethon—a boy about your age, maybe a little bit older. It’s a story I told the staff members when we began staff training. It is the challenge I laid before them, and it is the challenge I lay before you.”

In these few short sentences, so very much has occurred: I had added to the camper’s preexisting knowledge of Greek mythology; I had shown them to be knowledgeable and that I was going to pass something on to them, adding to their knowledge. I had also chosen a story about a boy that is their age, as if to say, “Here is the sort of boy you should be.” And I quickly followed it up with the connection to the staff members, suggesting that if they heed the message of this story, they will walk in the staff members’ footsteps. I was attempting to offer an enticing who in order to make the ground fertile for transmission.

I then launched into the legend, swinging my arms around, pointing at people in the audience, winking at Scoutmasters, cajoling young Scouts:

Phaethon was a boy about 14 years old, maybe 15. Growing up, he’d been told that his father was the Sun God. Does anybody know who the Sun God is? Yes, that’s right, Apollo. Phaethon’s mom would point up at the sun as it crossed the sky, and she would tell young Phaethon that ‘That’s your dad driving that sun chariot across the sky.’

One day, Phaethon packed up his stuff and decided to go visit his dad. He hiked up big Mount Olympus where all the gods lived, and he came to the throne room of Apollo, the Sun God. He opened up the huge doors and there, at the end of the huge hall, was this massive throne, and sitting on it was Apollo, the Sun God.

So far, the story models a vacant fatherhood, but certainly reflects the sort of masculinity Scouting would approve of: Phaethon knows what he wants and he goes after it. The story continues:
When Phaethon walked in, Apollo recognized him immediately and was overjoyed. “My dearest son, it is so good to see you! I have missed you so very much! I am so pleased that you have come to find me! I am so pleased, I will give you a gift. Ask anything you want, and you may have it. Anything you want, I will give it to you.”

Phaethon is thrilled, and being the age he is, he says, “I want to drive the sun chariot across the sky.” He’s essentially saying, “Dad, I want the car keys.”

Apollo is not too excited about this: “Oh, that’s very dangerous, son. Please pick anything else. Anything you want—it’s yours. Just not that. It’s very dangerous.” I mean this sun chariot is big and the horses that pull it are bigger than Budwieser Clydesdales, and they’ve got flames shooting out of their nostrils. They’re big, beefy beasts!

Phaethon says, “Dad, I want to drive the sun chariot across the sky.”

“Son, you don’t understand,” says Apollo. “Even Zeus, king of the gods, cannot drive the sun chariot across the sky. It is very difficult and requires great strength. Only I, Apollo, the Sun God, can drive the chariot across the sky. Please, ask anything else. I am so pleased to see you, I don’t want to lose you. Choose anything else, and it will be yours.”

“Dad, you said I could have anything I wanted, and that is what I want. I want to drive the sun chariot across the sky.”

After the traditional third interdiction—common in nearly all Western jokes and stories—Apollo gave in to his son’s request.

He took Phaethon and smothered him with ointment that would keep him from burning up—like sun tan lotion with 5000 spf rating. He then took the crown which was the sun
and put it on his head. And then told him some rules. Apollo told him, “Keep the chariot in the ruts that have been cut. You’ll see the pathway, and there are ruts dug into the ground there. Keep in those ruts. Don’t go too high or you’ll scorch the constellations, and don’t go too low or you’ll burn up Mother Earth. Stay the middle path. And it’s scary up there, so don’t look down.”

It is here in the story that we get a piece of the “passing on” motif: the father is passing on to his sons the lessons of adulthood: lather on the protection, follow the middle path that I’ve already created, and keep moving forward, never look back. The story continues:

Apollo opens the huge doors, and the horses pulling the sun chariot leap forward. They’re off! They’re charging up into the sky. Zoom! And there’s Phaethon, at the reins. He’s doing pretty good. Staying on the path up into the sky. Until, well, he does what he was told not to do: you guessed it: he looked down. And he flipped out! He was pretty high up there—imagine how high you’d be if you were driving the sun across the sky! He freaked.

And the horses were used to having the strong arm of Apollo at the reins. When Phaethon freaked out a bit, he eased up on the reins. The horses felt that. They looked around and realized that Apollo wasn’t at the reins. And they’re wild beasts, you know, and they went wild! They drove up into the sky, and scorched the constellations. They swoop down below, and turned lakes into deserts, torching entire forests, blackening the mountains and drying up the rivers. They were shooting back and forth, up and down, completely out of control.
Mother Earth got a little upset by this, and she calls up to Zeus, “What’s going on with Apollo and the sun chariot? He’s out of control! You gotta take care of this! He’s killing me!”

So Zeus, king of the gods, pulls out one of his lightning bolts and throws it at the chariot, and it explodes! Boom! It obliterates the chariot. And it obliterates Phaethon. He falls in all these little pieces down to Earth. Dead.

Well, there in the wood are these wood nymphs. And they gather up all of Phaethon’s parts, and they bury him. And on his tombstone, they carve the following lines: “Here lies Phaethon. Though he failed greatly, he ventured more.”

And here is where I launched into the lesson. I repeated the epitaph a couple more times:

“Though he failed greatly, he ventured more. This week, while you’re here at Lakota, I want you do what Phaethon did: he ventured more. I want you to venture more. I want you to try new things. I want you to do things that you’ve never done before. I want you to try things that some people might say, ‘Oh, I don’t know if you’re capable of that.’ Venture more!

Now, yes, you might fail if you try something new. But you won’t just fail—you’ll ‘fail greatly’. Yes, Phaethon failed Greatly! He didn’t just wallow around in failure. No, he failed so greatly that the gods had to shoot lightning bolts at him and blow him to pieces! Now that’s failure! That’s not like getting an F on a test or anything like that. We’re talking serious failure.

That’s the challenge I put to the staff, and that’s my challenge to you: to venture more. And if you fail, I guarantee that you won’t just fail—you’ll fail greatly. In fact, if you venture more, I guarantee that you won’t fail at all. You will succeed.
Now, I’m not telling you to steal your Scoutmaster’s car keys and go joyriding. Let’s get that straight. I’m not telling you to break the law or endanger anybody’s life.

But I am telling you to venture more: Take that merit badge class that looks interesting even if it’s hard. Go canoeing or on that outbound or do that hike or shoot that black powder—try different things. Experience as much of Lakota as you can. Venture more.

Don’t just sit in your campsite and wallow in failure—because that would be the real failure, to not have ventured more this week at camp.

The End.

Each week, I would end by saying that we would now walk down to the Council Ring where the staff are preparing for the Opening Campfire. I would reiterate to the campers that I had told the staff this same story of Phaethon, and that they have ventured more with the skits and songs and such for tonight’s campfire. I asked the campers to applaud the staff’s venturing more even if the skits were not all that great. Everyone laughed, but I modeled for them the behavior I wanted them to try on: I basically said, “Staff members will applaud your venturings whether or not you’re successful or not.” The venturing is what is most important.

The story of Phaethon was told to staff members. And, it was told to campers—week after week. The repetition was my own: I forced the story into the program schedule, I forced the story onto the audience members. There were no requests from the audience, “Hey, tell us that Phaethon story again”, nor were there other staff members or campers retelling the story. It was the camp director’s story. Even at the end of camp, during the Staff Banquet, the story was still my own: As part of the entertainment—and as my way of wrapping up the summer—I wrote a little “Top 10” list like David Letterman does on “Late Night with David Letterman” in which I presented the “Top Ten Reasons Why Phaethon Wasn’t A Lakota Staff Member”.39
From the personal side of things, I meant this story to be a radical change for the staff and the campers. I thought the story was truly radical, for it challenged a number of traditional Scouting practices and ideas. First of all, the Legend of Phaethon was a departure from the tradition of using Indian themes at Camp Lakota. I don’t believe Greek mythology is found anywhere in Scouting lore, much less Camp Lakota lore. Secondly, Phaethon didn’t have to do his best, like all Scouts promise to do. All he had to do was venture more. He didn’t have to aspire to anything beyond showing up and do something different. Third, Phaethon bit off more than he could chew. Rather than take progressive steps to mastery—like the merit badge program—Phaethon leapt to the final, most challenging feat without prior preparation. And lastly, Phaethon challenged rather than obeyed his father, trapping his father into “keeping his word” even though it was against his better judgment. In the end, Phaethon was perhaps not the best role model for Scouts, but I thought it was a good story with an ironic twist that might be inspiring.

Upon reflection, the performance of this so-called radical legend is simply another manifestation of what Gary Fine calls Newell’s Paradox, the distinctive and paradoxical nature of children’s folklore which is both highly inventive and rigidly conservative. Like Fine’s notion of children’s folklore being inventive egotypically (in their individual performances) but deeply conservative thematypically (in the themes or structures of their folklore traditions), I now see my Phaethon performance as a creative retelling of a very common theme (Children’s 180). Phaethon was a veiled effort to repeat the same theme as just about every opening night legend I’ve ever heard at Camp Lakota: they are all about passing on wisdom from the ages and taking on new challenges during the coming week at camp. It is a repetition of—or in this particular performance, perhaps a prequel to—the Oliver Spencer Legend which carries the same themes.
Phaethon is a retelling of a story told by camp director Jake for a number of years, a story about an Indian brave who accepted the chief’s challenge to best him to become chief. As the story goes, young men tried to beat the chief, but all were unsuccessful. Then, one day one young brave had an idea. He approached the chief with a baby bird cupped in hands. He told the chief, “If you are so wise, tell me whether the bird in my hands is alive or dead.” The chief could not see or hear the bird. He thought about the situation, knowing that if he said the bird was alive, the brave could every so slightly squeeze his hands together and kill the bird, letting it drop to the ground. But, if he said the bird was dead, the brave could open his hands and let the bird fly away. He would lose either way. Finally, the wise old chief said to the brave, “It will be as you will it.” And then the camp director would talk about how this week at Camp Lakota would “be as you will it”—would be as good as you made it, would be as bad as you made it, would be whatever you made of it.

Both my Phaethon and Jake’s “As You Will It” are but repetitions of themes told by Terri the Chaplain when she was camp director. Following in the tradition of “playing Indian,” she told of Hanta Yo, an Indian word for “clear the way.” Terri told how the minds of American Indians “were nourished by someone who had cleared the way for them to achieve understanding of their thoughts and to guide, to investigate, to choose the path which they intended to follow” (Shook Hanta Yo). She suggested that each camper had many persons who have been a Hanta Yo for them: “Someone who has cleared the way toward this season, this time, this very moment. Parents, Scoutmasters, Teachers, Ministers, Sunday School Teachers, and many, many others.” She turns what seems like a verb (“to clear the way”) into a noun (“someone who clears the way”). She fashions a Hanta Yo identity in which doing is being. She offers this “who” to the campers, suggesting that by clearing the way, they will become a Hanta Yo for others. She
charged each camper and adult leader to become a *Hanta Yo*, claiming that in “the seasons ahead when many Scouts and leaders come to visit this treasured ground,” they “shall see the ways and the honor; the precepts and customs. They will recognize and remember YOU as the SCOUTS who cleared the way.”

Certainly, *Hanta Yo* has less of the Horatio Alger, pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps who that both Jake’s and my story have, but it still speaks to the themes of self-making, of personal responsibility (for others), of venturing more. It is meant to be a compelling who for young campers to inhabit, encouraging newcomers to dive in to the Camp Lakota experience and prepare the way for others to have this experience.

The question is, why would camp directors find those themes to be so important as to tell them time and time again at Camp Lakota? Why would I choose a story which I thought was divergent, only to tell the same old story? The contents of the story changes, but the rhythms, themes, morals are repeated year after year. Barre Toelken helps clarify what is taking place in this repetition. While he is writing about jokes, the same applies here to these camp directors’ storytelling (I have replaced “joke” with “story”): “When we tell a [story], we are reshaping and recomposing clusters of ideas that we have heard expressed in a similar context at another time, but we are arranging them according to an understood—though unarticulated—cultural logic” (*Dynamics* 23). This recomposition or re-ordering seems to involve Ellsworth’s unconscious—a logic that is understood but unarticulated is similar to the indirectly communicated discourse of the Other. Toelken says,

A learning process has taken place, and it is now followed by an expressive event, a performance, but only if we judge the context to be right. If the setting is appropriate and the [story] performance is well executed, the [story] teller will notice the pleasure of his
companions, reinforcing his own pleasure in telling the [story]. At this point, the [story] telling has become another educative experience, and the [story] has solidified itself into a cluster of potential ingredients in the mind of the teller; but no matter how many times the same person tells the same [story], it will seldom, if ever, be performed exactly the same way twice, for a dynamic process (dependent on context, mood, intonation, and reason for telling) is now in motion as that first event is continually reshaped, rephrased, and re-experienced in the mind and actions of the performer. (Toelken Dynamics 23-24)

Independent of my own conscious effort to be radical in my storytelling, I chose to execute a reshaped, rephrased, and even for me, re-experienced first event: the stories told by camp directors before me. Against my own wishes, I passed as a camp director when I performed that story: I had situated myself as camp director by doing what all other camp directors had done before me: articulated the traditional Boy Scout themes and masculinities: the young boy striving for agency and adulthood, the threat of tragedy and even death, the adult men who enable the boy to reach his chosen goals. I demonstrated my own personality by changing the packaging, but I played the part of a camp director to be recognized, or passed, as such.

Passing as Masculine in “The Lakota Justice League”

One of the richest examples of camp staff lore is found in the skit performed in 2002 and 2003 called “The Lakota Justice League” (LJL). Although there are obvious allusions to popular culture superhero teams like the Super Friends, the Fantastic Four, or even groups like the Power Rangers, this skit was created by the staff themselves. Marcus typically plays the narrator and told me how the idea for the skit started: he was working in the office and couldn’t find a stapler or a three-hole punch. He made a joke about wishing there were a Stapler Man or a Hole Punch Man who could leap into the room and save him from his stapling/hole-punching trauma—and
thus, a skit idea was born. It is also worth noting the influence of the television show “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” in which the comedians play a “superhero” game whose structure and improvisational style undoubtedly influenced this skit.

It is this sort of folklore—from their own creation—that I think are most telling of how staff experience masculinity. There are a couple staple items in this skit, but the rest of it is completely ad-libbed.

First, there is a narrator who walks on stage and introduces the characters. In one version, he first introduces the villain—Pruneface the Obliterator—and asks the villain what sort of villainy he has wrecked upon Camp Lakota. Sometimes it involves switching the camp’s toilet paper with poison ivy while other times it involves pouring all the OFD (Orange Flavored Drink) into Lake Glengary. Then, the narrator introduces the members of the Lakota Justice League—“A group of elite super heros that are here to help us.”

The narrator then explains: “The thing you need to remember is these super heros don’t have an identity: they don’t know their super powers.”

One hero adds, “We just have funny voices and cool stances.” All the heroes stand boldly, with hands on hips, heads cocked back, chest out—very superhero-ish—and they talk with stilting bravado—much like comic book characters talk in short sentences and with an air of superiority and confidence.

Then the narrator asks for a hat from the audience, into which he places small pieces of paper with different identities on them. Random audience members are chosen to draw a slip of paper from the hat, and the narrator tells the staff member what his identity is: Tin Man, Slippery Man, Sticky Man, Falsetto Man\textsuperscript{42}, No Neck Man, and so forth. What is interesting is that sometimes the actor doesn’t know what to do with the identity he has been given. The Tin Man,
for example, didn’t know what to do with his identity for the first few minutes of the skit until another hero told him that he could “build himself into” things—a car, a factory, machinery, etc.

Once everyone knows who they are to play, the narrator reiterates the villainy, and the superheroes jump into action. They attempt to figure out how they are going to address the problem—completely improvising all the dialogue and actions. They brainstorm how to get to the site of the problem, different options for resolving the problem, and different alternatives to the side-effects of their resolutions. That is, each superhero throws out options: No Neck Man is all muscles, so he could carry the group to Lake Glengary. Or, Slippery Man could lay on his stomach and the group could slip their way to the Lake. That sort of thing.

Then comes the fascinating part: After the LJL comes up with various plans, the narrator pops back up and stops the action on stage. He tells the actors, “Wait. It’s their turn now,” and then asks the audience to pick between the options the actors have suggested: “Do you guys want to see a catapult by No Neck Man?—give me a holler. Or, if you want to see the Tin Man create a car and put a lot of oil in him—holler even louder.” The audience responds after each option, and the loudest cheer steers the direction the actors take next.

Once the superheros arrive at the site of the villainy, they then go through more brainstorming as to how to use their powers to stop the evil plan. For example, in one performance, Pruneface the Obliterator took all the toilet paper and replaced it with poison ivy. The League was able to create a bunch of pulp by Tin Man turning into a toilet paper factory and then made an entirely new supply of toilet paper. However, in a brilliant educational turn, Pruneface rears his ugly head and reminds them of the oil from the ivy plant, which he has put into Lake Glengary. The League begins to brainstorm: No Neck Man worries that the “water in Lake Glengary will no longer glisten upon my muscles,” while Tin Man suggests that Sticky
Man stick all the oil to his body and then have Slippery Man wash it off. No Neck Man thinks this is a great idea, and for his part, he’ll “just stand and flex.” Slippery Man provides an alternative suggestion: Tin Man could make himself into a purification system—an idea which No Neck Man responds to by quipping, “Tin Man, you could once again become a machine—a random machine—that we can use for our own petty devices.”

This skit can go on for quite some time—based on how many actions they need to take to solve the problem and on how the narrator works the crowd. The skit ends when the problem is resolved and the villain comes back on stage and says something to the effect, “You thwarted my plans this time, but I’ll be back,” and then rushes off stage.

Many Masculinities of the “Lakota Justice League”

What is being expressed in this performance of Lakota Justice League? If we focus on the masculinity-related material, I believe there are three serious masculinity issues expressed in this piece. These are issues staff members have raised during interviews—issues which seem clearly expressed in this skit:

The Multiplicity and Ambiguity of Masculinity

The Narrator doles out identities randomly, asking a member of the audience to pull their identities out of a hat. They are arbitrary names, distributed at a whim. It is unclear to me if this is an expression of anxiety based upon unfetteredness or loose changeability of masculine identity (you may be heterosexual, but that could change!), or if this is an articulation of these staff members’ understanding of the choose-ability of masculinity (we don’t all have to be the same Man). Since there are so many different Man-hoods recognized in the skit, it would seem to indicate the latter is the case. There is not just one man who we must all become: you can be
muscular and athletic (like No Neck Man), or you could be nasty and slimy (like Slippery Man), or you can be effeminate-sounding (like Falsetto Man), and the like.

Hands down, diversity of self is what staff members have taken away from their staff experience at Boy Scout camp.

Matt describes how he is “a lot more open . . . here about many different issues than I am at home.” But he says there is a wall between this world and that one: “I don’t share a lot of what goes on at home with people here, and I don’t share a lot of what goes on here with people at home. So, neither world knows—they only know me for who I am there.” As an example, he told me about how active he is in his church youth group—something he has chosen not to share with people at camp. Matt describes it as a developmental issue: “I don’t think my faith is strong enough yet to say, to share it, outside the people in the youth group. I think I’m building it to where I can say more openly anywhere that I’ve got this faith and all. That’s just a part of me that’s there and I haven’t brought it here.”

A greater number of staff talk about how hard it would be to bring their camp selves back to the real world. First year Aquatics instructor Ronald says, “I can’t carry everything I have out here” back home. He wants to take some of “how I act out here,” some of the “ways I have it out here,” back home, but he is not sure how he will do that. Ronald says he never—absolutely never—would have imagined he could get up in front of a group. Ronald describes his poor “talking skills”: “Like at school when I do presentations and stuff, I’m scared to death. I go up there, I stutter like crazy. I get so nervous and sweat like crazy. It always goes bad. It makes me look like I’m stupid or something, which I don’t think I am.” I do not think staff members would recognize this sweaty, stuttering, seemingly stupid Ronald, for he is considered one of the most animated, dynamic, public personalities at camp. He describes his newly-found
“outgoingness” and teaching abilities. He also describes how he learned that if he talked with an “accent,” his stuttering would go away. Despite the fact that he experienced “new” personality traits and communication abilities while on staff, Ronald says the other staff members “accepted me for who I was.” It seems to me that they accepted him for the who he wanted to be perhaps more than for who he was. Ronald argues that “there are two of me,” and “the way I am out here is the better me.” He would like to have the “better me” in everyday life, but as a first year staff member, he does not know what will happen when he goes back home.

Other staff members like camp physician Travis do not describe finding multiple, better selves on staff so much as finding an opening up of possibilities on staff. Travis refers to “male bonding” that happens on staff. He argues that we have lost a great deal of male bonding in the United States. But on staff, he finds, “There’s more of a bonding, so there is more freedom.” He describes how even young male staff members are more comfortable hugging one another, how they talk about more than just their girlfriends, how they seem less restrained by the fear of “somebody’s going to be gay.” Travis suggests that on staff, “I think they have a chance to be young boys or older boys”—whichever they want to be. “Here,” he argues, “they don’t have the pressures of everywhere else. They can be themselves. . . . You don’t have to go to that party. You don’t have to go out drinking or. . . . If you go to a party alone and don’t talk to girls that night you don’t feel like, ‘Does someone think there’s something wrong with you?’ Or, so they can be who they want to be.” Here on staff at Boy Scout camp, boy-men shuffle off many social pressures by bonding with other boy-men, and thereby increase their who possibilities.

Camp Chaplain Terri simply says that’s what staff members call “Lakota magic.” She says, “There’s something that happens when you come through that gate. That puts your life in a
whole different perception.” A whole different who. First year staffer Thomas says the same sort of thing:

When you get up here, you step out of character. Let’s say if you’re like this shy guy that never talks to anybody at school. Don’t even do anything, don’t volunteer yourself for anything. But when you get up here, people are acting like idiots. I might as well do it too. Everybody else is doing it. The magic comes into you. It gets you to do things that you normally don’t do. Like I didn’t think I’d actually go swimming and pass the swimmers’ test this year, let alone go for rowing merit badge. But now, it’s like I’m up here, “You know what: why was I afraid of this before, might as well go ahead and do it.”

Lakota magic is what keeps you coming back to camp, year after year: it’s that feeling of being a better, or at least a different, who.

Team Player

Echoing Baden-Powells admonition to “play the game” and “be a brick,” we hear in this skit the call to take your place in the team and do your part—whatever it may be—to the best of your ability. Despite the diversity of men in this skit, each has a role, each has a talent to offer. Slippery Man does not try to do what No Neck Man does—nor vice versa. What’s more, neither denigrates or mocks the other’s Man-hood. Each has something to offer so that the group may prevail. No matter how strong one may be, no matter how high one’s voice may go, no matter how slippery one might be, no one Man can do what is necessary to defeat Pruneface the Obliterator’s nasty scheme. It would appear that the key underlying feature of all masculinities is resourcefulness: playing the hand you’ve been dealt to support the team in coping with problems. The equivalent would be if the skinny guy, the fat guy, the jock, and the sickly kid all
had something to offer the group, as opposed to the typical arrangement where the fat or scrawny kid is solely the butt of cool kids’ jokes.

Coming on staff is a defining moment in these Boy Scouts’ lives: for some, it is the first time they felt like they belonged, when they felt like they were playing a significant part in something larger than themselves. As stated earlier, many of the staff describe how different life was for them on staff than it was back home and in school. The vast majority were outsiders back home. The vast majority of the staff did not fit in back home. But most felt something very different when they joined summer camp staff, when they had a role, a job, an authoritative position.

It is as simple as receiving a nickname. Senior commissioner Warren said, “I felt kind of good when all of a sudden somebody labeled me as Wardaddy’s Daddy. Um, yea. Yea, that was a sign of acceptance.” He could have been kept at arm’s length based upon his age (he is old enough to be my father), but he felt welcomed into the fold of the younger staff when they gave him a nickname and at times even chanted his nickname. He was “in”.

Program director Josh theorized this in a wonderful way. Based upon his experience as a Peer Counselor at college, he developed an understanding of the need to fit in. Josh says,

You have a social self and a personal self, and your social self seems to take over because you are so desperate to find people. And so, you have a neighbor who likes, say, rap music. But you don’t like rap music, but all of sudden you’re going to like rap music because you want to have something to talk about.

And it might not be until two months later, until after you’re kinda like settling in, and everybody’s done presenting what they have to offer. People are starting to settle down, that you realize that I really don’t like rap music. But you have another friend
over here that you’ve met, and you may have made up something, some other connection, but through that made-up connection, you find out that “Oh, we both like this type of music or whatever.” And that relationship develops and that one dies out. It doesn’t die out completely, but it’s not as strong as this new one. . . . But then you need to shift from a social to a personal relationship otherwise you don’t get anything out of that relationship at all. You’re just miserable.

Josh says it’s the same way at camp: He gives the example of how staff members decorate their tents in staff area.

That first staff week, everybody’s out there—they’ve got something to present. For us, it’s like, what can you put in your tent. Or what can you have outside your tent. Which is funny that T.J. has that American flag out there now. Before he didn’t have anything. After staff week, that flag appeared. It’s his effort to try to fit into that. And I was a part of that too. I was bringing anything I could from my house. And I lived in the dorms, so I had lots of crazy stuff.

The goal was to personalize the outside of your tent space. First year staffers like T.J. caught on after Staff Week, and he set up a lighted American flag—something important to him, reflecting a part of the who that he wanted to be—in front of his tent. Other staff who have been around a little longer don’t just display themselves; rather, they set up a performance situation.

One of the most fascinating is Jeremy Smith’s tent. Jeremy is one of hardest working but also one of the more socially reserved staff members. He can lead a group and has no problem singing songs and such, but when it comes to interpersonal skills, Jeremy is relatively quiet and unobtrusive. However, he makes it a practice to put a yard sale in front of his tent—with all sorts of cool and weird junk: lawn chairs, a walking cane, yard signs, etc. It is his way of
opening the door which he may find otherwise closed: “Hey, look at me, come over and look at my stuff!” Jeremy turns the front of his tent into a venue for interaction, for performance, for fitting in.

Powerlessness

No “Man” in this skit can choose what action must be taken; instead, the narrator turns to the audience for direction. At best, the evildoer, Pruneface the Obliterator has agency: he wrecks havoc on the Camp at his own whim. He is always thwarted, but at least he gets to act outside of committee. The superheroes, on the other hand, never get to decide anything. Instead, they throw out ideas, offer up suggestions, provide their eccentricity for the benefit of the team; but all decisions go through the narrator and the audience. Of course, this is much better campfire fare for its interactivity; however, it also seems to demonstrate a certain powerlessness in the masculinities at play in the skit.

Notions of powerlessness are common themes in conversations with males: they are told they have all the power, yet they feel none of it. It is what Kimmel (1996) has called the “shrill chorus of impotence, a frenzied assertion of power by those who do not feel powerful” (331). W. C. Runciman argues,

People’s attitudes to social inequalities seldom correlate strictly with the facts of their own position. It might be thought plausible to assume that a person’s feelings about the structure of his society should vary with his own location; whatever the system of stratifications, should we not expect those at the top to be pleased with it and those at the bottom dissatisfied? But this is not what happens. Dissatisfaction with the system of privileges and rewards in a society is never felt in an even proportion to the degree of inequality to which its various members are subject. (Runciman 4)
While I do not want to homogenize staff members at Camp Lakota—for there is quite a bit of variation within the population—I can fairly safely say that nearly all are or pass as white, heterosexual, Christian, middle-class boys from rural northwest Ohio; and even these boys can feel powerless and manipulated. They do not feel powerful even if they are subject to a disproportionate quality and quantity of privilege and reward.

For example, Mitch’s description of the paradox of freedoms he experiences on staff, where there are no regrets, but there is a trade-off of freedoms:

It’s kind of a paradox or oxymoron or whatever that I feel that I have more freedom of choice here, but yet I miss the freedom of choice that I don’t have here. For example, I feel like I have the freedom of choice in that if I’m not somewhere on time, there’s no one who’s going to be there immediately to make me, or if I decide, on my free time, if I decide to take a shower, if I decide to hang around the trading post, nobody is going to tell me no you can’t do that, you have to do…

And yet when I’m here I miss the freedom of choice that I have of being where I want, when I want, not having a schedule to follow. Also freedom of choice—I also miss freedom of choice of being able to wear what I want to wear.

Mitch recognizes the privileges he has on staff, but he also recognizes the price he pays for power. What he may not fully realize is that he lists many of the same freedoms—or lack thereof—at home and a camp. For example, he first claims that no one will make him be somewhere on time at camp, but he then regrets the loss of freedom to be “where I want, when I want.”

Few males (much less anyone else of privilege) recognize privilege in the way that Peggy McIntosh describes it in her illuminating essay, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible
Knapsack” (1990). Disturbed by the fact that most men are unwilling to “grant that they are overprivileged,” McIntosh turns a critical lens on her own white privilege and produced a list of the “invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools, and blank checks” which are the “daily effects of white privilege in [her] life.” She admits the “privilege” may be misleading, for what she’s really talking about is “unearned advantage and conferred dominance” based upon skin color. She lists fifty effects of white privilege, including the following:

6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented. . . .

12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser’s shop and find someone who can cut my hair. . . .

20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group. . . .

24. I can be pretty sure if I ask to talk to the “person in charge”, I will be facing a person of my race. . . .

44. I can easily find academic courses and institutions which give attention only to people of my race. . . .

Her list needs only slight variation to apply to male as opposed to white privilege. In fact, B. Deutsch creates an “unabashed imitation” of McIntosh in “The Male Privilege Checklist” which includes simply replacing McIntosh’s “race” with “sex,” but also includes the following male privileges:

8. I am not taught to fear walking alone after dark in average public spaces.
9. If I choose not to have children, my masculinity will not be called into question. . . .

18. As a child, chances are I got more teacher attention then girls who raised their hands just as often. . . .

26. My wardrobe and grooming are relatively cheap and consume little time. . . .

35. Every major religion in the world is led primarily by people of my own sex. Even God, in most major religions, is usually pictured as being male. . . .

43. I have the privilege of being unaware of my male privilege.

Deutsch quotes Marilyn Frye who argues that “while men are harmed by patriarchy, women are oppressed by it” (Deutsch). Most of the camp staff members feel the harm but do not recognize any authority or responsibility in the oppression. Professor and artist dian marino calls this “invisible participation”—the fact that we “participate without seeing ourselves as participants” (107).

Who Does the Boy Scout Staff Member Think He Is?

Just as the National organization offers a specific and limited array of masculine whos for Boy Scouts to pass, they offer the same—if not even more restrictive whos for camp staff members to pass. And staff members know these whos very well. We see the usual Scouting suspects in the Hard Core Flag Corps and the Phaethon lore: resourceful, adventurous, vigorous (though somewhat incomplete or failing) masculinities. However, based upon the examples I have included so far, Boy Scout camp staff members allow a wider array of whos to circulate amongst themselves. For example, we see some other facets of masculinity in the Lakota Justice League which indicate that staff members may have a different understanding of masculinity than the National organization does. Perhaps masculinities are as random and transferable as
pulling them out of a hat and putting them on. Perhaps the usual Scouting suspects are not as coherent as they appear. Perhaps power is not where it once appeared to be.

Ellsworth would claim that staff “read against” Scouting’s mode of address and “answer” Scouting from places different from the ones Scouting speaks to (31). How can this be? Perhaps it is because, as Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen points out in One of the Boys? Doing Gender in Scouting (2003), “gender in the world will be more diverse than the often very dichotomous gender in our heads” (22). In the real, lived experience of staff members, they encounter a much wider array of living masculinity than Scouting provides. Scouting’s whos are rather limited and confining in comparison with the whos that are encounterable and actually encountered on staff. For example, the who that second-year COPE assistant Anthony encountered on staff was someone rather different from the who he was at school:

I like the person here better than the person I was before. I don’t know if I can go back to school—if that’s going to be weird. If . . . I go back to school and I’m the staff member I am here. Will that make them look at me differently? Will they be like, “You’re contradicting yourself [from] last year”? I don’t know. I can kinda see that I’ve eased up towards the end of last year, but not quite like I have here. Walls are falling like Jericho!

Seemingly, the who he encountered during his first year on staff shifted into high gear this summer, and he had a sense that the boundaries of his school whos were becoming porous. He says that, now, “I’m more tolerant. I’m more able to deal with things. Some of my morals have been changed. A lot of them haven’t changed. I’m a little bit more open.” While some of these changes are supported by the National organization, he did not make these changes in his years as a Scout. Instead, he made them after he encountered a different who—or perhaps he encountered different ways of ordering whos—on camp staff.
So, who do staff members think they are? Ironically, I think it is the same who that they offer campers: an incomplete participant. But the incompleteness for staff members is undoubtedly larger than the incompleteness for campers. If the “Lakota Justice League” is any indication of how staff members view their own identities, then they seem to realize how incomplete they are, how incomplete the ideal Scout is, how little was passed on to them, or how little they accepted of what was passed on to them. They begin to realize, after a couple years on staff, just how much ordering goes on and to what extent they can participate in that ordering.
Notes

1Wallace has a very interesting notion of culture study: He sees two common conceptions of the relationship between culture and personality: some look at the “replication of uniformity”—how “members of a social group, by virtue of their common group identification, behave in the same way under the same circumstances” (26)—and others look at the “organization of diversity”—the “actual diversity of habits, of motives, of personalities, of customs which do, in fact, co-exist within the boundaries of any culturally organized society” (27). He suggests that culture can be seen as “not so much a super-organic thing sui generis, but policy, tacitly and gradually concocted by groups of people for the furtherance of their interests; also contract, established by practice, between and among individuals to organize their strivings into mutually facilitating equivalence structures” (28). From the organization of diversity viewpoint, these equivalence structures are articulations of “private cognitive worlds” and thus, the “measure of individual survival will not be conformity, but complementarity” (39). Which leads to a different relationship than the typical conformity/resistance notion—to one of complimentarity/disconnect.

Wallace also includes interesting quotes like Linton’s (1936) notion that, “Man may be a rational being, but he certainly is not a utilitarian one. The constant revision and expansion of his social heredity is a result of some inner drive, not of outer necessity. . . . The skilled craftsman is not content with endless repetitions. He takes delight in setting and solving for himself new problems of creation. . . . It seems probable that the capacity for being bored, rather than man’s social or cultural needs, lies at the root of man’s cultural advance” (90). (These quotations are taken from an earlier edition of Wallace’s Culture and Personality (1969) than is quoted below (1970). Page numbers will be different.)

2 It should be noted that you will not find this quotation in earlier versions of Wallace’s book. The second edition added Chapter 3, titled “Culture and Cognition,” which delves into “cyclical models of time” and is drawn from a paper titled, “Some Formal Properties of Three-Place Free Transformation Systems,” which was read at the 1962 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Preface, 2nd Edition).

3 This is a revision of O’Shea’s (1993) statement that an “unruly and unresolved ‘self’” is generated in “the gap between what we are supposed to be and what we have in actuality not become” (O’Shea, 504; quoted in Ellsworth, 43).

4 Because of these oscillations and unpredictable transformations, Donald views culture as a “polylogic field of forces” (2).

5 Ellsworth uses the term “ignore-ances” (with the hyphen) to highlight her notion that ignorance is an active state of ignoring rather than a passive state of just not knowing.

6 In Phaedrus, Socrates describes the soul as a charioteer driving two winged horses. One horse is the ideal Boy Scout: “upright and cleanly made; he has a lofty neck and an aquiline nose; his colour is white, and his eyes dark; he is a lover of honour and modesty and temperance, and the flower of true glory; he needs no touch of the whip, but is guided by word and admonition only” (Plato Phaedrus). The other horse is “a crooked lumbering animal, put together anyhow; he has a short thick neck; he is flat-faced and of a dark colour, with grey eyes and blood-red complexion; the mate of insolence and pride, shag-eared and deaf, hardly yielding to whip and spur” (Plato Phaedrus). The charioteer labors to drive the chariot with the downward, earthly pull of the dark horse and the upward, heavenly pull of the light horse.
Toelken claims a debt to John Wilson Foster (1968) who argued that folklorists study material which “share a common mode of existence governed by their tendency to persist and their tendency to transform. Each instance of folkloristic expression, in fact, is a product of the twin forces of conservation and dynamics” (Foster 247). Gary Alan Fine (1980) claims that these so-called twin laws were described by William Wells Newell in his book Games and Songs of American Children (1963). Fine describes how Newell used the terms inventiveness and conservativeness to describe features “considered particularly characteristic of children’s folklore,” but not adult folklore (Fine 1980, 179). Since Newell didn’t explain how these two forces could coexist, Fine called it Newell’s Paradox. Fine provides an explanation which suggests that children are inventive egotypically (in their individual performances) but deeply conservative thematypically (in the themes or structures of their folklore traditions) (180).

Ellsworth promotes a “passion for ignorance” in which her understanding of “ignorance” is borrowed from Shoshana Felman (1987). Felman argues, Teaching, like [psycho]analysis, has to deal not so much with lack of knowledge as with resistances to knowledge. Ignorance, suggests Lacan, is a passion. In as much as traditional pedagogy postulated a desire for knowledge, [a psycho]analytically informed pedagogy has to reckon with “the passion for ignorance.” Ignorance, in other words, is nothing other than a desire to ignore: its nature is less cognitive than performative. . . . it is not a simple lack of information but the incapacity—or the refusal—to acknowledge one’s own implication in the information. (Felman, 1987, 79).

Ellsworth argues that the origins of what she calls an “ignore-ance” are often unknown, unconscious:

The hatred or fear of one’s own implication in what’s being taught—about the histories and operations of racism or sexism, for example, or about the Holocaust, or about the Middle Passage—can make forgetting or ignoring or not hearing an active, yet unconscious, refusal. And the “inner resistances” that call an ignore-ance into being are stubbornly capable of maintaining it, even against the conscious intentions or desires of one who otherwise wants to learn. (Ellsworth 57).

Despite their elusiveness, there is a history of what we don’t know: our “forgettings and ignorings” have “wheres and whens”—and it is important to discover at what moments and at what locations we forget and ignore (Ellsworth 65).

Ellsworth quotes phrases from Adam Phillips (1993) to argue that instead of acknowledging their passions for ignorance, we make the mistake of thinking that students (or campers, perhaps)

should [already] be interested, rather than take time to find what interests her. There is always the risk that free-floating attention will be assaulted by invitations proffered by “impinging auxiliary egos,” soliciting “premature flight from uncertainty,” and proffering orgies “of promiscuous and disappointing engagements.” (Ellsworth 167; Phillips 70, emphasis added)

So, instead, we keep them busy with adult programs to fill their supposed waiting, already existing interests.

As well as studies of the organization and its programming, the Boy Scouts of America has also been involved in various studies of boys, including the following three: Withey, S. B. and Douvan, E. A Study of Adolescent Boys. A Report of a National Survey of Boys in the Fourteen to Sixteen Year Age Range. Survey Research Center, Ann Arbor, MI: University of


10 This is the same Judge Lindsey we learned about in Chapter 2 who was one of the founding board members of the National Council, BSA. This is the same Judge Lindsey who proclaimed in The New York Times (Dec. 15, 1915) the Boy Scout movement is our greatest hope, the greatest single activity in this country promising a solution, not only of the boy problem, but the girl problem, for the best protector of girls is the youth who lives up to the laws and ideals of the Boy Scouts. . . . After 15 years of juvenile work I say without question that if you will give the Boy Scout movement the moral and financial support it rightfully demands, the Juvenile Court will soon no longer be needed. (qtd in Levy 24)

11 According to Dean (1992), Dr. Edwin Nicholson led the study and authored the pamphlet, Conduct Habits of Boy Scouts. This is incorrect. Nicholson was not a “Doctor” until 1940—based upon the study I quote above—and rather than author it, Nicholson simply quotes the original source of the study: H. P. Fairchild’s Conduct Habits of Boy Scouts (1931).

12 Hartshorne, Hugh and May, Mark A. Studies in Deceit. Book Two: Statistical Methods and Results. Studies in the Nature of Character. NY: The Macmillan Company, 1928. 362-367. Don’t get Book One: General Methods and Results. Keeping with the common practice of misquotation and misunderstanding, one source (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin “Lessons” 21) suggested that Studies in Deceit was written by three authors: Hartshorne, Hugh, and May. They were mistaken.

13 Maw attributes this quotation to Wyland, Ray O. Scouting in the Schools. Columbia University Contribution to Education. NY: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934. He is mistaken. The quote is actually from Fairchild (1931).

14 Nicholson argues that Scouting is not as constrained as Schooling: Free from the college preparatory obligation, unhampered by state syllabi, unencumbered by any imagined necessity for “covering ground” as is the public school, uncluttered with a mass of subject matter long since inoperative for individual and social growth, the Boy
Scout movement has a unique opportunity to test more fully in practice some of the newer viewpoints in education. (109)

15 Nicholson makes a distinction between intrinsically motivated and extrinsically motivated Boy Scout activity. Intrinsically motivated activities include fire building, outdoor cooking, and shelter building—where the “locus of control” is “within the learning situation,” and the “ends of endeavor” are “integrimately related to means” (34). Extrinsically motivated Boy Scout activity includes its “decorative award system” (34), that is, badges, ranks, merit badge emblems, and the like. He claims that the advantages of intrinsically motivated activities outweigh the disadvantages of extrinsically motivated activities (44). However, if the time, energy, executive skill, and resources now devoted to external control of standards in the Boy Scout movement were transformed into ways and means for creating learning situations where intrinsic control of standards would more fully predominate, it is our conviction that the character building power of learning by doing in the Boy Scout movement would be enhanced immeasurably. Freed from this unnecessary and unwarranted dependence upon extrinsic motivated devices, learning by doing can more efficiently than ever continue its positive influence as the foundational method of Boy Scout character building. (44-45)


17 Maw cites a 1933 report from the National Education Committee of the Boy Scouts of America titled, “Report of the National Education Committee on Merit Badge Principles,” in which they established the “Nine Basic Principles of the Merit Badge Program” to “justify the inclusion of this program as part of the Boy Scouts of America”:

1. Should be boy centered in terms of boy interest.
2. Should involve preponderance of doing as contrasted with mere knowing.
3. Should as far as possible be objective, thus involving minimum of variation in outside judgment as to results obtained by boy.
4. Where possible should provide progressive opportunity to go farther in an interest.
5. Should include service opportunity wherever possible.
6. Where possible should provide opportunity for understanding of and familiarity with economic aspects.
7. Should facilitate having boy secure vocational information as basis of possible career choice.
8. Where possible requirements should be made more elastic by affording a wider range of alternatives within a given set of requirements.
9. Should be approached from the hobby angle. (Maw 2)
Maw also creates a list of “external” criteria culled from three studies from experts in the fields of education and adolescent psychology (Cole, 1942; Educational Policy Commission, 1938; and Thayer, 1939). Maw’s list can be summarized in Cole’s assessment of the problems of adolescence:

In order to pass from childhood to adulthood the adolescent must solve a number of problems. He must develop heterosexual interests, he must become free from home supervision, he must achieve economic and intellectual independence and learn to use his leisure time, he must make new emotional and social adjustments to reality, and he must begin to evolve a philosophy of life. (Maw 3)


Coinciding with these changes, BSA membership took a nose dive, from a high in 1970 of 6.28 million, touching bottom at 4.27 million in 1979. This drop reflected national changes: a 10% drop in Scouting-age youth nationally, an increase in youth organized sport programming, a sluggish economy, high inflation and unemployment (Peterson 205). Kleinfeld and Shinkwin suggest other reasons for the decline: “the decline of patriotism following the Vietnam War, the rise of counter-cultural values, the rejection of traditional definitions of masculinity, the increase in two worker families where no one has time for volunteer work” (“Getting Prepared” 39). They cite a study by T. J. La Belle (“An Introduction to the Nonformal Education of Children and Youth.” *Comparative Education Review* 25 (1981): 313-329), arguing that,

Organized sports has replaced scouts as a common activity for early adolescent boys. In the 1950’s, most organized sports did not begin until high school. The parents and scoutmasters we interviewed, for example, recalled that thirty years ago scouting was the main after-school activity available to young boys. Now eight year olds sign up for the basketball team and five year olds for soccer. Sports has preempted the developmental period appropriate to scouting. (“Getting Prepared” 39)

Obviously numerous social, cultural, and international forces “conspired” to effect membership in Scouting as well as other traditional youth organizations.

Based upon this precipitous decline in membership—as well as overwhelming disfavor for the program changes from the membership who thought the organization had strayed too far from its origins and had lost its romance—the national organization rescinded. Chief Scout Executive Harvey L. Price replaced Alden G. Barber in 1976; and in 1978, the ninth edition of (the newly replenished title) *The Official Boy Scout Handbook* (by William “Green Bar Bill” Hillcourt) was produced. The new edition, and subsequent revisions of the advancement program, brought the outing back into Scouting (Peterson 199).

I possess two versions of this study: Item #02-849 (a larger, more detailed version) and Item #02-882 (a smaller, summary version). Both documents have the same title and publication information: Boy Scouts of America. *Values of Americans: A Study of Ethics and Character*. 
BSA Youth and Family Research Center, May 2005. The statistics listed here are from the smaller version (#02-822).

21. This data comes from an unpublished “Age Report” that I created as an employee of the Black Swamp Area Council after the 2004 camping season. Age data had been collected over the last couple years, but this report only accounts for the 2004 season.

22. This takes into account those staff who have never attended Camp Lakota as a camper (like me), those who attended camp from age 11 until they were old enough to be on staff (at least age 14), and those who may have attended with their troop as an adult leader. The vast majority of staff have been campers at Lakota: Nearly 85% in 2002 and 75% in 2003 had been a camper at Lakota at some time in the past.

23. This includes those staff who are brand new to staff (zero years on staff) as well as those staff who have spent many, many years on staff (Personally, I had 18 years on staffs by 2003).

24. The notion of passing could be extrapolated from Baden-Powell’s own admonition to “play the game”—to keep smiling and progressing despite adversity. Keep your gameface on. Passing also plays a key role in one of Baden-Powell’s favorite books: Rudyard Kipling’s Kim (1901). According to historian Hugh Brogan, the core question in Kim is the question of choice: “should Kim become a mere agent of Empire, a pawn in the Great Game, or should he follow the lama in the greater Way of the Buddha?” (Brogan 19). Based upon Baden-Powell’s dismissal of the lama in Scouting for Boys as an “old wandering priest,” and based upon Baden-Powell’s admonition to “play the game,” we know which choice Scouting reflected (3).

In fact, Baden-Powell views Kimball O’Hara (Kim) as a model of “the kind of work a Boy Scout can do for his country in times of emergency if he is sufficiently trained and sufficiently intelligent” (5). In Scouting for Boys, Baden-Powell glowingly writes of how the Irishman Kim learned to talk the language and knew the ways of Indian people and was able to dress in Indian cloths and “went among the people as one of them” (3).

Kim as passer is drawn out in Edward W. Said’s introduction to an edition of Kipling’s Kim (Penguin Books, 1987). Said describes Kim’s “abilities, his quickness, his capacity for disguise and for getting into a situation as if it were native to him” (36). Kim almost casually goes “native,” passing as Indian despite his Irish background and training in observation and spying. Said describes the difference between Kim’s “chameleon-like” gift for “dancing in and out of [this Babel of tongues], like a great actor who passes through all situations, at home in each of them” in comparison with the “dull, mediocre and lustreless [sic] world of the European bourgeoisie, whose ambiance . . . reconfirms the utter debasement of all contemporary life, all dreams of passion, success, and exotic adventure” (42). Kim is who every boy could wish to be in Scouting, just as every Brit would have wanted to be in India.

Echoing the notion that discontinuity breeds continuity, Said remarks that Kim’s “inexhaustible fund of boyish enjoyment” does “not at all contradict the overall political purpose of British control in India”—much as the “odd mixture of fun and single-minded political seriousness . . . found in Lord Baden-Powell’s conception of the Boy Scouts” (13).

As a footnote to a footnote: Kipling and Baden-Powell met in Lahore, India, in 1882. Baden-Powell mentions, “His father and my eldest brother [Baden Henry Powell] were colleagues in establishing the Museum in Lahore of Indian arts and crafts” (Baden-Powell The Scouter March 1936, p. 82. Quoted in Brogan 18). Years later, the two became friends. In fact, historian Hugh Brogan suggests that Kipling “invented Baden-Powell” near the end of the 1890s
in the “brilliantly off-beat leadership” of Stalky in his book *Stalky & Co.* (1899) (Brogan 19, emphasis added). While invention may be debated, what is not debatable is that the two men became collaborators of a sort. In the early days, Kipling had given permission for Baden-Powell to use Kim to promote Scouting, and in a letter from Baden-Powell to Kipling dated July 28, 1916, Baden-Powell asks for another huge favor:

You were kind enough to give me leave (some eight years ago already) to quote your story of Kim in giving the boys a lead in becoming Boy Scouts.

We are now encouraging a junior branch of the movement under the name of Wolf Cubs for youngsters between 8 and 11, and I want to enthuse them through your Mowgli and his animal friends of the Jungle Book. Would you have any objection to my introducing it to them on the lines of the enclosed proof?

It would be a very great help to me if I may and I hope that it might also help in a small way to add to the demand for your book. (Carbon copy (Scout Archives), quoted in Brogan 42).

As another sidenote, Baden-Powell made famous a game called Kim’s Game, which draws directly from chapter 9 of Kim. The game comes from the ways Lurgan trains Kim to be a special agent for the Empire.  

Ahmed argues that one’s relation to whiteness as something which is passed through depends on a prior history of self-identification and identification by others. Would one worry, would one fear being caught out, if one did not already perceive oneself to be passing for white? Would there be danger, would there be death? In other words, passing for something that one is already assumed to be makes a difference to the politics of passing. (93)

I confess that I have a hard time understanding the metaphor used in masculinity studies which claims a “crisis” of masculinity. I do not have evidence in this study of boys or men in crisis. Instead, I do have some evidence of boys and men experiencing the “risk” of masculinity: the risk of being “found out,” of failing to pass as what they have been passed as.

In most every passing lore and theory, it is the subaltern, the marginal, the subordinate that passes in order to fit in (for whatever reason) amongst the hegemonic, centered, ordering class of people. If this is so amongst race, class, gender, sex, and sexuality, is it not so amongst age? In every known culture, are not the young the primary subaltern, the original marginalized being, socially, legally, biologically, economically, in all ways subordinate to the older ordering class of people? It is so among the Boy Scouts—where one is encouraged to obey one’s leaders—as it is across all cultures, all people, in all time. Age is the quintessential, original passing model. All other passings are built upon the back of the passing of youth to adulthood.  


Goffman identifies a number of tactics that the discredited deploy to manage the tension created by the perception of their differentness and to achieve some semblance of acceptance (Stigma 8):

(a) a “direct attempt to correct what he sees as the objective basis of his failing, as when a physically deformed person undergoes plastic surgery. . .” (Stigma 9);

(b) an indirect effort “to the mastery of areas of activity ordinarily felt to be closed on incidental and physical grounds to one with his shortcoming. . . . [like] a lame person who learns or relearns to swim. . . .” (Stigma 10);

(c) attempting to “employ an unconventional interpretation of the character of his social identity” (Stigma 10) by seeing his suffering as a “blessing in disguise” or by reassessing the “limitations of normals” and seeing them as limited as well (Stigma 11); or by

(d) isolating themselves away from contact with normals. (Stigma 12)

Goffman actually describes a “natural cycle of passing”:

The cycle may start with unwitting passing that the passer never learns he is engaging in; move from there to unintended passing that the surprised passer learns about in mid-passage; from there to passing “for fun”; passing during non-routine parts of the social round, such as vacations and travel; passing during routine daily occasions, such as at work or in service establishments; finally, “disappearance”—complete passing over in all areas of life, the secret being known only to the passer himself. (Stigma 79)

Goffman also claims that a complete passer will sometimes arrange his own “rite de passage, going to another city, holing up in a room for a few days with preselected clothing and cosmetics he has brought with him, and then, like a butterfly, emerging to try the brand new wings” (Stigma 79-80). Goffman cites the following sources for his ideas: H. Clayton and S. Drake, Black Metropolis. London: Jonathan Cape, 1946. “A Rose by Any Other Name” pp. 159-171. An unpublished paper by Gary Marx. Lee, R. I Passed for White. NY: David McKay, 1955, pp 89-92 and Griffin, J. H. Black Like Me. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960, pp. 6-13.

Phillip Harper (1998) takes a slightly different tack on passing: it is not so much about happiness and control as it is about social access and material gain (388).

I am reminded of a comment by Brian Sutton-Smith (1981) about sociodramatic play among children: He says,

In sociodramatic kinds of play it is not always easy to tell what is play and what is story. A child’s ability to make up stories while playing is . . . a bridge between child and adult. . . . It would not be surprising if when first asked to tell their own stories, children borrowed from dramas that they have acted out in sociodramatic play” (Sutton-Smith 31).

34 Mitch makes an interesting distinction between his friends back home and his friends at camp. He says that after he’s been away from his friends back home, they’re relationship gets “kinda shaky.” He says they “have to feel [each other] out for a little bit before you can get back to your old friendship.” But with his camp friends, there’s no lag time: “You just step back into camp this summer, you kick up where you left off last summer. Everyone’s still friends. ‘Hey how was your year? Pretty good. Okay, let’s get back down to business.’”


36 According to the *Boy Scout Handbook*, “To give the Scout sign, cover the nail of the little finger of your right hand with your right thumb, then raise your right arm bent at a 90-degree angle, and hold the three middle fingers of your hand upward. Those fingers stand for the three parts of the Scout Oath. Your thumb and little finger touch to represent the bond that unites Scouts throughout the world” (7).

37 In practice, we would raise the sign, and with the other hand, snap our fingers between the words: “Sign’s up (snap, snap), sign’s up (snap, snap), the mouth (snap) goes (snap), quiet (snap, snap).” I have heard an alternative phrasing: “When the sign goes up, the mouth goes shut.” However, we found that closing the mouth was not precise enough: kids could and would hum, holler, and make other guttural noises with their mouths shut. They were following the rules (their mouths were certainly shut), but the rules did not accomplish their intended purpose (the mouths go quiet).

38 Phaethon was my story. It was a bit shocking after a couple years of passing on the Legend, when the staff gave it back to me. I was camp director for two more summers after my research project ended, and at my retirement, I was given a beautiful piece of slate from the slate beds on camp property. On the slate was engraved my name and the phrase, “he ventured more.” Around my name, curved the “running Indian” headdress which had become part of the Camp Lakota logo—where “Camp Lakota” should have been, they replaced it with my name. And then at the bottom, it was engraved with “Camp Lakota” and underneath “2003-2005.” It looked like a tombstone—Phaethon’s tombstone. I can assume that the story of Phaethon will not be told at Camp Lakota without me telling it, since it seems to have been my story. But it was nice to see them give it back to me in the end.

It was also returned to me at a recent Eagle Court of Honor where a staff member was being recognized for achieving the highest rank in Scouting, the Eagle Award. This staff member, Sid, prepared an Eagle Scout Address to present in front of the whole audience of troop members, family members, guests, and even community dignitaries. Rather than talk about his accomplishments or what he planned to do next, Sid told the audience the story of Phaethon. It felt like he was telling the story to me because he looked at me nearly the entire time he was performing. It was an honor to bear witness to the transmission of culture.

39 I used the “Top Ten Reasons Why Phaethon was not a 2003 Camp Staff Member” to pick on staff members who had done foolish things during the summer and to highlight various sayings, events, struggles:
10. If he were a staff member, you would hear him say more things like, “How do you like me now!” and “Chiga-what?” and if Carmen were here, “Errck.”

9. He didn’t try to pack half the staff onto his cart. [like staff tried to gangpile the golf carts]

8. Short of using a little of that Lakota magic, the staff has never seen nymphs in these woods. [referring to the joke that “Lakota Magic” was really the pot that was growing on the Armstrong side of camp]

7. Phaethon’s dad didn’t make him tuck in his shirt before he received an award. [referring to the lady who taught First Aid and CPR that summer who embarrassed a boy by making him tuck his shirt in while we all waited before she would give him an award]

6. When he, Phaethon, didn’t want to do Astronomy observations late at night, he didn’t just cancel class. He torched the constellations. [referring to Vasko who would cancel his classes with reckless abandon]

5. Phaethon used ointment as prescribed by his daddy, so he didn’t have to go to Carmen for those squat and wiggle treatments. [referring to the name the health officer gave to putting medicated powder on their jock itch]

4. Nymphs wouldn’t have picked up his pieces . . . unless he was Old Blue. [referring to the skit from the Opening Campfire]

3. Driving a sun chariot—Matt—he wouldn’t have gotten stuck in the ruts in the road. [referring to when a staff member got the camp director’s truck stuck in the mud, up to its axels]

2. During the third week at camp, it may have looked like Zeus was aiming for us too, but his lightning bolts didn’t keep us from doing our duty. [referring to the unending rainfall and flooding that summer]

1. One word, Fer’shizel. [referring to my own closing lines to The Lakota Farce]

Failing greatly embraces error for its developmental effects. Robert Chambers (1999) suggests that errors “lie on a continuum between two poles: at one pole embraced errors which lead to learning; at the other, embedded errors which sustain mistakes” (Whose 15). Chambers argues that

Errors which are recognized and embraced can lead quickly to better understanding and performance. Faced with the complexity, diversity and dynamism of people, conditions, institutions and actions, it is only to be expected that mistakes will be made. . . . They are known as trial-and-error, learning-by-doing, and successive approximation, and found and expected in pilot projects and in a learning process approach. . . . (15).

He quotes Peters as saying that the opportunity these embraced errors provide is to “fail forward” (Peters 261-2, qtd in Chambers Whose 15).

On the opposite pole are the embedded errors. Chambers claims that embedded errors often “reflect widely held views, and are generalized. Often they fit what powerful people want to believe” (Whose 15). Phaethon is about embraced errors rather than embedded ones.

41 Terri provided me with two written versions of the Hanta Yo presentation: one was of the first presentation with this theme, given to the Noon Optimist Club in 1984, and the other “slightly altered” given at Camp Lakota. In the earlier presentation (to adults), she shared the beginning of Ecclesiastes, Chapter 3 (“To every thing there is a season”) and explained, “Each
day we are given opportunities to start new foundations, to ‘clear the way’ for a new time, to become a part of a young person’s life.” She made a connection to how Baden-Powell had first recommended the Scouts use the South African word “Ipese” (meaning “to what destination” or “to what place” as its slogan), as if to say, we are given the opportunity to clear the way to unknown destinations for young people. Terri juxtaposed the “clear vista and boundless faith and optimism” of youth with adults “so enmeshed in the conflict of personal problems and changing sense of values” and “over cautious.” And, she closed with “There is a time for everything and it is today. Hanta Yo.”

42 Admittedly, Falsetto Man does come from Saturday Night Live: Adam Sandler has an Opera Man sketch which most likely inspired Falsetto Man and at least laid some of the groundwork for the skit.

43 Fox, Payne, Priest, and Philliber (1977) chronicle three studies of authority relations and class conflict: Ralf Dahrendorf (1959); Joseph Lopreato (1968, 1972); and their own (1977). Nomenclature-wise, they divide “imperatively coordinated associations” into two classes: the command class includes members who possess some degree of authority, and the obey class which includes those who are excluded from authority (966). Dahrendorf argues that the “command class have an interest in maintaining the structural status quo that gives them authority, while members of the obey class have an interest in changing it” (Fox et al 966). Lopreato found similarities, arguing that (a) members of the command class are more likely to “perceive the existing authority structure as legitimate,” (b) members of the command class are less likely to “acquiesce to authority,” and (c) the “upper echelon of the command class is more likely to perceive the authority structure as legitimate and to acquiesce to authority than is the lower echelon” (Fox et al 966-977). Fox et al reconfirm Lopreato’s study, but find that the middle echelon rather than the lowest echelon of the command class had low legitimacy perceptions and acquiescence to authority (971). Fox et al argue that the middle command class have to implement policies that are not of their making and are directly exposed to the shortcomings of the upper echelon (972). They argue that it is more likely that conflict within class will occur rather than between classes (972). Dahrendorf, Ralf. Class Conflict and Class Conflict in Industrial Society. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959. Lopreato, Joseph. “Authority Relations and Class Conflict.” Social Forces 47 (Sept. 1968): 70-79. And Lopreato, Joseph, and Hazelrigg, Lawrence E. Class, Conflict, and Mobility. San Francisco: Chandler, 1972.
CHAPTER V. PASSING AS, PART TWO: WHOS ORDERING WHOSE SCOUTING?

Chapter Five Summary: In this chapter, I will further describe the ways that staff members pass as Boy Scouts and as men through the use of non-resistant ordering tactics. As incomplete but highly socialized, staff members produce orderings of whos—both personally and collectively—which reflect but also reorder received culture. I will examine the origin stories of staff members—how they came to be on staff—as well as study a very complex cultural production—The Lakota Farce. These orderings also demonstrate the limitations of ordering.

Not a Very Good Boy Scout

I come from a Scouting family on my dad’s side. I do not know what it is like for a young boy or his parents to have to choose whether or not they’re going to get into Scouting. My grandpa was Scoutmaster. My dad was a Scout, staff member, and Scoutmaster. My mom worked on staff. All three of my older brothers were Scouts and worked at Camp Lakota. My uncle and cousins were Scouts, and they too worked on staff. I come from a Scouting family.

But I am not a very good Boy Scout.

By all Scouting standards, I am not a very good Boy Scout. I barely got to the rank of First Class—which most boys get by the end of their first year in Scouting. I was nearly 14 when I finally got there. I was just never interested in systems of achievement. I would, however, get very excited when I went to an Eagle Court of Honor where they would honor a fellow Scout for completing all the requirements for the Eagle Rank. These Court of Honors were big affairs. A boy—the guy who I went on campouts with, who stood beside me during flag raising, who taught me how to tie a sling around a broken arm—was standing up front of everyone, being showered with praise for his accomplishments and leadership. I wanted to be that. But I was not a very good Boy Scout.

Similarly, I was not even close to holding a significant position in my troop: never senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, patrol leader, nor assistant patrol leader. At best, I
think I was Scribe for a little while, but I have no recollection of ever doing anything as Scribe. In fact, I have a few memories of campouts—usually bad ones where I cried a lot from being horribly homesick—but I do not have many memories of doing anything in Scouting. I went to summer camp as a camper for two summers. It was fun, but I was pretty unconscious at the time, just going with the flow. I took the merit badge classes I was told to take. I went to programs because my patrol leader told me to. I performed in the skit at campfire because my senior patrol leader forced me to participate. I was not a very good Boy Scout.

Likewise, I was not voted into the Order of the Arrow by my troop, which is the way it is done. By some sort of special dispensation, the Camp Lakota staff was able to act as a unit, and they voted me into the OA. I went though the Ordeal Weekend to join, and I attended a couple other OA functions that first year. But I did not see the purpose of it. Years later, as an adult, I did make the decision to become a Brotherhood member of the OA (something each individual chooses to do of their own volition). Once again, it was a group of my fellow staff members who performed the ceremony for me and another staff member. Afterwards, I did very little to participate in or support the OA. I was not a very good Boy Scout.

Once I became a staff member at the age of 14, I never again registered as a Scout with an actual troop. My “unit” was summer camp staff, and I registered every year so that I could be on staff. Everything I knew about Scouting came from my experience on camp staffs. As Scouting programs changed, I learned about it from those who went to National Camp School. I did not participate with a unit until I started writing this dissertation—when I became a Crew Advisor for a Venture Crew. Our crew was started by a bunch of staff members who were into punk music. They wanted to form a punk Venture Crew, and I was old enough and willing to sign off as their adult leader; so I got back into unit-level Scouting. Primarily, we organized
shows for punk bands in northwest Ohio. We compiled a CD of their music and sold it as a fundraiser. We did a couple campouts, but we never got into the advancement program or the quality unit program. We were not your typical Boy Scout unit.

By all standards I was not a very good Boy Scout.

But I was one heck of a Boy Scout staff member.

Ordering Tactics in the Market of Possibility

There are two “big-picture” concepts which help to explain the whos that staff members pass as and order: Brian Sutton-Smith’s (1995) notion of the “multivocal mind” and Joe Kincheloe’s (1997) notion of the “postmodern child.”

In The Folkstories of Children (1981), famed children’s folklorist Brian Sutton-Smith collected an impressive number of stories told by youth as young as two years old. He found that their stories showed a world of “great flux, anarchy, and disaster”—themes and ideas most adults try to avoid sharing with or hearing from children (Radicalizing 80). Sutton-Smith wondered why children would tell such stories, especially when adults do not support, encourage, or teach such stories or themes. Sutton-Smith theorizes that children’s stories imply “not just that we are different from each other . . . but that we are different within ourselves, that we are multivocal creatures, that we hear voices, that we consider multiple possibilities” (83). He argues that we all have “multivocal minds” with a “surplus of signification which inhabits all our minds” (83, 85). Adults hide or forget or control this surplus of voices and possibilities, but in the case of children, this surplus “gets loose” (85). Sutton-Smith denigrates schooling for having “not sufficiently seen itself as a market for this activity of possibility” (83). Summer camps, however, seem more conducive to the “activity of possibility” and heeding multiple
voices. Staff members, especially, seem to unleash their surpluses of signification—sometimes consciously, sometimes intuitively—in their cultural productions.

This unleashing is supported by, I argue, the larger context in which these summer camp staff members have found their whos. The staff members I studied seem a lot like Joe Kincheloe’s (1997) “postmodern children.” Kincheloe describes how contemporary youth “now know what only adults used to know . . . they understand and many have experienced the same pressures as single working mothers, as they strive to manage the stresses of school, work at home, and interpersonal family dynamics” (45). The youth in my study are Kincheloe’s postmodern youth. As staff members, they are exposed to and expected to embody adult-level thinking, roles, authority, and cultural production. Kincheloe claims that as these postmodern youth

  gain unrestricted knowledge about things once kept secret from nonadults, the mystique of adults as revered keepers of secrets about the world begins to disintegrate. No longer do the elders know more than children about the experiences of youth: given social/technological changes (video games, computers, TV programs, etc.) they often know less. (46)

The National organization seems to recognize the fact that youth seem to know more about youth, and they actively seek out youth to be leaders of youth. What’s more, the staff seem to recognize this fact as well, and they sometimes unleash sanctioned and nonsanctioned significations in their cultural productions. It seems to me, though, they do not actually unleash any and all significations; rather, they seem to just let the leash out a little further.
What staff unleash—what culture they produce—seem more like approximations than resistance. They seem to be attempting to order the multiple voices and potential whos that they want to become. As we have seen, however, the whos they want to become are contained within the parameters of what they know to be a staff member/Scouter. No matter how divergent the signification, they always try to pass as a Boy Scout staff member.

Staff employ a number of tactics to reconcile the multiple voices and possibilities, and their tactics seem very similar to those described by Jesse Goodman (1988) in his analysis of student-teachers and their efforts to learn how to teach. Goodman argues that student-teachers use “political tactics” to reconcile the multiple voices they hear from their own teachers, their cooperating teachers, the school system, their own experiences, etc. (31). He identifies five tactics which student-teachers employed during their initiation into teaching: overt compliance, critical compliance, accommodative resistance, resistant alteration, and transformative action (31). Staff members use all five on a regular basis.

*Overt Compliance.* Goodman describes how new teachers typically start out with overt compliance, seemingly putting “their own beliefs ‘on hold’” and trying “to integrate themselves into their classroom routines” (31).

First year staff members start out performing overt compliance, and oftentimes move to other tactics as their experience grows. However, I would suggest that those campers who encountered a role model staff member—who end up becoming that staff member in so very many ways—are performing a brand of overt compliance. They integrate themselves into the who they want to become by actually trying to become it.
Critical Compliance. After some familiarity, students-teachers would engage in levels of critical compliance. Goodman describes critical compliance as accepting but simultaneously criticizing the status quo and expected procedures (32). He describes how teachers would engage in “wishful thinking” or “daydreaming about how they would ‘do things in my classroom’” (32).

This is perhaps the most common tactic employed by staff members, for there is a considerable amount of critique of each other and the system imposed by the camp administration. The aforementioned credit card hierarchy is an example of critical compliance: the staff can clearly articulate a problem at camp, but take no action to change things. They accept their own Gold Card status, waiting patiently for their credit limit to go up as they age on staff.

Accommodative Resistance. According to Goodman, some student teachers would engage in accommodative resistance by developing “small, incidental activities that would provide an alternative to the drill work that dominated classroom instruction”; however, “these activities did not alter significantly the standard curriculum or nature of instruction” (33).

Staff members perform these sorts of so-called resistances on a daily basis at summer camp. They are found in the creation of innovative lessons (“Clear Pee!”), in parodies of traditional songs, in games, and so forth. I remember one day when half of the camp was crammed into a building to wait out a hard, mean storm. After a little while of sitting around, grousing about the weather, Henry stuck a spare canoe paddle into a spare toilet bowl and created a game out of it. He found a couple of deflated innertubes, and people lined up to take their turn to try to toss the innertube over the end of the canoe paddle. It was a raging success!
Accommodative resistances are the expressions of creative whos, working with limited resources, to get the job done.

Resistant Alteration. In an effort to “make schooling more personally meaningful to their pupils and themselves,” some student teachers would engage in resistant alteration (33). They not only “looked for ways to break the instructional routine of drill work but also made decisions concerning the content taught in their lessons” (33). Goodman suggests that they attempted to “provide more substantial educational experiences for their pupils within the general expectations of the districts instructional programs” (34).

Staff members engage in resistant alteration, for instance, when they change the performance of the skit they perform each week at camp. Campfires can become monotonous for staff members, performing the same material week after week. So, they often end up adding jokes, side comments, pratfalls and the like to keep the campfires relevant and interesting to themselves and the other staff members. Campfire programs take longer and longer as the summer progresses because of all the alterations staff make to their performances, not because they are trying to undermine the program, but because they want to make it better—at least for one group of audience members (the staff).

Transformative Action. Almost every student-teacher in Goodman’s study also engaged in transformative action. They “seriously reflected on what should be taught to their pupils . . . and then planned and implemented an entire unit of study around a particular topic” (34). They went to great lengths to design and implement a unit that was not required of them (35).

One of the most striking examples of transformative action at Camp Lakota, The Lakota Farce, will be described in great detail below. Unprovoked by camp administration or National standard, a group of staff members took it upon themselves to write, stage, and perform a play
called The Lakota Farce. The creators of The Farce spent untold hours thinking through the
significations they wanted to let loose. They coerced fellow staff members to play various
roles—which required them to study and memorize their lines. A number of nights during the
already extremely busy Staff Week were spent in rehearsals. They created something entirely
new to Camp Lakota—a theatrical play—and it was something which reflected some of the
highest ideals and deepest themes of Scouting.

In each of these tactics—overt compliance through transformative action—there is hardly
any genuine resistance. Surely, the practice of any of these tactics makes the practionner feel as
if they are “getting away with something.” Plus, there is a feeling of accomplishment and
agency when one takes action. However, these actions truly change or impact very little on the
organizational level. The hegemony continues on unabated. In fact, the hegemony benefits from
these sorts of tactics. What hegemony would deny its subordinates the opportunity to willingly
consent to doing more than what is required of them? What hegemony would deny its
subordinates the chance to feel really good about doing their job? And if learning by doing is the
best way to learn something, then staff members learn hegemonizing by doing these five tactics
on a daily basis.

Origin Stories and Ostensive Communication

Without using the word passing, staff members are very familiar with the notion and
practice. Passing is a common theme in staff members’ origin stories: how they came to be on
staff. Each staff member has created (ordered) a narrative about “how it all began” for them, and
they typically fall into three major categories: (a) Rebirth, (b) Authority, and (c) Legend
Tripping, the most common story.²
Rebirth

One of the common origin stories for staff members is the story of being lost in life and finding oneself at summer camp. For example, Paula, one of the cooks, started working on camp staffs at Camp Pioneer in Oregon. I started working at Camp Pioneer during Paula’s first summer camp experience. Later, when I became camp director at Camp Lakota, I sought out her and her husband Moses to come work with me. That first summer for Paula, though, was a life changing experience. Sometimes, Paula describes the experience as purely a whim, but more often, she describes how her life had taken a few downward turns, and she had found herself “adrift”. Her mother suggested working at this Boy Scout camp, and she thought, “What the heck!” She packed up her car and drove the long trek up to Camp Pioneer in Idanha, Oregon.

She tells of driving up the last few miles of windy, mountainous road when she came across a beat-up van broken down at the side of the road. A short, hairy, sweaty man waved her down for help. She tells how she considered not stopping, but she did—to discover that this was her program director. She helped him get up to camp, and settled in for a very long summer. And it changed her life completely. A year later, she married that short, hairy, sweaty man and became his wife. She ended up working on many more camp staffs after that. Her tale, like others, is one of being lost and then being found (at Boy Scout summer camp).

Agency

Another theme of origin stories is the acquisition of privilege, authority, or power on staff. When I asked Matt what it felt like to be on staff, he said, “Privileged. Yea. Privileged to affect my present, and privileged to affect my future.” I read this as agency.

There is a tone in Matt’s response that rings true in other staff members’ origin stories. For example, Jerry, the Ecology/Conservation Director, tells how a friend showed him a place
where he could lead. It wasn’t camp staffing at first; instead, his friend coaxed him into participating in an Order of the Arrow ceremony. He went, participated, and liked what he saw:

And the really cool thing about OA that you don’t see so much on the troop level, I think, is the leadership. It really comes out in certain people during the events and stuff. Like, especially in the youth level. Like, you know, you go to camporee in your district or whatever, and you think, “Ooh, yea, camporee. This is being run by adults. . . . Who cares?!?” Well, then you go to an OA event and see, “Hey, there’s certain guys that I know, youth that are actually running around doing this!” I’m like, that is so awesome! It is other people—just like you—who get to run things, who get to make things happen. Jerry was drawn to that in the OA, and the OA brought him to camp staff because it depended on that sort of leadership as well.

Legend Tripping

The most common origin story, however, was articulated best by the older/elder staff members who have had a longer time to reflect on their staff beginnings. A common denominator in their stories rings forth: becoming a staff member was the fulfillment of a dream and the embodiment of an ideal.

For example, Senior Commissioner Warren tells how he had a severe case of asthma as a child, before there were medications to control the symptoms. Since he didn’t have “sustaining breathing power,” he figured he “would never be an Eagle Scout because you had to pass a swimming test for First Class, let alone Swimming and Lifesaving merit badges.” Warren says he couldn’t even swim one length of the pool. And then, at the age of 13, he had the onset of epileptic seizures. He was 19 years old before his doctor allowed him to be on staff. However, he had an encounter with a staff member his first summer as a camper in 1951 which lit his fire:
Oh, it was like a dream. I um, was inspired as a young scout by some of the staff members and wanted to be like them. And didn’t think I could because of my health, but that began to change as I went through high school. So that dream of being like those staff members became a reality when I finally could come and work at camp. . . . I wanted to be an Eagle scout in the worst way like a fellow that had served on staff when I first came to camp in 1951 by the name of Tom Deacon. He was the first Eagle Scout I had ever met. . . . He was just the image in my mind of what was cool. You know. And I just wanted to be like him. And some of the others too that I eventually encountered as I went through those early years of scouting. And um, so, I aspired to be like them.

A staff member had fit the bill, had presented an image of a man—yes, a man—that Warren wanted to become. He was cool. He was an Eagle Scout. He didn’t have the health problems that Warren had. And, he provided Warren with a model which helped him move “beyond those limitations.”

Another older/elder staff member—the 2002 camp director Jake—had a strikingly similar role modeling experience. Jake described how he got started, “like every boy started”:

When I came to camp as a 12 year old, I ran into a gentlemen by the name of Jake Cline was working shooting sports at that time. I thought he was the neatest guy on earth. Better than sliced bread. I wanted to be like him. As time tells, I ended up being the shooting sports director just like Jake Cline. I got my dream I guess.

Both of these older staff members saw something, or more specifically, someone that they wanted to be. It was truly a dream-come-true because they encountered a who they wanted to be and, in their own telling of the story, they became that who.
It is as if they are legend tripping. Legend tripping is a term folklorists have used to describe an event where “Teenagers will ‘cruise’ to a place said to be haunted, cursed, is habited by witches or maniacs, the scene of a terrible accident, or the like, and there retell the legends while half-hoping that something supernatural will take place” (Brunvand Study 412). These staff members seem to be legend tripping except instead of attempting to reanimate a legend narrative, these staff members reanimate a legendary performance by a staff member role model. They affectively “trip” that role model, realizing a dream of becoming like that legendary role model.

Folklorist Elizabeth Bird argues that legend-tripping is more than just storytelling and getting folks scared. She views the legend trip as play, “involving not only story-telling, but also doing particular things. The emotional power of the experience derives from a combination of setting, narratives, and actions, all of which are interdependent” (Bird 192). Pulling from Gary Fine’s work with fantasy role-playing gamers, Bird argues that young people “use the legend trip as a form of play, deliberately suspending the normal laws of the real world, and entering a world of heightened reality, or fantasy, much as dedicated players of fantasy games do” (Bird 202).

I am not suggesting that these staff members are flipping over into an alternate reality or some sort of psychotic episode whereby they attempt to become the role model they dreamed about. Instead, I am suggesting that, much like a traditional legend trip, they encountered a story (the story of the role model) which they identified with and wanted to experience again and again. So, these two staff members in particular, spent the next 20, 30, 40 years going back on camp staff year after year. Each year, they went back to the location—whether or not it was the same camp, it was “camp”—and retold the legend’s story in their own actions. Much like
traditional legend tripping, these staff legend trippers were compelled by a powerful liminality: while the traditional folks are drawn by the liminality of fear, these staff are drawn by the liminality of awe.

Take, for example, second-year staff member Mitch. He tells how he came to camp with his troop, and Melvin—a fellow staff member—was their troop guide (who met them on the first day, gave them a tour, etc.): “I was just really impressed by him, and it seemed like he was having a good time. And I was in one of his classes, and I didn’t pass, but I still had a good time. So I decided to sign up and they gave me a call, and here I was.” I pressed Mitch on this point: Was it Melvin or was it, perhaps, the way he talked about staffing? Mitch said, “I think it was mainly him. But also I could tell that the staff liked being here. They were always doing crazy stuff and it was like cool. You know, if I was on staff, maybe I could do that stuff.” Mitch saw a who he wanted to become.

For some people, that who is an older brother rather than a random staff member. Office Manager Marcus tells how he followed the “the older brother vibe”—“which means sometimes what they do, you do.” Marcus describes his older brother:

He was hard core into scouts, OA. He got the Eagle Scout. He’s a vigil honor member, you know, the whole nine yards. He worked on staff for probably 6 or 7 years. So, it was kind of like you know, it was kinda like, “Hey, he did it. It was cool. I’m going to have the same experience. There’s nothing to do in the summer so why shouldn’t I?”

(Marcus, July 2)

This is more of a lateral approach to role modeling. Rather than role modeling from “superiors,” this is peer modeling. This actually seems more in line with Scout methodology: putting older boys in leadership positions over younger boys to be their role models. Marcus is one of the few
staff members who claimed that this sort of situation—with his brother being on staff when he was a camper—caused a little stress: “Some, some like fellow campers were kinda like, you know, ‘Marcus gets treated a little better. Marcus gets more credit,’ shall I say, ‘because the staff knows him or because he’s in with the cool people of the time.’”

Similarly, Frontier Patrol Director Henry (2003) describes how it must have been for staff members to have someone like him hanging around. He referred to himself as “almost a groupie”:

My first year, I just really looked up to them and thought they were cool and they were funny and exciting. And then as it came more and more along into the year, I didn’t want to be . . . the scout that they thought was annoying and pushed away. You know. I wanted to be the only scout in the area after everybody was gone. And I was kind of, not necessarily accepted but they welcomed me more because I wasn’t just there for merit badges. Instead of them having free time and chilling with all the other staff members. Here was this new kid who was kind of alright, he could carry his end of a conversation, knew how to make jokes. And you know, they would, they would chill with me and then hang out and stuff like that.

Henry remembers when they literally—not just figuratively—invited him inside staff culture:

I remember going into the Eco Con Tent once when the three staff members had their flaps down and they were smoking at like 7:00 at night. And they were, like, “I thought you were Jake [the camp director]. Oh, come on in. You’re cool man. Play some Magic with us.” (Henry, June 25)

Henry tried to explain: “I was just a 14-year-old kid at camp walking around just trying to be hip and trying to be me I suppose.” “Just trying to be me”—and he happens upon a group of people
who take him in, allow him to see what’s behind the closed flaps of staffing—and the “me” he became is evident. He goes on to tell a story about how he and one his role models actually got to work on staff together:

We sat around tonight, me and Brent with a bunch of young scouts and told them about how, you know, Brent was my frontier patrol guide when I was there [as a camper]. And look at us now, you know. And we talked about this. I mean we were totally . . . it’s like yea guys, man, my second day on staff, when he came back I called my mom. I was like, “Mom, Brent’s on staff! He’s on staff with me . . . .” She had no idea who he was. . . .

We were explaining to them, “You know, [when] I was your age, Brent was the man. And now here we are on staff together.” (Henry, July 10)

This sort of equalization of role models—becoming the model you wish to become, following closely in your brother (not your father’s) footsteps, actually getting to work side-by-side with the role model you followed—is how Scouting passes masculinity on to the next generation, especially at Boy Scout camp.

Ostensive Communication of Who

Famed sociologist Erik Erikson developed the idea of “developmental moratoriums” where youth have the opportunity to “reflect on and experiment with who they are, particularly with respect to their skills, interests, and relationships with others, they are likely to move toward adulthood with enhanced possibilities for long-term health and success” (Nakkula 11). Erikson warned against the opposite of these beneficial “moratoriums”: identity forclosures. A foreclosed identity “results from an adolescent making a commitment to a particular life course without adequately exploring alternatives” (Nakkula 11). Erikson warned against such premature commitment, and promoted the notion of postponing foreclosure.
He argued that one-to-one youth development organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters significantly ward off foreclosure. They were “holding environments” where a moratorium on development can be established. Such programs are not explicitly intended to help young people explore different career paths or adult roles in society, but they are designed as spaces for self-exploration and development. Such programs cannot and should not jolt young people out of the pressing demands of their everyday lives, but they often constitute an important space for adolescents to pause, connect with the world in a different way, and perhaps experience a change in life course, whether subtle or dramatic. (Nakkula 13)

He argued that while identity development “happens every day and everywhere . . . it develops most actively where energy is invested most thoroughly. In this regard, a program, an activity, or a hobby that calls for a deep investment of time and energy does more than build skills and interests in a particular area; deep investment builds into and upon the very sense of who we are” (Nakkula 13). Thus, a summer camp environment which supports a developmental moratorium would be a major constructor of identity, since it demands deep investment.

Unlike the Big Brothers and Big Sisters, however, the Boy Scouts of America is not a “holding environment.” Scouting is all about choosing a path, getting on it, moving toward the destination. If there is a moratorium in Scouting, it may be had at summer camp or on long hikes at Philmont Scout Ranch or on some other program where merit badges are downplayed and time and energies are spent in exploration. Camp may be a moratorium for campers, but it is certainly not for staff members.

For staffers, summer camp seems to provide what Ellsworth says Hollywood films offer. She suggests that perhaps the reason we like watching movies is because “a Hollywood film is
one of the few places and times that we can immerse ourselves in the illusion of having full, complete, adequate knowledge” (Ellsworth 81). She paraphrases Pam Cook’s understanding of film editing:

The conventions of classical editing constitute a particular mode of address to the spectator. In accepting a certain kind of verisimilitude in the spatial and temporal organization of the film narrative the spectator becomes witness to a complete world, a world which seems to even exceed the bounds of the film frame. In looking at the faces of characters in close-up, and in identifying with characters in the text through taking on their implied point-of-view, the spectator identifies with the fictional world and its inhabitants, and so is drawn into the narration itself. Consequently, a resolution of the narrative in which all the ends are tied up is in certain ways pleasurable for the spectator. (Cook 214-215)

Perhaps, the present staff members are watching their role model staff members much as we watch a Hollywood film: they are immersing themselves in an illusion of full, complete, adequate knowledge. They are not seeing the real staff member; rather, they are seeing a fullness that they too would like to become. They are such compelling whos—these completed staff role models—who would not want to become them? Upon realizing a dream, who would not want to foreclose on that who?

It is as if the staff member steps into the movie screen, taking their place in the cast, playing someone else’s part. Linda Dégh and Andrew Vázsonyi call this sort of taking of a who “ostensive action.” Dégh & Vázsonyi suggest that folklorists should concede that “telling, even in folklore, need not always be identical to talking” (5). They argue that people tell stories by various means: “Some folklore bearers, for example, retell it by word of mouth; some newsmen,
for example, through the media; and others: mad killers, by a means of communication reminiscent of, but to be distinguished from, imitation—ostensive action” (15). Dégh & Vázsonyi borrow the notion of *ostension* from the semiotic work of Ivo Osolsobě to denote “a type of communication where the reality itself, the thing, the situation or event itself functions in the role of message” (Osolsobě 35). Rather than imitation or representation, acting or signifying, ostension “consists of showing” and is the repetition of a legend in real life rather than a retelling of the script or narrative (7). Ostension is the act of turning narrative into embodied fact (12).

Bill Ellis builds off of Dégh & Vázsonyi’s argument, claiming that “legends can help the folk relieve themselves of contemporary fears, but they may also serve as patterns . . . for provoking the same fears” (202-203). Ellis argues that narratives can be “maps for action,” not only what has happened in the past, but “what a person or persons can make happen” in the present or future (218).

When we examine the origin stories of staffing, we see at their core the theme of becoming someone else. I would argue that such stories not only communicate the anxieties which they face back home where they are unappreciated, unnoticed, unknown; but they also seem to provide a map for action. These staff members are not just willing to return home after a week at summer camp and spend the next year talking about what happened to them at summer camp. That form of communication is insufficient. Instead, they take ostensive action: putting blood, sweat, and tears behind their need to communicate, they turn themselves into a living, breathing example of a who they heard about at summer camp.
Embodying Scout Culture in The Lakota Farce

This practice of ordering words into flesh is not only done on an individual basis, but it is also done on a communal basis. It is the job of staff members to embody the ideals and values of Scouting. How they go about that job is sometimes very creative and not always “by the book.”

I would like to present The Lakota Farce as an example of how creative staff members can be in doing their jobs. The Lakota Farce—so named because we could not come up with anything better—was the first and only time in my memory that Lakota staff members have put on a “play” at camp. The Farce is a rich text for exploring what staff have picked up about Scouting and masculinity. Not only do the staff members in The Farce pick up on the three central themes Gary Alan Fine (1980) found in preadolescent male culture—socialization to adult roles, sexuality, and aggression—but it also reiterates an amazing array of traditional, albeit not necessarily common, Scouting themes.

The Farce was written by a small group of staff members. It was held on Tuesday night—early in the week—and the vast majority of campers came to see it. It was orchestrated much like one of the campfires: Troops were gathered at Meecheway Lodge and brought down to the Council Ring at an appropriate time. Rather than have the audience sit in the stands, we brought down benches from Meecheway Lodge and put them in the grassy area just below the stage. We felt that putting the audience in the stands would put them too far away from the actors. The stage itself was raised about 3-4 feet above the grassy area, so the audience would look up at the actors, and all would be able to see clearly.

Staff Knows the Camp Genre

The Farce is a stereotypical “camp” film/story: it has all the major elements. The Farce tells the story of a troop going on a campout. There are ten characters in all, with eight in the
troop, a Creepy Old Man (a.k.a. Doctor Price), and a Mother. The eight Scout characters correspond to stereotypes the staff-writers thought appropriate (and I suppose farcical). This is how the writers described them in the script:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rusty</td>
<td>Cocky Deock\textsuperscript{11}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Jennings</td>
<td>Wigger\textsuperscript{12}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. McPherson</td>
<td>ZZ\textsuperscript{13}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgy</td>
<td>Smart-Ass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris</td>
<td>Peer/Weirdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane</td>
<td>Mellow Assistant Senior Patrol Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jay</td>
<td>Rusty’s protégé</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Naïve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Altogether, the troop is comprised of stereotypical characters. The cocky, know-it-all Senior Patrol Leader (Rusty) is the youth in charge of the troop. The rest of the Scouts include a wannabe Rusty (Jay), a foil to Rusty (Georgy), a couple of young and naïve Scouts (Chris and Mark), and the cool guy (Shane). And then we have the jovial, older Scoutmaster who tries to lead the boys (Mr. McPherson), and the younger Scoutmaster who tries to be cool and fit in (Mr. Jennings). All fairly standard fare for a Boy Scout troop—though perhaps not the same characters you’d find in a skit performed at school (no cheerleaders, jocks, etc.).

In a nutshell, The Farce opens with the troop returning from a long hike. The adult leaders head off to bed, and the Scouts stay up. They joke around, pick on one another, bring out their stash of junk food, tell stories, and then send the two naïve Scouts out to find the famed “Creepy Old Man” who haunts these woods—all pretty standard camp fare.\textsuperscript{14} The two young
Scouts head into the woods, stumble across a sleeping man, and run back to the campsite in terror. The man follows them back to the campsite and, come to find out, he’s Dr. Price a well-respected doctor in town, and he gives the boys some advice about how to live a good life.

Though many camps have their ghost stories, the Creepy Old Man character is the only formal ghost story/bad guy character in contemporary Camp Lakota lore. When we consider the significance of such characters, it is striking that they are almost entirely absent at Lakota. Jay Mechling borrows anthropologist Victor Turner’s analysis of “liminal monsters” in initiation ceremonies to help explain Creepy Old Men characters:

Turner’s observation is that liminal monsters are aimed not at terrorizing the neophytes but at startling them “into thinking about objects, persons, relationships, and features of their environment they have hitherto taken for granted.”

It is possible that campfire ghost stories and local legends are bourgeois equivalent of liminal monsters. (Magic 49)

According to one of the script writers, this is precisely the motivation that went into the creation of the Creepy Old Man: Marcus said that he and Raptor were talking one day about how people disrespect folks that are different from them. He remembers that they had seen a homeless guy and started talking about the fact that you really do not know other people’s circumstances and that everyone deserves respect. They wanted kids to learn that they should give everyone respect. They created the liminal monster—who is actually the frightening and insane Creepy Old Man as well as the kind and philosophical Dr. Price—to teach campers to take a second look at people (Marcus).

The basic storyline of The Farce is all very wholesome and Scout-y. However, the content of The Farce pulls back the curtain on Scouting and masculinity lore at Camp Lakota. The staff-writers consciously-or-not created a play that “tells all.”
Ritualistic Rebellion

The Farce includes repeated and numerous examples of material outlawed by National: it includes toilet humor, making fun of mental or physical abilities, and lots of sexual overtones. Similar to the opening campfire, The Lakota Farce is filled with silences denied—that is, examples of things which should not be spoken, which should not happen at Boy Scout camp.

For example, The Farce touches on the prevalence of sexual, primarily homosexual, play in Boy Scouting (and certainly amongst staff). It starts right at the beginning of the show. After the troop arrives in camp, the two adult leaders decide to go to bed. Mr. McPherson the Scoutmaster suggests they do a “buddy check” before they go to bed—to “help your buddy look for ticks.” This is fairly standard procedure: it is part of the training straight out of the Boy Scout Handbook to “inspect yourself daily, especially the hairy parts of your body, and immediately remove any ticks you find” (BSA Handbook 310), plus it is common to get a friend to look in your hair and on your back.

However, this turns into a suggestive joke when the newbee Chris says, “I don’t have any buddies here,” and the entire rest of the troop leaps forward, “I’ll be your buddy”—as if they all want to help the new boy check for ticks on his body. Then, the cool Scout (Shane) says, “Just kidding,” suggesting that the characters know that they’re making homosexual references. Shane adds, “He always says that [we should do buddy checks], but we never do it.” The other young Scout, Mark invitingly blurts out, “I sure wish we could!”

Throughout the rest of The Farce, “homosexual” references are made—sometimes rather blatantly:

- Young Scout Mark is constantly wanting to sing “show tunes” and “rockin’ musical interludes,” which is always denied or ridiculed by the other Scouts.
• Young Scout Chris tells everyone he has a “pair of snake skin pants,” and everyone else gets grossed out, and Shane says, “Wow, way too much information.”

• When the two young Scouts go off into the woods to find the Creepy Old Man (“before he finds us”), they prance away together—some weeks even arm-in-arm—singing “Camptown Races.”

• In the original script, The Farce was supposed to end with a grand finale dance number. That ending was changed during rehearsals.

Eagerness for young boys, flamboyant clothing, prancing, singing show tunes, and doing a dance number: I wager these are all affectations that boys from northwest Ohio would recognize and associate with homosexuals and homosexuality.

In his study of a long-term Scout encampment, Mechling bears witness to how rampant such homosexual references are at Boy Scout camp, and interprets it as a response to the environment and culture of the camp itself:

A Boy Scout camp experience is an exaggerated male group experience, perhaps the first for the boys. Men and boys live, eat, and sleep together for two or three weeks in a wilderness setting far removed from the everyday reality of school and home. . . . At the same time, the boys are thrown together in activities that alternately require cooperation and competition with other males. Loyalty and trust are highly valued in the official Boy Scout literature and in the real-life demands of this male group. (Mechling Magic 45)

Mechling suggests that such close, long-term, multi-faceted contact naturally creates homoerotic feelings. Such feelings lead to anxieties which are relieved by “perjorative references to homosexuality.”
Homosexual, or homoerotic, feelings are central to both competition and cooperation within close male groups. . . . The boy distances himself from these homoerotic feelings by means of “put-downs” and the projection of these feelings onto another. In short, close comradeship between these boys is possible as long as they share in their symbolic lore a scorn for homosexuality (Mechling Magic 45-46).

Therefore, in the context of a formally sanctioned performance like The Farce, when such symbolic lore reflects scorn for homosexuality, it is a fairly strong message produced by the dominant group. It is unclear what the message actually was meant to be: “Here’s how you deal with your homoerotic anxieties” or “Don’t be a fag!” or “Watch out, the guy sitting next to you could be gay!” However, based upon the prevalence of homoerotic play among staff (see Chapter 5), it seems more like a lesson in method than a lesson in ideology or caution.

In addition to homosexual reference, though, The Farce also includes more traditionally heterosexual references. For example, at one point in Dr. Price’s monologue, he mentions being married. He says it “straight” one time, then mentions it again with a snicker, and he nudges the boy next to him suggestively—in one performance, even mumbling something to the effect of, “You know what it means to be married, don’t you!”

There are also stylized references to masturbation. For example, one Scout picks on Rusty, saying, “Rusty, you spend more time orienting your map then looking at girls”—with “orienting your map” as a euphemism for masturbating. Ironically, masturbation is a common theme in Baden-Powell’s writing; it is perhaps second to none the path to destroying a man. In the original transcript of Scouting for Boys, Baden-Powell had described the situation very openly:
You will know what it is to have at times a pleasant feeling in your private parts, and there comes an inclination to work it up with your hand or otherwise. It is especially likely to happen when you see a dirty picture or hear dirty stories and jokes.

Well, lots of fellows from not knowing any better please themselves in this way until it becomes a sort of habit with them which they cannot get out of. Yet I am sure that every sensible boy, if he were told in time of the danger of it, would have the strength of mind not to do it. (Quoted in Rosenthal 187)

He spoke very frankly about how a “very large number of lunatics in our asylums have made themselves mad by indulging in this vice” and the “use of your parts is not to play with when you are a boy, but to enable you to get children when you are grown up and married” (Rosenthal 187). Baden-Powell warned that misuse while young would lead one to “not be able to use them when you are a man” (Rosenthal 187). It is perhaps understandable that this bluntness did not make it into the published version of Scouting for Boys; his clarity was reduced to vague statements about “continence,” “indulgence,” and that the causes of this temptation comes from “eating rich foods, sleeping on the back in a soft bed with too many blankets on, or from constipation” (Baden-Powell Scouting 199-200).

Along the same lines as masturbation, The Farce includes an early scene that suggests ejaculation: Before Mr. McPherson heads off to bed, he tells the boys about how “in his day” they used to put potatoes in their pockets when they went hiking, and they had baked potatoes by the end of the hike. Later, Georgy makes fun of Mr. McPherson saying, “Back in my day, after we got done with our 300-mile day hike, we used to put ham in our pockets, and we had enough glazed ham to feed the whole camp.” While equating glaze with, say, ejaculate, may elude most campers and campers, the writers and actors in The Farce are cognizant of the joke.
Seemingly, these “on-stage” breaches are carefully coded so as to “hit” only some audience members, sometimes only the actors themselves (as in the glazed ham example). Surely, the wider audience saw the humor in Georgy mimicking Mr. McPherson—something the campers are perhaps familiar with—so the staff-oriented breach was masked in a camper-oriented gag. But this is risky business: focusing parts of your performance for a very small part of your audience—for you risk a return of silence rather than laughter. If *The Farce* is meant to be entertaining, then the references and gags ought to be focused on the widest audience possible. However, it is interesting that the writers introduced and the actors maintained this sort of esoteric reference.

Along a similar vein, *The Farce* also includes “breast humor”. For example, when the older boys send the younger boys out to find the Creepy Old Man, they warn them to watch out for “booby traps.” Then, just about every chance they could work it in, the staff would say, “booby trap”: “Watch out for any booby traps!” “What’s that? Is that a booby trap?” “Did you check for booby traps?” “I wonder if he set any booby traps for us?” On and on. It was amusing to them to be allowed to say such words in a public Boy Scout venue.

*The Farce* even touches on fear and bed-wetting. It begins with an exchange between the two younger Scouts: Mark says he has a rash that he thinks came from poison ivy. Chris says he has a rash, too. Mark says, “That’s cause you pee your pants!” The characters bring it up later when they warn Chris to quit playing with the fire: “You’ll pee the bed if you do [continue playing with the fire]”. Once again, bed-wetting reemerges when the Doctor is telling about being a little scared to give a speech at his graduation. Chris says, “I would have peed my pants if I had to talk in front of all those people.” Jay shoots back at him, “You pee your pants anyway!” At that point, Chris pees his pants and runs off to the adult leaders’ tent to be
consoled. From behind the tent, Mr. McPherson yells, “You did what?!” and Mr. Jennings adds, “Dude! That’s messed up!” Chris’ older brother, Jay says, “Geez, he takes that ‘Clear Pee’ thing way too seriously!” The scene ends with Georgy telling Dr. Price that Chris “sleeps in a tarp” because of his bedwetting, and Dr. Price offers him a “few diapers he could borrow if he wanted to. They work for me.” Therefore, in one fell-swoop, The Farce makes fun of people’s bladder control problems, both for the young and the old.

Much like the references to “booby,” it is titillating to transgress. The Farce actors found a way to say “pee” in front of campers. Similarly, there is a reference to Rusty’s last name: Rusty introduces himself to Dr. Price as Rusty Balicky—obviously, another barely veiled way to say “ball licking” in front of the entire camp. Typically, such behavior would be interpreted as Mary and Herbert Knapp interpret “shocker” rhymes and jokes (folklore meant to shock the listener): performers of shockers enjoy a “brief escape from social restraint—a ritualistic rebellion,” they “gain a certain kind of prestige among their peers” by performing shockers (Knapp 179). Based upon the blatant transgression and overt repetition, I would argue that most of The Farce humor is meant to be shocking and thereby spark laughter. Such references meet all of Thomas’s mechanisms for laughter: (a) the campers recognize they are mentioning taboo topics; (b) the campers realize the staff/actors are breaking with convention by saying these words out loud; and, (c) so long as the audience is not too emotionally close to the topic (e.g., bedwetters), they will most likely laugh (43).

The staff, acting like campers, are able to exert a ritualistic rebellion against the social constraints on saying words like “pee” and “booby.” Staff would not say such words ordinarily in day-to-day interaction: they know it is inappropriate coming out of staff members’ mouths. Which is why they put it in the mouths of campers. The Farce is a chance for staff to do what
they think campers do, and get away with it. They are performing the whos they think campers are—potty humorists and sexually immature—and doing so for shock, but receiving no retribution for transgression. The reason, perhaps, is that their performance is seen by adult leaders at camp as actually reinforcing the taboo against saying such words. That is, by introducing “pee” and “booby” into the formal context of The Farce in a way that is meant to shock, they actually affirm that the taboo exists (Knapp 183).

An exception would be the humor aimed solely at the staff (like the heavily coded “glazed ham” reference). Here, we witness the performers making a grab for prestige: not from the campers—amongst whom they already have prestige—but from the staff in the audience. The writers included these references and the performers acted them out as a way to say, “See what I can get away with saying on-stage!” A regular credit-card member perhaps moves up to a gold card member by avoiding retribution from intended transgression performances.

This prestige grab is perhaps best exemplified by one performer who took the “pee” humor one step further: As part of the script, young Chris wets his pants in front of everyone else. In the actual performance of The Farce, the staff member playing Chris (Marcus) actually pees himself on stage. Every week prior to the performance, Marcus would drink a lot of water, so he could pee himself on stage. The audience just figured he had a balloon in his pocket—or some other mechanism for wetting his pants in front of everyone. But the staff were highly impressed—and admittedly somewhat put-off—by Marcus’s dedication to the part. Suffice it to say there were hugs and high-fives after each performance, but few were willing to give Marcus a hug at the end of the show. They respected his breach, but were a bit grossed-out by it as well.

As previously noted, all of these situations cross the line of what National says is appropriate: There are clearly worded prohibitions against “anything with sexual overtones” (like
boys wanting to check out other boy’s hairy parts, references to masturbation and “booby’s”) as well as against “toilet humor—anything that involves bodily functions, toilet paper, etc.” (like all the references to “peeing,” and actually urinating in front of people). They even got passed by the camp director (me) who banned the “Hard Core Flag Corps” skit under the pretense of being too violent (which is something else National looks down on).

**Infantilization and Feminization**

It is important to note that in all these examples, it is the two young Scouts who perform effeminate affectations and are the butt of homosexual allusions. They both have high-pitched voices and are very flamboyant and sometimes giddy. They say silly things, sing songs, get scared, and pee themselves. They represent the least developed masculinities, or at least the masculinities least impacted by the Boy Scout program so far.

While they’re meant to solicit laughter and perhaps pity, they could be seen as a cautionary tale to the first year campers. The Creepy Old Man is not exactly the equivalent of Bloody Mary who kills anyone who performs her ritual, or the Babysitter on LSD who mistakenly cooked a baby instead of roast, or the escapee from the insane asylum from the Hook tales. The Creepy Old Man may start out scary, but he actually turns out to be the sage hero of *The Farce*. While he is not scary, he still provides a cautionary tale to campers. On the one hand, the Creepy Old Man/Dr. Price dynamic sends a clear message that one should not judge a book by its cover. On the other hand, the representation of the two youngest campers as small, foolish, feminine, and rather queer informs the actual first year campers watching *The Farce* that this is who the staff think they are. Unless a first year camper wants to be addressed in this way, this story lets them know which whos not to be. Rather than threaten them with death or the
Creepy Old Man’s huge machete, all the staff need to do is dramatize and offer for ridicule the whos that boys will not want to imagine themselves being or enacting.

This Creepy Old Man/Dr. Price character is juxtaposed against the performed immaturity of these young, effeminate boys. When he chases the two boys back to the campsite, the Creepy Old Man defends himself against the Troop members: “Look, my name is Willy Price. I know I’m creepy. And I know I’m old. But I’m not a Creepy Old Man.”

Georgy responds, “Does that mean he’s not a man?” The troop members all laugh.

Dr. Price responds, “I’m a man. I’m a doctor.” He defines masculinity for the boys: occupation is masculinity. Throughout his conversation with the boys, he sprinkles references to his affluence, sexually available wife, military record, children, and valedictorian status. He is manly, and the boys are not. Do we not see in Dr. Price the reflection of Ernest Thomson Seton’s legendary model of masculinity: Tecumseh? Tecumseh was

- a great athlete, a great hunter, a great leader, clean, manly, strong, unsordid, courteous,
- fearless, kindly, gentle with his strength, dignified, silent and friendly, equipped for emergencies, and filled with a religion that consisted not of books and creeds or occasional observances, but of desire to help those that had need of help….22

Dr. Price is the quintessential Scout man: he is a great leader in the town (a prominent doctor). While not necessarily clean, he is manly and strong—at least enough to camp out by himself in the woods. Dr. Price is definitely filled with the religion to help those that need help—namely, this group of boys. The performance of this character implies that the “Creepy Old Man” is a mask, a prejudice placed upon the real man—the Boy Scout man that sometimes hides beneath. Dr. Price admonishes the boys—actors and audience alike—to find the manly man beneath the
legend. Dr. Price is the who Scouts should strive to become as they veer away from the who represented by the effeminate Mark and Chris.

*The Military in the BSA*

*The Farce* also makes reference to the long-standing connection between the military and Scouting which goes back to Scouting’s beginnings in Baden-Powell’s military experiences in Africa.\(^23\) Even though Baden-Powell was a military man through-and-through, he always maintained that Boy Scouting was about “peace Scouting” rather than “war Scouting”. In response to those who would say that he was training the next generation of soldiers, Baden-Powell replied that Scout training methods

> are all consistent with our work as Peace Scouts and do not tend very much to militarism. At the same time the form of training is very much left in the hands of Scoutmasters, and if they like to train their lads to become gymnasts, marksmen, farmers or mechanics, they are free to do so according to their individual ability. (Baden-Powell Dec. 1909, 9)\(^24\)

Since Scoutmasters have the authority to train their boys as they see fit, it is no wonder there is a military thread in the Boy Scouts of America. In the United States, Scouting is influenced by the military, primarily because a significant number of the adult leaders have military experience. In fact, many of the mid-to-late aged leaders served in Vietnam (though younger leaders now are coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq). However, we also see a clear relationship between the military and the BSA, represented by the fact that National Boy Scout Jamboree\(^25\) has been held at Fort A. P. Hill in Virginia every four years since 1981.\(^26\)

But the relationship goes deeper than that. On June 15, 1916, the United States Congress issued the Boy Scouts of America a federal charter, formally protecting the name, insignia, and terminology (Peterson 88). Two weeks later, Congress approved the Boy Scout uniform in the
National Defense Act, making the Scout uniform the rare exception to the law prohibiting uniforms similar to the U.S. military (88). Soon thereafter, the U.S. entered World War I, and the Boy Scouts leapt into action: planting gardens (“Every Scout feed a soldier”), organizing “Scout coastal patrol to watch for enemy ships,” selling $355 million worth of Liberty Loan bonds, and so forth (89). Scouts filled the same needs during World War II, collecting scrap materials (including going “into the woods to collect milkseed floss as a substitute for the kapok used in life jackets”), distributing posters and pamphlets, and growing food (“Victory Gardens”) (137). Historian Peterson suggests that it was this role as “prodigies of home-front service” that “made the Boy Scouts of America the preeminent youth movement in the United States” (89).

In The Farce, the military is carefully woven into the story of how the Creepy Old Man became so creepy. Rusty tells how it all started:

> It all started during the Vietnam War. You know how all those hippies were like, ’HECK NO! WE WON’T GO!’ Well, this one guy was the complete opposite. He was like, ‘Sign me up and ship me out’ . . . . He was like ‘Let’s go get those Viet Con! [sic] . . . At first he was all about it, but the jungle got to him. He started hearing strange voices all around him. Then he freaked. . . . so he got a section eight! . . . They kicked him out because he went insane.

Rusty tells how the man got home from Vietnam and disappeared. Rumor had it that he was in these woods, and he was known for his huge machete. Come to find out, the Creepy Old Man was really Dr. Price, and yes, he was discharged from the army—but it was for a “Section Eighteen,” as Dr. Price put it, because his father had died. He was honorably discharged.

The role of citizenship and the military is a relatively sacred topic in Scouting: flag raisings, flag lowerings, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, a plaque in the dining hall honoring
Vietnam veterans, flag retirement ceremonies—the list goes on. These are traditional practices in Scouting and especially at Scout camp. The sacredness was heightened during the two summers of my study (2002 and 2003) due to the wars waging in Afghanistan as well as Iraq. Many of the boys came from families where parents and siblings were involved in the military. Somehow, _The Farce_ seems to have waded through it comfortably. _The Farce_ gives voice to the Vietnam veteran—who may be sitting in the crowd—as well as the war protestor—who also may be sitting in the crowd.²⁹

_Play the Game_

_The Lakota Farce_ reflects one of Baden-Powell’s mantras: “Play the game!” In the dialogue between Dr. Price (a.k.a. the Creepy Old Man) and Rusty (the Senior Patrol Leader), we see the core struggle in the play: Rusty is seeking success, popularity, being “well known” throughout town. Meanwhile, Dr. Price represents all those things Rusty wants, but Dr. Price doesn’t interpret those items as “success”:

Life isn’t a big game where you can win or lose all the time. At the end of the day, you’ve gotta live your life happily. . . . I used to think having a lot of money . . . was where it’s at and all. But you come home at the end of the day and don’t recognize your own kids, or if you think one of the neighbor kids is really your wife, you don’t even recognize your own neighbor.³⁰ . . . You realize it’s your friends in life that count. . . . Having a nine-to-five job is not making a living in this world. Making a living is keeping your friends real close to your heart, making sure you look after them. Because otherwise, they’re going to pee themselves forever.³¹ . . . It’s not about having a job and making money. It’s about making sure that every who sits around this campfire has got a potato on a stick.³²
Dr. Price tells the boys that all his cars, houses, exotic trips abroad and so forth are nice, but they don’t make him superior. It is as if Baden-Powell himself were speaking through Dr. Price’s lips: Baden-Powell told people that “A rich man . . . is not the man with the most money but with the fewest wants”; he criticized those who wanted “to possess, rather than to enjoy the world around them” (Baden-Powell “Success”).

Such talk from Dr. Price was shocking to Rusty. Rusty cannot seem to understand how someone as successful as Dr. Price didn’t get his Eagle Award. Rusty is absolutely mystified when Dr. Price suggests that a garbage man is just as important as a doctor.

Dr. Price asks Rusty, “Do you think I could do my job—pulling kidneys out and stuff—if I had to worry about where my trash was going? I don’t care what happens to my used q-tips and diapers.”

Dr. Price, ironically, is voicing one of Baden-Powell’s mantras: Baden-Powell believed that everyone had their place in society and that the Scout’s duty was to learn their place and “to play the game.” He took this notion from the public school system in England (which was reserved for the elite) where “playing the game” was standard operating procedure for a gentleman in any circumstance. Failure to “play the game” was what distinguished the gentleman from the working boy:

But another weakness of the boy is his inability to “play the game.” He will loudly question the referee’s decision when it is against him. . . . It is therefore a primary duty of the Club Helper to insist upon his boys playing a clean game and obeying the referee’s decision without question or discussion. “To play the game” fairly and squarely is a lesson that is of intense value throughout life, and a club which fails to teach it neglects one of its main duties to its members. (Pelham 128)
Baden-Powell suggested to many Scouts and Scouters that they read the works of amateur tennis champion and editor of books on physical fitness Eustance Miles. Miles argued that “Good play is not mere recreation. It is also preparation for most if not the whole life. . . . It is preparation and education nearly all around; physical, remedial, hygienic, aesthetic, ethical, intellectual, economic, social, prospective, and competitive” (Miles 10). Playing the game was “a sensible test and standard for almost everything that we shall do, or say, or look, or think—or leave undone, unsaid, unlooked, unthought” (Miles viii-ix). Like Dr. Price, Baden-Powell argued that we each should be like a brick in the wall:

Some bricks may be high up and others low down in the wall; but all must make the best of it and play in their place for the good of the whole. So it is among people; each of us has his place in the world, it is no use being discontented, it is no use hating our neighbours because they are higher up or lower down than themselves. We are all Britons, and it is our duty each to play in his place and help his neighbours. (Baden-Powell, “Be A Brick” 182)\(^{33}\)

Without any foreknowledge of Baden-Powell’s arguments, these Boy Scout staff members from rural northwest Ohio have somehow embodied Baden-Powell’s rhetoric. And it is ironic that the script writers’ revolutionary intention in the script ended up re-ordering (reifying) one of the oldest of Scouting values: know and stay in your place.

*Playing at Scouting*

As *The Farce* comes to a close, there is one final twist in the story line. As mentioned earlier, the original script called for the entire cast to do “a music and dance number.” That idea was scrapped during rehearsals when the cast couldn’t agree on what song to sing or what dance
to perform. In the spirit of necessity and the inclusion of a staff member who happened to be watching during a rehearsal, the following series of events takes place:

The Scouts are sitting around the fire as Dr. Price is finishing his monologue on playing the game. All of a sudden, from the top of the hill, a woman’s voice hollers out from the treeline:

“What’s all that ruckus out here? Boys, is that you? What are you doing out here?” A woman (a female staff member dressed in an apron) walks to the edge of the hill. “Elly McPherson?” she calls out, “You get in this house and bring your friends in for some cookies.”

Mr. McPherson stumbles out of his tent where he was sleeping and says, “Mom, you ruin all the fun!”

She ignores his protest. “And Norman Jennings,” she calls down to Mr. Jennings, “I made snickerdoodles. Just like you like ‘em.” Mr. Jennings pops out of the tent behind Mr. McPherson.

Mother goes on, “But you make sure you wipe your feet when you come in my kitchen. Not like the last time!”

The Mother’s appearance reveals that the two adult leaders (and presumably Dr. Price) are really just youth playing at being adults, passing as adults. The woman is “Mr. McPherson’s” mom. The entire group is playing at Scouting, passing as rather than being Scouts.

The Farce ends with Mr. Jennings walking up to center stage, kicks at the ground like a disgruntled kid, and says, “When I turn 18, I’m outta here! Fer-shizel!” And then all the boys run up the hill to get some cookies.

The End.
Prior to this closing, The Farce has been a mirror of Scouting, reflecting many of the common practices, motifs, issues, critiques waged against and within Scouting from its inception: We witness how Scouts really behave rather than what you see on the cover of Boys’ Life magazine. We witness the flock of masculinities darting this way and that within Scouting: the military masculinity, the creepy old man masculinity, the cocky senior patrol leader masculinity, and the unmanly new Scout masculinity.

As a caveat to what we witness, it is worth noting what was not reflected in this mirror of Scouting. If The Farce is meant to demonstrate what enculturation was taken in by “recent campers” (called staff members), it is worth noting that there were no references to Indians, merit badges, flag ceremonies, or old ladies needing a hand to cross the road. There was no Order of the Arrow, no Cub Scouting, no Guide to Safe Scouting. Also, there were no fathers, but one domineering, matronly mother.

The ending makes one wonder whether or not this is really a farce, a mockery, a sham. Does this ending critique Scouting? Are Scouts shown to be just boys playing at manhood, or is this merely an echo of Baden-Powell’s admonition to “play the game”? Is the motherly intrusion and unveiling at the end a mockery of boyhood and masculinity, or is it merely another example of infantilization and emasculation within the Scouting program itself? It is a fact that this ending was not constructed by thoughtful, calculating minds with the intention of upending anything; after all, it was created in the heat of a creative impulse and necessity. As such, this ending opens a doorway into The Farce that seems to show it as a reflection of staff member issues rather than just general Scouting issues.

The Farce actually articulates an issue that emerged in my interviews with staff: Not only are many of them passing as “the living breathing example of the Boy Scouts of America,” but
they actually have to pass as Boy Scouts too. One staff member, Matt, narrates how he became an Assistant Scoutmaster in his troop after getting his Eagle and turning 18 years old. He says,

> If I wouldn’t have had that year and half or whatever on staff that I’ve had, I don’t think I would have said yes to that. I think I would have said I don’t have time for that. I learned a lot. . . . You make time for the things you want. You make time for the things you like. I’ve learned to make time for Scouting because I enjoy Scouting.

This sort of giving-back is the ideal. One would hope that Scouting would induce this insight; and one would hope that the intensified Scouting found at summer camp would instill it. However, that is far from the case. Matt’s story is a rarity amongst staff I interviewed.

More common is to hear the story about someone who did a year or two of summer camp staffing and then dropped out of Scouting with their troop altogether. Mitch is a prime example:

> He describes how “before I became a staff member, I was an avid Scout, I was there, I was senior patrol leader and everything.” But he hasn’t been to a Scout meeting since. He says it had to do with a Scoutmaster he didn’t particularly like, and after staff, he realized, “No, I don’t like that scoutmaster. I don’t have to put up with him. I don’t have to be there.” He said, “I think you could say that staff ruined me for scouting because of the things I was able to know and find out being on staff.” In effect, Boy Scouts turn into Staff Members, and then staffing commonly severs their ties to their troop. Staff members seemingly find a different, and more attractive, level of Scouting on staff. This certainly was my own story: at the age of 14, I effectively dropped out of Boy Scouts and joined staff. Each summer, I re-registered as a Boy Scout so I could work on camp staff, but I never joined a troop again. This story is told again and again by the staff I interviewed.
Fourth-year staff member, Henry had a very similar story of finding another form of Scouting that interested him more. Whereas my own story is about joining summer camp staffing, Henry got involved in the Order of the Arrow (OA)—the honor camper society in the Boy Scouts of America:

Well, staff got me into the OA big time. And so all of a sudden OA campouts started taking precedence over the troop. . . . It’s almost used as a double edged sword because, on one hand, all of the guys who I knew in my troop had hit the age where they took off. And it was me and the younger scouts. Not to be the guy who has no ties with his shitty rural town here in Ohio, but I’ve got no ties. I don’t want to talk about hunting. I don’t want to talk about fishing. I don’t want to talk about my new four wheeler at camp meetings, at scout meetings. You know. There’s a lot of stagnation. There wasn’t a lot of motivation in the troop. So on one hand it was the troop. It was losing touch with who the group of guys were. And I would even come out and tell people like Marcus, you know, man you are so lucky to have a troop that you like. It is so cool for you to be able to go to a scout meeting. Because I really lost that. I had the OA on weekends. But I lost an every week . . . hour-and-a-half long chill session.

Henry also added that he had tried to return to his troop after the first year on camp staff, but then “staff started cutting into high adventure. My troop is huge into high adventure.” In Scouting, “high adventure” involves a multi-day activity for older scouts which includes “action, adventure, challenge, a risk factor for excitement, and vigorous activity,” like climbing a mountain, whitewater rafting, a bicycle trek, and so forth (BSA 2006 Council High Adventure 1). Henry’s troop did high adventure activities during the summer months, and that’s when he chose to go to staff instead.
The theme of competition between staff and troop who is common. For example, Brent, the COPE Director reflected back on his eight years of working on staff and found his dedication to staff overwhelming his pursuits in Scouting. After a couple years on staff, one of the highly respected older Scoutmasters at camp (not his own Scoutmaster, mind you) approached him about his advancement toward Eagle rank.

“I remember [him] giving me some crap one time. He’s like, ‘You’re seventeen and you don’t have your Eagle yet. Why?’ I was like, ‘Because I’ve been working at camp staff all those years. So, I was pretty dedicated to camp stuff, and that was before like ’93 and ’96—that was before they really started saying, ‘Hey staff members, take some merit badges.’ Then they started to pushing that.”

He was one who knew he always wanted to be on staff. He got his friend to join with him. Camp was so fun, he wanted to be there for four weeks. Scouts just got in the way of staffing.

Other staff find that their troops don’t want them any more.

Henry mentioned this too. At first, his troop tried to accommodate his new staff and OA schedule, but he said that

eventually it became an “us” against “you” situation, of “You are too good for us now.”

And it was totally coming from them. You know. “You are too good for. . . .” And I can understand where they are coming from. I wasn’t around as much as I should be but it wasn’t just about staff or about the OA. It was about that I had lost touch with them.

It is understandable that a staff member would get pulled away by all the demands of “higher level” Scouting, but it forces one to then pass as a model Scout even though you and your troop don’t want each other anymore.
However, it is not a clean break. There are hurt feelings on all sides. When Henry tried to go back to his troop, he got the cold shoulder from the other members.

And it was, “Oh, oh, look who’s trying to step in now,” you know, “Mr. Big OA guy. We saw you in the Smoke Signals. Oooh, ooh”. . . . I’m not in it for the recognition, but nobody ever once got up at a court of honor and said you know, “We’d like to let you know that a member of our troop is a chapter chief in the OA”. . . . In fact, Section Secretary went by the wayside. The lodge chief even went by the wayside. . . . I mean, it was never, never a congratulations. Never a celebration. But it was not even mentioned. . . . And it wasn’t even known to the kids.

Henry became very frustrated as he continued to talk about his relationship with his troop:

Damn the stupid, “Give back more to scouting than scouting has given to you”. . . . That’s bullshit. How can I serve scouting more? Can I serve scouting more watching 600 scouts walk through this camp in these next four weeks. Or can I serve scouting more going out to my assistant scout master’s house this summer and seeing the same 20 kids fish? And jump off a raft. You know? Not that scouting doesn’t happen at the troop level. Not that it isn’t important for me to be there for those kids and be a more immediate and recognizable role model. But at the same time, I feel like I honestly am doing more out here and I wish I could give them both worlds.

Then Henry’s story takes a turn: no longer is he talking about the complexities of his involvement in Scouting. Instead, he starts to talk about disrespect for him and the Scouting he had found:

There just wasn’t respect is basically what it boils down to. For what I was trying to do outside of scouting. You know, Henry has discovered scouting outside of Paulding’s
troop. Oh my God. . . . But I feel like that they were really pushing away a piece of the scouting puzzle, and when I joined that puzzle, it was looked down upon.

He had, for all intents and purposes, outgrown his Troop. Truly, he had found Scouting outside of his home town; but where he went, they could or would not follow.

Even the staff members who do return to their troops after a summer at camp have a difficult time readjusting. For example, second-year staff member Jerry started out saying he was a “good Scout,” but then he backed off, “Well not really.” He said,

I used to hate troop meetings a lot. . . . Absolutely think they are the worst things in the world, at least for my Monday nights. And like, you get back from staff, and for the first couple of months you are kind of burned out. But then you come back, and it seems like I came back stronger than I did when I started out.

He tells how he started going to troop meetings “feverishly” and “like actually working, sitting down with the kids.” Jerry’s tactic was to bridge the gap back to his troop by passing as a Staff member in Scout clothing:

When I went through the frontier patrol thing, I learned a whole new respect for people that worked with kids on a daily basis. And like, I took some of the skills that I learned there, and I’m taking it back to my troop. Before summer camp, I was a troop guide . . . with the first year patrol. . . . So I figured well, yea, I’m doing this here [at camp], I can do that there. And that was cool. And then I was the junior assistant scout master for awhile.

Jerry found a new who in his troop—not just another regular member who—which allowed him to perform like a staff member but on the troop level. He said, “I had a lot more respect given to me.”
This is a wonderful paradox in staffing: the work of Scouting leads one away from Scouting. These role models for Scouting are typically not a part of traditional, troop-level Scouting—or at least they aren’t for long. Many start “passing” as Scouts rather than being one. Mitch rationalizes not being an active member anymore by arguing,

I can still display the model for what a Scout should be like by, even though I’m not an active Scout, an active member of Scouts, I can still display the Scout Law, the Scout Oath. When you think about it, those are things anybody can do. You just have to have the control and the willingness to do it.

However, I am suggesting that Staffing is not the same as Scouting. Yes, staff members tie knots all day long; they shoot bows and arrows, hike trails, paddle canoes and the like—they “do” Scouting more than most Scouts do. However, there is a difference between doing and being. Their identity changes from a Scout identity to a Staff identity. And for these Scouts, staff identity—or really more specifically, staff masculinity—is more attractive and thus compelling. The staff experience lures them away from the Troop experience.

A Play within Play

The Lakota Farce is much like “Murder of Gonzago” in Shakespeare’s Hamlet: While Shakespeare uses the play-within-a-play so Hamlet can “catch the conscience of the King” (90), I wager the staff scriptwriters use their own play within the play of summer camp to catch the conscience of Boy Scout staff members. As Carol Replogle (1969) suggests, a successful play-within-a-play converts “actors of the main action into spectators, bound for the moment with the real audience. These actors thus acquire a kind of new actuality as, together, with the audience, they inspect a performance which is equally remote from both” (153). This “new actuality” implies that for the actors (staff members) as well as for the real audience (the Scouts), a space is
opened up by the inner play to inspect, review, reconsider the outer play—or for that matter, the real world. According to Robert J. Nelson, “The play within a play is the theater reflecting on itself, on its own paradoxical seeming” (Nelson Play 10).

The Lakota Farce is perhaps just such a inspection, review, and reflection of Scouting which staff members have created for themselves as well as for all to see. In the midst of the play of summer camp, The Farce stands out as the only significant performance where staff members reveal before the camper audience their truth of Scouting. The staff perform the stereotypes of Scout troops and the characters in Scout troops. The staff provide a review of the traditional themes and myths which support the experience of Scouting. And in the end, the staff perform their own experience of being a Scout. That performance is of boys passing as Scouts, as adults, as creepy old men passing on life’s wisdom. While skits and songs provide a glimpse into staff experiences of Scouting, The Farce is perhaps the most informative performance I’ve witnessed. It is Geertz’s Balinese cockfight for Boy Scout summer camp staff members.

Ordering Limits What Can be Ordered

Education theorist Deborah P. Britzman employs queer theory and psychoanalytic theory to suggest that we engage in “impertinent performance” whereby we have “an interest in thinking against the thought of one’s conceptual foundation; and interest in studying the skeletons of learning and teaching that haunt one’s responses, anxieties, and categorical imperatives; and a persistent concern with whether pedagogical relations can allow more room to maneuver in thinking the unthought of education” (Queer Pedagogy 155). She argues that we should ask the question, “What makes something thinkable?” to “get at the unmarked criteria that work to dismiss as irrelevant or valorize as relevant a particular mode of thought, field of study, or insistence upon the real” (156). Britzman would argue that staff members’ origin
stories and cultural productions like *The Farce* tell us what and how staff members know, but also what and how that “knowing” keeps staff members from knowing. She suggests that we examine ways in which “the knowledge one already possesses or is possessed by works as an entitlement to one’s ignorance or when the knowledge encountered cannot be incorporated because it disrupts how the self might imagine itself and others” (159). In this way, she suggests that “knowledge is a form of resistance” to other knowledge (159).

Wherein the previous section I attempted to articulate what the origin stories and *The Farce* tell us about what staff members know and think about masculinity, identity, and Scouting, in this section, I would like to articulate “where thought stops” in these orderings and what these orderings “cannot bear to know, what [they] must shut out to think as [they do]” (156). As examples, I would like to highlight aspects of the “unthought” in staff members’ origin stories and in *The Farce* performance.

Each of the origin stories—rebirth, agency, tripping—seems to suggest an opening up of possibilities for staff members. They encounter something or someone previously unthinkable on staff, and they attempt to become that new who. These experiences truly are liberatory for the vast majority of these young boys. However, these new whos are hardly new to the Scouting and camping ordering system. Staff members are encouraged to behave in “crazy” ways, to play along the borderlines of appropriateness, to make a break with the old to encounter something new. But they are encouraged to do these things in the service of training young boys to become young men. The “new” whos are merely tools for creating manhood and citizenship. Britzman uses the example of how anti-homophobic initiatives that have argued for inclusion of gay and lesbian subjects have actually produced “the very exclusions they are meant to cure” (158). Inclusivity fails when it is built on the back of a notion like homophobia which, itself, “centers
heterosexuality as the normal” and reaffirms the hegemony of heterosexuality (158). Similarly, Scouting opportunities for whos are only so broad and so deep, and beyond those opportunities, few staff members ever go.

Similarly, The Farce appears to be an incredible example of Boy Scout staff members thinking about the unthought of their own Scouting experiences. After all, the complexity of youth staff members passing as youth passing as Scouts and adult leaders brings to the surface many of the paradoxical foundations of Scouting and masculinity. The freedom of public urination, the breaking of silences, the last minute unveiling of boy-men identities—these are all critiques (some might say resistances) and cracks in the coherence of Scout camp culture. And staff members experience them as freeing and as if they were “getting away with something.” The experience of “getting away with something” is hegemonically ordered. On the one hand, if one did not “get away” with it, the hegemony would be exerting some form of discipline for the transgression. On the other hand, if one did “get away” with it, can we really consider that action outside of the hegemonic ordering system? I would argue that it is not.

My point is that the staff experience seems to open up so many possibilities, seems to offer a whole new array of whos; and yet, these opportunities and whos are still well-within the bounds of the hegemony of Scouting ordering systems. Bell hooks points out that for all the good that the 1960s black liberation movement did, black men and women “were not liberated from the system but liberated to serve the system” which oppressed them (181 my emphasis). The whos that are ordered at Boy Scout camp—both for and by staff members—actually widen the array of available whos but also limit what whos are able to be known. It is as if this seeming loosening of a few more whos will catch and keep the attention of “the masses” so they will not
pursue other, more truly liberatory whos. There does not appear to be any who to become that is not already within the hegemony.
Notes

1 Sutton-Smith references the inspiration of Gregory Bateson’s works: Mind and Nature (1979) and Angels Fear (1987).

2 There are other explanations given for why some people are on staff, but these are told by people about other people, not themselves. For instance, Matt tells about another staff member—a guy from his hometown—whose father has pressured him to be on staff:

   I think . . . their family tries to put them in shoes that are too big for them, to try to fill. Especially, I see dads that try to push their sons to points where they never got to. You see it happening a lot. I think staff is an opportunity for them to do that. I think some of these kids get pushed into doing this, and they really don’t want to be here. They really enjoy camping and stuff, but they’d rather just be a camper.

In stories like Matt’s, we see how they order other people’s staffing experience as forced or coerced, but when they talk about their own experience with staffing, they experience power and agency.

While it isn’t an origin story, there are also explanations for why staff keep returning: Mitch says that “some come back because they just love the place so much, they’re attached to it.” They have an attachment to place more than people.

Travis, for instance, tells how a staff member from years ago used to say that he would come out to camp so he could “have peace and quiet and no one bothered me.” Travis described this staff member as very popular—“everyone wanted to be with him”—but when he told Travis that when he came to camp, “I could just be my own self.” Travis tells how that staff member would even go off by himself when he was on staff, so he could be alone. Then, Travis articulated his own attachment to the camp property:

   I guess when I walk more so back here towards Meecheway, walk the trails, I just forget all of my problems. I just forget everything. I’m in my own little world. I’ve come out here alone a lot, since I live so close. And I’ve done some of the articles I’ve written. I come out here and I can just write away and my mind is clear. And feel relaxed. And if I have, if things aren’t going well, lawyers are chasing us or something like that, I come out here and walk the trails. Especially I love it in the wintertime. And I just, you just forget everything. It’s hard to describe. But to me it’s a spiritual type of feeling. Where I feel like I can come out here, and even though I’m not saying much, I’m walking around with God, if you will.

At Camp Lakota, this sort of experience is called “Lakota Magic” despite the fact that many staff members, like Travis speak from a Christian perspective.

3 Obviously, these narratives are ordered. None of them said, “You know something? I witnessed the ideal Scouter that I wanted to become, but I never quite got there.” All those who tell this story actually feel that they have realized their dream. For example, when I asked Warren if he had realized his dream, had he become like Tom, he said,

   I think I did in many ways. Yea. I achieved my Eagle award. And was eventually very active in the Order of the Arrow. Um, and served as a lodge vice chief. And um, was chosen as one of the first two youth vigil honor members of the lodge. And um, that idea of giving cheerful service at the Order of the Arrow calls scouts and leaders too was something that I accepted as a way of life that I wanted to carry out. And that’s the reason I became a teacher and eventually went into ministry. Partly, at least.
In effect, Tom put Warren on a path that he is still on over 50 years later.

4 This dream-come-true experience is reminiscent, too, of the “imaginary relationships” which John Caughey describes. Caughey argues that we do not only live in “the objective world of external objects and activities,” but “much of our experience is inner experience” (241). We have innumerable “imaginary” relationships, processes, and activities on a daily basis which can positively influence our society or can “constitute a real threat to the social order” (30). Caughey avoids entanglements with psychological interpretations of such relationships by viewing them as “other worlds”—a concept borrowed from phenomenological sociologists Berger (1966) and Schutz (1962)—and thereby uses the social sciences and ethnographic methods to explore imaginary other worlds (like dreams) much like we study actual other worlds (Caughey 28).


5 In a traditional adolescent legend trip, there are three “scenes” to the experience: (1) experienced trippers tell others about the location, (2) a group goes to the location and “invokes the supernatural by prescribed rituals”—like telling the legend, and (3) a retreat to a safe place to share perceptions and “uncanny events” that occurred (Ellis Mock-Ordeal, 487). The actual performance of the legend—scene 2—is absolutely critical to the experience. In her example of the Black Angel in Iowa City, Iowa, Elizabeth Bird describes how the performance at the location involves both an explanation of the existence of the Black Angel statue as well as a warning of what happens if the Angel is molested in any way. She says that “legend testing” ensues, whereby the participants challenge the warnings to see what happens (Bird 199). In the context of “a dark cemetery, add a few beers, the discourse of friends whose conversation centers on death and evil, and you have a . . . situation [in which] people exhibit the well-known ‘willing suspension of disbelief’ that is part of many games, rituals, or dramatic performances” (Bird 200).


The card game, Magic.

8 The Boy Scouts of America is not a holding environment built for warding off foreclosure: First, Boy Scouting is not so much a one-on-one as it is a group—that is, patrol- and troop-oriented—organization. Similarly, the Boy Scouts is intended to help one explore varied though relatively prescribed career paths and adult roles rather than allowing self-exploration. As such, the BSA seems more geared toward foreclosure than moratorium.

Dégh and Vázsonyi give the example of Roger C. Drollinger and his friends who killed four teenagers reminiscent of Manson’s helter-skelter murders. Dégh and Vázsonyi explain: Drollinger was deeply influenced by the film version of the Manson case, and his attraction was probably supplemented by information obtained from a variety of earlier sources. This influence was so strong that he felt the urge to communicate the story through an available means of folklore transmission. Had he been a narrator by nature, he perhaps would have recounted it orally to one of his neighbors; had he been a folk poet, he would have composed a ballad; had he the talent in mime, he would have played it with gestures; had he the skill of writing, he would have written it down in a short story, a letter, a diary, and so on. He had a variety of communicative vehicles from which to choose. Drollinger, however, for some reason . . . chose ostensive action. He recruited friends of similar inclination, and together they faithfully presented the Manson case—in fact, the Manson legend. . . . (29)

Driven by a desire to communicate, one must also consider the motive of Drollinger’s communication. If he wanted to persuade, one must consider the persuasiveness of these various forms of communication. Ostension is far more persuasive than a ballad.

“Deock” is a way of saying “Dick”.

Wigger is an amalgam of “white” and “nigger”—a white person attempting to perform African American characteristics. In this case, the character was an Assistant Scoutmaster, an adult figure who was trying to be hip and cool.

ZZ are the initials (here, changed) for a Scoutmaster known by a number of the staff for being an over-the-top, ultra-manly, ultra—Scouter. In The Farce, Mr. McPherson is a stereotypical Scoutmaster who blathers on and on about, “Back when I was a Scout,” and so forth.

While the Creepy Old Man character is “new” to Camp Lakota, it seems standard fare at nudist camps for teens. Apparently, COG’s (“creepy old guys”) are the reason tall fences are built around nude summer camps (“A Nude Kind of Summer Camp”).


I also assume a psychoanalytical approach to this material would find all sorts of phallic material: talk about the Creepy Old Man’s “huge machete,” and poking people with a stick, and such.

They seem to sing “Camptown Races” as if it is a showtune, arm-in-arm, frolicking and such. Historically speaking, the song “Camptown Races” was written in the late 1840s by Stephen Foster—the same person who wrote “Oh! Susanna”—and became standard fare in the minstrelsy shows of the time. It appears as though Foster drew inspiration from the Negro spiritual, “Roll, Jordan Roll” (whose refrain is very similar) and “Doo-Dah” (which has almost identical passages) (Lee). “Camptown Races” was one of what Foster called his “Ethopian” songs, written in a southern dialect (“I come down dah wid my hat caved in, Doo-dah! Doo-dah! I go back home wid a pocket full of tin, Oh! Doo-dah-day! Gwin to run all night! Gwin to run all day! I’ll bet my mon-ey on de bob-tail nag, Some-bod-y bet on de bay.”). Influenced by his
friend, artistic collaborator, and abolitionist crusader Charles Shiras, Foster sought to humanize his characters and coached singers to perform his songs in a “pathetic, not a comic style”—by pathetic, he meant to engender compassion rather than superiority (Stephen Collins Foster).

One of the most grisly and supposedly scientifically supported descriptions of what occurs with self-abuse comes from G. Stanley Hall himself, author of Adolescence (1904):

The old phrase, post coitus triste, is illustrated in excess of all forms, and especially in self-abuse. Weakness always brings more or less depression, and in some cases the physical exhaustion of muscles and nerves, if intensified by excess, brings pain and traces of convulsion, epilepsy, palpitation, and photophobia, differing according to individual predispositions and powers of resistance. Neurasthenia, cerebrasthenia, spinal neurasthenia, and psychic impotence generally result not more in the loss of fluid than from expenditure of physical force and often by tissues connected with the sympathetic system. Subjective light sensations, optical cramps, perhaps Basedow’s disease, intensification of the patellar reflex, weak sluggishness of heart action and circulation seen in cold extremities, purple and dry skin, lassitude with flaccidity, clammy hands, anemic complexion, dry cough, and many digestive perversions can often be directly traced to this scourge of the human race. The onanistic psychosis seems especially to predispose to convulsions disorders like epilepsy, to which it is so akin, but weakness of memory and attention, paranoia, agitation, cachexia, various neuroses of the stomach which Preyer and Fournier have studied, dwarfing or hypertrophy of the organs themselves, and many of the lighter and transitory forms of psychic alienations, are also produced. (Hall, Adolescence [New York: D. Appleton, 1911] pp. 442-43)

This is in my copy of Scouting For Boys (no publication date). Rosenthal (p. 185) quotes it from p. 280 of Scouting for Boys.

“Clear Pee” reference is to the public service announcement given at meal times—discussed in Chapter 2. In The Farce, it is a nod to the campers in the audience—a silence denied, perhaps, where they bring real-time information into the fictionalized Farce world. The audience responded to this broken silence with laughter.

For examples of cautionary tales and urban legends, see Jan Harold Brunvand’s collections in, to name a few of his books, Curses! Broiled Again! The Hottest Urban Legends Going (1989), The Choking Doberman and Other “New” Urban Legends (1984), and The Vanishing Hitchhiker: American Urban Legends and Their Meanings (1981). For my purposes, I found many examples and variations of Bloody Mary, Babysitter, and Hook stories in Brunvand’s Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid: The Book of Scary Urban Legends, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004. Bloody Mary is a legend about what will happen to you if you look in the mirror and say “Bloody Mary” three times. Supposedly, a woman—Bloody Mary—will appear in the mirror and kill you. There are various Babysitter legends, but in this case, a drugged up babysitter mistakenly cooks the baby instead of a roast. And, the Hook legend revolves around a young couple who stop making out when they get spooked by a report on the radio about an escaped madman in their area who has a hook instead of a hand. They tear off in their car to get home, and upon arrival find a hook dangling off the door handle. There are numerous articles published on these and other legends, including Ellis, Bill. “The Hook” Reconsidered: Problems in Classifying and Interpreting Adolescent Horror Legends.” Folklore 105 (1994): 61-75.

From a “typed copy of essay by Seton entitled “History of the Boy Scouts,” p. 10. This essay is in the possession of Mrs. Dee Seton Barber, Seton’s daughter, in Santa Fe, New
There are some interesting articles and chapters in books about whether or not Scouting was created as a para-military organization. See the following for engaging debate:


In his own words (January 1912 in the Headquarters Gazette), Baden-Powell articulated how he saw the Boy Scout movement as a peace movement:

“Similarly, the movement having been taken up in so many different foreign countries, we may hope to open up with them, through correspondence and interchange of visits, a mutual regard and friendliness such as may reasonably be expected to tell strongly in favour of peaceful measures when crises arise between nations.

Hence my remark the other evening—which I find has been widely quoted—namely: “If some one would give to the Boy Scout movement the price of one Dreadnought, we could go near to making Dreadnoughts no longer necessary.”

(Batchelder 255).

Quite a statement, coming from a military man, through-and-through.


The first National Jamboree was meant to be held in Washington, D.C. in 1935 to celebrate Scouting’s 25th anniversary, but it was cancelled due to a polio epidemic in the Washington, D.C. area. Without modern vaccines at the time, polio—then, called infantile paralysis—was “one of the most fearsome scourges of childhood” (Peterson 130). Two years later (1937), they tried again and were successful. The next was in 1950 at Valley Forge, PA, and thereafter every 3 or 4 years: 1953 (Irvine Ranch, CA), 1957 (Valley Forge, PA), 1960 (Colorado Springs, CO), 1964 (Valley Forge, PA), 1969 (Farragut State Park, ID, 1973 (Farragut State Park, ID, and Moraine State Park, PA), 1977 (Moraine State Park, PA). And then, in 1981, the National Jamboree became “permanently” located at Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia (for 1981, 1985, 1989, 1993, 1997, 2001, and 2005). (National Scout Jamboree)

This connection between the Boy Scouts and the military has become a bit strained in the years following my study: November 16, 2004, the Department of Justice issued the following statement:

The parties to a case challenging the federal government’s longstanding support the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have voluntarily settled the claim challenging the ‘sponsorship’ of the Boy Scout organizations by the Department of Defense. . . . The settlement clarifies that existing DOD policy precludes official sponsorship of private organizations. . . . Under the terms of the partial settlement agreement, the Department of Defense will communicate to military bases that, consistent with department policy, they may not sponsor Boy Scout units and department personnel may not sponsor Boy Scout units in an official capacity. . . . Boy Scout units are permitted to meet on military bases and military personnel are permitted to remain active in Boy Scout programs. The
settlement does not diminish the level of support provided to the Boy Scouts by DOD. . . . (Statement by the Department of Justice)

The Boy Scouts of America also issued a statement that day, declaring they “have directed our local councils to work with the unit leadership to find an alternative non-governmental chartering organization, such as a VFW Post or American Legion” (Statement by the Boy Scouts of America).

According to Peterson, “At the outbreak of war, the Boy Scouts of America was the largest uniformed body in the country with 268,000 men and boys. . . . The U.S. Army had about 200,000 men. . . .” (89). Membership grew during the war by more than 60%. By 1918, the BSA had 419,000 registered members (95).

On this point, a writer for the Saturday Evening Post in 1945 wrote,

The Boy Scouts are so much a part of the American picture that it is hard to believe they have been around for only thirty-five years. They are so tangled up in the vocabulary, humor, ideals and daily life of the nation that one would think they had been around as long as the Grange or the W.C.T.U. . . . Probably the secret is that the Scouts, instead of playing soldier or cops-and-robbers, actually participate in the life of their communities. During the war they have sold Bonds, collected scrap materials, assisted ration boards and other civilian boards. . . . Who can tell how much the Boy Scout movement has done to relieve the blackout of the Seven Ages of Man—those years when a boy is too old to have nothing useful to do and too young to be allowed to do it. (Quoted in Peterson 129).

Despite all the protestations to the contrary, militarism was always at the core of Scouting. As Rosenthal points out,

the fact remains that however admirable the rifle as an instrument of moral instruction, Scouting for Boys must surely be the only handbook of peace Scouting that gives detailed advice on how to shoot a man, as opposed to a fixed target:

Shooting at a fixed target is only a step towards shooting at a moving one, like a man. Firing at moving objects is, of course, more difficult, but more real, because you will not find a deer or an enemy as a rule kind enough to stand still while you shoot at him, he will be running and dodging behind cover, so you have to get your aim quick and to shoot quick.

The very best practice for this is always to be aiming at moving objects with your staff, using it as if it were a rifle.

Aim first at the man, then, moving the muzzle a little faster than he is moving, and fire while moving it when it is pointing where he will be a second or two later, and the bullet will just get there at the same time as he does and will hit him. (Baden-Powell Scouting For Boys, p. 249. Quoted in Rosenthal 226-227)

Henry, the actor playing Dr. Price, got lost a bit here, suggesting that when he gets home from work he mistakes the neighbor kid for his wife. A little pedophilia slip, perhaps. One of the other actors tosses in, “You really are creepy,” but Henry just keeps talking.

This is probably where the biggest laugh of the evening happens. Young Chris is sitting next to Dr. Price, and Dr. Price picks on him for peeing his pants.

This last line doesn’t make sense unless you were watching the show. Throughout the show, the boys are trying to cook a potato on a stick. The stick gets passed around, but never seems to get cooked.
33 Apparently, Baden-Powell liked this analogy of the brick. Here is the context from which this quotation was drawn:

This means you should remember that being one fellow among many others, you are like a brick among many others in the wall of a house.

If you are discontented with your place or with your neighbours or if you are a rotten brick, you are no good to the wall. You are rather a danger. If the bricks get quarreling among themselves the wall is liable to split and the whole house to fall.

Some bricks may be high up and others low down in the wall; but all must make the best of it and play in their place for the good of the whole. So it is among people; each of us has his place in the world, it is no use being discontented, it is no use hating our neighbours because they are higher up or lower down than themselves. We are all Britons, and it is our duty each to play in his place and help his neighbours. Then we shall remain strong and united, and then there will be no fear of the whole building—namely, our great Empire—falling down because of rotten bricks in the wall. (Baden-Powell Be A Brick 182)

In a similar statement to the Girl Guides, Baden-Powell reiterates the brick analogy:

If you are divided among yourselves, you are doing harm to your country. You must sink your differences.

If you despise other girls because they belong to a poorer class then yourself, you are a snob; If you hate other girls because they happen to be born richer and belong to higher class schools than yourself, you are fool. We have got, each one of us, to take our place as we find it in this world, and make the best of it, and pull together with the others around us.

We are very like bricks in a wall; we have each our place, though it may seem a small one in so big a wall. But if one brick gets rotten, or slips out of place, it begins to throw an undue strain on others, cracks appear, and the wall totters. (Handbook for Girl Guides [London: Thomas Nelson, 1912], p. 418)” (Quoted in Rosenthal 285)

34 The audience members, however, sometimes recognize these absences. During one taping of The Farce: At the end, an audience member reprimanded the actors for not having fire buckets beside the tents on stage. It is standard to have fire suppression of some sort in the campsite. Placing fire buckets outside each tent is a traditional way of dealing with this regulation. The host of The Farce, Ryan Wieble says, “They’re pretty bad Boy Scouts. We’ll take care of it.”

35 The Order of the Arrow is Scouting’s “national honor society” whose goals are to recognize those youth and adult campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives, to develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit, to promote Scout camping, and to crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others. The Order of the Arrow was founded in 1915 by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson at Treasure Island, the summer camp of the BSA’s Philadelphia Area Council. The Order of the Arrow became an official part of the Boy Scouts of America in 1948. (Boy Scout Handbook Eleventh Edition, 426)

Treasure Island, one of the oldest Boy Scout camps in the United States, was not the only camp to create its own honor camper society. David L. Eby lists many others—some of which I have come to discover still exist in spite of the Nationally recognized OA program:
Owasippe had the “Tribe of Owasippe” in 1916. Teetonkah had the “Tribe of Keokuk” in the 1930s and for decades after. Treasure Island has had “Wimachtendienks W. W.” (the OA) since 1915. Delmont had the “Order of the Tipi”. Indian Mound had the “Tribe of Ku-ni-eh”. Yawgoog had the “Knights of Yawgoog Honor Society” starting in 1920 as well as the “Wincheck Indians Honor Society” which was converted to the Wincheck OA Lodge in 1958. Miakonda was used by the “Tribe of Gimogash”. Belzer was the birthplace of “Firecrafters” and and [sic] Scouthaven had the “Tribe of Wokanda” from about 1923-1949. Camp Friedlander was the birthplace of the Tribe of Ku-ni-eh. Camp Parsons had the “Order of the Silver Marmot” as a society in the 1920s and beyond.

36 Archery director Matt said that his parents have “made a requirement that, to my younger brothers, you have to be an eagle scout to be on staff.” He said that they saw what happens when someone gets on staff: “They’re working, they’re doing their job, and they don’t have time to go earn those merit badges.”
CHAPTER VI. TAKING A PASS ON PASSING: ACQUIESCING STAFF MEMBERS

REORDER PASSING

Chapter Five Summary: In this chapter, I will explore the ways in which staff members “take a pass on” masculinity—how they defer or avoid received notions of masculinity—by acquiescing to rather than resisting against a very traditional, Scouting form of masculinity. Their notions of and experiences with masculinity at Boy Scout camp are far more complex and decentered than one might imagine in such a centered institution as the Boy Scouts of America.

“To be natural is a very difficult pose to keep up.” –Oscar Wilde

The Bart Simpson Lovefest and The Doctors

In 1991, I became a founding member of “The Doctors.” We were a small group of staff members at Camp Miakonda in Sylvania, Ohio. Camp Miakonda is one of the oldest Boy Scout camps in the country, and it was then a Cub Scout Day Camp with about 300-350 Cub Scouts per week for eight weeks. A “day camp” means that the campers come during the day, but they go home each afternoon. We ran an overnighter for Webelos Scouts (mostly 10 year olds) and put on an Indian-themed Arrow of Light ceremony. Otherwise, all the campers went home at night, and the staff were able to hang out.

It was my sixth year on camp staff at Miakonda, and I had two additional years of staffing from Camp Lakota. I was the Assistant Aquatics Director, which meant I worked at the pool. Scott the Camp Director had been the Assistant Camp Director the year before, and he brought in a new Program Director who was supposedly “a ringer”. Kim Natty was her name. She brought in all sorts of new ideas: Kim changed the pre-opening program—which was traditionally an inviting, free-for-all soccer game in the middle of the parade field—and she established more intimate, small-group, cooperative activities as more appropriate. She removed the “Tribe Poles” which surrounded the flagpole—because someone “might run into them and hurt themselves”—despite the fact that they were where groups (Tribes) gathered, lined up for
flag ceremonies, deposited their belongings, and so forth. I was there during Staff Week when she told us to lower all the obstacles on the new “challenge” course because she “didn’t want a boy to encounter a challenge he couldn’t overcome.” Her educational theories and philosophies were flying in the face of tradition, and good camp programming.

Kim also instituted an hour-long “Songfest” after lunch each day. While it is a standard to have a half hour “break” after lunch, Kim designed an hour-long campfire-like program. We were to take all 350 kids to the Council Ring and sing songs and perform skits for an hour every day for five days. We got through the first day, barely. Fifteen minutes into the second day, and the Cubs were starting to go stir crazy. Needless to say, by day three, the kids wouldn’t have anything to do with it. It turned into mayhem midway through the first week.

By the end of the first week, the staff were referring to the Songfest as the “Bart Simpson Lovefest”—a name that emerged out of a need to give it a “personality” (Bart Simpson) and because a male and a female staff member were caught kissing in the trees beside the Council Ring. But the staff tried their best to fill the hour as best they could.

Until, I believe, it was Wednesday of the second week of camp (perhaps week three). I arrived to the Council Ring a little late to replace the staff member who would be excused to go eat his lunch. I found my Tribe and sat down. There seemed to be some sort of cheer going on. Everyone was standing up, arms waving, jumping up and down. I was impressed: they’d figured out something that got the Cub’s attentions. And then it hit me: they were chanting, “The Bart Simpson Lovefest Must Die!”

A couple of staff members were fired that afternoon, and we were told to take our Tribes to different locations after lunch the rest of the week and to play Marbles or some other quiet
game with them. While we were sad to see our comrades fired, we were invigorated by the success of our little rebellion and elated by the reprieve.

The following Sunday we had a staff meeting, and we were told to reinstitute the Songfest. After some debate, we were overruled. My cabin mates and I returned to our cabin and began grousing about how the Program Director was screwing everything up, how she was making us do things that were impossible. Some of the guys were talking about vandalizing the camp: we talked about painting over camp signs, changing Camp Miakonda to read Camp Natty. Since it was no longer “our Camp Miakonda,” we figured we should rename it for what it had become.

A couple of us thought it would not be appropriate to destroy anything, so we came up with an alternate plan that everyone in our little cabal agreed to: Outside the front of camp was a hillside on which the words Camp Miakonda were spelled out in about 4-5 foot tall letters made of white-painted rocks. This was the entry way into camp, so everyone who entered the camp drove by this sign. We agreed to wake up at 3 a.m. and go rearrange the rocks to spell out Camp Natty.²

So, at three a.m., a group of about 6 of us gathered to begin our “operation.” I do not remember all the participants, but I know one was related to the camp ranger and one was an exchange-Scout from Scotland. With the precision of the Keystone Cops and stealth of a three-ring circus, we renamed the camp. The next morning when parents arrived to drop their kids off for the day, they would encounter a large sign that read “Camp Natty!”—the exclamation point was there because Kim used to put exclamation points all over her handouts.

After we had rearranged the stones, we regrouped in the woods and raised our right hands and took a vow of silence. We turned to each other, shook hands, and spontaneously referred to
each other as Doctor: “Doctor.” “Doctor.” “Doctor.” “Doctor.”—like Chevy Chase and Dan Akroyd in the movie *Spies Like Us* (1985) when they acted like they were doctors, greeting a group of other doctors. Newly minted, the Doctors made a pact that night to begin doing “operations” like this at every chance. We agreed to not deface or break anything, but to “fix” and “heal” the camp as best we could.

During the ensuing weeks, we created proposals to the camp administration as to how we might liven up or alter existing programs that did not seem to be working—including replacing the Bart Simpson Lovefest with a shorter game/award program (a program we had been doing the last few years) and reinstituting the free-for-all soccer game during pre-opening. We also took responsibility for the campfire programs which had been horribly organized. By the end of the seventh week, the Doctors had done operations on every major program in camp and were administering the new programs without interference from the program director.

And then I got fired. I was accused of taking minors to a bar (it was a Mexican restaurant). For that last week of camp, everything went back to the way it was during the first week of camp, including the Bart Simpson Lovefest. The Doctors were no more.

**My Notes on Camp**

In the mid-1990s, I first began to study summer camp culture, and I thought I had found a glorious treasure when I came across an article titled “Notes on ‘Camp’” (1964) by Susan Sontag. I was sure it would be the foundation for my then burgeoning interest in explaining the complexities of Boy Scout summer camp culture. I was wrong. She was quipping about “fugitive” sensibilities and the “love of the unnatural,” “stag movies seen without lust” and affinities for “sensuous surface” instead of content. Very quickly, I realized Sontag’s “camp” was not my camp. She was talking about a “homosexual sensibility,” and I could not see at that
point how to juxtapose that with a Boy Scout project—the contradiction was seemingly insurmountable. Frankly, I put the article aside without reading it through to the end. Unfortunately, I did not return to it until perhaps a decade later when I found myself in staff training, telling my staff the Greek myth of Phaethon (see Chapter 4 for a more complete retelling).

I told of Phaethon’s tombstone, upon which was inscribed, “Though he failed greatly, he ventured more.” I told my staff that that is the attitude I want from them: I want them to venture more, and if they fail, they will fail greatly precisely because they have ventured more.

And that was when Sontag came back to me. She writes, “When something is just bad (rather than Camp), it’s often because it is too mediocre in its ambition. The artist hasn’t attempted to do anything really outlandish. (‘It’s too much,’ ‘It’s too fantastic,’ ‘It’s not to be believed,’ are standard phrases of Camp enthusiasm.)” (#24).³ It seemed to me, I was using Greek mythology unwittingly to encourage camp staff to order “Camp” whos for themselves.⁴ What once seemed so far apart—camp and “Camp”—are actually fairly close for staff members.

While camp may be “Camp” for youth campers, adult leaders, and visiting parents, it is unavoidably “Campy” for staff members. For example, most campers and parents would understand what Sontag is saying when she describes the “Camp sensibility” as disengaged and apolitical (#2). Summer camp is an intentional project to help youth and adults to disengage from the everyday grind, to get back to nature and avoid the real world, to depoliticize and get back to the basics—building campfires, tying knots, hiking, canoeing, and so forth. Many parents actually send their children to summer camp because camp—like Sontag’s “Camp”—“rests on innocence” (#21).
For a staff member, though, the curtain is pulled back, and they witness the backstage of cultural production at camp. The disengagement and apolitical innocence which staff experience comes more from encountering complexity than from the Arcadian myth of “getting back to nature.” I think staff become somewhat disengaged or unhinged, not from life, but from the story they have always been told of camp and of Scouting. The curtain is pulled back, and the staff members are unleashed from the ideal Scout. As previously described (in Chapter 3), staff members learn what Sontag calls a “theatricalization of experience” whereby they encounter “the sensibility of failed seriousness” (#36). They witness the passing that occurs to produce the ideal. They realize the paradoxes upon which Scouting and camping exist. And yes, they become a bit apolitical—not un-political—and while they must perform the ideal Scout on-stage, they experience the complex play with the ideal both on- and off-stage. They learn that what is on stage is not the entire truth. They become, as Sontag suggests, “innocent” in a way: more free to play with the whos that are available. This is the “Camp” that staff members work, play, and live in all summer long.

Staff members are very busy ordering “Camp” whos at summer camp. Sontag claims that to perceive “Camp” in persons is to “understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role” (#10). “Camp” is the furthest extension of the “metaphor of life as theater” (#10). Staff are taught and encouraged to sing, act, be cheerful, and generally keep their chin up even in the face of emergencies, inclement weather, flash flooding, or honey-dipping (cleaning out the latrine vaults). Office Manager Marcus suggests that staffing “brings out the best in you. It brings out the goofy side of you.” Staff quickly learn that the form rarely reflects the content, and that their job is to emphasize “texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content” (#5). Campers are not supposed to know your personal content, only your surface of Scouting.
Along the same lines, staff members learn what Sontag describes as a “more complex relation to “the serious,” whereby, “One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious” (#41). I am reminded of one staff member (not at Camp Lakota) who found ridiculous and absurd phrases in the tenth edition of the *Boy Scout Handbook*; for example, “The best way not to get lost is to know at all times where you are” (209). He decided to share these absurdities with the camp through mocking, sarcastic “readings” from the *Handbook* each day before breakfast. The staff and campers would sing like falsetto angels as he would walk to the center of the clearing with the *Handbook* raised high above his head like some sort of holy scripture. He would bellow self-righteously, “And now, a reading from the *Boy Scout Handbook*,” and he would read an absurd sentence from its pages. The staff and campers would all respond, “Well duh!” and then he would walk off stage to a chorus of falsetto angels once again. Staff perform these sorts of “gestures full of duplicity,” in this case, both honoring and ridiculing the *Handbook*. By pointing out the ridiculous phrases, we found more Scouts that summer than ever before scouring the pages of the *Handbook*, actually reading it in hopes of finding other phrases for that staff member to read at the next breakfast gathering.

These duplicitous gestures also refer to those performances which contain both a “witty meaning for cognoscenti” (e.g., the other staff members) and “another, more impersonal, for outsiders” (e.g., the campers). *The Lakota Farce* models this duplicity with its inside jokes, public urination, and perhaps even its performance of boys passing as men. Sontag describes the duplicity as the “straight public sense in which something can be taken” and what lay behind: “a private zany experience of the thing” (#17).

Perhaps this duplicity emerges over time. After producing camp culture week after week after week, the cultural producers sometimes begin to play more and more with their
productions. Duplicity is perhaps born of what Sontag identifies as the “tonality” of “Camp” which she refers to as “excruciating” (#39). In so many ways, the experience of summer camp is seeping with the excruciating. Most campers and staff can describe the painfulness of soaking wet shoes, ice cold showers, bug-ridden beds, and maddening cases of poison ivy. But this does not even scrape the surface of Sontag’s excruciating. What is closer to her notion is the experience of sitting through numerous campfires produced by campers which replay the same old songs, the same old monotonous jokes and puns (#39). Sontag claims that “so many of the objects prized by Camp taste are old-fashioned, out-of-date” (#31). But she says that these out-of-date objects are experienced with a “kind of love, love for human nature. It relishes, rather than judges, the little triumphs and awkward intensities of ‘character. . . . Camp taste identifies with what it is enjoying” (#56). The excruciating tone of campfires is found in the undeserved rabid applause at extremely small “triumphs,” in the pleasing groans at hearing the same punchlines year after year, in the willingness to endure and find enjoyment in approximations of cultural production. Sontag identifies the core liberating experience of summer camping: disregarding pretension and discovering “the good taste of bad taste” (#54). This liberation is perhaps the midwife of duplicitous gestures and passing.

And herein lies what some might call the “danger” (or is it “power”?) of staffing: these boys on staff encounter a real life experience on a daily basis of the struggle between “the thing as meaning something, anything” and “the thing as pure artifice” (#16). They find that the Scouting and the staffing that they thought were clean, clear, and true are actually relatively empty and available for the filling. I think staff learn that all is not pure artifice; rather, that to all, meaning can be added. Scouting is not an empty vessel, for it is filled with many meanings; however, the camp staff member as cultural producer has the ability to add meaning to that
vessel as well. There is not infinite possibility, but there is relatively broad and deep possibility: numerous but finite choices which they are capable of making. While they may not be able to choose not-Scouting and still be able to identify as a Scout, they can certainly re-order Scouting to include some not-Scouting meanings. As cultural producers—and ones who are learning hegemonic methods—summer camp staff members at Boy Scout camp have agency within parameters, and they learn to wield that ordering power while passing on, passing as, and sometimes—as we shall see—in taking a pass on.

Taking A Pass On, or Failing Greatly at Passing as Masculine

Because camp is “Campy,” staff are also allowed to “take a pass” on parts of it. Boy Scout summer camp staff members are working very hard to pass on masculinity to the campers while they are simultaneously trying to pass as masculine. And amidst all that work, they sometimes engage in duplicitous, sometimes vulgar, fugitive performances. They say, “No, not gonna do it.” Sometimes, they refrain from participating in the masculinity they are paid to perform, role-model, and pass on. Having experienced Sontag’s “theatricalization of experience,” staff members don’t always perform masculinity the way they’re supposed to. In fact, sometimes they fail greatly to pass. Philip Core (1984) would suggest that they actually fail miserably, for he describes “Camp” as “a disguise that fails,” “a lie which tells the truth” (1, 7).

Some might call it “resistant” behavior when one’s disguise fails or when one refuses to completely pass. I have doubts, though, that all failures and refusals are actually resistance. Instead, keeping with the theme of “passing,” I argue that staff members “take a pass” on masculinity, or at least certain aspects of it. In the same way that one might “pass” in a card game, they sometimes “pass”—forgo their turn, refrain from bidding or playing, sometimes even throw in their hand—but they continue to at least want to play the game. Viewed another way,
these passers-on of masculinity and masculinity passers sometimes fail to pass: sometimes they are just plain bad at passing and whatever lay beneath the façade shows through. But even when they consciously “throw in their hand”—when they purposefully fail to pass—I still do not see them as resisting. If the game plays on, and they are still playing, then they are simply “taking a pass” on passing rather than resisting.

Taking a pass on passing is not resistant behavior for multiple reasons. First of all, staff may take a pass on one particular masculinity or aspect of traditional masculinity. At least amongst staff members, taking a pass on part rarely means they want to take a pass on the whole—and very rarely are they forced to do so. Parameters in cultural production are wider than that. Concerning masculinity, the parameters are relatively wide, and taking a pass on one variety of masculinity or one aspect of it still leaves open the option to pass as other varieties of acceptable masculinity.

Secondly, they may “pass” on it in one instance, only to find themselves enforcing it in the next instance. Passing on, passing as, and even taking a pass are all situational. Staff members demonstrate an incredible capacity for duplicitous gestures and situational decision making.

Thirdly, as in a card game, a pass does not mean you drop out of the game completely and stop any further play. To stop play would be a resistant act. But instead, a pass means that you’re bowing out of this particular hand, of this particular point in the game. The game continues on. And you have a chance to rejoin the game the next time the cards are dealt. When one takes a pass, one declares an intention to neither bid nor bet, but it is not a withdrawal from play. It is, rather, a pause in active participation.
A pause in play is often viewed in culture studies as a critique or problematization of masculinity. Scholars often choose to see the pause as more than just a pause and therefore choose to see it as resistance. At summer camp, however, there do not seem to be any qualms about some of this “passing” behavior. It is as “normative” as performances of the “official” masculinity. Staff do not disrupt the “game” when they take a pass on it; rather, they simply perform non-normative masculinities, refrain from full participation, disengage for a time-being. But the game always plays on. Always. Taking a pass is hegemonic: it allows for and may even create variation and shifting but not seriously disrupting equilibriums.

Just think of it: You’re a young man, hired to exemplify something you are not yet, and then you are encouraged to do so by means of “Camp-ish” behavior: you’re encouraged to behave somewhat outlandishly if not innocently, simultaneously frivolous and serious, and above all else theatrically: play the part, keep smiling, roll with the punches, the show must go on.

Staff members begin to experience and some begin to understand the theatricality of identity and the discontinuity inherent in what they thought was coherent. They are placed in the position of masculine, patriarchal authority, yet feel relatively powerless. They are handed the tools to transmit culture and masculinity—hegemony—yet they hardly possess what they are meant to pass. They are shown the backstage of masculine performance, and they sometimes have issues with or take issue with what they have been shown. However, the following examples make me think he doth protest too much.

“We’re All Boy Scouts”

Consciously or not, staff dive into an array of oftentimes duplicitous, sometimes vulgar, fugitive performances, both on- and off-stage (in front of and behind the backs of the campers). For example, the year before my research began, we staff members transformed a punk tune with
lyrics like “I’m an asshole, I’m a fuckin’ wanker” into the opening song to our Sunday night campfire, singing a chorus of,

   We’re all Boy Scouts,

   Here at Camp Lakota.

   We’re here to have fun

   And then run home to our moms.

They were far from creative lyrics, and our staff couldn’t quite sing it right (“Come in on the two beat, not the one!”), so we only sang it once. The campers didn’t know the tune was from a vulgar song, but those staff who were “in the know” sure felt like they were getting away with something by singing the song in public.

   Patricia Atkinson Wells (1988) shares a similar example of this practice that she found amongst Girl Scout staff members. They created an “unofficial staff song” which was set to a familiar tune. The words, however, were beyond the pale: “Shit, fuck, hell, damn, son-of-a-bitch, I don’t give a flying crap” (115). Wells describes how staff could hum the tune “with impunity in any group” while communicating “a message in no uncertain terms to other group members” (115). The same behavior is seen in my study: the staff passed “fuckin’ wanker” off as “Boy Scouts”, and nobody outside the group knew the difference.

   And then, there is the lyric choice: “here to have fun” then “run home to our moms”.

Sung at the opening campfire, this is a blatant invitation to get into the spirit, to have fun, to get a little crazy perhaps. But then, of course, you can go home again to your moms who will take care of you—and hopefully never find out the fun you’ve gotten away with here at Camp Lakota. It positions us Boy Scouts as momma’s boys, at least after we live like fun-loving men here at camp. Duplicitous tunes and duplicitous lyrics.
Some—myself included at one time in my studies—would call this sort of duplicitous behavior “resistant,” for it does not flow with the stream; it bucks the system a bit. It is as if the staff are saying, “Yes, I’m the role model here, but I’m not going to play that part right now.” They refrain from participating in the masculinity they are paid to perform, role-model, and pass on. They take a pass.

“Superman” or “Just a Boy”

Sometimes, staff members provide an explicit description of how they understand their own masculine whos. For example, one night during staff week, a small group of staff were sitting on the front porch of the Administration Building, chatting and listening to Henry play some tunes on Aaron’s acoustic guitar. Henry sang a few songs to the group, ending up with a song by the group Five For Fighting called “Superman (It’s Not Easy)”. He said he had heard it a while back, loved it, and learned it. It had become popular recently—something that seemed to disappoint Henry—but he said he wanted to sing it to the group of us.

The song is about a man who is a reluctant superhero. Unlike the real Superman, the man in the song claims, “I’m only a man in a silly red sheet.” He argues that he is “more than a bird . . . more than a plane . . . more than some pretty face beside a train.” But he says, “It’s not easy to be me.” He looks for the “special things inside of me,” but he keeps coming back to that chorus, “It’s not easy to be me.”

The man in the song does not feel like Superman, but he seems to crave something that Superman had. He says he is “digging for kryptonite,” as if he were searching for the substance which makes Superman weak. Kryptonite is a glowing, green, crystalline substance created when Superman’s home world exploded. Exposure to kryptonite saps Superman’s power, painfully weakens him, and can even kill him (Kryptonite). Kryptonite is his Achilles’ heel.
Ironically, the reluctant Superman in the song is searching for Superman’s weakness—as if he wants an excuse to not be who others want him to be. It seems like the man is looking for a way to compensate for not having a weakness like Superman had. He says he is trying to “find a way to lie about a home I’ll never see,” trying to cover up or excuse his lack of a reason for being weak.

When Henry finished singing the song to the group of staff, he explained that this was the first time he had sung the song in front of anyone else. He wanted to “save it until he got to camp” with people he was “close to.” He then provided a short explication of the song: He said it was about how “I’m just a boy, not a man.” He said, he does not “really know what’s going on. . . . I’m just a boy.”

A couple days later, after our interview was over, Henry began talking again about this “I’m just a boy” mentality. He talked about his girlfriend whom he loved so much, but he’s afraid of screwing it all up. He has told her, “I’m just a boy. I’m not a man. I’m gonna do or say something wrong. I’m going to cross a line I shouldn’t cross. I’ll screw it up. I’m just a boy.” He said she told him that’s why she loves him, but that didn’t seem to comfort him. Mind you, this is coming from an 18-year old staff member—technically an adult, surely a leader amongst the staff—and he’s passing on the manhood thing. He isn’t passing on anything else masculinity-wise, but he passes on the identity of man.

White Trash Run

When I asked the program director, Josh, what his least favorite part of being on staff was, he said, “As program director, the responsibility and accountability. Not that I don’t like responsibility, I don’t like having a reprieve from that.” He said he missed the days when he was a regular staff member, when he could “be completely stupid and run around and do something
completely irresponsible and stupid and make an ass of myself.” He gave the example of doing a “trash run” during a Dad & Lad weekend:

Me, Brent, and Dave Forbes: It was Dad & Lad weekend, and we were pissed off as it was, because we had Dad & Lad weekend blah, blah, blah. So, they wanted us to haul the bb-guns down to the bb-range. So we loaded them up. We’re doing trash, but they stopped us.

“You need to take these down.”

“Alright. Anybody else wanna tell us what to do?” So we get these bb’s in the back. And . . . somehow, David rode in the back of the truck. I don’t know how we got away with that, but David rode in the back of the truck. Me and Brent and him—and him and David were fairly large guys. And there was no room.

And we had some bb-guns up front, and he had some bb-guns in the back. And we’re driving down to shooting sports. I got the Kaycee lights on. We’d flip on the Kaycee lights and find the fastest country station we could find and crank it. We even had a coontail we’d tie to the antenna.

And we’d drive around camp as the kids were checking out, and we’d be hoopin’ and hollerin’. We had these bb-guns and we’re going down the [road behind] Council Ring . . . and we started lettin’ them fire.

We were like driving, bang, bang. Hitting trees, leaves and anything. And we had to have gone through a good number of their bb’s. And we’re not quiet about it either. We’re hooting and hollerin’.
We’re making up little stories. We each had little names like Billy Bob and Bobby Joe. It was great. And I can’t do that now. I could, but I haven’t been able to do that.

Unlike the previous examples, the “trash run” example crosses the line. The earlier performances may have smeared the line or problematized it a bit, but they didn’t break any rules. The Trash Run broke a number of big rules—riding in the back of pickup trucks, driving recklessly, shooting guns in an unsafe manner.

**Acquiescence Rather Than Resistance**

Are these examples resisting manliness? Certainly Henry’s remarks about “just being a boy” sound like a refusal, but is he actually resisting anything? Or is he simply identifying his failure to pass as self-assured, in control, on the right path? Rather than say, “To hell with being a man!” perhaps Henry is simply acquiescing to his boyhood masculinity—something he knows he is. Perhaps he is saying with humility that he is X, not Y. He’s not opposing Y; he’s just declaring that he’s not Y (yet). It is the same thing with the staff who say they cuss more at camp, take up smoking at camp—even those who smoke pot and drink alcohol while on staff. They are genuinely not doing these behaviors to resist the image or ideology of Scouting. I would argue, they are acquiescing to a host of various other whos available to them: a tougher Scout rather than a goody-two-shoes Scout; a team-player rather than an outcast; a cool Scout rather than a geek Scout; and in some cases, they’re actually embodying the Scout ideals of adventure, control, bravery, and so on. Staff member Mitch claims that staff can do both because they are different aspects of our personality. We kinda keep the more un-Scouty, less role model type things away from the scouters, behind the scenes. And
we try to put the best forward. I think when the other stuff comes out it kinda makes us more human to the kids. We do the same stuff they do.

Mitch sees the darker side as a humanizing characteristic, not as resistant or even discrediting. As such, this acquiescence is no “negotiation” in my framework. The staff are not attempting to “negotiate” the multiplicities, constraints, and ideologies they encounter at Boy Scout camp or even in the outside world. The term “negotiate” does not adequately describe what these staff members are doing. Perhaps a better way to look at these actions is that they seem to be more about acquiescing to something else, perhaps to the peer group or even to peer group hierarchically below them (the campers). Their behavior is reminiscent of Michel de Certeau’s *la perruque*. *La perruque* “is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer” (25). De Certeau says it differs from pilfering and absenteeism because *la perruque* actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses scraps) from the factory for the work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. In the very place where the machine he must serve reigns supreme, he cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products. . . . (25)

But the worker does not do this to get even with the employer; he does not do this to throw a monkey wrench into the machinery; she does not do this to wreck havoc or to change the system. Instead, De Certeau argues that the worker indulges in *la perruque* “to signify his own capabilities through his work”—that is, to express pride in his who—and “to confirm his solidarity with other workers or his family” (25). The worker could be said to acquiesce to his fellow workers and his family rather than acting out against his boss by stealing company time and resources for his own benefit.
Surely, what I call “acquiescent behavior” could easily be—and often is—described as “oppositional behavior.” Discerning acquiescence from resistance has a lot to do with the position one chooses to take to observe and to address “the worker.” Saxe’s fabled blind men chose different “addresses” and found a spear, a snake, a rope, but not the elephant right in front of them. The monoglossia of resistance in Cultural Studies has opened up considerable space and understanding, but it does not bear witness to the entire elephant (Brown 729). There are other parts of the elephant to examine which will be just as “partly right” and “entirely wrong” as the examination of resistance.

In the context of Boy Scout summer camp, where boys are teaching and are taught hegemonic practices, it seems more appropriate to examine their consenting, acquiescing, assenting behaviors rather than their resistant behaviors. It seems more appropriate to ask questions like, where are they headed and what are they ordering, as opposed to where have they been and what has already been ordered. In the above examples, it does not appear from their descriptions, nor from the effects of their actions, that staff members are performing these acts in response to the institution so much as in response to each other and their own notions of masculinity. Perhaps we can learn more about the elephant by examining its acquiescing forces, not solely its resistant ones.

When staff take a pass on the BSA masculinity—by singing appropriate lyrics to an inappropriate song or claiming “I’m just a boy”—they do so because they are attempting to acquiesce to another standard, to another masculinity that seems more fitting or appropriate to them. In the one case, staff were acquiescing to a cool, insider, punkish masculinity thinly disguised (for them) beneath Boy Scout stereotypes. In the other case, Henry is choosing from the array of whos available to him, and he chooses the boy who (who are actually the customers
of the whos he has to offer this summer at Boy Scout camp). And the trash-runners are giving in
to a stereotype of who they actually have to be: sanitation engineers in a beat-up pickup truck
(with loaded BB-guns). It makes me think that they’re not really resisting anything, nor are they
putting anything on that isn’t already there: it’s like Tally Brown says in Andy Warhol’s
Response to Susan Sontag’s Essay on ‘Camp’ that “I don’t think anybody’s camping. I think
we’re all doing ourselves” (qtd in Camper). And in these staffing examples, these young men
are simply performing another one of their selves.

The Power of Functional Dysfunction

It is important to note that in all three cases, by choosing these alternative masculinities,
each actually shores up the BSA masculinity they supposedly rebel against. The wanker-singing
staff enthusiastically came together (teamwork) to sing a song (their job), while Henry comes
closer to the interests of his customers—the boys—as Scouting would like him to be. And the
drudgery of a trash run—a necessary job—gets accomplished efficiently and with style. Patricia
Atkinson Wells (1988) calls this “functional dysfunction,” when “apparently dysfunctional
behavior is translated through expressive forms to become functional for the work group and/or
the organization as a whole” (110). She quotes Toelken who argues that, often, symbolic forms
“are registered as inappropriate when they are heard by outsiders, when they are presented out of
their normal context, when their audience is expanded beyond the usual local group for which
and in which the performance makes sense” (Toelken Dynamics 1979 12). Wells provides
examples of banned or inappropriate behavior by staff at a Girl Scout camp which she says were
an “integral part of the work culture and the enculturation process,” for instance, telling the ghost
story of “Red Eyes,” defacing camp uniforms, parodying camp songs, creating scatological or
obscene jokes or lyrics, and performing pranks (111). These “dysfunctional” behaviors
“function for members” as “survival tools, aesthetic outlets, and expressions of group identity, community, and solidarity” (114).

What’s more, Wells argues that these behaviors function for the organization as well. Referring to a prank where staff put a table on top of the dining hall, Wells claims that it may have been a “gesture of defiance,” but it also required “imagination, initiative, planning, problem-solving, and teamwork—the very skills and techniques that the staff are charged with teaching to the campers” (114). This works because, as Bakhtin points out, “Folk humor denies, but it revives and renews at the same time. Bare negation is completely alien to folk culture” (Rabelais 11). The vast majority of the “bad” behaviors were kept to the work environment, typically solely amongst staff members. Wells found that there was a “conscious effort on the part of the staff members to preserve the public image of Girl Scouting and to regard the initiation of campers into the traditions and values of Scouting as a sacred trust” (114). Therefore, rather than homogeneity as the key to organizational culture, Wells finds that “dysfunctional behavior may actually further organization aims and strengthen organization cultures” (116). This is also the lesson (discussed in Chapter 4) that anthropologists learned about discontinuity. Rather than disrupt or destroy the culture, discontinuity actually compresses cultural learning and initiates commitment.

Resisting Resistance in the “Staff Rebellion of 2002”

As Butler says, identities—group or individual—are not so worked out as we might assume or wish; instead, identities are becoming, are being worked out, are being forged, ironed out, continuously recreated. Most organizations and institutions strive for a static identity—for the organization itself as well as for its members—something you can depend on, a port in the storm, a “true” identity. Institutions enact policies and procedures which reinforce this static
notion: we fire people when they make a “mistake” of official identity rather than encourage them to develop a multiplicity of whos. We try very hard to get people to quickly acquire and maintain strict standards of identity performance, thinking that if they act the part, they are the part. But institutions, too, adapt and evolve their identity as environmental changes mandate. Or, they die.

Even those identities which appear to be pre-washed, pre-approved, mature—even those—are still in process. Through this study of Boy Scout summer camp staff members, I have described the complexity of the not-so-unique conundrum whereby identities are ordering in the midst of performance, the odd juxtaposition of assuming authority of a particular identity before one has a secure mastery over that identity. This is not a unique position to be in; in fact, it is probably so common that we deny its existence at all. For instance, moms and dads try to figure out how to be moms and dads as soon as they discover they already are moms and dads. Recently promoted employees step up the challenge by taking on airs and demanding authority before they actually have it. Teens try to act like adults. Even the authorities are trying to work out their who’s.

Nothing is more true of the vast majority of staff members: they’re all just trying to work it out. And yet, they are in the position of authority: they are the main teachers of Boy Scouting, they are the primarily agents of ordering and producing “official Boy Scout” culture. At one camp I have worked at, staff claimed they were the “living, breathing example of the Boy Scouts of America—right off the cover of the Boy Scout magazine.” However, they don’t know what they’re doing any better than anyone else. This is not a criticism or even something that should be alarming, for most authorities and identities are in a similar position.
Scouts are working out their identities through non-resistant methods. By “non-resistant,” I do not mean passive. Identity organization is a very active process. Choices are made. Movements are made. Attempts are made. Identity organization is active, but not necessarily resistant. Instead, I argue that identities may be organized through acquiescence—through a striving toward something rather than a resistance.

A striking example emerged during the first year of my study: staff members called it a “staff mutiny.” It may seem obvious to use words like “rebellion” and “resistance” to describe how a bunch of rural, corn-fed, northwest Ohio farmboys got up enough gumption to stand up to the camp administration and actually walk out on their job. But the question is whether or not it was resistant. While I could very easily describe it as such, I choose, instead, to look for acquiescent behaviors.

It happened on July 14, 2002. It was a Saturday, and it was one of the weekends that staff was required to work. It was the second of two Dad & Lad weekends. Dad & Lad Weekends are a Cub Scout program—a fun day for young Cub Scouts and their fathers. A similar Mom & Me program is offered at the other camp in the Council. The volunteers who run this event take care of all the administrative concerns, but the Council has required the Boy Scout camp staff members to work these weekends. Generally, staff members are asked just to run program areas—keeping the boat docks up, running a BB-gun range—that sort of thing. Over the last couple of years, staff has been allowed to leave around 6:00 p.m., after program areas close down on Saturday.

The Boy Scout camp staff members have felt forced into working these weekends. They argue that they have been staffing a full week with the Boy Scouts, and they deserve the “24-Hours Off” period from about noon on Saturday until noon on Sunday which they traditionally
receive. It is enough time enough to eat, watch a movie, do laundry, and sleep—and then get back to camp for another week of Scouts. Most feel that Dad & Lad was foisted upon them, and many staff, including the administration, resented it. Those “24-Hours Off” are precious downtime, but Dad & Lad takes it away. Surely, it is part of the staff contract. Every staff member signs a contract that included Dad & Lad weekends. They know it is part of their job. However, everybody also knows that the program is not the staff’s program. It is the Cub Scout people’s program, administered by “outsiders” to the summer camp who do not involve the camp staff in designing the program. It is considered “work,” not camping nor staffing.

This discord seems to be what results when an organization allows what Goffman (1961) calls a “secondary adjustment” to be seen as a “primary adjustment.” Goffman writes that an individual and an organization make “primary adjustments” to one another, officially asking the other to “be no more and no less than [it/he] is prepared to be” (Asylum 189). Secondary adjustments, though, are

any habitual arrangement by which a member of an organization employs unauthorized means, or obtains unauthorized ends, or both, thus getting around the organization’s assumptions as to what he should do and get and hence what he should be. Secondary adjustments represent ways in which the individual stands apart from the role and the self that were taken for granted for him by the institution. (Asylum 189)

Thus, when the who offered by the organization doesn’t provide all the whos an individual wants or needs, the individual makes some adjustments. Secondary adjustments can become “disruptive” and even provoke mutiny (Asylum 200). In the staffs’ minds, the “24-Hours-Off” is a primary adjustment: they deserve it, they’ve earned it, it’s part of the job. However, in the organization’s mind—reflected in the contracts they offer, as well as in the obligations they
assign, like Dad & Lad weekend duty—the 24-Hours-Off is an unauthorized relief from contract. Surely, everyone knows about the 24-Hours-Off tradition, but as Goffman describes such things, it is “neither openly demanded nor openly questioned” (Asylum 191). That is, except when it is an adjustment which is ignored by the organization but assumed by the staff.6

For years, there have been difficulties running Dad & Lad. At best, staff were usually apathetic toward the program, and at worst, they have been downright difficult toward the Cub Scout volunteers. And, on July 14th, the staff had had enough.

Three of the young-adult staff members—Henry and Marcus and Jerry offered me very detailed descriptions of the event. Henry is by all accounts an instigator of the so-called Camp Staff Rebellion, and Marcus was undoubtedly aiding and abetting. Henry begins his very excited tale:

Here is the vibe on the Camp Staff Rebellion 2002 which I personally think will go down in history. But maybe that’s a little too conceited. The whole vibe is that we had Dad & Lad weekend . . . which we all know that Dad & Lad is a complete clusterfuck.

He describes how the Dad & Lad people changed the program and had supposedly requested that staff stick around until 7:30 p.m. instead of the usual 6:00. This probably wouldn’t have been a big deal, but the camp administration apparently knew about this change, but didn’t tell any of the staff members. He goes on to describe the straw that broke the camel’s back:

The program went okay throughout the day. At about 5:00 we shut down and head back to staff area. And we’re told to get in Class-A uniform and be up there at flag by 5:55.

We’d all seen the schedule and we all know that dinner was at 5:15. And people had to call around to find out what was going on with this flag thing. So we walk up there at five ’til six or just about 6:00, and all I could see was staff playing hackie sack and guys
sitting down. And I said, “What’s going on?” And they said, “There’s no flag lowering. We have to help clean up tables at 7:15.”

Henry felt like they had been lied to: “They told us we were going to do flags just to swindle us to coming to the dining hall so that we wouldn’t get pissy about having to clean tables. Except we did get pissy. And they expected us to sit there.”

Henry said it all happened in a flash: “I looked at Jerry and Jerry is like, ‘This is bullshit.’”

I said, “You’re damn right this is bullshit. We’ve gotta leave.”

Henry walks over to where staff are playing hackie sack: “I walk in the center of the hackie sack circle of like twelve guys, and I grabbed the hack, and I said, ‘How many of you guys can get out of camp this instant? How many have rides to get out of here right now?’”

The other staff members all had rides, so they asked Henry, “Why? Are you thinking about leaving?” And Henry said, “Yea, I’m thinking about leaving. This shit pisses me off.”

Marcus, the Office Manager, jumped in, “Someone should go tell Jake that the staff is leaving.” And the Assistant Health Officer, Melvin says, “I’ll do it,” and he turns and marches into the kitchen to inform the camp director.

“So we gave him like a ten second [lead] time,” Henry said, and then instructed the other staff, “Let’s just go. Let’s just get into our cars and go.” And so we turned around, and we started to walk down the road.”

Marcus told Henry to not take the front, so he appointed a couple younger staff to walk in front.

As they’re walking down the road away from Meecheway Lodge, Marcus says, “I feel like we should be singing,” so the entire staff began singing the Lakota Fight Song. There’s a
part in the song where you say “___ more days ‘til vacation, ___ more days ‘til we’re through”—talking about how many more days of camp you’ve got until you go home. The blanks are filled in with the appropriate number of days until camp is over. The song changes each day. So on this day, the staff started singing, “Five minutes ‘til vacation, five more minutes ‘til we’re through.”

Henry describe it like this:

And we’re singing it loud. Street punk, balls to the wall!, Oy, oy, oy! We’re singing it with fists in the air. Loud. It was just like raw anger that came out in two minutes. It was like we walked into a group of people, I looked around and saw the frustration on everybody’s face, and decided that for once we should do something about it.

So, at this point, the entire event sounds very “resistant.” The staff members are upset: their time-off has been shortened; they haven’t been told about this change; they feel lied to and manipulated. And so they actually walk out. But there are two significant hints that this is less resistant that one might think:

- They tell the camp director that they’re walking out. It’s as if they want the camp director to not be inconvenienced when he finds nobody there. It’s as if they want him to stop them. They were letting the authority know they were going to do something bad. Even giving him lead time to inform the authorities before they acted. This is not a resistant behavior. This is a suicide note left in obvious sight; this is crying wolf; this is about acquiring attention rather than resisting oppression or coercion.

- They sing the camp “Fight Song” on their way out. What sort of resistance sings the “Fight Song” of the oppressor? It would be the equivalent of Timothy McVey singing the “National Anthem” after blowing up the Oklahoma City Murray Federal Building.
They weren’t parodying it, making fun of it; rather, it was “balls to wall” singing of their anthem. It leads me to think they were acquiescing to the Boy Scout ideal and actually finding the camp director out of line with the organization. They were rebelling against a rogue camp director who was not doing what the organization says should happen. All their Scouting values told the staff that they had been treated inappropriately.

And so in the heat of rebellion against the camp director, they send someone to tell on them, and they fling themselves into the arms of the organization. It sounds more like they’re walking toward something rather than walking out on something.

By this time, Melvin has gone into the kitchen where the Camp Director is, and he tells Jake that the “staff is mad,” and that he thought they were going to leave. Now, not all staff had walked out. They estimated 15-20 staff walked and another 6 staff, including the older staff (meaning 21 year olds), stayed in Meecheway Lodge. Cliff claims that “Jake’s jaw dropped and eyes bulged” when he was told that the staff had already left. He walked outside, got in his Blazer and drove after them.

The walkers had gotten about half way to the parking lot—at the Trading Post—when the Camp Director catches up to them. Henry describes what happened:

And we get there, and we’re still singing, and we’re at like a minute and a half to vacation, like the fourth time we sang that song. And he pulls up, and we all kinda tail off and stop. And we’re scattered because some people stopped immediately and some of us kept walking like, “Let’s go.” And Jake rolls down his window and leans out his window and he said exactly this—I remember every word of it: “Noone is going to leave
until they are dismissed. I am not going to lose my job because this staff has become independent. Understood?”

Henry goes on: “And nobody said a fucking word. Nobody even blinked.”

Henry said he started to raise his hand to ask a question—like “Why weren’t we told earlier today that we had to work until 7:15?”—but before he can ask his question, Jake does one of his shifts in his seat and grabs the steering wheel and reaches over and throws it into drive. He peeled out. I mean dirt is flying, he’s making ruts. And he takes off. And he goes 40 or 50 yards forward, his truck is fishtailing in the gravel, and it’s up on its left and right side of his suspension, like up and down I thought he was going to roll his fucking truck. And turned into that field there and backed it up, and drove off. The marks are still there. If you go by you see that big arc, that was Jake.

Notice how the camp director is described as out of control. This is a rogue camp director. He’s breaking all the rules—and that is what they are responding to. They are not walking out on the camp, on the program, on the organization. And what’s more, I would go so far as to say, they’re not even walking out on the camp director. In fact, they stop walking out—like the camp director told them to do.

After the camp director drives away, Henry tells everybody to sit tight under the Handicraft tent which sits next to the Trading Post. He tells the group, “Nobody has to stay if you don’t want to stay. You guys can go if you want to go.” He was mostly concerned about Blake, a staff member who has Downs Syndrome. Marcus pointed this out to him:

“Dude, Blake’s back there.” And I said, “Blake, do you understand what’s going on?”

And Blake’s like, “No.” And I said, “Do you want to stay here? You can go back if you
want to.” And he says, “No, I’ll go back later.” I said, “Are you sure? If you don’t want to be here, you can go.” He says, “No, I’ll go back later.”

Then, Henry instructs the gathering:

“Understand there’s going to be repercussions from this. We might not be able to go into town tonight. I hope you’re ready for that. Ya know, they can’t withhold our paychecks. They can’t fire us all for god’s sake. But we might get a curfew, or something will come out of it. Just be prepared. This is just bullshit guys. We’re just really fed up about this. We’re just kinda pissed off about a lot of things that happened at camp this year.”

And so their response to being pissed off? “Just be prepared.”—sounds like the Boy Scout motto to me! These are not rebellious boys. These are not resistant folk. Instead, they are aspiring to the highest ideals of Scouting. They are giving themselves over to the authority of the organization despite the leader of the organization. Some resistance!

The guy who seems to be looking out for everyone, Marcus, offers his theory that there were two groups of people who walked that day:

There was a group that was solely pissed off about not being able to leave. And there was a small group that was like, “Jake is an asshole and this is why we’re walking.” See what I’m saying? And that’s the group that I fall into. That was my vibe. I was like, “Hey this is shitty, you can’t leave. But at the same time, this is like Hey Jake, look at yourself. You’re lame.”

The one group was simply irritated, but the other group aimed their walk at Jake.

Henry and Marcus admit that they were “pretty much the catalyst for the situation,” but “everybody was pissed.” “All I said was, ‘Let’s leave,’” Henry says, “And so we walked.”

Marcus clarifies Henry’s role:
Henry goes over there and starts talking. He’s kinda the catalyst. He’s not, “This is what we need to do. This is what we’re all doing!” It was like, “Hey man, this is shitty.” He was like saying this is shitty, and they’re like, “Hey, this is shitty.” Then all of sudden, somehow, everybody started walking to the direction on this road towards staff area.

And then, in the middle of telling his story, Henry soliloquizes for my dissertation:

For the record of your thing about masculinity, I think it takes more balls to stand up and be a man and say I’m pissed off about this, than to be a boy back there at Meecheway and roll over while you get stepped on. Ya know, it would be one thing if they’d tell us in the morning when they knew, they knew we were going to do this at breakfast. . . . And we woulda been like, “Yea, this sucks balls, but….“ It’s just common courteousy.

Henry thinks the staff were more manly because they stood up to demand fair and just treatment. He says that a boy is one who “rolls over” and takes it. This is the same Henry who ended every week at summer camp singing “Superman” and talking about “just being a boy.”

So, the walkers are sitting under the Handicraft tent, playing cards, when the Program Director arrives. Josh had not been at Meecheway, but had heard something was up. Henry describes the scene: “Josh walks up. ‘What’s going on now? Who’s leading this little sit in? Who’s the instigator here?’” Once again, nobody said a word. Then one of the younger staff says, “No one. It was all of us.”

Josh responds, “Bullshit. You’re all followers. Who started it?” As Marcus tells the conversation, he was miffed by one of Josh’s issues: “So he was talking and was like, ‘Where were you guys going to go?’ He still to this day, right now, he’s like, ‘They had no place to go. The people who couldn’t drive had no place to go.’ I was like, “Bullcrap. Like five minutes
later, they were able to go somewhere, why weren’t they able to go somewhere now.” And

Henry describes the rest of the conversation:

So we had this little powwow with Josh, and a bunch of shit was said about this is stupid.

And Josh gives us some shit about, “You assumed the program was the same. You
should have called.” And Jerry said, “We did call. We couldn’t get ahold of anybody.”

. . . I said, “We don’t do anything until we’re told because we’re not paid to think.” And
he’s like, “I understand you’re mad about this, and I’m pissed about this, and I’m upset
about this kinda stuff too. But we’ve got a miscommunication from the Dad and Lad.”

At that point, Henry and Josh get into it. Marcus claims it was a hatred-filled conversation:

“Henry was just being an ass and Josh was being an ass as well.” And Jerry adds, “He was
actually more of an ass and Henry was more of a dick. So you had some dick and ass going
on.”

Henry makes the point that it “wasn’t just specifically about this issue.”

“This wasn’t Dad & Lad,” Henry claims. “This was the first time the staff decided that
Jake wasn’t in total control.”

One of the adult staff members, Brenda, shows up to tell them that they’re all needed
down at Meecheway to help clean up. They decide to go. “So as we’re putting things in the
Handishack, and we’re walking down the road again, the Handishack phone rings and it’s Josh
on the line. And Josh says, “All you guys sign out and leave. You’re free to go.”

At that point, the entire group runs back to staff area to get cleaned up and load into the
cars to go into town. Henry gives the group one last instruction:

Let it be known that two things: One, we haven’t done anything wrong. We did not leave
until we were told. Number two, let it be known that we won tonight because Jake
buckled. It’s one thing for us to stand up. He could have screamed at us and screamed at us, and then not let us go out, blah, blah.” Let it be known that we fucking won tonight because he let us go.”

And Henry went one step further in his storytelling, rebuking Jake’s modus operandi: “And don’t give me this shit, don’t walk into Staff meeting on Sunday and say, “You guys are expendable. I can find people to do your jobs” Because if that’s the truth, he wouldn’t have driven after us. And that was the end of the staff mutiny. We’re finally heard.”

Notice how they followed all the rules. Notice how they did whatever the camp director told them to do. Notice how they didn’t really resist anything. The system was still maintained; the camp director was still calling the shots; the staff were all employed afterwards. The machinery kept on moving. This is what Goffman would call a “contained” secondary adjustment as opposed to a “disruptive” one. The staff rebellion appears to be of the disruptive variety, motivated by a desire to “abandon the organization or radically alter its structure, in either case leading to a rupture in the smooth operation of the organization” (199). However, it ends up sharing “with the primary adjustments the characteristic of fitting into existing institutional structures without introducing pressure for radical change,” and as such is a contained adjustment (199). In fact, the rebellion was never addressed by administration again: nobody was fired; there were no changes made in the program; and no discussions or reprimands were issued. Seemingly, none were needed because no rupture had occurred.

Ordering Spontaneity

There were two conversations with Marcus and Henry leading up to the “mutiny” incident which I recorded in my notes that illuminate this event and show it to be perhaps less spontaneous than it may appear. One night after the Camp Director had “reamed” the staff,
Marcus, Henry, and I went to take showers and lick our wounds from Frese’s lashing. The showerhouse seems a common place for such conversations to transpire because the stalls are open from the shoulders up (so you can see and talk with your neighbors without being fully exposed). Marcus remarked that we were spending far too much of our time and energy dealing with Jake. Henry argued that we needed to actually do something about the problem rather than just bitch and moan about it: “I want to slash tires, burn down trees, tear something apart!” And then more to the point: “I want to make Jake look ridiculous! … I want to step on his toes!” The more we talked, the more dissatisfied we all became: We agreed that the Camp Director wasn’t going to change, and that we shouldn’t stoop to his level and treat him like he treats us. But Henry was resolute: if we can’t change Jake, “then we’ll make him look as ridiculous as we see him.”

It was about perception. It was about how people see Jake. The next morning, Marcus and I were talking, and he described Jake as a boy: “He’s like a 15 year old boy, trying to be the guy who looks good during a breakup . . . “I’ll take my friends away, you’re nobody without me, I’m stronger than you.”” He kept emphasizing “boy” who keeps trying to “look good.” Marcus and Henry seemed to agree that Jake’s passing was lame and that they saw through the veil and were disappointed by what they’d seen. They wanted others to see Jake for who they thought he was. This small group of people felt that they had waged a battle against an authority figure who is obviously passing as a leader, as an authority. People do not like to discover that their leaders are passing—that they are not who they say they are, that they are not stable, unchanging, rock-solid whos that you can depend on. If staff members were rebelling against anything, they were rebelling against the camp director’s passing.
And then the plan comes together one morning when Henry and I were talking. We were talking about deep dark secrets and fears. One of my secrets was a desire to take a baseball bat and bash in the skulls of one of those raccoons that kept me up at night; but that when I actually had the opportunity to do so, I let the little raccoon go. One of Henry’s—and perhaps the most illuminating for this rebellion—is that “everyone will up and walk out on me.” He knew he was different from the rest—his musical tastes, his persona, his method of passing through the world. He wondered if I, too, had that fear; and I admitted I did. I told him that my greater fear was in being “found out”—that they would somehow discover that I was not who they thought I was. We thought most people felt that way. And in connection with this dissertation, I believe that is perhaps one of the most overwhelming and motivating force in many of the staff members’ lives: the fear of being found out and then dismissed. They find a place on camp staff where they finally belong. The people around them allow them to pass as a staff member. When it is discovered that they were passing, however, the staff (and society) can be unforgiving. At best, they walk out; at worst, they offer discipline and punishment.

The Staff Rebellion of 2002 seems to have been motivated by the desire of a few people to show the Camp Director who he really was. They had found him out and wanted him to know that, and then they wanted to walk out on him. They effectively mobilized people to walk out on the Camp Director even though most did not mean to aim their action so directly at him.

Having said all this, though, I must go back and reframe this rebellion as non-resistant. It is far too simplistic to see this walk-out as resistant, to describe it as a group of youth or workers or the oppressed taking control of their actions and dealing with an oppressive situation. Instead, what if we see these staff as aspiring to the ideals of Scouting, striving to reassert the legitimacy of the organization that was being threatened: what if they were defending themselves from
attack rather than resisting anything at all? They were asserting themselves, but not in a resistant way.

And this is not just semantics: “You say resistance; I say acquiescence. You say to-mato; I say tom-ato.” It’s more than that. These boys were not resisting anything. They may have felt like they had struck a blow for freedom and the American way, but they resisted nothing. They felt like they walked out on their jobs, but they walked right into the hands of the organization. In fact, this situation was an opportunity to pass as resistant. These rural, northwest Ohio boys by and large have only read about walk-outs. On this day, they tried it on, but ended up resisting nothing. In effect, they took a pass on resistance.

This is, in fact, the most common way for middle-class white male youth to order identities: they are tried on, passed. Boy Scout staff members in my study ordered both an individual and a “staff” identity because of the circumstances they found themselves in and because they wanted to find a way to best fit into those circumstances. They approximate the who’s they wish to be—trying them on, acquiescing to them, test-driving them—rather than resisting the who’s offered to them. Clearly, the camp administration had offered them an unsavory sort of who: Jake’s denigrating “independent” who and Josh’s “just a bunch of followers” who. But the staff didn’t really rebel against either of these whos. By ignoring or taking a pass on them, they acquiesced to an organizational who: the Boy-Man Scout who stands up for himself, who is “prepared,” who takes his place amongst his league of staff members fighting for justice.

Mitigating Sexuality While Playing Naked Hacky Sack

The relationship between acquiescence and taking a pass is also played out in the now infamous Naked Hacky Sack episode at Camp Lakota in 2001. Personally, I witnessed this
event—as did many of the staff that summer—and it has entered staff lore as a significant event. I’m sure it will be forgotten in a couple of years, but at the time of my research, two of the participants in that event were still on staff, and one was willing to talk quite eloquently about it.

I do not remember anyone playing hacky sack at Lakota in the early 1990s. By the 2000s, though, many staff members carry them in their day packs and break them out whenever there is “down-time.” The game consists of players standing in a circle volleying a small footbag back and forth between using their bodies (except for their hands), trying to keep it from hitting the ground. Before meal times, you see a number of circles in the parade ground where groups are moving the hacky sack around. Staff typically starts many of these groups; I have no recollection of campers starting a game in a public venue. But it is a very inclusive game: new players are freely and willingly accepted, and dropped hacks are brushed off and the game continues on. Staff not only play this with the campers; they also play it back in Staff Area. It is a good way to pass the time with a group of friends.

One day, when staff arrived back in staff area after a day of work, they were treated to a surprising view at Boy Scout summer camp. There, in the middle of Staff Area were four staff members naked down to their tennis shoes, kicking a hacky sack around. All four of them—Henry, Phillip, Derrick, and Cliff—had been on staff for at least a couple years. They were not doing a prank or trying to spook anyone. They were just playing hacky sack, but in the buff.

One of the participants, Cliff, said that it started out as a normal game of hacky sack, but somehow it “just kinda like happened”:

It was actually Derrick’s idea. We started with our shirts off. It was a hot day. It was a hot day. So he’s like, he took his shirt off and you’re hackin’. And he’s like, alright, alright. And Henry was like, “Hey man, let’s take the pants. Let’s go with the pants.”
So we’re in our boxers. And then, who was it, Phillip was like, “Hey man, we might as well pull the full thing off. And he was the first to do it, and we were all like, “No way, we’re not doing it.” And Phillip’s like, “Come on, it’s no big deal.” He’s standing there naked while we’re doing this. And we’re kinda like looking away, kinda like, “No, no, put your pants back on man.” And then he just like started . . . and we like, “Aw, whatever.” So, it just kinda like happened.

In other words, it was a fairly innocent disrobing: no heavy persuasion; just good clean hacky sacking.

It must be noted that nakedness was not all that uncommon for a couple of these guys. Three of them—Derrick, Henry, and Phillip—were known for walking back from the Staff Showerhouse with their towel draped over their shoulder rather than around their waist. But standing in the middle of staff area, buck-naked, playing a game was not exactly a normal situation. It was a bit “too much,” a bit unbelievable.

And besides that, it was also not exactly an appropriate situation. For one thing, public nudity is not okay at summer camp. While there is nothing in Camp Lakota materials prohibiting nudity, National provides some insinuations and then direct decrees against it. For example, in the Guide to Safe Scouting, there are references to “respect for privacy in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp,” and there is a policy for “appropriate attire” which states, “Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping is not appropriate as part of Scouting” (BSA Guide 4).

Surely, if you’re wanting to get a peek at some bodies, you might have a chance at shower times, or maybe someone who doesn’t close their tent flaps while changing, or most often when someone steps out of their tent and urinates on the closest tree—those are times when
you might catch some level of nudity. However, these are situations surrounded by rules and regulations. For example, sometime during the late 1980s or early 1990s, they renovated all the shower facilities, putting in actual stalls rather than “gang” shower rooms. Each person now gets their own shower stall. Similarly, staff members usually close their tent flaps while changing, mostly because it’s about the only ounce of privacy they have on camp staff. During Staff Week, they are encouraged to respect each other’s privacy—what little they have—to help us all get along. Also during training, staff are told not to urinate on the trees outside their tents: for one reason, because someone might walk past while they’re relieving themselves, and that’s not appropriate; and for another reason, because it makes the staff area stink like a toilet.

What’s more, the Youth Protection Guidelines are always in effect. Youth Protection Guidelines attempt to minimize the opportunity for abuse to occur—whether it be sexual, physical, mental, or neglect—by instituting some simple procedures, one of which mandates “two-deep leadership”. Two-Deep Leadership requires two adult leaders at all times overseeing activities by the boys. This protects the boys from falling victim to one, overpowering leader all by himself; and it protects the leader from false accusations because there will be a witness to everything. Along with the policy on appropriate attire, the Naked Hacky Sack participants broke the “Two-Deep” leadership guideline. One of the participants was over 18 years of age—making him the only adult—and there were multiple “youth” participating. This means there was only one-deep leadership. And sure, it was in a public setting, but naked anything is inappropriate in the Boy Scouts of America—staff or not.

I would argue this behavior is Campy, but I’m not convinced that it is a resistant behavior. Are these boys finding a fissure in the seam of Boy Scout culture and exploiting it, flaunting it, parodying it, wiggling it in the face of Scouting? Not if you believe how Cliff
describes it: Cliff describes this naked hacky sack episode as a turning point in his sexuality. He says summer camp helped him “mature sexually.” Why? Because now he knew he wasn’t gay:

[T]here was a time when I was in grade school that I was called gay for the longest time, ya know. It may have been my voice was too high, I don’t know. It may have been, I don’t know, I didn’t hit puberty when everybody else did. . . . But the thing, that feeling of knowing and stuff made me know, made me comfortable in saying, “Yea, I’m not gay. And this proves it because I’m not sitting here staring at somebody’s nutsack and saying ou, ou-la-la, or something like that.

Cliff joked that “we tried to keep it up in the air as much as we could because we really didn’t want to bend down to get it,” but reiterated throughout the conversation that,

I don’t think anybody turned gay out of it, ya know. I don’t think it made any difference, I don’t think. It was just something funny that everybody can look back and laugh on now. So I don’t think there was any sexual connotation or anything to it.

Despite the potentially sexualized nature of the activity, Cliff chooses to desexualize the episode. That is where he found meaning—and identity. He sorted through the experience and found some truisms:

And I think, well, you know, you’re not like that. And they know you’re not like that.

And you can look at people in the face and say, “I can do this, and not make it a gay issue . . . or a homosexual issue . . . . I can do this. It’s not gay. We’re just being guys.”

Cliff re-orders his participation in an episode of naked hacky sack so that it is not a reflection of his sexuality or his gender.

However, this is where his personal identity diverges from his group identity, and he recognizes the difference. Cliff acknowledges that some onlookers probably got the “gay vibe”,

but he figures some “knew it was a joke, and took it as a joke, and were mature enough to know better. . . . It was good humor.” Mitch was one staff member who saw them playing and closed his tent flaps. He said it didn’t “bug me, but I can see how it would bug someone.” Cliff, though, assumes the more mature—more adult-like, less boy-like—would see the episode for what it was. Put another way—Sontag’s way—Cliff assumes the mature audience members would know this duplicitous episode for its failed seriousness, its frivolous seriousness.

Cliff tries to pass this off as a desexualized, innocent, humorous gag—what Sontag might call “Camp”—but was it? Cliff claims there wasn’t anything gay about it:

I know that there wasn’t. And I know that they know that there wasn’t. And that’s a good feeling to have because nobody is uneasy about the situation, nobody is uncertain. Everybody is certain what happened, and everybody is certain how everybody else feels. That gives each of us comfort in knowing that. In knowing that . . . in knowing what they’re thinking, and knowing that everybody is okay with it. And staff may have had their jokes, and that was okay as long as we knew that nothing was ever wrong.

While his fellow staff members may have peered behind the curtain and seen the situation as sexualized and perhaps indicative of something beyond the performance, Cliff was resolute—certain—that the participants knew it was just for fun. In fact, the episode taught him to see through performances for the real person that lay beneath:

I’ve learned to look at people from the inside out. If I went back to the hackie sack thing, if I looked at a naked guy playing hack, I’d probably instantly think, “Gay,” ya know. He’s playing naked hack with four other guys!” And I knew him from the inside before I knew him from the outside. I knew what kind of person Henry is. I knew what kind of
person Phillip is, and Derrick. You learn, I’ve learned to look at people and like the person on the inside more than their appearance or what they do on the outside.

Cliff ended the conversation about the Naked Hacky Sack by saying, “I think it’s forever going to be a changing point, and a laughter point.” Cliff brings in the notion of laughter. “I’m glad I can look back on it and laugh now and not be bitter or regretful of what I did. Because I don’t think it was a bad thing.” This is the power of laughter, as Mikhail Bakhtin describes it:

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it. Laughter demolishes fear and piety. . . . (Bakhtin Epic 23).

The laughter more than the nudity—the play more than the flesh—is perhaps what helped Cliff change—foreclose, perhaps—his personal sexuality. The organization might not laugh at this event, but Cliff knew otherwise. He took a pass on the who they attached to Naked Hacky Sack, and he took his own. And, making my case for acquiescence rather than resistance, Cliff took a seemingly dysfunctional path to reach the same place the organization always wanted him, safely and resolutely heterosexual. He wanted to keep playing the “game” of traditional masculinity, but he took a pass on it, actually choosing a path that could have kicked him out of staff and even Scouting. Ironically enough, his pass actually won him the game he was trying to play.

While Cliff’s naked hacky sack experience is not exactly a full-fledge critique of the normal, it certainly demonstrates that “normal” can contain a serious amount of wiggle room. This is the Campiness of Boy Scout summer camp. Cliff experienced what Sontag refers to as “Camp taste”: “a mode of enjoyment, of appreciation—not judgment. Camp is generous. It
wants to enjoy” (#55)—even if that means you enjoy something you never imagined you would. According to Pamela Robertson, “Camp” as a strategy allows for both pleasure and criticism (Wu).

Which leaves us one more significant facet of “Camp” which is perhaps most bothersome to the Boy Scout organization and the parents who send their kids to summer camp: Sontag describes the sexuality of “Camp” which is definitely a part of summer camp. There is an element of the “androgyne”—as Sontag calls it—in the summer camp staff as he (or she) engages in an equal share of masculine and feminine duties and roles (#9). Staff and Boy Scouts in general, engage in cooking, cleaning, hygiene, first aid, and even nuturance while also shooting things, climbing on rocks, tying things down, and lighting things on fire. As such, they exemplify the androgyne: the feminine in virile men and the masculine in women: “a relish for the exaggeration of sexual characteristics and personality mannerisms,” “corny flamboyant female-ness,” and “exaggerated he-man-ness” (9).

Though he doesn’t argue for the exaggerated gender characteristics of “Camp,” Mechling (2001) also argues for androgyny. He argues Scouting would benefit greatly if men and women—parents and staff members alike—were more androgynous. Mechling’s androgyny expands the culturally expected performance of “male” to include qualities and behavior usually reserved for women, just as it expands the culturally expected performance of “female” to include qualities and behavior usually reserved for “men” (On My Honor 232). As an example, he uses Gregory Bateson’s (1952) notion of self-monitoring and self-correcting cybernetic systems to interpret an “injury display” during a game of Capture the Flag at his Boy Scout encampment (161). In the midst of an inevitably violent game, someone gets injured and the game pauses to take care of the injury. The injury event “stops the contest and the violence long
enough to permit the boys to show the nurturance and caring that the institution values so much”—the injury event is the self-checking procedure within the game. Mechling describes this as a “lesson in androgyny” as “the boys learn how to mitigate agency (the ability to organize resources to get things done) with communion (the ability to take care of how people feel about the group and their place in it)” (On My Honor 162).

Mechling’s use of the word “mitigate” as opposed to “negotiate” is fascinating and appealing to my own understanding of identity and cultural ordering. Mechling says that boys can mitigate agency with communion; that is, boys can lessen the intensity or severity of agency, ordering, and perhaps aggressive force with other acts like communion, re-ordering, and perhaps equivocating care. Mechling’s use of the term mitigate suggests that nothing is really changed in the system (in the game), but that the self-checking procedure of the injury event initiates mitigating acts like nurturance and reassurance that everyone is okay and that play can continue. The break in play is built into the system of play to manage the negative effects of play. And then, the play goes on. Mitigation is a hegemonic practice.

In discourse analysis, Bilyana Martinovski (2006) describes mitigation as a “complex cognitive, emotional, pragmatic, and discursive process whose main function is reduction of vulnerability” (Framework 2066). Martinovski cites Bruce Fraser’s (1980) work in identifying a number of mitigation structures, that is, acts which indicate a desire to mitigate and reduce vulnerability; for instance, “directives performed by indirect means, distancing devices such as disclaimers . . . immediacy in the information structure, parenthetical verbs (e.g., guess, think, feel), tag questions, and hedges” (Framework 2066).11 Focusing on court cases, Martinovski describes other mitigation structures, for example, excuses, justifications, rebuttals, admissions, denials, and objections as well as references to common knowledge, authority, shared
responsibility, and the lack of certainty, credibility, agency, and memory (2069-2070). These mitigation structures are used, for example, by witnesses in court cases to “enhance their credibility” or to avoid “being held blameworthy/guilty for the wrongdoing” (Framework 2082, Mitigation 2). Discourse analysts like Martinovski find that mitigation involves argumentation (different from persuasion) and is a way we “practice and learn social judgment, which is involved in the creation and maintenance of social institutions including the concept of self” (Mitigation 1).

In a hegemonic environment, the metaphor of mitigation seems more appropriate than negotiation for describing how ordering of identities and even institutions takes place. Boy Scout staff members are not “negotiating” hegemonic heteropatriarchal masculinity: they are not dealing or bargaining or managing transactions with the various whos circulating around them. I do not think they, like most subordinate groups, have the power, influence, or agency to make such negotiations with hegemonic forces. Instead, it appears more descriptive to say that they are “mitigating” the whos that are circulating through power and knowledge at the moment. This is not to suggest that these boys are constantly offering excuses, justifications, and rebuttals and referencing their own lacks of certainty, agency, and memory. However, they are often attempting to reduce their own vulnerability and even accountability by appeasing, mollifying, and smoothing out the whos, sifting through acceptable options and leaving some unchallenged. Staff members like Cliff, involved in activities as diverse as leading camp songs and playing naked hacky sack, seem to order their whos by attempting to decrease intensity or severity of those whos. Mitigation is the work of constantly shifting equilibriums (hegemony) while negotiation is the work of gaining concessions and making more “permanent” adjustments in hegemony’s equilibrium.
Another illustration of mitigation is found in Kleinfeld and Shinkwin ("Nonformal Education," 1983) description of everyday Scouting, where "altruistic behavior" passes as "toughness":

When we asked our focal boys whether they had met any boys in scouts whom they especially admired, almost all mentioned experienced older scouts who were good in the outdoors and who helped out younger scouts. One boy, for example described an older boy who noticed a younger boy sagging on a camping trip. Without saying a word, the older boy lifted his pack off his back and hiked on carrying two packs. In scouts, toughness could be expressed in this way. (Kleinfeld & Shinkwin "Getting Prepared" 24)

That is to say, in moments when it might seem more appropriate for a young Scout to have to "muscle through" his camping trip, another slightly older Scout mitigates the severity of the experience for that boy by intensifying his own (taking on another pack). The older Scout allows the younger Scout to take a pass on the one aspect of Scouting masculinity—"toughing it out"—but brings that "toughing it out" experience down to an experiential level for that young Scout who would not be able to experience it otherwise. That lessening of severity, that taking a pass on a part of Scouting masculinity is mitigation. For my own part, I have witnesses more males on camp staffs (rather than in Troop Scouting) mitigating their masculinity in these sorts of ways—genuine courtesy, kindness, helpfulness, friendliness—mostly because it is their job to do so.

Office Manager Marcus provides another example of this sort of behavior at Camp Lakota. On the dreaded Dad & Lad weekends, staff members do not have time to go home; however, they do have a few hours Saturday night to head into town, eat dinner at a restaurant, and watch a movie. He said that there’s "always a group that always made sure, 'Hey, is this
person going with somebody or what’s this guy doing?’ There is always someone who makes sure nobody is left behind.” When this happens, Marcus says, staff “really does turn into a family or . . . people actually start caring about other people even though they’ve wanted to punch them in the face earlier that day or that week.” “Nowhere, at least in my life,” Marcus remarks, “have people cared enough about other people—that they didn’t even like—that they would come back to Staff Area to make sure that they had a place to go, that they were hanging out with somebody, that they were doing something.” Only on staff does Marcus recognize mitigating structures for avoiding loneliness, exclusion, and disassociation. If Mechling is right that nurturing androgyny would “end the need for misogyny and homophobia in the construction and maintenance of masculinity,” then that utopian hope is being mitigated and passed amongst camp staff members (232).

“A Problem of Sexual Misbehavior”

During this study, I was privy not only to situations where dysfunction was but another mechanism for ordering, but also to situations where dysfunction could not be incorporated into the order, and ordering mechanisms adeptly acquiesced and mitigated the dysfunction. That is to say, I witnessed an attempt to take a pass which led to the end of the game for him. One example occurred during the first summer of my research, and it ended with one staff member being fired and subsequently being kicked out of Scouting completely. Rumor has it that he is no longer allowed to attend Scouting events or step on Boy Scout property. He performed perhaps one of only a few truly unacceptable things in Scouting: he used others to seek his own sexual gratification. Stated a little differently, in my words, he took a pass on normalized heterosexuality. He took a pass and actually failed to pass because he got caught as one of the few whos that the hegemony cannot incorporate.
This is also a tale of the power and responsibility of doing research. While an early version of my interview protocol included questions about sexuality, sexual experiences, and other “touchy” topics, I was dissuaded from including this line of questioning by colleagues who suggested it would never get approved by the Human Subjects Review Board. Interestingly, even without specific prompts, a number of staff members offered information about such topics, including the following example. My point is that my research project opened up a relatively safe space for staff members to divulge information; but it also opened up a space for the state to intervene—which is good in some situations but perhaps not good in others.13

This example begins innocently at the end of an interview I was doing for this dissertation. The interview was with a first year staff member named Owen.14 The last question I asked for every interview was, “Is there anything else I should know about your experience on staff?” Owen paused and asked me if it was okay to shut off the recorder. He asked me what I thought of George, a second year staff member. I told him I was not exactly a raving fan of George, but I did not really dislike him either.

Owen then began to tell me a story about how George had done things to him that made him uncomfortable. He told how George had done something to him during Staff Week, but had not done anything to him since. However, in the past week, he had “started up again.” Owen said that there were others on staff that George had done stuff to. He described how they would actually watch George invite another staff member into his tent, and then a couple of them would go over near George’s tent to listen. Sometimes, they would make noises outside his tent to distract him, but they never took any action against George. Owen said that he “just wanted it to stop.” I asked him to talk to the others to see if they were willing to meet with me.
Later that night, I met with four other staff members who Owen had talked to. They were a mixture of first and second year staff members. Each told their story, typically involving helping George take off or pack up his Indian regalia after an Order of the Arrow event. “They told me about their experiences with George—which included a kiss on the forehead (something he said, “Indians did to say goodbye”), pulling his loincloth up to show he was “freeballing it,” a lot of rubbing with the fur, attempts to get them to take their clothes off to try on his Indian garb, and getting them to help him take off his Indian garb” (Vrooman Police Report). None of them admitted to participating in any of the activities George was encouraging them to do. Typically, they told him they did not want to do what he was asking them to do, and they would leave his tent. Some of the staff members told how they had had multiple experiences with George.

I immediately took the situation to the Camp Director and Program Director, and before the night was out, George had been fired from staff. The Camp Director identified it as a “major problem of sexual misbehavior,” and action was taken to protect the victims and to make sure George was no longer given access to potential victims. By the end of the week, we heard that the Scout Executive had gone to George’s home and told him he was no longer allowed to be a member of the Boy Scouts of America and that he was not allowed on any Scouting property either.

The following morning, the Program Director and I met with the staff members who had reported George's behavior. We told them we needed written statements from each of them. We also tried to assuage their fears that they might be gay and to help them work up the courage to talk to their parents. During the conversation, one of the staff members, Earl, mentioned that George had told him that he had done something with his little brother too. Earl’s little brother happened to be a camper that week of camp, so we interviewed him. Earl’s little brother had
gotten trapped in a game of Truth or Dare with George, and the dares became increasingly graphic.

From that day on, we met daily with the staff members involved in this situation because they seemed to want to talk about it. Of the six “victims,” four of them returned to camp the following year as staff members, and some have continued on staff thereafter.

Unlike the previous examples of taking a pass, this example is certainly more serious and more complicated. Whereas in the other examples of taking a pass—Superman, the White Trash Run, even the Staff Mutiny—the passers took a pass on one aspect of normative masculinity by accepting another, different aspect of normative masculinity. In George’s case, however, he took a pass on a normative masculinity by accepting a socially non-normative aspect of masculinity: same-sex, sexual “play.” Like other attempts to take a pass, George sought to pass. Perhaps someone had engaged him in similar behavior in the past (and this behavior was normalized for him), or perhaps he is gay and is trying to locate similarly interested whos, or perhaps for a dozen other reasons, George tried to engage others in a behavior that is not typically acknowledged in normative Scouting masculinity. Consciously or not, he was attempting to take a pass on at least the sexual practices of normative Scouting masculinity, and I would wager he wanted to pass on this hand but keep playing the game. He was not trying to undermine or critique or change the organization, so it is not appropriate to describe his behavior as resistant. He effectively passed as a good Scout and staff member in all other ways, but because another staff member refused to pass as normative, it caused George to fail to pass in this attempt to take a pass.
Taking a Pass on Normative Heterosexuality

It’s not as if nobody masturbates at summer camp. Granted, in my interviews with staff members, nobody admitted to masturbating, but I think they would have if I had asked. Masturbation is a common theme in camp culture: it’s joked about, simulated, and ridiculed. For example, often when I would walk past the Staff Showerhouse, if a staff member we will call Derrick were there, he would climb on the partition between showerstalls and simulate masturbating at me. He would do this in broad-daylight and beside other staff members in other stalls, trying to make me laugh. Masturbatory innuendo is displayed in The Lakota Farce skit, and masturbatory innuendo is rampant in Boy Scout staff culture.

Mechling (2001) talks about another common allusion at summer camp: the “circle jerk” which consists of “a group of males who form a circle and masturbate (“jerk off”) themselves simultaneously. Usually, the male who ejaculates first “wins” the circle jerk” (292). There are a couple of common versions of this practice or legend (for neither I nor Mechling have ever observed or interviewed any Scout who has participated in an actual occurrence). Mechling cites an example told by Scoutmaster Pete in which the boys “ejaculate on a cookie in the middle of the circle and the last guy done has to eat the cookie” (292).

Another example is when it is used as a practical joke: “the boys in on the joke explain to the ‘dupe’ that they are going to do the circle jerk with the lights off. The boys make appropriate sounds and then turn on the light when the dupe ejaculates—he is the only one masturbating” (292). Just as in the example of the naked hacky sack game (above), the circle jerk is a behavior that might suggest homosexuality but, in fact, confirms the heterosexual orientation of the participants. . . . As homoerotic as this play is . . . it also bears the same metamessage as
other nude play. “We can play this way because we do not see each other as sexual objects.” An important element of the circle jerk is that each male is masturbating himself. Touching the genitals of another male would break the heterosexual play frame. (Mechling 2001, 292)

It is most interesting that Mechling refers to circle jerking as “nude” rather than sexual play, insinuating that circle jerks are not necessarily sexual, nor only autosexual. This runs contrary to common sense notions that someone who is naked and masturbating (with or without someone else nearby) is performing a sexual act.

However, I will borrow Mechling’s example and argue through Gregory Bateson (1972) that this commonsensical notion of sex is incorrect. Bateson describes his reactions to watching young monkeys playing. He describes how they are “engaged in an interactive sequence of which the unit actions or signals were similar to but not the same as those of combat” (Theory 179). Everyone watching knew the monkeys were playing despite the fact that they appeared to be fighting. Bateson argues that “this phenomena, play, could only occur if the participant organisms were capable of some degree of metacommunication, i.e., of exchanging signals which would carry the message ‘this is play’” (Theory 179). Between the monkeys, the message, “this is play,” actually translates into a more detailed message: “These actions in which we now engage do not denote what those actions for which they stand would denote” (Theory 180). This means that in his monkey combat example, Bateson describes how the “playful nip denotes the bite, but it does not denote what would be denoted by the bite” (Theory 180). In our circle jerk example, this means that the playful ejaculation denotes autoerotic but public sex, but it does not denote what would be denoted by actual sex.
Bateson goes one step further and suggests that the bite—and the sex—are actually fictional: “Not only do the playing animals not quite mean what they are saying but, also, they are usually communicating about something that does not exist” (Theory 182). He suggests that so long as all the players agree to frame their interaction as “this is play,” then that frame “assists the mind in understanding the contained messages by reminding the thinker that these messages are mutually relevant and the messages outside the frame may be ignored” (Theory 188). The bite and the sex messages can be ignored because the monkeys and the circle jerkers are within the frame that says “this is play.”

A real life example comes to mind from when I started working on staff in the mid-eighties. While it’s neither masturbation nor nude play, it’s definitely the sort of play you would not expect among Boy Scout staff members. The younger staff started playing something we called “corn-dogging”. Someone had come back from a 24-hours-off weekend with this notion of “corn-dogging” whereby you tried to sneak up behind a fellow staff member and put a stick or walking staff or broomhandle—or whatever you could find—between their legs or in their butt crack. As with the legendary circle jerk, this play did not frame anyone as a sexual object. As such, it was relatively innocent play with everyone trying to corn-dog everyone else—just to “get” them. It was simultaneously a defensive/offensive play: while trying to keep people from getting behind you and corn-dogging you, you were also trying to sneak up and corn-dog them. This progressed to the point that staff stopped using sticks and such and just ran their finger or hand up someone’s butt crack. The corn-dogger would yell out, “Corn-Dog!” and the corn-doggee would yelp in surprise and oftentimes try to get even by corn-dogging him back. This only happened the one year, and I’ve never seen or heard of it happening again.
This is a remarkable experience amongst boys from northwest Ohio who I am guessing (but I could be wrong) are not accustomed to giving and receiving anal pleasure. However, the difference between this example and the example with George are easily discerned. First of all, the incidents of corn-dogging were public events (at least among staff). They were done in front of others rather than done secretly or between just two people. As far as I know, nobody went inside tents together and corn-dogged each other one-on-one. And secondly, the corn-dogging incidents were among those of equal power and position. Surely, there were second year staff and first year staff corn-dogging each other. However, corn-dogging was not manipulative; at least, not the way George was manipulative. He used his knowledge of the Indian regalia to pass as “this is play” when it was really “this is sex” for him. In fact, this is the main distinction. While there was probably some sensual pleasure derived from corn-dogging, it was not the primary goal of the practice. Whereas, for George, he chose a sexual object and failed to pass within the frame “this is play.”

This distinction is supported by another example which occurred during the writing of this dissertation, under my supervision of the camp. This incident occurred amongst campers on an overnighter. The young campers were “caught” playing truth-or-dare which included touching penises together, kissing on the buttocks, and kissing penises. This incident, mind you, was found to not be sexualized—and the presiding officer and social worker concurred that this was neither abusive nor manipulative. The boys in this case mutually framed their interactions as “this is play.” Despite the rage of some parents, the participants in the truth-or-dare game ignored the outside messages that might view their interactions as sexual and thus inappropriate. Much like the corn-dogging practice, all the players framed the practice as play rather than some framing it as play and others as, for example, sex.
Framed behavior—which appears sexual but is not experienced as such—occurs rather openly among staff members. When I arrived back on Lakota staff in 2001, I was unpacking my stuff one night during staff week when Paul came to my door and invited me to stop by Henry’s tent for, what he called, “some male bonding.” Outside Henry’s tent, a small group of five or six staff members gathered and Henry passed around a bottle of Gold Bond Medicated Powder. It’s for soothing the pain of jock-itch and for maintaining a dry crotch region. I’d never used Gold Bond before, but everyone else had. They poured some in their hands and then shoved their hand in their pants, massaging the powder around their gentials. “Go ahead and rub it on your balls. It tingles.” They gave me the bottle and said it felt good. “You’ll like it.” So I did as they instructed. I felt nothing. Then they said that I might need to put the fan on me to get some air circulating. So I joined a couple of the guys next to the box fan Henry had in his tent, and got air to blow up the legs of my shorts.

And then it hit me! Gold Bond tingles and even stings a bit! As one participant described it, “It feels like a wintergreen lifesaver in your crotch.” This is what they called “male bonding”—making fun of the notion by actually doing it, with Gold Bond powder. While the ritual was not exactly masturbatory, it certainly treaded on that line by having everyone caressing their genitals semi-privately in front of each other. Once again, though, the public nature of the practice seems to be the distinguishing feature. The effect of this practice was actually community-building. While it was a bit of joke, there was actual “bonding” taking place by publicly caressing one’s genitals. And it might be worth noting that I’ve used Gold Bond ever since.

But what makes these sorts of behaviors any different than what George did? Why didn’t the boys he interacted with take his suggestions as jokes, as fun, as semi-innocent play?
The Naked Hacky Sack incident helps us better understand George’s transgression. Take an unacceptable and do it publicly, and somehow it loses its unacceptableness—and actually changes from a resistant behavior to a reifying behavior. But Cliff, the most verbose hacky sacker, goes a step further in his theorizing about this sort of behavior: He describes another non-normative behavior which some staff had called “upping the ante” (another card playing metaphor):

There was about four of them. There was Henry, Marcus, Pat here, and Josh. And they were, I think they were getting as close as they could to each other’s ears with their tongues, mouths, lips, without touching it. And, that’s um, very sensual. It is. The thing about it is, the observers around the outside, and I was an observer, we know that, I mean, Pat has a girlfriend; we don’t know about Josh, but uh; Henry has a girlfriend; and I don’t know about Marcus. But we know that they’re not like that. We know it’s joke, so it’s probably not as far as the hacky sack thing, but it’s pretty sensual like I said.

Rather than view these staff members—all “known” people with known or at least acceptably unclear sexualities, all “older” staff—as gay, Cliff assessed the situation as normalized among staff members:

I just take it as friends being who they are. I mean, you guys know who each other, and I don’t think you’d walk up to a total stranger and do that. So it’s like you make these bonds of friendship here, and you know limitations. You know limitations. You know, most people on staff are starting…I know that you know probably that the younger guys are learning there is a breaking point for Henry. There’s a breaking point for Josh. I haven’t found your breaking point yet, where you’ll, where I’ll get you so pissed off that you’ll absolutely snap. I’m sure you have one. But I’m glad I haven’t found it yet. But
there are limitations. And when you’re on staff, you learn everyone’s limitations, and you learn not to take them to that point. Because then they’ll pissed off at you, and you don’t want that to happen. That’s what I think. Because you guys know it’s a playful thing. If Henry started licking your ear, that’s a little too far.

Cliff claims that the dividing line between normal and gay is dependent entirely on the individual perspective. You can only “up the ante” until it’s considered…until you consider it… It goes as far as your definition, I believe. If you guys have the same definition in mind of how far playful activities go, then it goes as far as that definition goes. And whenever that definition ends, that’s where it stops. If your definition goes to licking the ear, [then that is] still playful.

And Cliff says this sort of experience only happens on staff: “that’s the only place it should be experienced.” He advocates compartmentalizing one’s experiences:

There’s things you tell, I’m sure there’s things you tell staff members that you won’t tell your mother, that you won’t tell your girlfriend. There’s things you do with staff members, there’s things you do with your girlfriend that you don’t do with staff members. It’s just the way it is. You have different groups of friends, and they’re put in different categories. And each category has different limitations and different rules. And I think you keep these friends as long as you don’t break these limitations or break those rules.

Cliff suggests compartmentalizing: do whatever you want with each particular group, but don’t mix the groups. That seems to be the best way to deal with complex identities. And it reveals the fact that people pass: they follow the limitations and rules of one group of friends, and
keeping that quiet while they are with another group of friends, following their limitations and rules.

The difference between George and all these other examples (which the reader should note are relatively common) is that all parties must come to mutually agreed upon definitions and limitations. Cliff surmises that so long as you all agree, almost anything goes:

It goes as far as your definition, I believe. If you guys have the same definition in mind of how far playful activities go, then it goes as far as that definition goes. And whenever that definition ends, that’s where it stops. If your definition goes to licking the ear as still playful . . . [then it is playful].

And in the example of George and the staff members, the definitions were divergent. And this is where the pass fails. George did not make sure the definitions and limitations were the same.

George may very well have gotten more willing participation if (a) he’d somehow made the experiences more public (though I don’t know how he would have done this without other staff recognizing a breach in limitation), or (b) he had somehow maintained an innocence to the “fooling around” or kept it within the frame of “this is play.” In one “victim’s” experience, he was packing up to leave after a late-night conversation, and George asked him to lay down on his bed. He said he thought he was joking, so he did it. Even after George asked him to pull his shirt up, the staff member complied, “but I kept my eye on him” (Vrooman Police Report).

Another “victim” said they did what he asked “out of trust or curiosity” and only stopped when it “got sick” (Vrooman Police Report). George passed very well, until he pulled the curtain back too far and showed something else at work in his games and Indian culture lessons. He showed himself to be working within a different frame than what he appeared. And then, he took it even
a step further and called it what it was: he forced them to look at the behavior as sex. The nip denoted the same thing as the bite.

The End of Easeful Inattention

After George was sent home, the “victims” met daily with me and the program director. They seemed interested in talking about what had happened to George and what this all meant; and we were most interested in making sure they were okay. In the end, the key question they all were asking was, “Does this mean I’m gay?” The discussions we had were riddled with “Am I gay?” “How gay is that!” “George is gay!” And so on and so forth. They simply didn’t have the vocabulary to talk about their experience. The only words available to them were that male/male play/sex was “homosexual.” Organizations like the Family Research Institute define such behavior as “homosexual molestation” (Family Research Report).

Boy Scout apologist Hans Zeiger (2005) quotes Paul and Kirk Cameron’s Right or Wrong: Should the Boy Scouts Include Homosexuals? (2003) as saying that the Center of Disease Control defines homosexuality as “males who have sex with males”; and thus by definition, “all molestations of Boy Scouts by Scoutmasters are homosexual. There is no risk of heterosexual child molestation within the Boy Scouts” (Cameron 9). Such common sense thinking was perhaps all our staff members had at their disposal, at least until we intervened.

In our responses to these questions and statements, the program director and I were somewhat vague: we said that we did not know if they were gay or straight, but we knew this experience did not define them as one or the other. The experiences they had had with George no longer allowed them to be normatively heterosexual, but these meetings with the “victims” enabled us to re-order what that could mean for them. Both the program director and I had differing degrees of experience with abuse, but both of us had far more invasive and long-term
sexual abuse experiences than these boys did. Both of us felt compelled to tell them—briefly and without detail—what had happened to us; but then we quickly added comments like, “But hey, look at us—we’re in charge of a camp now!” We wanted to assure them that they too could find a way to reorder themselves in a way that made sense of this experience.

One of the staff members described why he didn’t say anything to anyone. He didn’t know what to say, how to describe it—without the stigma being attached to him. During my interview with him, he said,

I personally didn’t want to say anything because I was just afraid of what would happen to me, like the whole mess was a failure. This is pretty much my biggest year in Scouting, and I’m still going out for bigger stuff, and I don’t want to be yea, that guy—with a reputation hanging over me.

It was a personal failure for him: he was now—according to Goffman—discreditable.

Ultimately, these staff members were stepping out of the privileged invisibility of normal heterosexual white males. We had to face (a) the uncertainty of our sexual identities, (b) the disconcerting experience of being sexualized, and (c) the now unstable masculinity predicated on our now uncertain sexuality. This is what happens when passing fails. The failed passer is no longer allowed to maintain what Erving Goffman calls “easeful inattention” (Stigma 103). When people are encumbered by a stigma—be it related to race, class, gender, sexuality, whatever—they may attempt to “restrict the way in which a known-about attribute obtrudes itself into the center of attention, for obtrusiveness increases the difficulty of maintaining easeful inattention regarding the stigma” (Goffman Stigma 102). Considerable effort can go into keeping a stigmatize attribute from obtruding on one’s own as well as other’s inattention.
Staff members are in what Goffman called a stigmatizable group—their stigmas are not yet realized. He claims that,

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. . . . Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior. (Stigma 128)

Short of a few age-related qualities (married, father, college educated, etc.), our “victims” are members of this elite group privileged with easeful inattention. They rarely if ever must pay attention to their race, their sexually, or their gender.

That is, unless they have an encounter like the one these boys had at summer camp. Surely, they could have engaged in naked hacky sack, upping the ante, even kissing penises without any of those events obtruding upon or compelling their attention. However, their interactions with George raised the stigma from outside of them to inside of them: “Am I gay because I felt pleasure when he rubbed that fur on me?” “Am I gay because I let it happen to me more than one time?” Metaphorically speaking, “Did my passing kick me out of the game altogether?” Being gay has implications for all facets of these boys’ identities. To be gay is to be another sort of man, another sort of masculine, another sort of person entirely. One of the “victims” even said, “I feel like shooting myself.”22 The gay question was thrust into their otherwise inattention, and probably won’t easily leave.

These staff members’ situation is compounded by the fact that the stigma of homosexuality is not only problematic for their sexuality but also for their summer camp job and their identity as a Scout. Divulged homosexuality is a quick ticket out of Scouting. In the late
1990s, I asked and was given a document by a Scout Executive titled, “Boy Scout Policy on Homosexuality in the BSA.” This document is not presently listed on the National, BSA, website as one of their policy statements, but it seems very similar to the one Hans Zeiger claims was a 1991 statement used in *Boy Scouts of America and Monmouth Council v. James Dale*. The statement reads as follows:

For more than 80 years, the Boy Scouts of America has brought the moral values of the Scout Oath and Law to American boys, helping them to achieve the objectives of Scouting.

The Boy Scouts of America also places strong emphasis on traditional family values as being necessary components of a strong, healthy society. The Scouting program is designed to be a shared family experience.

We believe that homosexual conduct is inconsistent with the requirements in the Scout Oath that a Scout be morally straight and in the Scout Law that a Scout be clean in word and deed, and that homosexuals do not provide a desirable role model for Scouts.

Because of these beliefs, the Boy Scouts of America does not accept homosexuals as members or as leaders, whether in volunteer or professional capacities.

Our position on this issue is based solely upon our desire to provide the appropriate environment and role models which reflect Scouting’s values and beliefs.

As a private membership organization, we believe our right to determine the qualifications of our members and leaders is protected by the Constitution. (Rehnquist)

The Scout Executive who provided me with this statement claimed that the Boy Scouts simply had the same “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy that the United States military had, and that Scouting wouldn’t change their policy if it was good enough for the United States military.
Therefore, for a staff member at Boy Scout camp, the stigma of homosexuality can weigh heavily, and for the boys involved in the situation with George, they have an experience which is hauntingly discreditable. In such a situation, their recourse is to mitigate. Of the six victims, four have continued in Scouting as well as staffing at Camp Lakota. Apparently, Boy Scout staffing provided a who which provided a way to lessen the stigma rather than exacerbate it. It seemingly allowed these staff to acquiesce to something within the experience rather than their threatening brush with perceived homosexuality. The other two victims never came back to Camp Lakota. One of them stayed in Scouting for at least another year, but as for the other, I am unaware of what happened to him. Making a break from the offending situation is one way to mitigate. This happens to also be the option the organization took in response to George’s offense.

Reestablishing Order

This breach of traditional heterosexual, manly Scouting was immediately reordered by the administration and the Council. In his report, the camp director describes how he became informed of a “major problem of sexual misbehavior caused by one of the other staff members”, and he says, “George was told about what I was told and instructed that this was major violation of the Council and the Boy Scouts of America policy. . . . He was informed that he was to pack up his things [and] leave camp for home.” Whatever George may have done—whether it was a bite or a nip, play or combat—the ordering system unleashed its hegemonic hounds: the behavior was named, the appropriate policies were identified and implemented, and the aberration was expunged. Like a malfunctioning computer program, the camp and the organization initiated a “reboot” to reset the order.
According to National policies, “Allegations by a Scout concerning abuse in the program must be reported to the Scout executive” (BSA Guide, 5). A staff member’s job is to go up the chain of command, with the camp director contacting the Scout Executive. The Scout Executive is the person who manages the situation at that point. It is true that I do not have first-hand knowledge of the communications between the camp director and the Scout Executive, nor between the Scout Executive and the perpetrator, nor if the Scout Executive ever spoke with the victims or their parents. These are things I do not know. However, I am fairly certain that the reordering plan was a plan of mitigation, hoping that it would all go away. While the hullabaloo around this sexual misbehavior was at its most fierce, the rest of the camp program continued unabated. Some staff members did not even know anything had happened, except recognizing a staff member had gone home. The program was unaffected. The program director and I turned to administering aid to the “victims.” The police were brought in to do an investigation, but the investigation was relatively low-key and not disruptive. Beyond a circle of perhaps a couple dozen people, nobody else recognized any changes or felt any repercussions.

This has been the practice of the Boy Scouts—and probably most other organizations—to quietly make the problem go away. Even early on in the organization, some prominent Scouters were found to be molesting boys, and they were quietly removed. For example, Robert Patterson, who in 1920 became an Assistant Camp Chief at Gilwell, the training ground of Scouting in England, was quietly removed from his position after some boys complained in August 1922 of the “irksome thoroughness of the nocturnal ‘physical examinations’ carried out by Dr. Patterson in the medical hut” (quoted in Jeal 510).

Patterson’s replacement, H. D. Byrne oversaw training at Gilwell for a decade before an office boy found a “fat diary in Byrne’s room and discovered it to be filled with detailed
descriptions of sexual encounters with boys” (Jeal 510). 25 Like Patterson, Byrne was quietly removed from his position. As Jeal describes it,

Although Baden-Powell stated publicly that flogging might be a deterrent to Scouters tempted to abuse the trust placed in them, 26 he allowed Patterson and Byrne to escape unscathed. Headquarters evidently preferred not to let it be known that for almost fifteen years the one job in the Movement requiring men of unimpeachable integrity had been occupied by a succession of active pederasts. (Jeal 510)

The desire to quietly pass these pederasts out of the organization has a relatively long history here in the United States as well. 27

Patrick Boyle (1994) claims that schools, youth organizations, and churches are either paralyzed or actively conspire to keep the adult sexual misbehavior silent (131, 139). In his extensive study of sexual abuse in the Boy Scouts of America from the 1970s into the early 1990s, Boyle lists example after example of how the National Boy Scout organization and the local councils delayed, interfered with, ignored, and swept under the carpet case after case. 28 Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, National’s own files show council after council from Pennsylvania, Missouri, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, New York—you name it—worked with policemen, editors of newspapers, and prosecutors to keep abuse allegations out of the press (136-140). Boyle gives examples of councils who employed “the most effective but dangerous method of keeping abuse quiet”—they set them free without charges (138). Case after case of molesters who agreed to resign from Scouting “in return for no further legal action on the part of the council,” 29 “in exchange for his lack of prosecution,” 30 “if they’d let him go” 31 (138-139). Talk about “soft opposition” and “patriarchal bargains,” the organization did not resist sexual abusers because they wanted to stop them; instead, they acquiesced to maintaining a good, clean
image and smoothed out any ruffles in that image as quietly as possible. They made bargains with the molesters, trading silence for silence and ultimately allowing molesters to potentially continue to abuse in someone else’s backyard.\textsuperscript{32} I must state that the organization Boyle reports on is not the same one as today (at least I hope not), for nowadays, the organization pushes its youth protection training and guidelines at every turn.\textsuperscript{33}

Having been in the same situation as a camp director, I know that this situation was more complicated than it appeared. First of all, there is fear of screwing up. In the \textit{Guide to Safe Scouting}, it clearly states that abuse is reported to the Scout Executive. Two sentences later, it adds, “It is important that you not tell anyone other than the Scout executive or the child protective services agency about allegations of abuse—if the allegations cannot be substantiated, you could be sued for defamation of character” (5). The next sentence claims that you cannot be charged if you act in good faith, but nobody wants to be sued for making false accusations. Secondly, there is very little in the Boy Scout’s Youth Protection Guidelines\textsuperscript{34} that says anything about youth-on-youth abuse. All of the policies and procedures are controls on adult-on-youth behaviors:

- Two-deep adult leadership on all outings
- No one-on-one contact between adults and youth
- Respect for privacy for adults by youth and of youth by adults
- Separate accommodations for adults and youth
- Proper preparations for high-adventure activities
- No secret organizations; all are open to adult observation
- Appropriate attire (clothing)
- Constructive discipline; no corporal punishment allowed
• Hazing prohibited
• Junior leader training with adult supervision
• Safety rule of four (with minimum of two adults) (Guide 4-7).

The only acknowledgement of youth-on-youth situations is found in the definition of sexual
abuse or sexual molestation, which involves “any sexual act between a child and adult or
between a young child and a significantly older or larger child” (Summer Camp Staff Training
Guide 56). For the other three forms of abuse—neglect, physical abuse, and emotional abuse—
adults and caregivers are the stated culprits. And, in the case in point, the perpetrator was 17
years old and considered overweight, and the majority of “victims” are between 14 and 17 and of
comparable size—not exactly a “significant” age or size differential. It is clear to me that the
National organization’s intelligence on abuse issues needs serious revision.35

While I am not accusing the Council or the National organization of covering up anything
about George’s situation, I would suggest that their ordering practices are perhaps too efficient.
The swift removal of an aberration allows the ordering to proceed. The camp staff ordering
system continues without hindrance. The camp program ordering system continues without
delay. The Scouting movement and its professed masculinization continues unabated. There
will be other aberrations in the organization—like George, some worse—but the organization
continues to order without serious revision or reordering. Neither the experiences of the victims
nor the perpetrator seem to affect the organization or its ordering in the slightest. Gather up the
cards, shuffle, and deal the next hand: the game goes on.

Outmigrating from the Individual

Rather than negotiate the dysfunction, the boys and the organization mitigated the
dysfunction. They didn’t acquiesce to the dysfunction—they didn’t incorporate it into
themselves in the way that Cliff and the other naked hackey sacker were able to do. Instead, they acquiesced to Scouting’s ideals, codes, rules, and regulations, and effectively avoided the stigma. They smoothed it out, appeased and mollified the potential stigma by acquiescing to a more appealing order.

One aspect of this mitigating process has bothered me from the very beginning. While I am sure the victims will not soon forget their experiences with George and how it altered within them some comfortable notion of self, I am not as confident that the organization will open up a similar space of doubt and possibility within itself. I will open up that space here.

In the Charter provided by the sixty-fourth Congress of the United States incorporating the Boy Scouts of America, it expressly states that the purpose of this organization

shall be to promote, through organization, and cooperation with other agencies, the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others, to train them in Scoutcraft, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues, using the methods which are now in common use by Boy Scouts. (BSA Charter 3)

Each Council claims to fulfill the BSA purpose by making “Scout training available to all boys and young men and women” (BSAC Bylaws). As such, is it appropriate for such an organization to keep one of its errant but perhaps most needy member from such training, organization, and cooperation? The BSA touts itself as a “preventative” organization, engaging youth in certain trainings and programs so as to prevent them from going down the wrong path. This was made clear to me during the years that I worked for the Boy Scouts of America when anxieties about United Way funding emerged. Scouting professionals would remark that the United Way was not giving Scouts as much funding because their focus was changing to direct-action projects rather than “preventative” programs like the BSA. As such, does its obligation end when it has
failed to prevent transgression? Is it only obligated to accept members who have the advantages to perform well—and properly—within the organization? Or, does it also have the brotherly obligation to support those who have gone astray? I question its claim to be preventative if its members are already ordered and must already be acting in appropriate ways.

Since the beginning of this sexual misbehavior situation, I have been equally concerned with the welfare of the victims as well as the perpetrator. I argue that perhaps the greatest tragedy of this “problem of sexual misbehavior” is that the Boy Scout organization kicked George out. He is a troubled boy, not only because he did not know how to effectively pass, but because he was cut loose from an institution that offers a who that he found appealing, a who that he could someday have become. Instead of continuing to offer that who to George—perhaps in some sort of altered fashion so that he does not endanger anyone else—the organization dismissed him. Surely, they offered him a who, but it is a stigmatized, discredited, outcast who. As Boyle describes it, the organization took the quick way to silence: removing George without charges (as far as I know), without media attention, without helping this boy to reach an appropriate manhood.

I approach this Scouting problem through the sociological work of William Julius Wilson and his understanding of what he calls the “truly disadvantaged.” Wilson opposes the theories that say the increase in social problems in the inner city is caused by poor choices on the part of the poor, racial discrimination, or the “crystallization of underclass culture” (Truly 56). He describes the situation as far more complex than those theories suggest. Wilson suggests the truly disadvantaged are a result of the “exodus of middle- and working-class families from many ghetto neighborhoods” which “removes an important ‘social buffer’ that could deflect the full impact” of “prolonged and increasing joblessness” (56). When these middle- and working-class
families outmigrate, the institutions (churches, schools, stores, recreational facilities, etc.) which receive the bulk of their support from these families follow them out of the neighborhood.

Similarly, Wilson argues, the residents left behind become “increasingly socially isolated from mainstream patterns of behavior” (58), including “access to jobs and job networks, availability of marriageable partners, involvement in quality schools” (61), as well as the “mainstream role models that help keep alive the perception that education is meaningful, that steady employment is a viable alternative to welfare, and that family stability is the norm, not the exception” (56). These neighborhoods become a “disproportionate concentration of the most disadvantaged segments of the urban black population” (58). It is the de-institutionalization and social isolation that wrecks havoc on the “already poor” and turns them into the “truly disadvantaged.” Wilson claims that “the social organization of any neighborhood depends in large measure on the viability of social institutions in that neighborhood” (144).

I would suggest that the same is true for the individual as well as the neighborhood. In Bowling Alone (2000), Harvard professor of public policy Robert D. Putnam demonstrates a precipitous drop in “social capital” since the 1960s in the United States. According to social capital theory, “Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups” (Putnam 19). While there are many different sources for social capital, the loss of institutional affiliation and support—social contact—radically diminishes one’s social capital.

Putnam provides evidence that “social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy” (290). Social capital “allows citizens to resolve collective problems more easily” and “greases the wheels that allow communities to
advance smoothly” (Putnam 288). On a more individual basis, social capital widens “our awareness of the many ways in which our fates are linked,” serves as “conduits for the flow of helpful information that facilitates achieving our goals,” and helps folks “cope better with traumas and fight illness” (288, 289). Take away social contacts—social capital—and these benefit go away. Putnam argues, “When people lack connections to others, they are unable to test the veracity of their own views, whether in the give-and-take of casual conversation or in more formal deliberation. Without such an opportunity, people are more likely to be swayed by their worst impulses” (288-289).

If a Boy Scout, for example, is stripped of his contacts, has organizations refuse him, has one of his remaining resources of identity, masculinity, models, and play blocked from him—does he not become literally and figuratively unorganized, and thus increasingly isolated and even more disadvantaged? If he loses his access to networks, to friends, to involvement, to mainstream role models, doesn’t he lose the ability to test the veracity of his views and thereby increase the chances that he will be swayed by his worst impulses?

When an institution like Scouting outmigrates from a boy, it concentrates the problems that already existed. When an institution like the Boy Scouts of America kicks a boy out—even for such egregious behavior as sexual offenses against other youth—it further isolates someone who has obviously failed to learn, incorporate, order, and pass as appropriate. Like the pedophiles that the organization allowed prior to the mid-1980s to silently slip back into society to repeat their offenses elsewhere (see Boyles), I would argue that the organization failed to pass as a preventative institution and has unleashed upon the world a young man who has an inclination to manipulate others for sexual gratification, unrestrained by institutions. I fully
expect to hear of George years from now, enrolled in a punitive rather than preventative institution—charged with multiple counts of abuse.

I am not suggesting that folks like George should be allowed to participate in a troop where they might endanger other participants in the program. However, the Boy Scouts of America has all sorts of different organizations with divergent rules and programs—including Exploring and Learning for Life which do not exclude gays, atheists, and girls; different regulations for people with special needs; as well as Lone Scouting which “serves boys who cannot take part in the activities of a Boy Scout troop on a regular basis because of distance, disability, or other unavoidable factors” (Handbook 11th edition, 437). Lone Scouting seems like an opportunity to apply a Scouting program to boys and men who cannot take part in troop activities, potentially for “avoidable,” criminal reasons.

I am reminded of the argument given by a “Holborn Rover” in The Scouter magazine (June 1935) who exclaimed that “Something is attracting our boys, and it is something on what we class as the ‘outside’ of Scouting” (quoted in Jeal 534). He was talking about how boys were attracted to prize fighting. The author’s solution was not to resist prize fighting, but to acquiesce to it:

Right, then let’s start right away and bring it on the ‘inside’ . . . Lots of Scoutmasters like to feel that their boys are blue-eyed little angels, who long for tenderfoot revision and an evening with their [Scoutmaster] . . . but do they? [Not according to the author, who urged Scouters to take boys to] . . . skating rinks, prize fights, dirt track races, talkies, since as soon as they regard you as part of all these things on the ‘outside’, you will have much less trouble holding them from the ‘inside’. . . . (Jeal 534)
I am not suggesting that we bring pedophilia or abuse into the program, but it already exists in the membership and thus the organization. To deny its existence, to avoid dealing with it, and to quietly remove anyone who fails to pass is tantamount to neglect and leaving them to potentially abuse others. And in the case of pedophiles, it most likely means the abuse of many, many others. Boyle cites statistics that the recidivism rate for pedophiles is as high as 80%, and he cites one study that claims men who abused boys averaged 150 victims each (145, 32). Rather than keep boys like George on the outside, the organization would have much less trouble preventing further dysfunction by continuing to hegemonically hold them inside the institution.

I am most interested in this because I know of another former staff member, Cliff, who I was not allowed to hire back because he had been caught molesting his sister. His father brought the matter to my attention, asking if there were any way that Cliff could be a part of staff, even to help during staff week before the campers arrived. Cliff had acquired a transformative “who” on camp staff, and his father wanted him to continue being attached to that experience. While Cliff was a threat to his sister and perhaps to other young girls, I was told that he was not a threat to Boy Scout campers or to staff members. He wanted to come back on staff, to continue experiencing the who he craved to become. But I was told that I could not hire him back, not even just to help out during staff week. The argument: “because if something happened, and it was found out that we knew something, then we’d be hung out to dry.” Acquiescing to the image of an already completed Scout, we had to de-institutionalize Cliff, taking away the networks, role models, and whos to which he wanted to acquiesce to but was to be denied. Baden-Powell had a very different view of how to deal with dysfunctional youth: “That’s what I’m always trying to tell them—there’s a spark of good in the toughest of these chaps and the Scouter’s job is to find it and fan it into a flame.”
In *Bowling Alone*, Putnam suggests that “we have been pulled apart from one another and from our communities over the last third of the century” by work, mobility and sprawl, television and electronic media, and “generational change” (27, 284). Putnam also suggests that 25% of this social cleavage is caused by “other” factors. I would like to suggest that at least some of that “other” and a great deal of his supposed “generational change” is really the result of outmigrating organizations. Rather than look at the one side of the coin—that individuals are less engaged in organizations—I would suggest looking at the ways organizations like the Boy Scouts have disengaged from individuals.

Putnam provides an adequate framework for theorizing this outmigration. He suggests that social networks which contribute social capital come in two major forms: bridging and bonding (22). Bridging social networks like “civil rights groups, many youth service groups, and ecumenical religious organizations” are inclusive; they are “outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages” (22). Bonding social networks like “ethnic fraternal organizations, church-based women’s reading groups, and fashionable country clubs” are exclusive; they are “looking inward and tend to reinforce exclusive identities and homogenous groups” (22). While bridging networks are good for “linkage to external assets and for information diffusion,” bonding networks are good for “undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (22). Putnam claims that “bridging social capital can generate broader identities and reciprocity, whereas bonding social capital bolsters our narrower selves” (23).

By all these descriptors, the Boy Scouts of America was designed to be a bridging social network: it is meant to include people across their differences; its programs are organized to help youth and adults access and use community assets; its methods are meant to diffuse information, knowledge, and skills to as many people as possible. The Boy Scouts of America was designed
to help a boy create a broader identity and to engage in increasingly complex forms of reciprocity.

Unfortunately, the Boy Scouts of America fails to pass as a bridging social network as its policies concretize. Its leadership has supported bonding rather than bridging social capital. Seemingly, after its failed 1970s efforts to overhaul of the Boy Scout program, the organization focused its attention inward and reinforced its homogeneity and exclusive identity. The BSA seems to have increasingly withdrawn from the public stage and began mobilizing solidarity within its brotherhood rather than with the communities it inhabited.

If this assessment is true, the institution of the Boy Scouts of America outmigrated—from the communities which were supposed to support it, and increasingly from the individuals who didn’t quite fit the mold: gays, atheists, and anyone who failed to pass or hadn’t yet been caught. The older generation that leads the organization ceased to seek the spark and to fan the flame in its potential membership. They changed their focus from a bridging community organization to a members-only, bonding organization, and thereby effectively disengaged and are now contributing to the dismemberment of American society.

Of course, all I am really saying is that the BSA could hegemonize better if it acquired consent and participation by people like George. Rather than kick them out, they could find a way to include them into the hegemony—not to continue their abusive behavior, but to learn how to better pass as an appropriate member of the culture. The silent treatment is not a good way to hegemonize and is, in fact, a tactic of the subordinate rather than the dominant culture.
The Arrow of Light is the highest honor one can achieve as a Cub Scout.

The renaming of a camp was perhaps planted in my head back in the mid-to-late 1970s when I was a child and my parents were working on staff. Terri tells a story about how a group of older staff renamed Camp Lakota and called it Camp Shoobillroom.

She describes how everybody went home for the weekend on their “24-Hours Off” except for the rifle range director, an assistant cook, the health officer, camp chaplain, and Cub Day Camp director (and a couple of their kids, like me). They renamed camp because, Terri sarcastically said, they “were so impressed with Captain Zero” (the nickname for the camp director that year). Rather than name the camp after the ineffective leader (as we did), they combined parts of their last names and named it for themselves: Camp Shoobillroom. Terri tells how it happened:

And we got really ornery that night. We had, went down to the kitchen and had pizza. And we decided that we were going to do something to camp just for the heck of it. Stir Mr. Zero up. And so we took those old boxes and we wrote on there, “Camp Shoobillroom.” And . . . we put down here, “Vacancies,” and then we decided no, that wouldn’t be any fun. So, we crossed that out and put, “No Vacancies.” Then we got rope and . . . . the next morning, on Sunday morning, we waited until [the ranger and his wife] went to church. And we went up and tied all of this on the [signs at the entrance to camp], covering up the “Shawnee Boy Scout” [words on the sign]. . . . And then we went to church.

But they didn’t stop there. They also made a camp flag out of an old towel. They had put symbols representing each of their jobs: a Cub Scout hat for Terri, a red cross for the health officer, etc., and they put the name “Camp Shoobillroom” across it. And, they hung it up the flagpole underneath the U. S. flag. (If memory serves, they even made up a song or cheer based off a camp song from that summer, including the question, “How bad is it?” and the answer, “Oh it’s this bad!”).

After they covered up the camp signs with these large pieces of cardboard, they all went to church. While they were at church, the ranger and his wife had returned from their church services, and

Captain Zero came back . . . and drove in and slammed on his brakes and went up to the Compound and said to [the ranger], “Who put those signs up?” And [the ranger] says, I don’t know what you’re talking about.” . . . . He gave Captain Zero a knife and he went and cut them down and he says, “I want to know who done that.” And the ranger just said, “I don’t know who done that.”

Well, we were the only ones in the camp. Of course, he knew who done that. So we were on the parade ground then after the troops got here, and Jake called for flag lowering. And [Captain Zero] was standing right beside me and I looked up. And you couldn’t see the flag, it was, the American flag had sort of curled around it. And all of a sudden the wind whipped just right, and there was that flag. [Captain Zero] put his hand on my shoulder and squeezed it and he says to me, “Who done this?” And I was, had so many giggles in my stomach that I didn’t dare open my mouth because I wanted to laugh so bad. And I heard Jake say, “I want that flag!”
And so. When the flag got down, the boys, it was so neat. The guys that were lowering the flag took that patrol flag off and they folded it so carefully. And, folded the American flag. And the minute Jake dismissed them, I ran out there and grabbed that flag and hid it for a couple of days. And then it appeared in the dining hall on a little flag pole above the fireplace for a long time.

Terri ended the story by saying, “Sometimes you have to have a little fun like that to offset the times you want to cry.”

Surely, there are some differences between this renaming and the Camp Miakonda/Natty renaming (like the one was renamed for the offending program director while the other was named for the perpetrators), but the impulse was the same: “We’re taking back our camp!” The power to rename is within the hands of the dominated. They also share the same movement: an acquiescing toward themselves, their own definitions, rather than resistance to the authority of the camp director or program director.

From this point forward, I will reference a quotation by its number—for Sontag numbered her notes.

I will denote Sontag’s notion with a capital “C” and quotation marks (“Camp”), for she says, “Camp sees everything in quotation marks” (#10). When I am talking about summer camp, it will be without quotation marks.

This is an ironclad rule at Boy Scout camp and in all of Boy Scouting: “Trucks may not be used for transporting passengers except in the cab,” and “Trucks are designed and constructed to transport materials and equipment, not people. The beds of trucks or trailers must never be used for carrying passengers” (BSA Guide 50, 51).

Goffman (1961) points out that “organizations have a tendency to adapt to secondary adjustments not only by increasing discipline but also by selectively legitimating these practices, hoping in this way to regain control and sovereignty even at a loss of some of the participant’s obligations” (Asylum 196). Another description of hegemony at work.

Just to show you how anal sex jokes work their way into just about every single conversation at camp amongst the staff.

This architecture is probably the single greatest manmade feature on camp property. For a folklorist, the Showerhouse is a goldmine! The conversations that happen there, the jokes that are told, the exhibitions, performances, tall tales, and gripes. Based upon the fact that three people can stand naked in their own stalls—“protected” one might say—and yet see and talk to one another, the Staff Showerhouse becomes a site of incredible performance. Unfortunately, I did not realize this until very late in the game. Ask any staff member, though, and they will have stories of things that have transpired in the Staff Showerhouse.

I remember first seeing hacky sacks when I worked at Camp Pioneer in Oregon during the mid-1990s, but that may be because the American version of the sport started in Oregon City, Oregon in 1972. According to Mary Bellis, Mike Marshall created a handmade hacky sack when his friend John Stalberger was recovering from knee surgery. It was a way for them to exercise John’s knee. They began to market the game soon thereafter (Bellis).


I agree with Mechling’s assertion that the Scouting experience “carries a gender revolutionary potential” (86). Most detractors as well as ardent defenders of Scouting claim that Scouting “turns out one sort of boy practicing one sort of masculinity,” but in reference to how Scouting has ordered “domestic skills” as masculine, Mechling argues,

Different boys tend to emerge from the Boy Scout experience with different degrees of flexibility in thinking about cooking and caring as “women’s work,” but I take it as significant that large numbers of men do attribute their own gender openness and flexibility to their Boy Scout experiences, including the “domestic” skills they learned in the organization. Teaching boys to cook and care for others is, in many ways, at the center of this alternative vision of what it means to be a decent, caring man. (Manly Art 86)

The Foucaultian criticism is that research projects like mine are simply another mechanism of the State, like the Catholic confessionals which put sex through the “mill of speech” and made people have to “speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to function according to an optimum. Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered” (Foucault History 21, 24). My project could be said to have accomplished something for the common good—getting an abuser away from potential victims—but in other situations, such dissemination of information through my research could provide an oppressive institution with information to increase their oppression.

It is worth reiterating that all the names have been changed in this dissertation—as I promised to do when I sought consent to do the study in the first place—and that even some of the people in this situation have been quoted elsewhere in this dissertation, but I have changed their names again in this account.

Also, it is worth noting how I came upon the data for this section: Under the direction of the program director and myself, the victims were asked to create incident reports for the police. I have no written documentation of the incident besides my own Incident Report and notes I wrote during the meetings with the victims. I did record an extensive interview conversation with the Program Director about this incident. I also had an extensive conversation with one of the “victims,” but unfortunately lost it when I allowed the tape to run out in the middle of the interview.

This is very similar to a situation Boyle (1994) describes in his book: A Scout describes how his Scoutmaster had “run an Indian dance group” that entertained the elderly at rest homes. “The Scoutmaster had taken him to his home frequently to practice dancing.” It was there that the man molested the boy, under the guise of an Indian dance tradition” (336).

“Playing Indian” draws boys in. Wall (2005) says that “playing Indian” has been wildly popular with boys since it was first introduced. She tells of an observer of an Indian Pageant at Bolton Camp in 1938 who said the pageant had given its male campers “a thrilling experience, so thrilling indeed that many of them insisted on wearing paint, feathers, and tomahawks for the rest of their stay at camp” (qtd in Wall 538). Wall claims that some camps even employed Native Americans, intensifying the boys’ thrill because they “modeled an alluring masculinity based on their mastery of wilderness skills” (538). Participants—or victims—in “playing Indian” are acquiescing to a type of masculinity they want to become.

Masturbation, as previously noted in Chapter 4, is one of Scouting’s oldest concerns, for it was one of Baden-Powell’s issues. When the BSA was revising the Boy Scout handbook
in 1947, they contacted Eagle Scout Alfred Kinsey the sex researcher for advise on the section on self-abuse—which they called a “source of very considerable personality disturbance” (Boyle 12). Kinsey wrote, “Our years of research have failed to disclose any clear-cut cases of harm resulting from masturbation, although we have thousands of cases of boys who have had years of their lives ruined by worry over masturbation” (Pomeroy 31-32). Kinsey added, “We should be glad to serve wherever the Boy Scouts can use factual materials” (Pomeroy 32).


Interestingly, Bateson (1972) describes the difference between play and hazing: He describes “the game which is constructed not upon the premise ‘This is play’ but rather around the question ‘Is this play?’ And this type of interaction also has its ritual forms, e.g., in the hazing of initiation” (Theory 182). These are two entirely different games.

Over the years on Boy Scout staffs, I am aware of a number of examples of heterosexual intercourse between staff members, but no examples of homosexual intercourse. Consensual intercourse between males and females on staff is not condoned at Boy Scout summer camp, but it does happen sometimes.

For himself, Cliff argues he likes the boundaries right where they are. However, he does open a doorway for those boundaries to change:

I don’t know, yet, I guess. I think those boundaries are set right now and if I chose to, in the future, to extend them, then that’s what will happen. They’re pretty much where I want them to be right now. I think that’s a good thing. I’m still maturing, and if I realize something different, then maybe those boundaries will change. . . . It’s a possibility that that’s where I want them to be set the rest of my life. Or at least until otherwise noted.

I’m using the term “so-called ‘victims’” because these boys were not damaged goods by any stretch of the imagination, and the notion of victim is simply another identity these boys were passing as during this episode in their youth. They were not very good at this identity, but this event helped them learn some of the affectations and poses and such. This is perhaps a cold depiction of victims of sexual abuse, but it is a theoretical, cultural perspective, I think, rather than a sentimentalized, personalized perspective.

It is interesting that these same folks don’t refer to, say, rape as heterosexual abuse, or incest as heterosexual molestation; yet they are quick to attach sexuality to an act that many would recognize as not framed as sex by all the participants involved. Shared framing is what makes it so. Discordant framing is where messages get confused and a nip becomes a bite.

From Josh interview—spoken by Patrick. This random statement is not so random or vacuous when taken in the context of a study where junior high children were asked if they awoke the following morning transformed into the opposite sex. Girls responded slowly, but then responded by discussing professions they would follow—doctors, policeman, baseball player, etc. The boys responded differently: without a pause, the most common answer was “Kill myself” (Tavris 208-209).

Despite this assertion, nowhere in Scouting literature about the Oath and Law is there anything remotely suggesting homosexual behavior fails these standards. There is, likewise, nothing in the Scout Bylaws, Constitution, or Policies & Procedures which rule out homosexuality or define the Oath and Law as inapplicable to certain groups. For example, in the description of the admonition to be “morally straight,” the Scout Handbook states:
To be a person of strong character, your relationships with others should be honest and open. You should respect and defend the rights of all people. Be clean in your speech and actions, and remain faithful in your religious beliefs. The values you practice as a Scout will help you shape a life of virtue and self-reliance. (Eleventh edition 46)

Similarly, in the description of the Scout Law to be “clean,” the Scout Handbook states:

A Scout keeps his body and mind fit. He chooses the company of those who live by high standards. He helps keep his home and community clean.

You can’t avoid getting dirty when you work and play hard. But when the game is over or the job is done, that kind of dirt washes off with soap and water.

There’s another kind of dirt, though, that can’t be scrubbed away. It is the kind that shows up in foul language and harmful thoughts and actions.

Swearwords and dirty stories are often used as weapons to ridicule other people and hurt their feelings. The same is true of racial slurs and jokes that make fun of ethnic groups or people with physical or mental limitations. A Scout knows there is no kindness or honor in such tasteless behavior. He avoids it in his own words or deeds. (Eleventh edition 53)

According to Hans Zeiger (2005), National’s policy against homosexuals has not gone uncontested by its membership. In fact in 2000, chief executive officers of councils in New York, Los Angeles, West Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Boston, and Orange County wrote letters requesting that the BSA change its membership policy to include homosexuals (Crary). In 2001, these executives were joined by other executives from San Jose, CA; Narragansett, RI; and St. Paul, MN, to coordinate their efforts (Boyle Holy War 16). By the year 2002, twenty-five councils were asking National to allow local councils to set their own policies on homosexual membership (Rimer A19). At the 2003 National Convention in Philadelphia, Philadelphia’s Cradle of Liberty Council announced it would be admitting homosexuals (Caruso). National’s response to these requests and actions has been to remind councils that their charters are provided by National based upon their adherence to the National Charter and Bylaws and Rules and Regulations. Council charters can be revoked by National.

Information Don Potter; J.S. Wilson, Gilwell t/s, lent by his daughter Miss Margaret Wilson, Quoted in Jeal 510.

The Scouter, Jan. 1923, 2. Quoted in Jeal 510.

What is probably most disturbing to many Scouters and non-Scouters is the evidence that Sir Robert Baden-Powell himself was a repressed homosexual at best and an inactive pedophile at worst. While there is no evidence to suggest that Baden-Powell acted on his sexual desires, there is considerable evidence (mostly recounted in Jeal) to suggest that he had sexual desires for men and boys.

During this time period, between 1971 and 1990, sex abuse was more common in the Boy Scouts of America than deaths or serious injuries: “an average of 13 Scouts died during Scout activities each year, and 30 suffered serious injuries, defined by the Scouts as life-threatening or requiring hospitalization of at least 24 hours,” but the BSA banned an average of 67 adults suspected of abusing Scouts each of those years” (Boyle 134). Death and injury statistics were provided by Caytie Daniell, spokeswoman for BSA, 13, March 1991. Abuse statistics were provided based upon Confidential Files from 1971 to 1990, submitted by BSA in Doe v. Trueman, Sacramento County (CA) Superior Court, 1990.
In contemporary society, pedophilia is a rather prevalent phenomenon. I remember during the investigations of singer Michael Jackson’s alleged pedophilia, I was surprised to read newspapers that referred to his alleged pedophilia as a sexual orientation. According to Boyle (1994), psychiatrist Dr. Gene Abel—“one of the nation’s leading experts on sex offenders and director of the Behavioral Medicine Institute of Atlanta”—estimates that “pedophiles make up 1 percent of the population; this works out to 1.8 million pedophiles in the United States” (Boyle 31). It is important to note that pedophiles are adults who are sexually attracted to children, but like Baden-Powell, that does not mean they act on those desires. Of course, none of these statistics and notions include youth-on-youth sexual (mis)behavior. Boyle quotes Dr. Gene Abel’s testimony from *Infant C. v. Boy Scouts of America*, Fairfax County, Virginia, Circuit Court (Dec. 19, 1988)

29 Confidential File dated 16 June 1977. Boyle examined this collection of “files at national headquarters of people banned from Scouting, usually for morals offenses. Officially known as the ‘Ineligible Volunteer Files,’ individual files contain a ‘Confidential Record Cover Sheet,’ along with letters, news clips, or court records about why the person is banned” (371). Boyle says that prosecutor Mike Rothschild (*Doe v. Trueman*, 1990) allowed him to “sit in his Sacramento office for eight days in 1992 looking over his findings” based on “nearly 2000 abuse cases in Scouting” catalogued in these so-called “Confidential Files” (xiv).

32 Referring to the “soft opposition” the Alabamans used against the Ku Klux Klan (in Chapter 1) and the “patriarchal bargains” one makes to accept restriction and even abuse in exchange for security, perceived respect, or authority over the even less fortunate (in Chapter 3).

33 Of course, it was just in March 20, 2005 that news broke that Douglas Sovereign Smith, Jr., National’s director of programs was arrested for possession and transmission of child pornography. At one time, Smith led the Boy Scouts of America’s task force to prevent child molestation. Some feel that the organization was heading for serious media attack, but it just so happened that Pope John Paul II died two days after news broke of Smith’s arrest. The Pope’s death caught and held the media’s attention, and Scouting skated through relatively unscathed.

34 A brief history of Youth Protection in the BSA: According to Boyle (1994), National began publicly addressing issues of abuse in September 1986 with companion articles in *Boys’ Life* and an article in *Scouting* magazine titled, “Child Abuse: A Critical Issue in Our Society” (272-3). National then hired veteran child abuse expert, ironically named John Patterson (remember the nocturnal examinations Dr. Robert Patterson gave at Gilwell) to help improve its anti-abuse program (275). In 1988, National sent a pamphlet to council executives titled “Boy Scouts of America Background Information on Sexual Abuse” (287), and unveiled their first Youth Protection Guidelines that same year (306). In 1989, National revised its application, requiring references and asking questions about crime and child abuse (304) and in 1990, released a training video for youth members titled “A Time to Tell” (309).

35 According to Boyle (1994), National put out a new *Scoutmaster Handbook* in 1981—prior to the rising number of sexual abuse cases in the early 80s—which discusses “males infiltrating troops for sex—but focused on children as the perpetrators” (131). After discussion of sexual experimentation amongst boys, the Handbook states, “It is important to distinguish between youthful acts of innocence, and the practices of a homosexual who may be using his Scouting association to make contacts” (not cited). Boyle wonders why, “The Boy Scouts of
America saw a need to warn about 12-year-olds joining troops to have sex with 12-year-olds, but saw no need to issue the same warning about men” (131).

36 William Julius Wilson argues that his social isolation theory “highlights the fact that culture is a response to social structural constraints and opportunities” (Truly 61). “From a public-policy perspective,” Wilson argues, the cultural isolation thesis “would mean shifting the focus from changing sub-cultural traits (as suggested by the ‘culture of poverty’ thesis) to changing the structure of constraints and opportunities” (Truly 61). He argues that “programs created to alleviate poverty, joblessness, and related forms of social dislocation should place primary focus on changing the social and economic situations, not the cultural traits, of the ghetto underclass” (Truly 138). Applied to summer camp problems, perhaps camp directors should spend less time and energy in changing unsavory staff cultural traits and instead focus on changing the unsavory social and economic situations of the staff.

37 The Scouter, June 1935. Quoted in Jeal 534.


39 Mrs. Wade, Baden-Powell’s secretary. 27 Years, 84-5. Quoted in Jeal 517.

CHAPTER VII. PASSING AS A SCHOLAR: CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Chapter Six Summary: In this chapter, I will summarize answers I’ve arrived at based upon my research questions. I will then explore the implications of doing Participant Action Research (PAR) in this study and in future studies.

“What Are You Studying?”

I was attending a conference and a friend hooked me up with a big-named folklorist for lunch. We chatted briefly, and then the Folklorist asked me, “What are you studying?”

I said, “Well, I study summer camps.”

“No you don’t.” the Folklorist replied.

Confused, I said, “What do you mean?”

He said, “That’s where you study. Now, what do you study?”

I was a bit taken aback, but I knew what he was getting at. I thought for a moment, and I stumbled through a list of things I had been writing about: staff culture, occupational versus organizational folklore, official versus unofficial culture, songlore, that sort of thing.

The Folklorist listened and nodded approval.

He then began to tell me that it wasn’t enough to study Boy Scouts or summer camps or even staff culture. He said that didn’t matter to anybody else. Surely, it was interesting to me, and it might be interesting to the folks I was studying; but it didn’t have anything to do with anything else anybody was studying. He told me that I needed to study things that would benefit the field, things that other folklorists studying other things would find of interest and importance.

I listened intently, asking questions. This was new territory for me. I was working on my master’s degree at the time, and I had written many papers, never once thinking about writing for my field. Most of my work was straight out of my own interests: I found it interesting, so
others would find it interesting. Summer camp culture was, after all, fun and entertaining, so who wouldn’t enjoy reading about it.

But the Folklorist planted a different seed in my head. He told me summer camps were an incredibly rich location for study, but that I wasn’t really studying camp. Instead, he suggested I study race, class, gender . . . power, hegemony, resistance . . . identity, agency, performance . . . audience response, consumptive practices, play . . . laughter, silence, transmission. . . . Surely, I could study these things within the context of summer camps, but these were the true topics of study. These were things that scholars of carnival, Native America folktales, Fijian initiation rituals, folk architecture, and so forth could relate to and use.

I had had this dreamy notion that I would write articles about summer camp for summer camp folk: that I would tell them the stories they had told me about their experiences. I would gather the lore of summer camp staff and give it back to them. Surely, they didn’t have the time or inclination to do that sort of work, for they were busy actually doing the work, living the dream, becoming the role model. I could fill the void by looking at many camps and giving them back my research so they could do their jobs better, so they could benefit from other camps’ experiences, so they could know better the complexity of their art.

The Folklorist suggested another path. He explained to me that scholarship was not merely about studying and writing about just any thing one might be interested in. Instead, it was about participating in a dialogue with other scholars: talking about things they were interested in, sharing examples from your context that they might find compelling or informative in their contexts.

It was then that I realized that I had been doing it all wrong, and I needed to start acting like a folklorist.
Conclusions and Considerations for Further Inquiry

In the introduction to this study, I asked four big, “moving” questions. The following are the four big questions I asked followed by my attempts at answers:

*How Does a Boy’s World Rise and Fall in Value Based Upon the Meanings That Are Unleashed at Boy Scout Summer Camp?*

This question is appropriated from Ellsworth, who asks, “In what ways does the world rise or fall in value when a reader or groups of readers perform and let loose in the world this particular meaning or reading of a text or event?” (127). She is paraphrasing Phillips, who quotes Frank Lentricchia talking about the pragmatism of William James. Lentricchia suggests that in his writing, William James is always asking, “Does the world rise or fall in value when any particular belief is let loose in the world?” (qtd in Phillips Terrors 45). Phillips claims that beliefs and theories not only allow us to hear and see certain things, but they also have a “defensive function,” and the analyst “must be alert to what exactly he uses them not to hear” (45). So, a secondary question is the question, “How are these meanings that are unleashed used to experience, hear, and know—and used to erase, not hear, and ignore?”

Such a question mobilizes a series of other questions: What does “rise and fall in value” mean—and for whom and with what consequences? What “meanings” are we going to consider and who is unleashing them and for what purposes?

The original question asks about the actual “boy’s world,” that is, the staff member’s world and how he or she sees it rise and fall in value. In other words, I am not interested in how the institution sees a boy’s world rise and fall in value. The institution obviously thinks that the staff experience is “value added” for the young staff member and for the camper-Scouts. Focusing instead on the staff members themselves, hands-down, every staff member I
interviewed (admittedly, prior to any of them being fired) anxiously described how being on camp staff increased their options, skills, potential, and yes, power.

I am reminded of Brent, director of the Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience (COPE) course at Lakota, who had been on staff for eight years and now works professionally in the camping industry. He talks about the “perks” of being on staff:

You’re in on all the jokes. You know everything that goes on. You’re more informed. You’re like an appendage of the camp. Whereas as a participant, you’re just there. To quote Garth Brooks, you’re “standing outside the fire.” But when you’re on staff, you’re in the fire. You are the fire. . . . So being on staff is like—it’s almost an unreal—when you sit down and think about it, you think about all the kids you touch, their experiences, and you think about all the stuff that you create, you see the skits that we do, the stuff we make up, the songs that we do . . . you’ll see that at camporees, you’ll see that at troop meetings, you’ll see that at district functions, and you see other people that aren’t staff doing the stuff we did [at camp].

His own value increased when he joined staff: he became a living, breathing appendage of the camp. He was the producer of culture. He witnessed his influence when he visited other Scouting functions and saw his cultural productions re-created by other Scouts.

I would suggest that these staff members’ worlds rose and fell in value based upon the whos that were unleashed at Boy Scout camp. After this study, I am convinced that Ellsworth’s assessment is correct: it does not matter what you teach or even how you teach, but the who you teach that matters. A person’s world will not rise and fall in value based upon what is taught. According to the official curriculum, the Boy Scouts of America teaches how to tie knots, fire a gun, camp out, apply first aid, and generally how to take care of yourself and provide service to
others. And of course, the official curriculum offers a value system—defined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law and the Aims and Methods of Scouting. But the core difference in rising and falling value is based upon the whos that are offered within the institutional curriculum and the purveyors of that curriculum.

Time and again in my interviews, staff members talk about the whos they encounter on staff: They talk about all the people they get to meet on staff. They talk about the feeling of belonging on staff. They talk about who they get to be on staff. Anthony, for instance, tells how his world rose in value based on the whos that he was allowed to encounter on staff:

For a long time I knew who I wanted to be and I was working towards that. And then I came on staff and then it all just went to pieces. . . . My social skills were not exactly the greatest. I was more or less an introverted person. I was more focused inside: “How am I going to do this? How am I going to do that? How can I do this? What am I going to do?” I was more cautious. More conservative. More worried that I was going to do something wrong.

And now that I’ve joined staff, I’m more outgoing. I’ll participate in more of the things that are interpersonal. I talk to a lot more people about different things this week that are different personalities than me. I’ve gotten along with a lot more people. In the dining hall for example, when I was a Scouter, I didn’t like the songs any more than the Scoutmasters that we try to get to do it now. But now that I’m on staff, I realize, “Heck, it doesn’t mean anything. Just have fun. To heck with what the song is. We could be signing the simplest little, five year old jingle song, and it’s fun and who cares?”

And what made the difference? The staff experience seemed to unleash new meanings, new orderings, new whos—providing Anthony with a heightened sense of value. For example,
Anthony says, “Being a part of the people that sing the songs, that start the songs, is much
different than just being someone who sings the song.” He became a who he didn’t even know
he wanted to be because it was unleashed and made available to him at Boy Scout summer camp
as a staff member. It wasn’t the job that he did. It wasn’t the work that he did. It wasn’t even
the authority and power he wielded. Instead, his world rose in value because of the whos that he
was able to meet, the whos he was able to pass as, and the whos he was able to shuffle off.

The question, then, is how do Anthony and the other staff members use these new
meanings to hear and to not hear, to know and to not know?

*How Might Hegemony Be a Good Thing? How Might One Hegemonize for*

*Social Justice, Democracy, Citizenship?*

One way to look at this study is to see it as a study of how boys learn to hegemonize.
First, they encounter and are drawn into the notion and practice of passing on: they receive an
experience that moves them, they find a way to become a part of some grander plan, they feel
like they are a conduit of something grander. Then, somewhat surprised, they realize that others
have accepted them as an authority, as a player, as part of this grander plan. Most don’t feel
powerful or authoritative or even productive, and yet others have positioned them as such. And
so they continue to do whatever it was that “got them this far”—in other words, they pass. And
lastly, they actually become that mechanism of passing; they offer an acceptable who for others
to acquiesce to. At its core, this is hegemony: providing and acquiescing to an acceptable who
that is not one’s own. For these staff members, this is a liberating experience.

In her book *Wild Garden: Art, Education, and the Culture of Resistance* (1997), activist
and professor dian marino takes the same surprising stance toward the notion of hegemony: she
also finds it liberating. She describes hegemony as an “unequal relationship”: “Persuasion by
the powerful goes together with consent by the many” (127). Marino focuses, then, on the relationship part of hegemony, not on the power part. She admits that the term hegemony “can seem heavy,” but she says, “I like the relational aspect of a concept like that as it resonates with my experience and my art. I also like the flexibility the concept gives me to move between the individual and the social; it tells me that consent can be both personal and social” (marino 20).3 Marino suggests that nothing can be done about the persuasion from the powerful, but she claims that one can focus on how one consents to persuasion. She says that “Gramsci showed me there was a whole lot of agency and colonization in me as a teacher, and in the students” (126). The agency she refers to is the agency to consent—or to not consent.

Of course, I would argue that “not consenting” is simply consenting to something else. But Marino says this is a mistake. She says that not consenting—or counterhegemony—“too frequently . . . comes to mean persuading and obtaining a different consent and thus reproducing relations of domination and subordination” (25). As I said in the introduction of this study, I did not think that counterhegemony really existed, that there are only multiple efforts to create hegemonies. To me, most counterhegemony is but an attempt to re-hegemonize rather than to de-hegemonize (i.e., end hegemony).

Marino and I diverge on this one point: she seems to see nothing outside of the hegemony while I see nothing outside of hegemonizing. Marino describes a way to participate within the hegemony. She suggests that a better, more appropriate (nonhegemonizing) counterhegemony can be waged “where you persuade—the good guys persuade—and people consent in a rational way, and not in a propagandistic way” (129). First of all, she seems to concede that there is nothing outside the tension between persuasion and consent. Even a “good” counterhegemony is about persuasion and consent. And second, she is suggesting that persuasion and consent can be
done appropriately—rationally, justly, and consciously as opposed to mystically, threateningly, and propagandistically. Her friend and students suggest that she would argue, “If we see hegemony as a system that organizes consent, we have the choice of reorganizing or disorganizing that consent” (Clarke et al 14). Through re-organizing or dis-organizing, one might use the massive weight of the ordering/organizing forces of hegemony against itself, to throw it off its equilibrium. Hegemony can have a good side to it.

Personally, I am not convinced of rationality in the hegemonic process. Hegemony and consent are neither rational nor irrational; instead, hegemony is simply the ordering process of culture. I argue that as parts of that ordering process, as we are ordered, we too may order. We have some ability—though constrained by existing hegemonies—to hegemonize. And like the staff members at Boy Scout camp, while we are passing as, we may also pass on. Potentially, we can find ways to order and pass that do not simply replicate manipulative power structures, and instead create better whos that others will want to acquiesce to. Unfortunately, my study is not about such practices. Instead, my study has been about ordering and passing behaviors that actually replicate existing, perhaps manipulative power structures.

Can an Individual Change the Way He or She Sees the World Based upon the Ways a Summer Camp Program or Staff Member Addresses Him or Her?

The mode of address holds great possibilities and potentials. Ellsworth claims that the “holding environment”—that is, how one is held or addressed—makes all the difference. For example, Ellsworth says,

Tickling, being bored, learning, psychotherapy, and interactivity are all precarious, transitional states, in which the holding environment makes all the difference. The holding environment—the mode of address, if you will—of the tickler, the teacher, the
therapist, makes all the difference between amusement and humiliation, a hint and an imposition, an epiphany and a deadening lesson. But no mode of address can guarantee an epiphany. (168)

While the mode of address can make the difference between amusement and humiliation, between hint and imposition, between force and hegemony, it is always only potential.

On the one hand, for example, the way summer camp addresses a staff member can have profoundly positive impact on how he sees the world. First year staff member Rick talks about how the old saying, “good guys finish last” seems to hold true outside of camp. However, when you’re here, you can be a good guy without worrying about the bad guys being in competition with you. Because there’s nothing here that some guy with like bigger biceps than you, that’s got a bloody nose all the time, and loose teeth and stuff—there’s nothing here that he’s got over you who weighs 110 pounds and has asthma and can’t swim that well and stuff. It’s just, “Tell me what you can about fishing,” “Help me out having fun with this,” “Make sure I have a good time and I can remember everything that I did here.” You don’t have to worry about lunch money. There’s no lunch money to be stolen. You don’t have to worry about keeping up your tough guy reputation, like, “I’m all tough. I’m good.”

Even the potential bad guys are not so bad. Rick admits, “Sometimes the people turn into bad guys, but only for reasons, not to be just generally tough and mean and nasty.” Camp even offers Rick a different understanding of authority. He says that on staff,

It’s not like a job relationship. It’s not like you have a boss because he gets paid more than you or he bosses you around. It’s like you have a boss because someone told him that’s where he works. And you just happen to be working under him, and you’re his
friend, and if he tells you to do something, then you “Okay, then I’ll go do it” . . . because
most people you respect them. That’s why they’re here. To do their job, and if they have
a different job than you, that’s fine.

As a “holding environment,” camp seems to change how everyone behaves. For Rick, bosses are
not authoritarian or abusive, and even if they are, there’s an understandable reason for it.
Similarly, bosses are bosses because, seemingly, a benevolent “someone” put them there.
According to Rick, they are still your friend, kindly making requests of you to do something for
them. It is all very rational and clean and inclusive. I am not sure if this changed Rick’s notions
of the world, but it surely established a paradigm of how things could and perhaps should be in
the world.

On the other hand, the same holding environment doesn’t always address one in ways
that are always good. For example, I was struck by the pain Camp Director Jake suffers from the
whos that he had acquired over the years at camp. He has picked up a number of nicknames over
the years, represented best by “Mr. Mean”—not exactly the sort of who you would expect to find
at summer camp. He tells about “many, many days when I walked the trails of Camp Lakota
coming from the rifle range back to the dining hall to eat. Scouts would come by me and they
would walk around me so they wouldn’t have to pass for fear they might get in trouble.” Jake
thought the who
came from my days on the rifle range when I wouldn’t tolerate any screwing around
because down there, safety was my first and foremost thing that I was concerned about.

You are teaching 11 and 12 year old kids how to fire a firearm. They need to understand
that that may be a toy in their mind, but it’s not in reality. People can get hurt from it.
And I came across as that. At the same time, my military bearing came out from being in the Air Force and being in [unclear] rescue and that kind of thing.

During my interview with him, I jokingly suggested he liked the nicknames and chance to perform as Mr. Mean. He argued that he really didn’t like it. “No, I really don’t. I don’t like that. I don’t like that stereotype they’ve given me, even though I play the role very well.” He argues,

I don’t like the role of being Mr. Mean because I’m here to give kids a positive experience and interact with them and have fun with them at the same time. I may be a 55 year old man, but I still want to be 16. And I like to have fun and screw around just like the rest of them. They don’t all let me do that because of the stereotype of being Mr. Mean and making people follow the rules and not varying from them any for fear of somebody getting in trouble, or getting hurt or whatever.

Like in Henry’s song about Superman, this fifty-five year old man still feels like a boy. However, he feels restrained because of the whos that have been offered him (and yes, that he has acquiesced to). It would appear that some whos are imposed, not chosen.

However, there is a choice in whos just as there is consent or no consent in hegemony.

Many people who “know” Jake say that he’s a “teddy bear” on the inside. He denies this, acquiescing to yet another kind of Man: “They tell me I have a soft heart. I just don’t think I have any heart at all. The old Scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz. Yea. Wanted a heart. Or the Tin Man, that’s what it was. The Scarecrow wanted a brain, and the Tin Man wanted a heart.”

Camp’s mode of address doesn’t guarantee a positive change in world view; unfortunately, sometimes it compounds existing pain.
How Do Those Who Order (Say, for Example, Masculinity) Accomplish That Task When They, Themselves, Have Not Been Fully Ordered? How Do They Mitigate the Incongruities? What Ordering Do They Do in the World or for Others When They Are Also Ordering Themselves?

Simply put, they pass. They “fake it ‘til they make it.” This is not a new notion, for folks have been saying this sort of thing for a very long time. Notions like, “act your age” and “he’s really got his act together” indicate an ordering identity process, one in which people can and do behave whos that they are not yet.

I wager “passing” is a better description of how ordering typically happens than the commonsensical, alternative view which suggests that those who order are coherent, stable people who already “get it.” Surely, those who order may “have their act together” a bit more than those who are not yet organized, but I wager they are still passing as orderers. This is what I have seen among staff members at summer camp, and I think their tactics are generalizable. I think it is a mistake to think that staff members pass like this because they are youth and not yet fully developed. Who among us is fully developed? I bet it all on “None of us.”

So, how does a passer order?

I do not know whether it is a linear process or if the following items take place simultaneously, but passers who order—like staff members—seem to engage in the following activities or exhibit the following characteristics:

- They recognize the chaos or multiplicity of the universe—if not all things, at least many things. They do not fully consent to the hegemony of coherence.
They actively participate in ordering processes and institutions, learning how ordering works. They acquiesce to ordering while avoiding being ordered. This is accomplished by experiencing what happens “off-stage” or “behind the scenes.”

They approximate ordering and yes, replicate hegemonic practices. Passers who order are hegemonizers, both the “recipients” of hegemony and the purveyors of hegemony.

They reorder the hegemony. While they may not change it significantly, they participate in shifting the equilibriums.

At first, I thought these characteristics and activities were reserved for those passers who order others—like staff members at summer camp—and not for those passers who “simply” order themselves. However, I have come to consider the possibility that the process of ordering one’s own who places into existence a who which circulates “through power and knowledge at the moment” and competes “for [others’] attention, pleasure, desire, and enactment” (Ellsworth 40). That is to say, all passers are orderers, and perhaps my use of “they” in the list above should be “we.”

Taking A Pass On Being a Scholar

I have never ordered myself a who that was a “real” scholar. Real scholars are smarter than I am: they can sit through conference presentations and appear to understand what people are saying. They’ve read everything there is to read on a topic. They are experts who don’t fumble over their words but talk authoritatively. They have the wherewithal to avoid answering questions that trouble their study, and they reframe the question to fit their own agenda or what they want to say. Real scholars write better than I, think better than I, talk better than I, teach better than I. This is not false humility: it is a fact based on repeated efforts to pass.
Admittedly, I haven’t met a lot of real scholars, for most of the professors and graduate students I’ve met are hardly the sort of role models I would like to become. In fact, that was one of the reasons I didn’t want to continue on after my master’s program was complete. I remember sitting with folklorist Jeannie Thomas at a Fife Folklore Conference party. She recommended that I continue on for my doctorate. I told her, “No flippin’ way.” I asked her, “Do you have to be like ‘that’ to get your doctorate, or do you become ‘that way’ during the process?”

She wasn’t sure what I meant.

I told her that professors were weird: they lived in anti-social, egocentric, severely circumscribed worlds; they wrote and talked in an unnatural language; they just seemed a bit off kilter—and not in a good way. When I graduated from undergrad, Dr. Nancy Warr gave me a book by David Lodge titled Small World (1984), and she told me this was probably the best description she’d ever read of “real academia” as opposed to her beloved “real University.” Small World is a satirical academic romance. At one point, the narrator explains how academia works:

All you needed to do to get started was to write one really damned good book—which admittedly wasn’t easy when you were a young college teacher just beginning your career, struggling with a heavy teaching load on unfamiliar material, and probably with the demands of a wife and young growing family as well. But on the strength of that one damned good book you could get a grant to write a second book in more favourable circumstances; with two books you got promotion, a lighter teaching load, and courses of your own devising; you could then use your teaching as a way of doing research for your next book, which you were thus able to produce all the more quickly. This productivity made you eligible for tenure, further promotion, more generous and prestigious research
Lodge refers to this as the “omega point” (172). This seemed like a horrible way to live one’s life: a very small, narrow life in a small, narrow world.

I told Jeanne that many Ph.D.’s were morons, and I couldn’t figure out if you had to be a moron to become a Ph.D. or if the trying turned you into a moron.

Jeanne dismissed all that without taking offence at my comments, and then asked me, “Do you love to teach? Do you love to do research? Do you love to write?”

I said, “Yes” to all three questions.

And she responded, “Then why would you let those morons get paid to do what you love to do? Why would you let them diminish what you love?”

It was at that moment that I decided to begin to pass as a scholar.

And it is in the writing of this dissertation that I have decided that I will now take a pass on becoming a scholar. The reason comes down to agenda: If the Folklorist at the beginning of this chapter is correct about being a scholar, then my agenda should be to talk to other scholars. That agenda is at best half of my own personal agenda: my agenda today is what it was when I first sat with the Folklorist: I want to return the fruit of my labor to those who provided the possibility for my labor to exist.

The Possibilities of Participatory Action Research (PAR)

In the *Bowling Alone* chapter/appendix titled “The Story Behind This Book,” Robert Putnam includes a snippet from a letter he wrote his friend in 1994. Putnam had been accumulating data about trends in civic engagement in the United States and had apparently
presented preliminary findings to both academic and public audiences. He wrote to his friend about these experiences:

Though it proves nothing, I have to report a striking distinction between the reactions of academic audiences and of public audiences. Academics always want to know whether it’s really true that we are disengaging—what about the new social movements? the Internet? 12-step groups? new age encounter groups? etc., etc. They almost never have any comments on what could be done about it, if it were true. Public audiences almost never ask whether it is true, because it rings so true to their own experience. They are always deeply concerned about how to fix the problem. Their questions are tougher.

(509)

I disagree with Putnam: the different approaches do prove something. I remember when I first read this paragraph to an academic I assumed would knowingly agree, her response was, “Well, is he just looking at America?” Yet another example of how “real” academics respond: not thoughtfully, but critically; not constructively, but deconstructively; not focused on creating answers, but in asking questions. This has been a longstanding irritation for me: that my colleagues who were sidestepping actual youth in youth studies were also seemingly more interested in criticizing orderings and institutions of or for youth rather than doing the really hard work of trying to order youth or creating better institutions for youth.

Surely, many would pull the carpet out of my critique by suggesting that we should not order or institutionalize youth at all. I am not yet familiar with the anarchist approach to society and organization, so I do not know how to respond to such arguments. I am passing with the belief that culture is ordering, that identity is ordering, that whether we like it or not, ordering is
what happens to the people by the people. To say we shouldn’t order seems ignorant at best and defeatist at worst, for it happens whether or not one actively participates in the process.

Near the end of my writing, I encountered a line of scholarship and practice that made me reconsider what I had done with my dissertation project as well as offered me an alternative path to follow beyond the disagreements with my colleagues. I was introduced to Participatory Action Research (PAR) by Dr. Kathy Farber, director of BGSU’s Partnerships for Community Action, who had come across the work of sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda.

Fundamentals of PAR

Susan E. Smith claims there are three forms of research: (a) empirical-analytic inquiry which is grounded in positivism, (b) interpretive inquiry which seeks to “capture meaning” much as this particular study does, and (c) liberatory inquiry whose purpose is to create a “movement for personal and social transformation in order to redress injustices, support peace, and form spaces of democracy” (179-181). PAR is a form of liberatory inquiry. Admittedly, there are various forms of PAR, but I have become acquainted with what I have heard called the “Southern” school of PAR, for it took root in South and Central America (B. Hall Wish 171).

In 1978, the International Participatory Research Network produced the following definitional statement about participatory research (PR):

1. PR involves a whole range of powerless groups of people—the exploited, the poor, the oppressed, the marginal.
2. It involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire research process.
3. The subject of the research originates in the community itself and the problem is defined, analysed [sic] and solved by the community.
4. The ultimate goal is the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of the people themselves. The beneficiaries of the research are the members of the community.

5. The process of participatory research can create a greater awareness in the people of their own resources and mobilize them for self-reliant development.

6. It is a more scientific method of research in that the participation of the community in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality.

7. The researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process of research, i.e., a militant rather than a detached observer. (Hall and Kidd 5)

PAR pioneer Fals-Borda argues that PAR is an “experiential methodology [which] implies the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge upon which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes—the grassroots—for their authentic organizations and movements” (Ingredients 3).

Economist Muhammad Anisur Rahman describes PAR as a “style of work with the people to promote people’s empowerment for changing their immediate environment—social and physical—in their favor” (16). Rahman says researchers typically think in terms of “knowledge transfer” when they should instead think in terms of “stimulation of and assistance to processes of the people’s own inquiries to build their self-knowledge” (17). By using PAR techniques, people can generate countervailing power by engaging in collective, socially validated research, critically recovering their own histories, valuing and applying folk culture (to “correct, complement, or clarify official or academic accounts”), and producing and diffusing
new knowledge according to the level of political conscience and literacy of the community members (Fals-Borda Ingredients 8-9).

Confirming Barre Toelken’s return of his interview tapes to the family he had interviewed all those years, Fals-Borda argues, “There is an obligation to return this knowledge systematically to the communities and workers’ organizations because they continue to be its owners. They may determine the priorities concerning its use and authorize and establish the conditions for its publication, dissemination or use” (Ingredients 9). He calls this the “systematic devolution of knowledge” and claims that this is what Gramsci meant by transforming “common” sense into “good” sense: by combining experiential and theoretical knowledge (Ingredients 9).

Talking this way about “liberatory scholarship” and “creating knowledge for social change” seems to contradict the complaints I waged in the beginning of this dissertation when I suggested that “activist” scholars like Lesko (2001) and Halberstam (1998) were heading down the wrong path. However, my complaint against them was that they did not study real, live people and instead studied “culture” in an effort to change it. My argument, reinforced by PAR, is that we should study real, live people—with the people and for the people—to, yes, change their circumstances for the better.

And these PAR ideas are not new to the field nor to me. While I am not conscious of anyone ever mentioning Participatory Action Research, many of the ingredients of PAR are found in the mid-1980s critique of ethnographic writing driven by Clifford and Marcus’s Writing Culture: The Poetics and Policities of Ethnography (1986) as well as the folklore studies I encountered at Utah State University during the late 1990s under Drs. Barre Toelken, Stephen
Siporin, and Jeannie Thomas. PAR ideology and practice spoke through their dedication to a more symmetrical relationship with those they study.

Implications of PAR for My Research and Other Academic Pursuits

While this present study was never intended to be a PAR project, it fails miserably to meet any of the criteria: I did not include any “powerless groups of people”—unless you count the youth in my study as “marginal.” I did not mobilize the community to learn for themselves; rather, I did all the work of researching, and I instead of they will benefit most from this study. And even though I am a committed participant in the Camp Lakota community, I did not solicit other community members’ interests, needs, or insight into the research design, questions, process, or analysis (beyond random conversations with friends and co-workers who were on staff). This would have been a very different dissertation had I engaged in any PAR-inspired methodology. My hope is to increasingly work PAR into future research initiatives.

In 1997, Robert Chambers from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, suggested that those involved in participatory methodologies should focus on five challenges:

(1) How better to enable the realities and priorities of poor and marginalized people to be expressed and communicated to policy-makers (Chambers Beyond 106). Chambers claims that political organization and power is the way to affect change; therefore, the real challenge is to “enable poor and marginalized people to analyze their conditions and identify their priorities in ways which freely express their realities, generate proposals which are doable, and are credible and persuasive to policy-makers” (113-114). In other words, researchers need to stop being the end-all, be-all of a research project. Instead, I need to use my skills and talents to help mobilize community members to develop “their skills, resources and power to work for change,
to help them take their appropriate seats at decision-making tables, and to get positive results
benefiting their constituencies and their communities as a whole” (Mott 5).

This is what Andrew Mott, Director of the Community Learning Project calls developing
“citizen monitors” rather than amassing a board of experts (7). Mott quotes a report from the
Casey Foundation that claims,

To positively impact the lives of poor people, many policy makers now believe, requires
a reshaping of key social elements in their communities, usually involving a shift from
reliance on strategies designed and operated by “experts” toward reliance on approaches
that involve local residents and organizations. (qtd in Mott 4)6

Since so-called experts have not solved the problems, policy makers are increasingly interested
in what grassroots organizations can do. As such, training citizen monitors to keep tabs on issues
that they find important is a path for my future research and service. Working together, the
citizen monitors and I could choose to write reports not only for policy makers but also academic
audiences.

(2) How better to enable trainers to facilitate attitude and behavior change (Chambers
Beyond 106). Chambers views attitude and behavior change (ABC) as more important than
methodology (115). He argues we should engage in

Learning to unlearn, and learning not to put forward one’s own ideas, not to dominate,
criticize, interrupt or talk too much, not to rush or be impatient, these negatives, together
with positives such as show respect, embrace error, ask them, and be nice to people . . .

have proved key to good facilitation of analysis of others. (116)

Unfortunately, Chamber points out, “Many professionals have been socialized into behavior that
is opposite of these” (116). He suggests a few techniques for training for ABC, including
spending days and nights in communities (immersion) and creating experiential training
courses—involving sharing, example, and fieldwork—and viewing trainers as participatory
facilitators rather than as “trainers” transferring knowledge (116).

Borrowing from Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset’s concept of “experience,”
Fals-Borda suggests, “Through the actual experience of something, we intuitively apprehend its
essence; we feel, enjoy and understand it as reality, and we thereby place our own being in a
wider, more fulfilling context” (Ingredients 4). Gasset calls this sort of experience vivencia in
Spanish, roughly translated as “inner life-experience” or “happening,” but Fals-Borda says it
implies finding fulfillment by “learning not with the brain alone but also with the heart”
(Ingredients 11). Fals-Borda argues that if one combines vivencia experience with “authentic
commitment,” one can see for whom knowledge is intended, and one can actually participate and
thereby “break up voluntarily and through experience the asymmetrical relationship of
submission and dependence implicit in the subject/object binomial” (Ingredients 4-5).

In other words, were we to engage in actual experiences—rather than just read and write
papers about experiences of others—we could begin to not only track the whos of knowledge but
also begin to break down the asymmetrical relationship between, for example, researcher and the
researched. Sociologist Alfredo Molano describes researchers “walking side by side with the
ordinary man rather than one step ahead. The confession that we do not know where we are
going but that we are there, shoulder to shoulder in the battle line, is, I think, an irreversible step”
(8). Rahman calls this a “subject-subject relation” between “the external researcher/activist and
the people” (17).

This has obvious implications for course design, but also for design and participation in
academic conferences. We could create more vivencias at conferences, even developing
vivencias rather than paper presentations: participatory experiences rather than relatively passive readings. I believe folklorists are already familiar with this sort of work, for folklore conferences are rife with performances and engagements with audience members. It would not be a great leap, I suggest, to fashion more immersion and participatory constructions of knowledge. The impact could not only be the dissemination of knowledge, but also a change in attitude and behavior of academics toward more symmetrical relationships.

(3) How better to make normal bureaucracies more participatory (Chambers 106). Chambers describes the “tension and contradiction between top-down bureaucratic cultures and requirements, tending as they do to standardize, simplify and control, and demands and needs generated at the local-level, tending as they do to be diverse and complex and to require local-level discretion” (117). Chambers suggests personal, procedural, and systemic changes advocated by management gurus like Tom Peters (Thriving on Chaos, 1987) and Peter Senge (The Learning Organization, 1990).

These sorts of tensions—between bureaucratic cultures and local cultures—are inevitable, but contain spaces to become more participatory. Chambers argues the need for research and reporting on “what really happens” in these cultures and at these points of tension. Without knowing what actually happens, any requests for change or further action are limited or unreasonable. As one colleague Dr. Timothy Lake has suggested to me, my research ought to “follow the pain.”

(4) How better to build self-improvement into the spread of participatory methodologies (Chambers Beyond 106). Chambers wonders what might be instilled at the start or injected into ongoing projects that “mean that however badly things start, they will get better” (119). He seems to understand that participatory methodologies are messy and sometimes volatile and
seeks something within the methodology which self-corrects or self-improves. He suggests strengthening the fieldwork experience, reflexivity (keeping diaries, reflection on experience, and sharing reflections and learning), and innovative ABC trainings (119-120).

For my own part, I need to engage in more fieldwork, more reflection, and make efforts to engage in participatory methodologies in order to know best how to improve them. A key initiative would be to take the time do more fieldwork—carve out time to partner with other citizen monitors, locate funding sources for the work, collaboratively develop research projects and systems of analysis, and the like.

(5) How better to enable people with power to find fulfillment in disempowering themselves (Chambers Beyond 106). Chambers argues that the real challenge is not to wrestle power away from the “uppers” and give it to the “lowers,” but it is to “find good ways to enable powerful people to gain from disempowering themselves,” from “having respect, standing down, shutting up, and facilitating, enabling, and empowering” (121).

It seems clearer to me now that I could help do this by trying to do it myself. I have no idea what implications these initiatives would have on my pursuit of an academic career—though rumor has it that I would never get tenure through PAR. Chambers gives me a metaphorical model, however, to help me on my path, suggesting,

We can be safe as ostriches hiding our heads in sand, avoiding the issue, or as giraffes with a lofty view, pontificating far from the ground. Or we can be vulnerable as a gazelle, committed to the middle ground and exposed to predators. . . . [but the] danger . . . and the temptation . . . is posturing as a grotesque ostrich-giraffe hybrid. (124)

Such talk reminds me of Clifford Geertz’s admonition for good interpreters of culture—that they should not draw attention to the elegance or cleverness of their interpretation, but to focus on
“the task at hand—figuring out what all that rigamarole with the sheep is about” (Thick 18). So, a gazelle I shall be.

What If I Had Done PAR? Or, Who Does My Research Think Staff Are?

If I were to re-design this research project to be more PAR-like, I would start by talking with the staff members about their needs, their interests, what they wanted to research, fix, find out more about. Despite the fact that Boy Scout summer camp staff members are hardly a disadvantaged nor seriously marginalized group, I believe it would still be appropriate to classify my research as PAR. While the powerlessness of the people engaged in PAR is a critical criteria, the inclusive methodology and the goals of conscientization and social change are also important. Perhaps I could choose a more exploited or marginalized group on staff—like the victims and even the perpetrators of the sexual abuse—as a focus for study.

Admittedly, I am not sure what the staff would suggest as subjects of study. As a member of that community, I could suggest some issues: (a) studying what is—what staff do, how they work, what their work conditions are like, etc.—to use as baseline research for future inquiry and social change; (b) women in Scouting; and (c) tensions between Council and Camp, or between administration and staff. I can come up with a number of other topics of research—like staff retention—why they join, why they stay, why they leave—and what can be done to increase retention; and program development—how it is really done and how to do it better—however, these do not involve social change. I could not say what they would find worthy of study. Unfortunately, I fear there are myriad topics which would not be directly investigated—like issues of race, class, sexuality, and the like—because most community members would not be interested in these issues.
As such, I am also not sure how I would meet community needs while also meeting my own. That is, how would I meet the needs of my field and dissertation committee who would require my research—or at least the product of that research—to contribute to the field and academia? This would be a need I would bring to the table when discussing what project we would all embark on.

Then, I would have worked with them to design how we would do the project. Perhaps they would have helped to interview campers or even each other. Perhaps they would have suggested other ways of gathering information, perhaps actively helping to line up interviews, writing journals, taking pictures, recording information that I would not otherwise know or think about. This would have required that I create some training sessions and somehow work that into their schedule. These are some of the reasons why research may have been done the “old” way: because it is the least expensive and time consuming: one researcher takes less time, treasure, and talent than training a whole cadre of researchers; plus, writing and presenting a paper or dissertation is considerably less expensive and time consuming than preparing an interactive, participatory experience. Technologically speaking, I can accomplish the one sort of research with pen and paper; whereas the other seems more daunting. However, the results of traditional academic research are typically focused on resolving academic issues and not the issues of the people.

Next, I would engage with them in the research itself. I think I would need to build in more interactions between myself and the staff community. The research design would require regular planning sessions and updates on the progress of the research. Once again, the struggle would be to minimize how much time this would take out of their work schedule. This struggle would be minimized, however, if they were genuinely interested in the project, if it were almost
part and parcel of their job. For example, if part of our project was to determine what actually happens on staff, then logging their days would be something that could be mandated as part of their job, and the staff hierarchy could support this effort. Similarly, if we were investigating, for instance, the history of the camp itself, I think more staff would be willing to meet and discuss updates as interesting and colorful stories and artifacts arrived. Engaged researchers require engaging subjects.

The next step would be to construct and disseminate the results of our research. As a group, we would decide on appropriate forms of dissemination for the group. For example, we might produce brochures for parents, an article for Boys’ Life magazine, a public presentation on the research findings, a policy paper for the Council and even National. And, of course, I would need them to support another form of dissemination—a dissertation—which I would need their help in completing. For example, I would want to create time and space for the community members to respond to my findings. I would include their feedback in the final project. This ramps up the complexity of the project, but I also think it would have contributed to a better final product—one which came even closer to the full complexity of summer camp staff life and one which probably would not end as soon as this research calls it quits.

In the end, PAR offers the subjects of my study—staff members—a very different who in the research process. In my own research for this project, I called on the staff members to engage in my project as participants, but not as observers, not as researchers, not as analyzers. I sought to inconvenience them as little as possible. Despite genuine enthusiasm for the project and for my progress on it, I offered staff members a limited participant who. I was the authority. I was the one in charge. I was the one who made decisions regarding the progress of the research. PAR could offer them a very different who—one they would probably like more, and
one which would potentially improve my research and its products. PAR could offer them, me, and my research more possibilities.

Afterword

Historian Patricia Nelson Limerick wrote an essay entitled “Dancing with Professors: The Trouble with Academic Prose,” in which she relates a story she finds metaphorically appropriate to explain the “workings of habit and timidity” in academia. The story is borrowed from an event that occurred on the set of the movie Hud (1963), an adaptation of Larry McMurtry’s classic western novel, Horseman, Pass By (1961). Limerick tells about a particular scene in which “Paul Newman was supposed to ride up and discover a dead cow, look up at a tree branch lined with buzzards and, in his distress over the loss of the cow, fire his gun at one of the buzzards. At that moment, all of the other buzzards were supposed to fly away into the blue Panhandle sky” (23).

The problem in filming that scene was how to keep the buzzards on the tree branches until it was time for them to fly away. The crew devised a plan: they would wire the buzzards’ feet to the branch and then pull the wire after Newman shot his gun. The buzzards would stay on the branch until the appropriate time, but then be free to fly when the director wanted them to fly.

However, Limerick quotes McMurtry as saying that the filmmakers had not reckoned with the “mentality of the buzzards” (23). With their feet firmly wired to the branch, the buzzards tried to fly. Restricted, they “pitched forward and hung upside down from the dead branch, with their wings flapping” (23). Not exactly the image the directors were hoping for. Limerick added that the buzzard’s circulatory system fails to work when they are upside down. After “a moment or two of flapping, the buzzards passed out” (23).
In an effort to get through the scene, this happened six or seven more times: buzzards pitching forward and dangling upside down until they passed out. They were revived each time, and rewired to their branches. Finally, the buzzards gave up: “Now, when you pulled the wire and released their feet, they sat there, saying in clear nonverbal terms: ‘We tried that before. It did not work. We are not going to try it again.’” Limerick says that they had to fly in a “high-powered animal trainer to restore buzzard self-esteem” (23).

In Limerick’s mind, this story explains how academics learn to be academics: We go to graduate school to get our feet wired to the branch of their discipline. Inevitably, during this process, we lose our footing and humiliatingly pitch forward and hang upside down. After a few times of being revived and rewired, we take what seems the wise choice: “to sit quietly on the branch, to sit without even the thought of flying, since even the thought might be enough to tilt the balance and set off another round of flapping, fainting, and embarrassment” (23). This is, perhaps the process which turns some professors into the sort of folk I told Jeannie Thomas I did not want to become.

Limerick points out that when we get out of graduate school with our Ph.D.’s in hand—and even more so when we get tenure—the wire is pulled. Our feet are free, and we can fly where we like. And yet, she argues, many “sit there, hunched and grumpy,” sometimes actively instructing the next group of buzzards “in the necessity of keeping their youthful feet on the branch” (23). The buzzard mentality had sunk in.

Like many of the staff members I studied herein, my goal is to pass as a buzzard with my feet firmly on the branch—as a good Scout, a role model, a producer of culture—but, like them, I want to fly around that tree.
Notes


2 Like bell hooks, dian marino uses lower-case letters for her name. She was a visual artist, activist, educator, storyteller, and professor of Environmental Studies.

3 To illustrate the concept of hegemony, marino quotes a story told by writer Philip Slater (Earthwalk, NY: Anchor/Doubleday. 1974.):

   Once there was a man who lost his legs and was blinded in an accident. To compensate for his losses, he developed great strength and agility in his hands and arms, and great acuity in hearing. He composed magnificent music and performed amazing feats. Others were so impressed with his achievements that they had themselves blinded and their legs amputated. (marino 20).

   She remarks that we are often persuaded to gouge out our eyes and cut off our legs to interpret and make our experiences understandable, “to see the world from someone else’s point of view, without questioning how it might work differently for me” (20).


5 There are serious problems with the notion of “empowerment,” because questions arise concerning who is bestowing power upon others and for what purpose. PAR talks about “people empowerment” as if it happens internally, within the people, not bestowed upon anyone from external sources. Rahman makes note of the term “animation” to refer to the “stimulation of people’s self-inquiry, self-image and self-action” (23). For further discussion of “animation,” Rahman suggests S. Tilakaratna’s The Animator in Participatory Rural Development: Concept and Practice (Geneva: International Labour Office, WEP Technical Cooperation Report, 1987).


7 Fals-Borda suggests that the concept of vivencia has found some resonance in Jurgen Habermas’ concept of the “life-world” as a totality of experience that includes daily living and concrete value contexts (Habermas 1984).

   Vivencias expressed with “the Other” incarnated in the poor are not far from the “alterity” philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas (1974) and Tzvetan Todorov (1982) recently diffused among PAR and intellectual circles in the Third World. (Ingredients 11)

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APPENDIX A:

Interview Script

I will request at least one interview with each staff member: This interview will be held during the 2002 summer camp season at Camp Lakota. Since the camp season is only four weeks long (with one additional week at the beginning for training and set-up), this will require rigorously scheduling 2-3 interviews each night.

The purpose of these interviews is to engage each staff member in a conversation about their experiences, perceptions, and feelings about the summer camp staff experience. Peterson et al argue that the “face-to-face interview provides one of the most powerful methods for understanding how people order and assess their everyday world” (203). Peterson et al go on to quote G. McCracken who suggests that the “long interview” is a great method for “stepping ‘into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves’” (203). My intention is to do just that: access the summer camp staff experience from the way each of the staff member experiences it. As such, interviewing will be a good way to augment my own observations.

Based upon the answers individual staff members give, my interviews will include the following questions:

- How long have you been on summer camp staffs?
- What did you do prior to coming to work on staff? What will you do after the season is over?
- How did you get started staffing?
- How long have you been at Camp Lakota?
- Have you worked at other summer camps?
- What is your job this summer? (What jobs did you do in previous summers?)
- Could you describe for me one of your typical days on staff?
- What did you think staffing was going to be like before you were a staff member?
- How would you describe to a friend what being on staff is really like?
- What advice would you give to someone else considering being on camp staff?
- Why do you think people choose to work on summer camp staffs?
- Why did you decide to work on staff? (Why do you keep coming back?)
- What are characteristics of a “good” staff member? Could you give an example of an experience you’ve had where a staff member was being a really good staff member?
- What are characteristics of a “bad” staff member? Could you give an example of an experience you’ve had where a staff member was being a really bad staff member?
- What are the rules or responsibilities of a staff member?
- What is your opinion of the rules staff members must live by?
- How do your friends and family feel about you working on summer camp staff?
- What are your feelings about being a staff member?
- What positive or negative impacts will working on staff have for your life?

If all goes well, I would like to take the interview to higher levels by the end of the interview (or in a subsequent interview if desired and necessary) by asking some of the following questions:
• What is “being on staff” mean to you? What does it mean to be a “member of a camp staff” to you?
• There’s a lot of talk about “Lakota magic” out here at camp. What is “Lakota magic” to you?
• Could you describe an experience while working on staff that made you feel like you belonged here, doing this, being on staff?
• Could you describe an experience while working on staff that made you feel like you weren’t cut out for this, like you wanted to quit, like you didn’t belong here anymore?
• How has your view of staff members changed since you’ve become a staff member?
• How has your experience as a Scout changed since you became a staff member?
• Is the person you are out at camp the same sort of person you are outside of camp? Are you able to be or do things here that you can’t do outside of camp?
• What is your opinion of _____ (an example of a staff member doing things the national BSA would not approve of: staff members breaking rules, drinking, smoking pot, walking naked through camp, etc.)?
• I was working at a camp a few years ago, and a few staff members were sitting outside my tent one night, talking about how they feel about being on camp staff at this particular camp. We were bitching and moaning, but we were also talking about how much it meant to us. One of the guys who had worked on staff at this camp for about five years piped up, “I like the kind of man I am out here at camp. I’m a better kind of man. I don’t like the guy I’m supposed to be down the hill. I like me better up here.” Do you identify with this staff member’s statements? How would you respond to him?
• One scholar [Wells] describes the staff experience as difficult due to the high standards of things like the Scout Oath and Law. She says, “Living up to this kind of image is difficult at the best of times and becomes even more so in a work environment that is isolated, stressful, and often hostile, and in which there is intense confinement and enforced communalism” (112). In what ways do you identify with this description of staffing, and in what ways would you disagree?
• I have worked at a camp in which staff members would claim that they were the “living, breathing example of the Boy Scouts of America--right off the pages of the Scouting magazine”. However, there are times when staff members do some very un-Scouting things. (Provide examples.) What’s going on here? How can this be? Are the rules of Boy Scouting different for staff members? One scholar (Wells) claims that serious violations of the Scout code occur only “off stage” amongst other staffers--that staff members make a conscious effort to preserve the “public image of Scouting” and to regard the initiation of campers into the traditions and values of Scouting as a sacred trust” (114). Is this your experience or does your experiences on staff contradict this scholar’s statements?
• After the summer was over a couple years ago, I received an email from one of my staff members--a 17 year old--who was complaining about his friends back home. He said they were boring. He said they had no passions. He said, that he hated being back home because, “Camp raised my expectations for life.” Do you identify with this staff member’s statement? In what ways has staffing raised or lowered your expectations for yourself and for life?