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So much more than Kumbaya: music at Jewish summer camps and the formation of Jewish identity

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SO MUCH MORE THAN KUMBAYA:
MUSIC AT JEWISH SUMMER CAMPS
AND
THE FORMATION OF JEWISH IDENTITY

by

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This dissertation investigated the influence of music at Jewish summer camp on individual and collective identity. I also examined how communal song assists in the establishment of a localized musical community. Although previous research indicated the importance of Jewish camp as an element in aiding the development of life-long affiliation to the Jewish community, greater philanthropic activity, a stronger connection to Israel, and a higher level of ritual observance, no research has specifically examined how music at Jewish summer camp impacts identity, affiliation, and behavior. This qualitative research project employed case-study research, with emphasis on narrative inquiry. Camp Hess Kramer, a summer camp in Malibu, California was chosen as the case due to its history of musical excellence and large alumni network. The theoretical and philosophical framework guiding this project was informed by Franz Rosenzweig’s writings on redemption, Emmanuel Levinas’s philosophy of the Other and ethical behavior, and Jacques Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality and welcome. Data were collected through interviews with camp alumni, as well as an intergenerational focus
group. Additional data were collected through analysis of artifacts as well as video and audio recordings. Themes indicated that for those interviewed, identity—personal and collective—is impacted by the experiences of communal song at camp. Campers carry the memories of the musical experience with them throughout their lives and reflect on them through a process of pseudosynesthesia. This synesthesia is created through the rich physical atmosphere at camp that encourages an interplay of all the senses. Camp was determined to be an environment where Rosenzweig's concept of redemption is presented through song and associated prayer and ritual. Recommendations for additional research and study include developing methods for promoting a fully embodied experience into the music education classroom, as well as creating synesthetic experiences as part of the synagogue liturgical experience.
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Prologue

David Newman: A Remembrance of Camp

Looking back I see how camp influenced my life. In fact, I know so many others who will say the same thing: camp and camp music played a big part in who they are or who they became. One friend, Laurel, was really shy, but Chuck Feldman gave her the opportunity to song lead and she figured if she could do that she could do almost anything. Now she’s a leading criminal defense attorney here in LA. Me? I went to law school and thought I’d be doing something in entertainment or corporate stuff. But the messages from all those camp songs kept coming back to me—that I could make a difference. What’s that song—“Ani v’atah”—we can change the world? I took those messages to heart. Now I work as an executive for an organization that sponsors literacy initiatives for children in Central and South America.

That first year I went to Hess Kramer I went only for about 2 weeks. It’s a short session. They set it up for a lot of first timers; kids who have never been to camp before. So it gave you a taste of camp but it wasn’t like a whole summer away. Those summers at camp stand out as the best summers of my life and I made friends that I have until today.

Hess Kramer is a particularly beautiful camp. Nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains—surrounded by sycamore and eucalyptus trees, with a creek running through the middle of camp.
Anyhow, I went to camp for 5 years. From when I was 10 until I was 15. Then I moved into CIT—counselor in training—and then I was a counselor for a couple of years. So altogether, maybe it was about 10 years starting in 1970 and I think my last year was maybe my sophomore year at UCLA.

During the summer, I’ll go back to camp for a Friday night and as soon as I smell the ocean, the trees, and hear the music it’s like I’m back there when I was a teenager. There are times when I’m sitting in the synagogue I belong to now—and we’ll sing something and all of a sudden I remember camp. For example, when the cantor at our place leads us in Debbie Friedman’s version of “V’shamru” it’s like I’m back at camp. Or when I’m putting my own kids to sleep and I’ll sing the songs we sang at each evening’s friendship circle—now they call it siyum—it’s almost as if I’m there again. I know it sounds corny or cliché, but when I hear those songs, I can close my eyes and see the shooting stars traveling across that Malibu sky. It’s amazing that way.

Now my kids go to camp—there’s a lot of multigenerational Hess Kramer families and when I drop them off downtown in the Wilshire Boulevard Temple parking lot, I realize that so much has changed about camp—but so much has stayed the same.

You start out on the first day of camp down at the Wilshire parking lot downtown. And there are counselors helping you and a lot of really little kids crying. I think it’s a lot of parents crying too. And before you know it your luggage is on a truck, you’re on a bus, and you’re on Pacific Coast Highway going north. Now—it’s only about
an hour and a half ride—at the most—but you would’ve thought we were going away for weeks. It’s all these kids—we had all these snacks and drinks.

I remember how, when the busses start making their way up to camp, all the bus counselors start singing. I can’t remember what songs. But not Jewish songs. Funny songs. Maybe something like “John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt.” I have no idea why we sang that song—but not only did we sing, but there was always a counselor in the middle of the aisle on the bus, and she’d be teaching us all these hand motions that went with it. There were other songs too. I remember “David Melech Yisrael”—my own kids know that. It’s like a Jewish hand jive. When we finally got up to camp, all the buses pull into the lot—it’s dusty—and I’m little confused—and the counselors and staff are all singing songs like “Heveinu Shalom Aleichem” and in that song there’s a lot of extra stuff you do. There’s a “doo-wap doo wap” and an “Oh baby” in the middle. A lot of those songs—even some of the prayers—have some of these added movements. If these hand motions or the dancing that often went along with the songs got out of hand, the counselors would tell us to “stop the shtick”—but then we’d just do it softer or make the hand motions smaller.

There are two things that stand out for me about camp. The first are all the friends I have from camp. They’re friends I’ll have for life. They’re friends with history and common memories. And second—I loved Shabbat at camp, and it helped me to create a very special feeling of Shabbat in my own home.
When I was growing up, we would sort of do Shabbat at home. We lit the candles, had challah, but that was the extent of it. Shabbat at camp is infused with such joy; filled with a feeling of overwhelming happiness.

Shabbat at camp is one of those amazing times. It’s when the entire camp comes together. There’s a lot that goes on to make camp ready for Shabbat. Cleaning, washing, the kitchen makes special food. But one thing that I became aware of was that people outside of camp aren’t part of this experience. I remember feeling proud and protected and knowing that what we were doing wasn’t ordinary. And then I got the feeling of what Shabbat meant for Jews all over the world. It’s a special feeling, a feeling of being connected.

Shabbat for me began when we’d start this procession. The song-leaders would start from the end of camp—up near the boys’ section—and walk with their guitars, singing, and gather us all up. We’d all sing Shabbat songs as we walked. You didn’t need a song book—they all had easy words or they were niggunim—those Chassidic songs without words. And everyone was wearing white. We’d process from the cabin area until we arrived at this small wooden bridge that separated the chapel from this dried up stream, and it was at this bridge that we’d wait until the entire camp had gathered. I think we walked into the chapel singing L’cha dodi, and that bridge was literally a bridge separating us from celebrating Shabbat. We all knew Shabbat at camp was special—we didn’t have to be told we were doing something special—we knew it.
Even the sounds at camp have special meaning—and especially on Shabbat. The sound of the song leaders’ guitars as they walked down the hill, the sounds of the feet on the bridge as they entered the chapel, are special sounds for me. There was the sound of feet reverberating on the bridge that I’ll always remember. I think everyone remembers the outdoor chapel as an extraordinary place. You’re sitting there surrounded by these oak trees and the sound of the wind brushing through the trees and the smell of the sycamore. I always felt closer to God sitting there. And all those voices surrounding you.

I remember one of those first summers, I was sitting in the chapel on a Shabbat—on Friday night—and we were singing and I’m looking past the oak trees and up into the sky and I’m thinking, “This is God. This moment. And I’m connected to this God right now.” It was such a powerful moment that I remember that feeling. You know, I think that in some ways it was the only time in my life I’ve ever had that sort of powerful an experience. Of course, I’ve felt God’s presence when my children were born and at other times—but at camp it was a different intensity of feeling: to be so very connected to my Jewish past, to the whole community, and in retrospect maybe even when I was a kid I was aware of the Jewish future.

As I got older, I realized how special this concept of Shabbat was. How brilliant our tradition was to give us this 24-hour break. And it struck me how extraordinary that Jews around the world—whatever their location—were experiencing this celebration of Shabbat just as I was. I still feel that way, sometimes even in synagogue when I’m
singing certain songs. All those songs and knowing those prayers we sang gave me a way into Judaism.

The service in the chapel was led by campers—so for me it was a much more participatory service than the services I had gone to at Wilshire Boulevard Temple where the service was—all I can say is I grew up at the end of Rabbi Magnin’s era. Wilshire Boulevard was representative of what we know as classical Reform Judaism, and for me, growing up at Wilshire Boulevard Temple in those days not really a Jewish experience. For that type of experience, some more solidly Jewish, with depth and meaning, I looked toward camp. I actually remember camp more than I remember my temple experience. And a lot of the same people I went to temple with, I went to camp with. So it wasn’t that I didn’t spend time with them. It was just the experience was different.

This community feeling was its best on Friday nights during the song session. When I was first a camper, Chuck Feldman would be at the piano. As years went by there were more and more song leaders—mostly guys playing guitars. But at the beginning, with Chuck we sang a lot of 1960s folk songs. Songs like “Blowin’ in the Wind,” “If I Had a Hammer,” and Bob Dylan songs. One song in particular made me feel very sentimental—sometimes it even made me cry. I don’t see it in the song book they use now—but it was the song “Armstrong.” “Armstrong” was a song that connected our problems in the United States with larger issues. For example, we sang about how on the day Neil Armstrong walked on the moon there were still problems of racism,
hunger, poverty, and homelessness on earth. From songs like “Armstrong,” I learned a sense of responsibility, and even when we do something amazing like putting a man on the moon—we can’t forget about the immediate needs going on down here—that we need to care for each other even if we can put a man on the moon.

Music was a major part of the message of social justice I learned at camp. As Jews we’re supposed to be concerned—it’s this whole notion of “tikkun olam”—the idea that you and I—each of us—is responsible for healing the world. But that’s what those songs were about even if we didn’t know it. These songs got interpolated with the lessons we were learning at camp through programs, activities, and discussions.

That core lesson of how you can impact the future and how you can change the world became super central to my identity. It’s ultimately the reason I stopped practicing law and began my work with children’s literacy. I wanted to do something that made the world a better place. So many of those songs were about creating change, creating possibility. It’s just continued to shape how I view the world, and I really—I firmly believe it began through the music. It worked its way into my bones through the music. Even when I’m at home and I gather my family together at the dining room table on a Friday night and we all join together in the blessings, part of me feels like I did back at camp.

As I was saying, that music reached its peak on Friday nights. After the procession, then the service in the chapel, and the dinner— the song session came next. Each week you had the feeling that the community grew closer and closer. We all knew
the songs: we even knew the order, more or less. Chuck Feldman would sit at the piano and the first few chords were always the signal for us to begin singing “The Sun on the Treetops.” Like the opening credits for a film or something. And then you knew the fun would begin. And then we’d move in a progression from slow songs to faster and faster and everyone would start dancing and singing and then somehow we’d move back down again. That arc that the song-leaders had was important—it was part of the tradition. After “Sun on the Treetops” we’d sing “Al tira.” We’d move into some more Hebrew songs and then maybe some new songs would get added. It was like a great rock concert where it’s escalating step by step in emotion and energy and participation. And we’re all singing at the top of our lungs and harmonizing and together we’re creating something really powerfully communal that can only be done together.

Then this singing would break out into dancing—especially on the songs like “Cherish the Torah”—everyone would grab a partner and do this tango in the middle of the floor. There were other songs too with all this shtick. There’s one song—a wedding song—“Od Yishama”—where the boys and girls would line up in two separate lines and run toward partners during the song. We also broke up into parts—the boys and the girls on Sabbath Prayer—so everyone could sing the harmony. We also sang in parts in “Elijah Rock.” The boys would sing, ‘Satan is a liar and a conjurer too,” and the girls would all shout out, “If you don’t watch out he’ll conjure you.”

They still sing some of these songs—but some have changed. But so many songs are the same ones I sang when I was a camper—and many of them have the same hand
motions. When my kids sing “Circle Game” I can actually join in with them because it’s practically the same motions and shtick as when I sang it.

My daughter tells me now one thing that has changed is that the song session is different from when we were at camp. It’s still high energy but they’ve moved it to Baruh Hall—the large auditorium, and the kids change out of their white clothes and wear sweats and dance like a rock concert or a rave. It supposedly gets so hot and steamy in that room that the campers have set off the fire alarm. Is what my daughter and her friends do at camp better than our song sessions? I don’t know. I really don’t know.

I think our song session had a better sense of community—but I’d just be guessing. That’s one thing I always have to remind myself about camp—every generation thinks that they did it the best. But in actuality what happens is that every generation really builds on the one before it. For example, I distinctly remember one time when I was a counselor, one of the song leaders started singing a song I had learned as a camper. And I instantly turned to my campers—a group of 10 and 11 year olds—and I taught them the hand gestures that went along with the song.

There’s something magical in that. And there’s this hope at that moment that these kids will be counselors and teach that same song and those same motions to a table filled with campers someday. We always say, “L’dor va’dor”: from generation to generation. And at camp you see this transmission from generation to generation very clearly. My memories of camp are very much the memories my campers or even my
own children will have. The memories themselves are greater than any one person. It’s this understanding that we all share the same experience and that we all have the memories, and through all of this, we are united in a community.

It’s a community that’s amazingly supportive. I remember my second or third summer, I volunteered to participate in the Friday night service. The counselor coordinating the service must have overestimated what she thought I could do and assigned me to chant the Avot—the first prayer of the Amidah. I didn’t want to admit to her that I didn’t know it. And I got up there to do it—in front of all the other campers, counselors, staff, and guests—and I just stood there. I didn’t know what to do. I was too embarrassed to admit I didn’t know the prayer. And the next few seconds felt like an eternity.

And before I knew it, that counselor in charge and two of the song leaders were by my side and they chanted the prayer for me. To this day it’s one of my best memories of Hess Kramer. Those counselors and song leaders covered for me. They supported me. This community, this support that was there that didn’t have to be.

At camp, with no exception that I can think of, I always felt that support. I was at camp very recently: I was visiting on a Friday night, and somebody said, “Camp is the place where we can be ourselves.” And that stuck. That was me. That was me from the time I got there until today.

My current work in this literacy nonprofit was definitely influenced by the music. Actually—let me clarify that. Not only by the music but how we sang it. Especially when
we gathered in the evening friendship circle or for the Havdalah ceremony around the campfire. These were the only times we came together in a circle. And that idea of the circle has really been a big influence on my life. We’d gather as a community and when we were singing you could see every other person and see their eyes. You can’t do that in an amphitheater, a dining hall, or in a chapel that’s set up in a hierarchical structure. With song leaders and people in front.

The way we express music in a campfire circle helped me. It had a different kind of experience because it felt much more like we were singing together. We were much more solidly in community and in connection. You could see other people singing and you weren’t facing the front and focused on a leader. You were singing with one another and watching each other in music.

It’s just continued to shape how I view the world, and I really—I firmly believe it began through the music. That we’re all in this together. It worked its way into my bones through the music. Those messages—especially of the campfire songs—like “The Boat Song” or “Dreamer” or “Ally Oxen Free” made me believe I could make a difference. It’s made me who I am. It’s really defined who I am.

Who is “David Newman”?

This experience of music at camp is best told through a first person account. Although participants interviewed for this study presented rich, detailed information about their camp experience, no one interviewee provided the total picture of the camp music experience. For a better understanding of the experience of singing at camp, I
created “David Newman.” David is a fictional camper, whose recollection, presented here, is a composite created by weaving together the stories and memories gathered as part of this research project. The interviews, focus group, archival materials, song books, and recordings provide the basis for “David Newman’s” experience. Although those interviewed as part of this dissertation represented various age cohorts, geographic locations, vocational choices, and levels of Jewish engagement, analysis of the interviews revealed great similarity when reporting the experience of communal song at camp Hess Kramer. “David Newman’s” experience is a tapestry woven from the memories of these camp alumni.

**David Newman: An Example of Ethnographic Fiction**

Ethnographic fiction has become an accepted method of presentation in qualitative research. My use of this mode of presentation follows in the footsteps of such formidable pioneers of this genre, such as Hurston in Their Eyes Were Watching God (2004), Castaneda, who wrote The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (1998), and Hecht, who penned Afterlife: An Ethnographic Novel (2006). Crawford, Hurston’s protagonist is based on a combination of Hurston’s own experiences and anthropological research the author conducted throughout the American south. Castaneda’s (1998) book was inspired by his anthropological field work in Sonora, Mexico and Arizona, an encounter with the Yaqui Indian shaman Don Juan, and the author’s recounting of hallucinatory experiences. Hecht’s study of street children in Brazil yielded an ethnographic novel that weaves together actual events suggested by anthropological research.
Ethnographic fiction combines the “factual” and “true” in an attempt to create characters that “represent more than a single individual: a typical member of a social group, whether it be a music fan, an elder in a community, a customer for a product, a technology user” (Callen, 2013, para. 2) The purpose of David Newman’s fictional account is to provide the reader with insight into the life of one camper and how the camper’s life was influenced by communal song. Although no fieldwork was conducted in this study, the interviews, focus group, my personal reflections, and archival materials presented thick description of musical life at Jewish summer camp.

This dissertation is enhanced not only by the reflections of David Newman, but by those of the multiple participants who volunteered for interviews, as well as the memories shared in a focus group, gathered as part of this research. Their voices—spoken and sung—have informed this project and guided the search for a greater understanding of the phenomenon of communal song at Jewish summer camp.
Chapter 1: Background

Each summer, thousands of children and adolescents attend Jewish summer camp. Like the mythical city of Brigadoon appearing in the mist-shrouded Scottish highlands and then vanishing, summer camps are seasonally constructed temporary communities. Like the fictional David Newman, campers are immersed in an all-encompassing, full-time Jewish environment that positions them away from parents, home, and the stress of school.

At first glance, the Jewish summer camp resembles other non-Jewish summer camps. There is swimming by the lake, cabins filled with friends, an arts and crafts shed musty with the smell of tempera paints, and a dining hall where the rattle of plastic dishes and bowls resounds. All camps are also filled with communal song. Guitar strumming song leaders help facilitate camp cheers, silly songs sung in the morning, and special songs sung around campfires. Just as at all other camps, communal song is evident at Jewish residential camps, with the difference that much of the communal song at Jewish summer camp is connected to religious ritual. Communal song in the form of prayers and blessings are said upon arising in the morning, a prayer is sung at the end of every meal thanking God for food, and songs and chanted prayers are the highlight of the Shabbat worship service and song session. Even social justice songs were connected to Jewish values, and the campfire might include Jewish themed songs.

When thousands of Jewish children and adolescents pass through the gates of camp, they enter a “removed society of living Judaism that harbored a unique sound environment” (J. M. Cohen, 2006, p. 175), and although these campers come together for
just a few weeks each summer, the effects of the musical experience at Jewish summer camp are long lasting, with many of the friendships created and lessons learned maintained throughout the campers’ lives. This phenomenon of communal song at Jewish summer camp represents the fusion of multiple elements, including the engagement of the entire camp in a form of community music and a multidimensional education and music-education process.

**Music at Jewish Summer Camp as Community Music**

Higgins (2012) presented multiple illustrations showing the variety of locales where community music is situated. Community music activities can be found in schools, prisons, community centers, daycare centers, women’s shelters, and after-school programs. As Higgins (2012) indicated, the definition of community music is wide and varied. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I focus on community music as the music-making that occurs outside the environs and structures of normative music institutions. Approaching the music at Jewish summer camp as a form of community music is novel because it expands the parameters of community music to include this previously unknown site for community music making and music education.

The discussion of communal song as community music is guided by the definition of community music presented by Higgins (2012):

From the outset then, I would like to suggest three broad perspectives of community music: (1) community music as the “music of a community,”

(2) community music as “communal music making,” and (3) community music as
an active intervention between a music leader or leaders and participants.

(Higgins, 2012, p. 3)

Higgins (2012) explained the first two parts of this definition by stating:

I would therefore say that statements one and two describe music that is made by any community at any time. Both of them point to an expression through music of community’s local identity, traditions, aspirations, and social interaction. I wish to suggest that “music in the community” and “communal music making” are a way of describing and understanding music in culture with a particular emphasis on the impact it has on those who participate. (p. 4)

Music at Reform Jewish summer camp is most certainly “music of the community.” Songs are sung that represent a wide range of Jewish experience, and the music embraces a variety of styles, epochs, and Jewish ethnic traditions, as is reflected in “The Complete Shireinu” (Eglash & Komar, 2002), a resource used by many camp song leaders. Contemporary Hassidic song is represented by the works of Shlomo Carlebach (“Am Yisrael Chai, Esa Einai,” and “Od Yishama”). Sephardic music is represented by songs such as “D’ror Yikra,” “Mipi El,” “Ki Eshmera Shabbat,” and “Tzur Mishelo.” In addition, contemporary American Jewish composers, such as Dropkin, Friedman, Klepper, Silver, and Taubman, also contributed widely to the anthology.

It is Higgins’s (2012) third perspective (“community music as an active intervention between a music leader or leaders and participants,” p. 3) that is most relevant to the discussion of music at camp as a form of community music and that permits discussion of the role of the camp song leaders as community musicians. At
Reform Jewish summer camp, song leaders acting as community music professionals facilitate this intervention by offering all campers an equal opportunity to participate in songs and prayers, which in turn aid in the establishment of a Jewish community. Higgins further explained this concept of active intervention:

Community music is an intentional intervention, involving skilled music leaders, who facilitate group music making experiences in environments that do not have set curricula. It has an emphasis on people, participation, context, equality of opportunity, and diversity. (2012, p. 4)

Facilitation is “understood as a process that enables participants’ creative energy to flow, develop, and grow through pathways specific to individuals and the groups in which they are working” (Higgins, 2012, p. 148). There is a difference between leading and controlling—and although song leaders often approach any given song session with a prepared set list and well-articulated goals and objectives, the more successful song-leaders are also fluid in their approach, adjusting their planned set list to match the dynamics and changing energy of the particular song session. Song leaders who control rather than lead often view their planned list of songs as having greater importance than adapting to the variety of emotions and energies in the room.

The exuberance of communal singing also serves as a catalyst for spontaneous harmonies, dances, and hand motions. Song leaders facilitating rather than controlling will encourage these impromptu additions to the singing and will “enable the participants to work together and steer a course for their group” (Higgins, 2012, p. 148). There is a balance between preset intentions and directions and the inventiveness and spontaneity of
This third perspective of community music permits articulation of the camp music experience. In an attempt to move from the general to the specific, I reframe Higgins' words to the understanding of music at Jewish summer camp as a form of community music:

Music at Jewish summer camp represents a purposeful attempt by trained song leaders, who have years of experience in the facilitation of diverse groups and a wealth of Jewish liturgical and musical knowledge, to engage campers in communal settings in which the campers will join in song and prayer and simultaneously learn Jewish values, concepts, and ethics. All of this takes place in the informal environment of camp, where the participation of all campers, regardless of ability, is welcome, creativity is cherished, and diversity is honored. Song leaders are skilled professionals who have amassed a large repertoire of songs and prayer melodies, can motivate large assemblies of adolescents, are capable of creating mood and environment, and are often called upon to improvise. At Camp Hess Kramer—a Reform Jewish camp that served as the site for this research—song sessions take place after every meal; the longest and most anticipated song session takes place during the communal singing following the Friday night dinner. Singing also takes place every evening after the nightly program. In addition, individual cabins or larger units may have opportunities for group song. Song leaders often use the song sessions following meals to teach new music, review favorite camp melodies, and prepare the entire camp for the upcoming Shabbat celebration.
What camp song leaders share in common with community music facilitators is the ability to create an environment in which all participants sense they are part of the greater community and are part of the collective. Where camp song leaders differ is that they may or may not be trained music education professionals, and most would not perceive of themselves as community music facilitators. Successful song leaders not only engender an environment in which campers feel welcome, they create a feeling among campers that they are all connected and interrelated. Song leaders do this while sharing with campers a balanced repertoire of songs reflecting the great diversity, depth, and breadth of Jewish music—both traditional and contemporary.

It is probable that neither song leaders nor campers would be familiar with the nomenclature and semantics of community music, and it would be rare for song leaders to refer to themselves as community music leaders or as cultural development workers, musicians in residence, or music outreach workers, as Higgins suggested (2012, p. 5). But these song leaders are community musicians—albeit for a very discrete, intentional, seasonally limited community. However, the term song leader does not sufficiently express the depth and breadth of their service or responsibility to the summer-camp community. The song leaders at camp are not only responsible for teaching music, they are responsible for transmitting tradition in the form of sung and chanted prayers and blessings, for developing and sustaining the camp community through group song, and for enhancing and elevating the Shabbat experience through music and prayer. Through song, they also teach Jewish values, lessons, and ethics. The skills and attributes of camp song leaders are clearly in alignment with the traits for community music facilitators.
presented by Higgins (2012, p. 4). There is, however, one caveat to Higgins’s (2012) assertion that community music is an “intentional intervention” that needs to be made in this examination of music at Jewish summer camp. It is dubious that camp song leaders would initially see their work as an “intervention,” though they would certainly see it as “intentional.”

To find a term that better suits the purposes of the camp environment, I turn to the Hebrew word for intention: kavannah. This word, derived from the Hebrew root word meaning to direct or to focus, means more than just intention. Kavannah implies a meaningful action. In Jewish tradition, the act of prayer has not been completed if one merely recites the words of a prayer, as these words need to be recited with kavannah—with intention. According to Summit (2004), “meaningful action is not just something that happens haphazardly. Meaningful action is the confluence of a thoughtful decision about what you want to do coupled with the action of doing it.” For song leaders this kavannah is the intervention at summer camp. This kavannah—this sense of purpose, focus, and intention—is what propels the concept of welcome, hospitality, and ethical behavior.

At first glance it would seem that some of the inherent power of the Jewish camp learning environment comes from its informal educational structure. But according to Michael Zeldin (2006), the director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Jewish Education, this is an erroneous assumption. Although camps feature the hallmarks of an informal learning environment (Chazan, 1991), which include participatory and interactive settings, voluntary participation, no grades or formal evaluation, an orientation that is
intrinsic rather than instrumental, and an environment that is highly participatory and interactive (p. 302), Zeldin (2006) asserted that educators view Jewish camp learning as an environment with "multiple simultaneous dimensions" (p. 96). According to Zeldin (2006), these dimensions include goals, human resources, environment, and modes of learning.

One musical example that fits Zeldin's conceptual framework of multidimensional learning in the summer-camp environment is the Friday night song session that takes place after the Shabbat meal. (Although this musical event will be discussed in great detail later in this dissertation, it serves to illustrate this type of learning.) The song session has a feeling of great spontaneity, with the song leaders leading hundreds of campers from one song to another. The energy of each song builds on the next until campers, counselors, and staff are singing in harmony, clapping rhythmically, and dancing through the dining room. Although the song session has the air of spontaneity, it is the culmination of a multidimensional educational process that is similar to the one proposed by Zeldin (2006). The song session's success is predicated on three daily song sessions (usually following each meal) in which song leaders introduce new songs, melodies, and text as well as review older, more familiar selections. Often, individual cabins or camp units have additional song sessions that serve to heighten reinforcement. Song leaders often follow these basic steps when first teaching a song (Breger, 2013, p. 55):

- Introduce the song: tell the campers something about the song, relate a story to it, and provide context. Make sure the song is appropriate for the age group
and the setting.

- Sing it through.
- Teach the words one line or phrase at a time. If the words are in Hebrew, it may help to use transliteration.
- Teach the chorus first.
- Use rhymes as a clue for what comes next.

When teaching new material, song leaders often rely on printed lyric sheets, song books, words written on chalk boards, PowerPoint presentations, or simple call and response, if the words are familiar or easy. They also attempt multiple methods to engage campers, especially if the song to be learned is new or difficult. Trained song leaders can also quickly ascertain the attention span (or lack thereof) of any group, move to more familiar musical material, and adapt their lesson when needed.

Learning song also takes place apart from the direct instruction of song leaders, as there is also much peer learning at summer camp. Campers often bring musical instruments to camp (especially guitars), and during a rest hour or free time might try a new piece of music with friends of cabin mates. Many of the songs sung as part of the song session have choreography or hand gestures, or interjected words or expressions associated with them. Newer campers unfamiliar with these camp traditions often learn these physical motions from cabin mates or counselors. Young campers can be seen practicing songs or motions as they stroll to or from the cabins, or from one activity to the next, for example.

This brief examination of the song session also presents evidence of the music-
education environment presented by Elliott (1995), in which formal knowledge, informal knowledge, impressionistic, and supervisory knowledge exist side by side. For example, formal knowledge is represented in the song session by campers learning meaning and pronunciation of the Hebrew text. As notated music is rarely, if ever used, the ability to read music is less significant in this situation than an understanding of the words, their context, and translation. Informal knowledge is based on campers' previous experiences in this musical setting. As Elliott indicated, informal knowledge is derived from "one's own musical reflecting-in-action" (1995, p. 64). In the case of Jewish summer camp, the informal knowledge a camper brings to the song session represents his or her own awareness and knowledge of the music in the ritual moment and the best way to approach the music as part of the larger group.

According to Elliott (1995), "impressionistic knowledge is a matter of cognitive emotions or knowledgeable feelings for a particular doing or making" (p. 64). For Jewish summer campers, this form of knowledge allows them to "assess, categorize, and place" (p. 65) their musical actions. As the song session begins, campers know how to harmonize during a specific song or how to clap an interesting rhythmic pattern on the dining hall table as the tempo of the song session increases. They have the ability to make critical judgments on the spot during the song session, based on a variety of previous real-life musical experiences and formal and informal education.

Supervisory musical knowledge presented by Elliott (1995) is the most difficult of these four categories of knowledge to assess as part of the Jewish camp music environment, because it is one in which a musician has the "ability to monitor, adjust,
balance, manage, oversee, and otherwise regulate one’s musical thinking both in action ...
... and over the long-term development of one’s musicianship” (p. 66). In the setting of
the Jewish summer camp, this knowledge is reserved for that small group of campers
who go on to become song leaders themselves. These once-campers who are now song
leaders have the longitudinal insight to understand their own personal practice and how it
interfaces with the needs of the greater camp population.

Elliott’s philosophy (1996) is well suited for understanding the musical
environment of camp, as the majority of the music at camp exists for what he terms
praxial application. The melodies campers learn and the prayers in which they join their
voices together in the outdoor chapel are not the sole domain of the summer camp. Rather
(as we shall see in the ensuing chapters of this dissertation), these musical experiences
are foundational to their adult Jewish lives and aid in the formation of Jewish identity.
The songs that formed the soundtrack of their summers at camp will be recalled and
relived for decades after the camp experience has ended. It represents a “living”
soundtrack in that many of the melodies and prayers sung and chanted at camp will be
heard as part of mainstream synagogue worship, and their children will learn them when
they attend camp.

One of the challenges of this research is to better understand how this identity
formation occurs through the music at camp and how this communal song becomes an
embodied experience, but before an exploration of how Jewish summer camp music
informs Jewish identity, the concepts of Jewish Identity, Jewishness, and Jewish
Peoplehood must be defined.
Jewish Identity, Jewishness, and Jewish Peoplehood

This research project examined how music at Jewish summer camp impacted Jewish-identity formation and the campers’ awareness of Peoplehood. The definition of Jewish identity or “Jewishness” has changed since it was first studied in the mid-1940s and is still emerging, with recent recognition of Jewishness as permeable, malleable, and fluid. Recent research (Horowitz, 2002; Hyman, 2008; Prell, 2000) revealed that personal Jewish identity changes over time and is influenced by multiple factors, such as environment, external sociological influences, and an individual’s personal life journey.

Alongside this changing definition of Jewish identity is the development of the concept of Jewish Peoplehood. Peoplehood may be understood as a shared sense of connection, responsibility, mission, or purpose “with an extended family with whom we have a collective history and a shared language of faith, ritual, and culture” (Brown & Galperin, 2009, p. 3). But Peoplehood does not stand alone, as it is intrinsically linked to personal identity. Ultimately the creation of a strong personal identity becomes “critical in forming a personal notion of Jewish Peoplehood that will be meaningful across space, will not be as fluid as the vagaries of time, and will join with the larger collective identity” (Brown & Galperin, 2009, p. 61). The experience of communal singing at Jewish camp provides one such opportunity for strengthening not only individual identity, but collective identity as well.

Seeking a definition of Jewish identity and “Jewishness.” Phillips (1991) traced the sociological study of Jewish identity from the growth of suburban Jewry in the post-World War II era, noting that this initial period of study examined Jewish identity
through the use of scales or indexes measuring Jewish behavior, attitudes, or levels of observance. Researchers using these methods found that the variables most influencing or affecting Jewish identity were father’s religiosity, friends’ or peer-group expectations, Jewish education, proportion of neighbors who were Jewish, organizational affiliation, and religious observance. Although useful, these research results failed to acknowledge the identity of the group or allow for changing individual concepts of identity. Phillips ultimately asked that new models of inquiry be developed based on the “new ethnography,” as these approaches “emphasize understanding the meaning systems developed by the participants themselves” (1991, p. 23).

**Seeking new models.** Schoem (1989) presented an ethnic definition of Jewish identity in which he proposed that an “ethnic group” is a “self-perceived group of people” (p. 5) who are transgenerational, share a common sense of Peoplehood, have a common understanding of continuity and history, share common cultural traditions, and may share genetic characteristics. London and Hirschfield (1991) discussed the psychological aspects of Jewish-identity formation and acknowledged that the very term identity “lacks precise definition” (1991, p. 31). They indicated that even with the great variety of definitions, two overarching definitions emerge. The first is “the notion of identity as a person’s entire sense of self or ego” (London & Hirschfield, 1991, p. 32). The other definition, which they claim is the one more germane to the Jewish community, is the concept of social identity or group identity. They defined this idea of group identity as follow:

A person’s sense of self in relation to others, or, one might say, the sense of
oneself simultaneously an individual and a member of a social group. People have a variety of social selves or group identities because they take a variety of social roles in life. But some are obviously more important and enduring than others. (London & Hirschfield, 1991, p. 33)

Blanchard (2002) proposed a model “based on the nature of contemporary American identity formation, especially the great value attached to individual freedom of choice” (p. 40). Identity needs to be understood outside the confines of institutional Judaism, which includes synagogues and federations, and should be approached as fluid and “linked to life context” (p. 41). Blanchard also noted that the choices one makes to express one’s Judaism extend beyond traditional or rabbinic practices and may be influenced by contemporary American culture.

**Developing the idea of “Jewishness.”** This concept of identity (and the use of the word “identity”) extends well beyond Jews and issues of Jewish identity. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) criticized the use of “identity” as not particularly well-suited as a unit of analysis, for it is “riddled with ambiguity, riven with contradictory meanings, and encumbered by reifying connotations” (p. 34).

Prell (2000) suggested a reevaluation of basic understandings and assumptions about Jewish identity, while proposing that benchmarks for Jewish identity not be based on some presupposed standards of authenticity. According to Prell, previous models of Jewish identity were based on a straight-line model of ethnicity and observance, assuming diminishing ethnicity and practice over time. Instead, Prell advocated an examination of “Jewishness” rather than Jewish identity. The use of the term “identity”
presents a sense of being fixed or set in place, whereas “Jewishness” implies a permeability or fluidity occurring over time and dependent on environmental and circumstantial factors. This concept may be best examined from the perspective of personal biography and narrative:

What the life story offers is the opportunity to look at the development of a Jewish self and in particular to understand how Jewishness is constructed in relationship to the life course. The focus then is on the meaning of choices, rather than the choices alone, and the conditions under which such choices are made or not made. (Prell, 2000, p. 39)

Horowitz (2000) presented a paradigm for examining Jewish identity in which conceptions of that identity were recast. In addition to measuring levels of activity and practices, Horowitz examined an individual’s identity in terms of self-perceptions and self-identity. For Horowitz, this new definition of Jewish identity was a purposeful attempt to present an individual’s identity in a subjective fashion that “examines and probes the current reality of what being Jewish means when individuals speak about themselves and their lives” (p. 3). Horowitz stated that “Jewishness refers to the set of beliefs, images, feelings, and practices that a person considers to be Jewish” (2000, p. 3). Horowitz’s definition follows ideas presented by Swidler (1986), in which an individual’s cultural identity is comprised of a “tool kit” of “symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems” (p. 273). Horowitz acknowledged that this definition of identity stands in sharp contrast to previously presented definitions. The question the author attempted to address was not
“What makes someone a good Jew?” but rather “For you personally, what does being Jewish involve?” (p. 3).

In contrast to earlier definitions or determinations of identity, these newer definitions are not only predicated on levels of observance or quantified actions, but are concerned with self-perception and self-definition. For this reason, this study will often use the term “Jewishness” as an expression of “distinctive patterns of association” (Horowitz, 2000, p. 25).

**Defining Peoplehood**

This research project investigates not only how communal song at Jewish summer camp influenced personal Jewishness, but also how the music at camp impacted a camper’s awareness of being part of the greater Jewish community or a sense of Peoplehood. I was not only concerned with how the experience of communal singing at Jewish summer camp impacted an individual’s personal Jewish identity; I also attempted to ascertain campers’ awareness of being part of the greater Jewish collective as a result of this musical experience.

Brown and Galperin (2009) stated that Jewish Peoplehood “is the combination of culture, religion, history and values under a Jewish umbrella that gives us a profound feeling of being connected to other Jews” (p. 4), while recognizing communal responsibility and acknowledging that the world community of Jews knows no borders and is a “global community of purpose” (Brown & Galperin, 2009, p. 4). Kopelowitz and Engelberg (2007) further defined Peoplehood as a multidimensional experience that rejects a strong ideological stance while promoting the connection among the Jewish
collective, rather than between Jewish individuals (p. 9). Peoplehood exists both as an experience (for example, when Jews come together in a social situation connecting with Jews of other ethnicities or ideologies) and as a consciousness of Peoplehood (Jews expressing an awareness of other Jews around the world or even those who lived in another time). According to Kopelowitz and Ravid (2010), this consciousness is less common, as the development of consciousness requires the organization to extend beyond the programmatic and social and embrace the development of a worldview acknowledging shared responsibility in the care of the greater collective of world-Jewry.

Experiences promoting Peoplehood have less to do with content and behaviors and more to do with the intensity of experience (Brown & Galperin, 2009, p. 2). Jewish camp is one such intense experience and stands in stark contrast to many of the experiences prevalent in contemporary Judaism, which are often viewed as “tepid, passionless, stale, or conventional” (Brown & Galperin, 2009, p. 2). These less than vibrant experiences include, but are not limited to, unengaging supplementary religious-school instruction, moribund worship services, seemingly endless committee meetings, and uninformed and uninspired rituals. For Peoplehood to be central to Jewish identity, Judaism must be experienced as vibrant and compelling, and must resonate with its participants. Camp is an environment where this type of Judaism is present and practiced. The role of music at camp—notably communal singing—is one of the more vibrant aspects of the camp experience. As part of the last chapter in this dissertation, I will discuss whether these musical-identity-building experiences from the camp environment
can be transferred to other musical-education settings and other worship environments, and how they can be adapted for mainstream synagogues.

Rationale and Purpose for the Study

In the study “Camp Works” (Cohen, Miller, Sheskin, & Torr, 2011), researchers presented their conclusion that the Jewish summer-camp experience increases Jewish identity and participation in Jewish life. Through the statistical and analytic review of 26 previous studies of Jewish camping, the researchers presented data indicating that camp succeeds in developing personal Jewish identity and increases adult affiliation with the larger Jewish community. It should be noted that although the concept of Jewish identity will be defined and discussed at length in the following chapters, for the purposes of this study, Jewish identity is considered to be permeable, fluid, and not measurable solely through quantifiable activities, behaviors, or ritual observances.

“Camp Works” (Cohen et al., 2011) acknowledged that attendance at Jewish summer camp helped promote greater Jewish affiliation and enhanced identity among adults who attended camp as children, but failed to determine precisely what it is about camp that actually is so successful in producing these long-term results. I propose that communal singing represents a central element in defining why camp does in fact “work” in creating Jewish identity.

Jewish Summer Camp Magic

The Jewish residential-summer-camp experience has been presented in promotional and academic literature as having “magical” or “enchanting” qualities. Although this term is typically undefined and indeterminate, camp is presented as a
magical environment, or as activities with magical or transformational qualities. For example, the Foundation for Jewish Camp, an advocacy organization for Jewish camp and the development of Jewish camp professionals expressed that the magic of camp is rooted in the 24/7 atmosphere, where the environment, Jewish values, the connection to Israel, and the culture and beliefs of Judaism are part of everyday living.

Information presented as part of Michigan’s Tamarack Camps’ website also reinforced this concept of camp being a magical environment:

Our camp sessions are officially kicked off with a glorious fire sign created by our Israeli Scouts (safety precautions are, of course paramount, as the oldest camper and youngest camper ignite the sign). The fire symbolically burns all summer long through the magic of camp. (Tamarack Camps, 2011)

The director of the Camp Tawonga—a Jewish camp located near Yosemite National Park—referred to camp as “magical” and described how many alumni describe the weeks spent at camp as the happiest times of their lives (Newbrun, 2006). Writing in Reform Judaism Magazine, Lechner (2008) also acknowledged this concept of camp “magic”:

“Camp magic” is a phrase that comes up all the time when talking to former campers and camp staff about Jewish overnight (or resident) camps. And it’s a phrase that, increasingly, educators and philanthropists are banking on to ensure that the Jewish communities of North America groom future generations of engaged Jews. (Lechner, 2008, para. 4)

Zeldin (2006) claimed that the success of Jewish summer camp “magic” relies on
three distinctive elements: charismatic people, intense identification with a larger group, and the reenactment of camp ritual (p. 90). Zeldin also stated that it was this summer camp “magic” that helped facilitate “friendships that have lasted a lifetime” (p. 87) and that this “magic” was responsible for shaping personal, communal, and professional identity. Sales and Saxe (2003) presented four elements necessary for the creation of “camp magic”: (a) a rural setting; (b) a self-contained environment; (c) a Phoenix-like, intentional community that is recreated each summer, and (d) camp-specific rituals, norms, and behaviors that are passed from one generation of campers to the next (pp. 46–49).

For Zeldin (2006) and for Sales and Saxe (2003), the common element for the creation of camp magic is ritual. Communal song is a prominent element in camp ritual, and researchers have acknowledged the centrality of singing to the camp environment. Sales and Saxe (2003) observed, “Song is used to bring order to chaos in the dining hall, to build community, and to create spiritual moments. It brings groups together, it energizes, it creates mood” (p. 84). J. M. Cohen (2006b) noted that by the mid-1950s, communal singing at camp was a well-entrenched practice providing campers with a sense of community and religious identity (p. 178); and Moore (1999) observed the centrality of song and ritual at the Brandeis Camp Institute (established in post-World War II Los Angeles), where the spirituality of Judaism was “affirmed through drama, dance, and especially music” (p. 215). I propose that it is this communal song that is essential to this camp “magic.” Ultimately this communal song, including prayer services and song sessions, help develop a sense of individual “Jewishness,” provide a connection
to the greater Jewish community, and assist in the creation of community.

This current investigation presents an understanding of how communal song, music, ritual, and liturgy function as the “magic” at Jewish summer camps using Camp Hess Kramer, a camp affiliated with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple in Los Angeles as a case study. Camp Hess Kramer is used as a site representative of camps affiliated or associated with the Reform movement of Judaism, and the lessons learned from this case may be transferable to other similar situations.

Researchers have examined Jewish summer camps as a socializing phenomenon (Sales & Saxe, 2003); the importance of Jewish summer camps as contributing to Jewish identity (S. M. Cohen, 1998); and the history of Jewish summer camp music (J. M. Cohen, 2006a, 2006b; Posen, 1993). However, few discuss how communal song at Jewish summer camp aids in the development of Jewish identity. The current literature also does not address the structures and mechanisms present in the camp environment that facilitate communal song to function as an important force in the camp experience.

In this dissertation, I attempt to better understand the role of the summer-camp musical experience in the formation of Jewish identity, the campers’ sense of being part of a greater Jewish collective, and the establishment of community. In addition, in this research I set out to comprehend the interplay of musical, anthropological, religious, and sociological forces present in the summer-camp environment that contribute to the salient role of communal song at summer camp.
Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. What are the structures and mechanisms that place music at Jewish summer camp as central to camp activity?
2. How does music at Jewish summer camp influence the concept of personal “Jewishness”?
3. How does music at Jewish summer camp enable the development of an awareness of the greater Jewish collective (often referred to as Jewish “Peoplehood?”)
4. In what ways does music at Jewish summer camp assist in the development of community?

In addition to these research questions, this dissertation was informed and guided by Franz Rosenzweig’s (2005) philosophy of redemption, Emmanuel Levinas’s (1969, 1981) philosophy of ethical responsibility, and Jacques Derrida’s (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) thoughts regarding hospitality and welcome. All three presented philosophies attempting to interrogate and de-center previously presented Western Hellenistic-Christian philosophies on topics such as temporality, human existence, knowledge of self, identity, and an understanding of God. Their philosophies are also closely interrelated, as Levinas’s work was informed by Rosenzweig’s critique of Western philosophy, Derrida was strongly influenced by Levinas’ writings, and each of them envisioned a world in which all of humanity are actors in the process of redemption.

This concept of redemption, which is discussed following the presentation of the
theoretical and philosophical framework, is significant to my research of music at camp, as many of the songs campers sing make reference to themes of fellowship, social justice, and the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam*—the healing of the world. I argue that the environment of camp provides a setting that is aligned with Rosenzweig’s image of what redemption may look like.

**Theoretical and Philosophical Framework**


The first part of this theoretical and philosophical framework initially presents an overview of Rosenzweig’s philosophy of redemption and an introduction to the Jewish concept of redemption, presented through Biblical and Rabbinic texts and contemporary philosophers. Following this, I present Levinas’ philosophy of ethics and responsibility and Derrida’s philosophy of hospitality. Finally, I provide an illustration of how these
philosophies are manifest through the creation of a contemporary ritual at a Reform Jewish summer camp.

**Rosenzweig and redemption.** The German Jewish philosopher’s most famous work, *The Star of Redemption* (Rosenzweig, 2005), provided insight into how music and the communal *Shabbat* meal are part of the act of religious redemption. Rosenzweig achieved fame chiefly because of the development of the *lehrhaus* (a Jewish adult education center replicated worldwide) and for writing a magnum opus, *The Star of Redemption*. Of equal import are the philosopher’s biographical details: a near conversion to Christianity, a religious epiphany and return to Judaism, and in his final years, being progressively paralyzed and debilitated by amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease).

In 1913, Rosenzweig, living in Leipzig, developed a friendship with Eugene Rosenstock, a law professor who was a Jewish convert to Christianity with whom he engaged in philosophical debate. On July 7, 1913, the two debated all evening and into the early morning about the significance of Christianity and its redemptive work in the world. Rosenstock stressed that for Rosenzweig’s philosophical concepts to become realized, Rosenzweig would have to convert to Christianity, as only Christianity could present a “coherent and compelling path to the kind of reconciliation of selfhood and worldliness which Rosenzweig sought” (Zalta, 2009, para. 1.4). Rosenzweig was duly convinced by Rosenstock’s arguments and vowed to convert. However, three months later, in October 1913, Rosenzweig attended *Yom Kippur* services in Berlin and was so deeply moved and transformed by his experience in the synagogue that he renounced his
decision to convert to Christianity and instead rediscovered his own Judaism. From that moment of epiphany, Rosenzweig devoted his life to Judaism, Jewish philosophy, and Jewish education. *The Star of Redemption* is one of the works written by Rosenzweig following this transformative moment.

Rosenzweig presented “new thinking,” a philosophy that attempted to understand the connected relationships between the self, the world, and God. According to Rosenzweig, humanity’s love for God becomes a love for fellow human beings, and in the demonstration of this love, humankind begins the process of redemption. According to contemporary Jewish philosopher Eugene Borowitz, Rosenzweig’s redemption is one in which:

- a community will appear, whose members, through knowing one another in full individuality, will live with one another in peace and harmony. In turn such communities will overflow to reach all human kind and then out to nature until a final concord of people, the world, and God is achieved. (Borowitz, 1993, p. 133)

This redemption, Rosenzweig acknowledged, would be brought about only by God at an unknown time or day (as cited in Gordon, 2007, p. 131), but the work toward redemption would take place in a community working toward this goal. That is, the redemptive experience is expressed through communal action in which the future is anticipated. Redemption for Rosenzweig did not possess the Biblical imagery of the “lion lying down with the lamb” but is instead an amorphous, undefinable, unimaginable, neo-Romantic process in which communal involvement is central to the process.

The community’s involvement in the form of liturgical celebration and the
cadence of Jewish communal life was key to Rosenzweig’s (2005) vision of the redemptive process. Rosenzweig also viewed the singing of the biblical Psalms as central to the creation of community and redemption. For Rosenzweig, the Psalms represented the hopes, strivings, and aspirations of the Jewish collective. The singing and recitation of these texts represented the individual’s move toward the communal and the present day melding with the future. The Psalms symbolized the unrealized future; their singing “is the eternity in the moment” (Rosenzweig, 2005, p. 272). Rosenzweig stated,

But this is the form of the communal song of the community. The community is not, is not yet, everyone; its We is still limited, it remains simultaneously bound to a You; but—yet—it claims to be everybody. This “yet” is the world of the Psalms. It makes the Psalms the songbook of the community, although they all express themselves in the form of the I. (2005, p. 268)

This ultimate objective is redemption, which becomes most pronounced during the observance of the Sabbath,

in which he broadens his I renounced under the rule of Revelation to the “We all”; and it is only then that he regains his own particularity, but it is no longer his, it is no longer as his homeland, they are no longer his friends and his kin, it is now the property of the new community that God points out to him and whose miseries are his miseries, whose will is his will, whose We is his I, whose—“not-yet” is his “yet.” (Rosenzweig, 2005, p. 269)

An expansion and contemporization of Rosenzweig’s (2005) philosophy regarding this singing of Psalms permits us to view camp as particularly well suited as a
redemptive environment. Rosenzweig viewed the Book of Psalms as a metaphorically redemptive song book for the community: the individual longing made collective. But what if we were to understand Rosenzweig’s image of a metaphorical song book as an actual song book? What if he had known about the Shabbat song session? Or the collections of songs reflecting the attitudes and philosophies of the camp?

This reinterpretation of Rosenzweig allows a consideration of group singing to be part of the redemptive process as part of the anticipated future. It is, as Rosenzweig expressed, “the event not-yet-having-taken-place and yet still-to-come-one-day” (2005, p. 268). In the context of the Jewish summer camp, and especially in conjunction with the celebration of Shabbat, I argue that the singing of all these songs are part of the redemptive process. Regarding Shabbat, Rosenzweig stated,

For on the Sabbath the community feels, as far as it can in any such anticipation, as if redeemed—already today. The Sabbath is the holiday of the Creation, but of a Creation that took place for the sake of Redemption. (Rosenzweig, 2005, p. 334)

The concept and philosophy of redemption as part of Jewish faith and tradition has been transformed and modified for centuries. Writing in the Encyclopedia Judaica, Leslie (2007) defined redemption as “salvation from the states or circumstances that destroy the value of human existence or human existence itself” (p. 151). For the purpose of this dissertation, I focus on redemption and redemptive acts associated with divine action as part of personal and communal redemption. Jewish concepts of redemption, however, extend back to the Bible.

The following example from the prophet Isaiah, who was active in what is known
as the Classical Prophetic period that stretched from the 8th to the 5th centuries BCE, illustrates a redemptive vision in which the people are blessed with productivity and peace:

And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come with shouting to Zion,
Crowned with joy everlasting.
They shall attain joy and gladness,
While sorrow and sighing flee. (Isaiah 35:10; Ochs, 2007)

Following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, with the Jews again in exile, the rabbinic concept of redemption expanded the prophetic vision of a return to the land of Israel and the reestablishment of the monarchy, along with the concept of a personal messiah who would bring about spiritual redemption. As expressed in the Talmud, the great rabbinic compendium of law and philosophy, redemption was also viewed as dependent on repentance and good deeds (Shabbat 118b; Yoma 86b; Sanhedrin 97b). Some Talmudic sources also included the resurrection of the dead as part of this vision of redemption.

Medieval Jewish philosophy understood human’s finite condition “as the primary state from which he required redemption” (Leslie, 2007, p. 152). Adapting Christian ideas, these philosophers presented redemption as hastened by righteous acts in two sequential parts: the Messianic Age and the world to come. As part of the Messianic Age, Jews would be restored to the land of Israel, and righteous Jews would be resurrected. In the second phase of redemption—the world to come—all the dead would be resurrected
and everyone would face God’s final judgment, with those deemed wicked facing eternal punishment and those judged favorably receiving eternal reward.

In the 16th century, with the development of Jewish mysticism, the theology of redemption shifted yet again. In that vision, the creation of the world proceeded through a metaphoric shattering of heavenly vessels. Accordingly, repairing those vessels became essential to the mending process. The repair, or *tikkun*, of these vessels would be brought about when enough holiness emanated from humankind through ethical conduct, adherence to *mitzvoth*, or commandments, and prayer. It is this concept of *tikkun olam*—the repair of the world—that has become central to liberal Jewish redemptive theology.

In the modern era, some thinkers have theorized redemption as the complete triumph of good over evil, the pursuit of social justice, and the establishment of a sovereign, reestablished Jewish state. In the early 20th century, Rosenzweig (2005) contended that redemption represents the state in which the world and humankind are united with God. Twentieth-century thinkers Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel viewed redemption as the elimination of human-created evil. In *I and Thou* (1937), Buber presented the process of redemption as one in which human beings turn from evil and approach God, and God, in turn, enters into relationship with humanity.

Reform Judaism has embraced social justice and *tikkun olam* as central to its philosophy of redemption. At the same time, it has rejected the concept of a personal messiah, found in more traditional branches of Judaism. Reform Judaism has refashioned this concept of messiah to mean an age or time when all of the human race, including the Jewish people, will be redeemed from all that causes our own sense of humanity to be
diminished. The Pittsburgh Platform of the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR, 1999) articulated this attention to *tikkun olam* and social responsibility as necessary for a redemptive world:

Partners with God in *tikkun olam*, repairing the world, we are called to help bring nearer the messianic age. We seek dialogue and joint action with people of other faiths in the hope that together we can bring peace, freedom and justice to our world. We are obligated to pursue *tzedek*, justice and righteousness, and to narrow the gap between the affluent and the poor, to act against discrimination and oppression, to pursue peace, to welcome the stranger, to protect the earth’s biodiversity and natural resources, and to redeem those in physical, economic and spiritual bondage. In so doing, we reaffirm social action and social justice as a central prophetic focus of traditional Reform Jewish belief and practice. (CCAR, 1999, para. 3)

This concept of ethical responsibility is not only congruent with Rosenzweig’s vision of redemption, it is also in line with Levinas’s philosophy.

**Responsibility and ethics in the works of Levinas.** Levinas’s philosophy of ethics and responsibility also informed this dissertation (1969, 1981, 1990; Levinas & Kearney, 1986). Levinas’s philosophical themes are closely connected to his childhood and adolescent experiences, which included Nazi anti-Semitism, the murder of family members during the Holocaust, persecution, and social marginalization.

Levinas was born in Kovno, Lithuania on January 12, 1906. The Jews of Lithuania (often referred to as “Litvaks”) were generally considered *mitnagdim* (literally
"those against") who opposed the more mystical approach of the Hassidic movement of Judaism gaining strength in Eastern Europe in favor of a Judaism that valued intellectualism. In the philosopher's early years, Levinas was surrounded by the clashes of the Russian Revolution, the First World War, and the rise of fascism. Levinas began studies at the University of Strasbourg in 1923, became a French citizen in 1931, served in the French military in 1932, and, in 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, was called into military service again. In January, 1940, Levinas was captured by the Nazis and held as a prisoner of war for the next 4 years. During the war, much of Levinas's family was murdered by the Nazis, although his wife and child escaped death, as they had been hidden in a monastery. The Jews of Levinas's native Lithuania suffered extraordinarily during the Holocaust, with over 90% of the population killed by the Nazis. The opening page of Levinas's Otherwise than Being bears witness to the slaughter of innocents:

To the memory of those who were closest among six million assassinated by the National Socialists, and of the millions on millions of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other man, the same anti-Semitism.

(Levinas, 1981)

Levinas dedicated the book to "those who were closest"—presumably referring to family and friends. In the dedication, Levinas presented not only a memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust—but advanced a plea to all humanity to acknowledge the hatred of the other, by recognizing the nameless and the named, the anonymous and the familial. The emergence from the Nazi camps propelled Levinas to compose a
polemic against Western philosophies, accusing “Western philosophy of betraying the
other in its self-absorbed two-thousand-year struggle to logically define, explain, or
‘know’ the individual” (Stern, 2010, para. 19), rather than have an infinite “willingness to
be available to and for each other’s suffering” (as cited in Putnam, 2008, p. 68).

Levinas’s philosophy focused on the Jewish ethical imperative of responsibility
toward other people. For Levinas, ethics prefaces all, and central to his philosophy is the
ethical responsibility we all have toward the Other, or the autrui.¹ This “someone else” is
that other person one might encounter directly or indirectly: The Other “confronts me and
puts me in question and obliges me” (Levinas, 1969, p. 207). For Levinas, the ethic of
responsibility precedes philosophy and informs all that one does. It obliges the
engagement of the Other, the mitigation of the Other’s sorrow, misery, and sadness, is
fundamentally related to one’s own humanity, and is foundational in one’s essential
obligation to each other as human beings.

One of the philosophical axioms guiding Levinas’s thinking is not whether one is
going to respond to the Other, but rather, what one’s response will be. According to Stern
(2010),

Levinas offers philosophical redemption to post-Holocaust Europe with a
common Jewish ethic; he substitutes the ethically irresponsible self-centered
subject of philosophy with the other, for whom one is responsible. In other words,
his philosophy begins with Jewish responsibility for the other instead of
beginning with self-seeking knowledge and/or salvation for itself. His work is

¹ In Totality and Infinity, the translator, Alphonso Lingis, notes that Levinas had granted
permission for “autrui” to be translated as “Other” and “autre” as “other.”
Other-centered. Like the ancient rabbis, Levinas’s concern is ethics, and in his concern we are shown that our encounters with others begin ethically, which he locates in one’s response for the other by whom one is addressed. (Stern, 2010, para. 26, emphasis in original)

Levinas’s Other is the person (that is, each person) to whom one is responsible, and this Other is revealed in the face. But the face is not simply a physical manifestation, but “a moment of infinity” (Hand, 2007, p. 36) that extends beyond any idea of the Other or otherness that an individual can create when encountering another person. According to Levinas, it is the face revealed that compels each person toward justice; that is, a nonnegotiable obligation and responsibility. Regarding the face, Levinas and Kearney (1986) said,

The approach to the face is the most basic mode of responsibility...[t]he face is the other who asks me not to let him die alone, as if to do so were to become an accomplice in his death. Thus the face says to me: thou shalt not kill. ...

Accordingly, my duty to respond to the other suspends my natural right to self-survival, le droit vitale. ... To expose myself to the vulnerability of the face is to put my ontological right to existence into question. (pp. 23–24, emphasis in original)

The encounter with the face implies obligation and relation, and makes people aware of their own responsibility to the Other, which is best expressed in Judaism through the expression “Hineini.”

Levinas defined the Hebrew word, Hineini, meaning “Here I am” (Putnam, 2008,
p. 73) as “obedience to the glory of the Infinite that orders me to the other” (Levinas, 1981, p. 146). According to Putnam (2008), in the Hebrew Bible, the declaration Hineini performs “the speech act of presenting myself, the speech act of making myself available to another” (emphasis in original, p. 74). Although Hineini occurs in the Hebrew Bible only 14 times, its significance transcends its limited use. When Hineini is uttered in the Bible, three main concepts are generally presented. According to N. J. Cohen (2003), the first sentiment Hineini represents “is the ability to be present for and receptive to the other” (p. xi). The second concept of Hineini embodies the willingness of the one speaking the word to “act on behalf of another” (p. xi), and the third concept of Hineini indicates that the person uttering the word is willing to make a great sacrifice for God. When one utters Hineini, they announce willingness to act, even if they are unsure of the reason for the initial call. Many of the campers interviewed in the course of my study recalled how the words and message of the songs sung at camp presented them with a personal call of Hineini that encouraged them to become involved in acts of tzedakah (charity) and righteousness.

This concept of Hineini resonated in Levinas’s understanding of radical Other-centeredness and provided the underpinning for Levinas’s philosophy of ethics and responsibility. This leads to a world in which redemption seems not just probable but possible. According to Morgan (2007),

What he suggests is that in the face of useless suffering, we need senseless kindness. In place of politics and ideology, we need humanity, goodness, and

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2 Hineini occurs in the story of the binding of Isaac, Jacob’s journey to Egypt to see Joseph, Moses at the burning bush, Samuel’s call to prophecy, and in the book of Isaiah.
ethics. In the place of systems and totalities, we need an acknowledgment and realization of the utterly particular. This would be “redemption of the everyday,” in a sense, not a new version of the old mythologies and metaphysics, but a new version of a new metaphysics and a new philosophy—a metaphysical ethics of a new kind. (p. 18)

This prophetic eschatology, as Levinas called it, is what gives one’s life purpose and significance and reminds people that “our lives are invested with goodness insofar as they are ruled by a sense of compassion and concern for others” (Morgan, 2007, p. 216). Although other religious doctrines may propose a war or a battle for a proposed “end of days,” Levinas rejects this view of redemption. Lives garner meaning not because of the proposition of some mythic battle waged to end all battles, but by the way one acts and behaves during every minute of life. Levinas’ vision of redemption does not wait for the end of days—it happens in the here and now.

**Deconstruction and hospitality.** Derrida is closely associated with the strategy of reading texts called deconstruction. The basic thesis of deconstruction is that the written word is void of the original voice that gave it meaning, and, according to Derrida, it is not possible to know the initial intent or meaning of letters, documents, or written speeches in which the writer is absent. It follows that documents are then open to interpretation, and no individual can claim a correct or true meaning. For Derrida (1997), this does not only apply to written or spoken texts. It extends to multiple aspects of life. In the case of music at summer camp, the lyrics and music of the songs may be considered “texts.” So too, the choreography accompanying the songs, the campers’ manner of dress, their postures,
associated actions during song and prayer, and even the physical songbooks themselves, are all texts.

As a strategy, deconstruction enables one to interrogate texts and to question philosophical, literary, or political presumptions that have traditionally informed previous readings. The deconstructionist reader asserts the absence of absolute truth, as multiple meanings and interpretations are revealed. According to John Caputo, “Deconstruction is hospitality, which means the welcoming of the other” (1997, p. 109). Derrida’s approach to opening text to a multiplicity of interpretations then becomes a form of hospitality, in that it makes room for multiple viewpoints, welcomes other interpretations, and disallows univocality.

Derrida’s (1999a) philosophy of hospitality has roots not only in childhood experiences, but in the study of Levinas’s (1969) Totality and Infinity. Derrida noted that although the term “hospitality” is not used in Levinas’s Totality and Infinity, that work “bequeaths to us an immense treatise of hospitality” (Derrida, 1999a, p. 21). For Derrida, hospitality without boundary or limit becomes a philosophical underpinning with which to enact and enable social and political change:

To put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I open my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.) but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. (Derrida, 2000, p. 25, emphasis in original)
Derrida, however, recognized the conundrum implicit in the notion of unconditional hospitality. In *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, Derrida wrote,

It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place between the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, whoever they may be, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which the unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire. (Derrida, 2004, Kindle location 375–378)

Hospitality, as presented in Derrida's work, is also a "messianicity without messianism" (Bergo, Cohen, & Zagury-Orly, 2007, pp. 33–34) and is associated with a yearning for justice without religion, extending beyond prophetic discourse or discussion. Derrida (2004) proposed that each person is responsible for bringing justice into the present and not waiting for justice to occur, and therefore we are each responsible for the creation of a just world.

Derrida’s (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) philosophical approaches regarding deconstruction and hospitality resonate throughout this research of music at camp by encouraging the examination of traditional camp structures, activities, and communal song to be approached beyond their "definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy" (Caputo, 1997, p. 31). Jewish summer camp, as a hospitable environment in which the door to the Other is opened and all are welcomed,
also propels this research. But just as Derrida reflected on the impossibility of absolute hospitality, an ongoing refrain in the analysis of communal song at camp bears similar caveats: all may be welcome to attend camp, but because of limitations such as space, scheduling, or financial considerations, not all adolescents who want to attend camp may actually be able to participate. In addition, even those in attendance, though they may be invited to participate in song, prayer, ritual, and other activities, often choose to refrain, due to a variety of factors including adolescent lack of interest, discomfort with singing, or a perception that a particular activity is not “cool.”

In the following example of a creative ceremony created at camp, all three philosophies come together and are interwoven in a touching ceremony. Camp becomes the venue and communal song becomes the vehicle for the realization and manifestation of philosophical thought.

**From Theory to Practice: The Philosophies of Rosenzweig, Levinas, and Derrida at Summer Camp**

The songs sung at camp speak of peace and friendship, ending war, respect for each other, and making change in the world. But what do those values, or redemption, more broadly look like when informed by the surroundings and musical possibilities of summer camp? In the environment of camp, the redemptive act does not have to be exclusive to the religious *Shabbat* experience. As Rosenzweig indicated, the beginning of redemption occurs when we live in community, recognizing and respecting each other’s individuality and reach toward the other.

An example of this here-and-now redemption was articulated well by Jaclyn
Fromer (2011), who in the summer of 2011 was a student rabbi at Camp Newman, a summer camp in northern California affiliated with the Reform movement. Fromer recounted the story of a ceremony of *giluach rosh*—a ceremony written especially for the head shaving of an adolescent girl who was going through a second round of chemotherapy for brain cancer. The ritual Fromer created used music as a central portion of the ceremony. The songs and chants chosen reflected both the girl’s difficult circumstance and a message of hope. The 16-year old with cancer had told Fromer that camp was a place where she felt safe, secure, and knew she would be in the company of friends. The ritual began with a chant based on the text from Exodus: *Ozi v’zimrat yah, vay’hili lishua* ("God is my strength and song and will be my freedom"). The words are part of *Shirat HaYam* (The Song of the Sea)—a section of the Bible in which the Israelites celebrate their Exodus, their redemption from Egyptian bondage. Fromer recalled that when the girl’s head was shaved:

Jessica was left with a beautiful bald head. She truly looked gorgeous, and everyone clapped. At the conclusion, five girls from Jessica’s cabin sang a medley of songs—from Adele’s “Make You Feel My Love” to “Isn’t She Lovely” to “Stand by You”. Then the entire group offered blessings to Jessica. To stand in a room full of teenage girls extending blessings to their peer—including strength, love, continued support, confidence, and faith—was nothing short of inspiring. I stood there with my mouth agape, tears flowing from my eyes, as gems of wisdom and maturity passed through the lips of these campers. The whole evening culminated with a celebration featuring Martinelli’s sparkling cider, fresh
fruit and chocolate, and songs of joy. (Fromer, 2011)

This ritual provides a glimpse to how philosophical theory is manifest through real-world experiences in the Reform Jewish summer-camp environment. The religious ritual Fromer created was one of redemption from sickness and pain. This was reflected in the choice of the opening chant—words sung as part of the initial liberation of the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea and traditionally associated with the Israelite passage to freedom. These words from Exodus not only spoke to the situation of the adolescent with cancer, but recall the ancient Israelite experience of being freed from slavery. Redemption for these summer campers is presented as a historic continuum, an experience common to both an ancient and modern community. As Rosenzweig (2005) indicated, the movement toward redemption is made possible through individual and communal actions, and in this ritual, voices joining together in song and prayers created an environment of hope and healing. The campers learned to approach the face of a friend whose cancer and changed appearance may have rendered her physically Other through the ritual Fromer created. The head-shaving ceremony literally transformed the camper’s face and presented her publicly as one battling cancer.

This ritual also presented elements of Derrida’s (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) notion of hospitality: the camper with cancer, acting as host, invites the counselor to devise a ritual during a most vulnerable and difficult time. Similarly, the camper extends an invitation to the counselor to create a ritual that will provide healing and strength for her and for the community around her. The counselor, in turn, becomes the host and invites all of the cabinmates to participate in the devised ritual. In both instances of
invitation, the host and invitee interrogate the ethical relationship with others. The adolescent with cancer trusts that the counselor will create an effective ritual; the counselor invites all the campers to participate, hoping they will respond with sensitivity and caring.

The campers' sung response to Fromer's initial sacred sung text is also noteworthy. After the singing of *Ozi v'zimrat Yah*, the campers responded to Fromer's religious ritual with secular popular songs: their own versions of songs of redemption. Thus, the boundaries between what might be considered sacred and secular songs were blurred. Regardless of the songs' sources, they all became songs of redemption. Derrida's belief in a messianism without religion, as described by Caputo (1997), and Rosenzweig's (2005) religious redemptive community converged in that moment. This ritual, a ceremony Rosenzweig probably could never have anticipated, expands his philosophy regarding the possible paths toward redemption. Camp becomes a locale where redemption exists, and songs are an intrinsic element of this activity.

By creating this ritual, Fromer continues the formidable Jewish tradition of welcome and hospitality that extends from Biblical times to the present day. Since the inception of the Reform Jewish residential camp, songs reflecting this philosophy have been sung by generations of campers.

**Welcome and Hospitality in the Music of Jewish Summer Camp**

The philosophical and Biblical imperative of welcoming the stranger and treating the Other ethically reverberates through the musical activities of communal song at camp and is congruent with the philosophy of Derrida (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2002a,
2002b, 2004), who consistently presented a theory of welcome and hospitality that was Abrahamic in nature. Precedents for this ethical behavior are found in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible). In the Book of Exodus: “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex: 22:20), and “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex 23:9). Derrida’s own childhood experiences with anti-Semitism in colonial French Algeria positioned him as “stranger” and may have influenced his approach to hospitality and welcome.

Rituals also present this theme. In both the Friday night Kiddush (the blessing for wine) and the Passover Seder (a didactic retelling of the Exodus story), a constant and repetitive reference back to Egypt and the command to remember or recall the Israelite bondage is the traditional way of reminding Jews that those who are strangers are worthy of our benevolence and hospitality. At Reform Jewish summer camp, hospitality is manifest not only through the song texts and rituals but also through the interactions between members of the community when music making takes place.

At Camp Hess Kramer, for example, the embrace of the Other is manifest through songs expressing brotherhood, civil rights, and the Jewish concept of tikkun olam, or the repair of the world. These concepts, as part of the communal singing experience, have been present from Reform Jewish camps’ beginnings in the 1950s. Camp as an arena for championing social justice is evident from the recollections presented by J. M. Cohen (2006b) in a discussion of the development of song leading at the first Reform Jewish camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin (established in 1952). As a summer camp sponsored
by the Reform movement, much of the camp’s curriculum, including many musical choices used in communal singing, reflected Reform Judaism’s stance on issues of social justice, religious philosophy, and theology.

J. M. Cohen (2006b) noted that in those early years, the repertoire appropriate for camp was sparse and consisted mainly of a few liturgical pieces and some Israeli pioneer songs. Other song-leading material was selected from spirituals and “brotherhood” songs. One of the first songs of this genre to be introduced to the camp was the Leadbelly song, “We’re in the Same Boat Brother.” According to J. M. Cohen (2006b), many of the songs were culled from the folk-song magazine, Sing Out, and even though the publication had associations with very left-leaning politics, it was “a sign of the camp’s political tendencies that the songs were not disallowed because of content” (p. 185), despite the camp’s disagreement with the songbook’s socialist inclinations. By the 1960s, the repertoire grew and included more music imported from Israel, contemporary settings of Jewish liturgy, and settings of nonliturgical texts. In addition, the English-language “brotherhood” songs were now part of a larger category of folk songs that grew to include a large repertoire of civil rights, antiwar, and social-justice songs. Songs representative of this genre included “Where Have all the Flowers Gone,” “The MTA Song,” “If I Had A Hammer,” “We Shall Overcome,” “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” “I’m on My Way,” “Last Night I had the Strangest Dream,” “Day is Done,” and “Down by the Riverside.”

The Reform Jewish publication Shiréinu (Eglash & Komar, 2002), a collection of songs for use at camps, conclaves, and retreats, includes almost 40 songs categorized as
“Songs of Social Action” (p. 131). In addition to including many of the songs popularized in the 1950s and 1960s, this list includes many contemporary Hebrew-language songs promoting this message of social justice. For example, the Israeli song Ani v’atah proclaims how “You and I can change the world.” A setting of Im ein ani li mi li (with original text from the Pirke Avot (The Ethics of the Fathers; Nichols, 2011b)) translates as: “If I am not for myself who will be for me? But if I am for myself alone, what am I? And if not now, when?” Another song with text from Pirke Avot states, “In a place where there are no human beings, Hillel says, you must strive to be a human being.”

Not only do the texts of the songs present a message of welcome to the Other, the act of song leading itself is a representation of hospitality. As presented above, Derrida (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) viewed hospitality and welcome extending beyond the expected. Similarly, the song leader as host begins the song session not knowing precisely how the community will respond to the melodies or even who among the campers that day will be eager to participate. The song leader “must therefore seek to keep open the possibility of hospitality in its unconditional form, as an opening to the wholly other, the unwelcomable guest, the absolutely unanticipatable arrivant” (Wortham, 2010, Kindle location 922). This is the hospitality Abraham exhibits in the book of Genesis, when the strangers approach his tent: guests were welcomed not as if it were a duty, but the welcomed as if it were a sacred privilege.

In a presentation of guidelines for song leaders, Cantor Jeff Klepper and composer Sam Glaser (2011) expressed the value of preparation and enthusiasm, but also agreed on the importance of being able to adapt at a moment’s notice and understanding
the power of a group that might not respond the way one desires, thereby expressing the song leader’s understanding of the unexpected event that occurs as part of the invitation and welcome.

In the Union for Reform Judaism summer camp web log *Summer Central* (Nichols, 2011b), song leader and composer Nichols recalled a recent experience at camp that affirmed the sense of welcome that occurs through the communal song session:

Sure, there’s the high intensity jumping/almost screaming/cheering part of the song session that makes many old timers roll their eyes and wonder, “What in the heck is going on here?!” AND, it doesn’t end there—not even remotely. I see counselors now literally searching for campers who are on the outside looking in. I hear counselors’ conversations about their successes and joys of engaging with campers during song sessions. It’s beautiful to behold. But song sessions are not limited to the rut of loud singing only. There’s something else happening at [Goldman Union Camp Institute] that I don’t see ANYWHERE else. There is a welcoming spirit, openness, and a hunger for gentle, tender and expansive singing in harmony. We experience it daily in the dining hall and in the Beit T’filah (our outdoor chapel). The dynamic is intensified on Shabbat. The last third of the song session is done in the dark with candles softly lighting each table. Our community is seated at their tables and it sings its heart out. Harmonies are thick and luscious. It’s truly breathtaking. I don’t hear the staff complaining that they feel forced. I hear the staff saying, “Thank you” and “Wow” and “Oh my God, did you hear camp tonight?” I also notice that “the tough, macho jocks” are singing. And you
know what? They sound fantastic. They really do. I’ve let them know and they say things to me like, “Thanks, man, I love it.” “Dude, seriously, that was the most fun I’ve had in a long time.” (Nichols, 2011b, para. 1)

Nichols’s (2011b) web-log post revealed not only pertinent information about the musical diversity at camp, but also expressed how camp provides an opportunity for involvement and engagement in the communal experience for those who ordinarily may not have taken part or only participated from the periphery. Nichols’s recollection is a contemporary presentation and extension of the Biblical statement of Hineini and illustrates welcome and hospitality at summer camp in the environment of communal singing.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The experience of communal song at camp is one filled with song leaders strumming guitars, campers eagerly singing familiar and newly composed songs, often accompanied by rhythmic clapping, and hand and body motions campers learned from each other that have been passed on from generation to generation. At other times, group singing is more reverent and contemplative, as when campers are seated in the outdoor chapel on Friday evening, arms wrapped around each other's shoulders, singing songs and prayers about peace, hopes for a better future, and the beauty of the Sabbath.

The musical experience of group song at camp is rich and varied, and an understanding of this musical experience at summer camp and how it informs Jewish-identity development (individual and communal) is predicated on an understanding of a variety of subjects presented as part of this literature review. This review is presented as if navigating through the rings of a redwood or the layers of an onion: moving in a series of imagined concentric circles from the large concepts of community to the personal issues of individual identity. Through a critical review of these topics, I explore the interconnectedness of these issues as they relate to the issues of individual and communal identity formation and the development of community.

Concepts of Jewish Community

The concept of Jewish community is reviewed through Biblical, Rabbinic, Talmudic, and Jewish liturgical sources, as well as through the writings of contemporary Jewish sociologists and theologians. This section concludes with a review of literature presenting the Jewish summer camp as a form of community.
Community in the Bible, Mishnah, and Talmud. From Biblical times to the present day, the terms used to express community in a Jewish context have changed semantically and sociologically. Biblical terminology used to express an idea of community includes *Yisrael* (referring to the entire nation of Israel), *shivtei Yisrael* (the entire community), *ha-am* (the people), *b'nei Yisrael* (the children of Israel), *kol ish Yisrael* (the men of Israel), *adat Yisrael* (the congregation of Israel), and *ha-kahal* (the congregation). The terms are often used interchangeably and often appear in quick succession, as evidenced in Judges 20–21 and 1Kings 12. According to Weinfeld (2007), the use of similar terms to indicate social institutions is typical of documents in Syria–Palestine and Mesopotamia during the second half of the second millennium BCE, and although the terms are often interchangeable, the meaning of these terms is dependent on the Biblical context (Weinfeld, 2007, p. 158).

Jewish community in the Middle Ages. Of all the terms, the word *kehilla* (from the root kahal) emerges as the one most commonly used to express the concept of the Jewish community, especially from the Middle Ages onward: Jewish communities that were “parallel to and within Christian and Muslim ones” (Ben-Sasson, Levitats, Hirschberg, Elazar, & Chanes, 2007, p. 101). In the Middle Ages, the Jewish *kehilla* was responsible for tax collecting on behalf of the ruling monarchy, the establishment of corporate organizations designed to interface with the dominant Christian culture, and the creation of policies that would serve to guarantee that each community would adhere to Jewish law (*halakhah*). Individual communities (*kehilot*) offered its members social-welfare services, financial assistance, an educational system, and religious functions.
Jewish community in the United States. In the United States, community organization was of a local nature until the late 19th century, and existed in the form of burial societies, charitable organizations, synagogues, educational institutions, hospitals, and other structures modeled on those found in Europe. The large migration of Eastern European Jews in the years between 1880 and 1920 led to the establishment of landsmanshaft organizations. These community structures were established to aid recently arrived Jewish immigrants based on town or geographic origin. It was not until the late 19th century that attempts were made to establish a larger network of Jewish charities incorporating all these various functions, with the first attempt at organizing a citywide communal structure in Boston in 1895 with the formation of The Boston Federation of Jewish Charities. This association of Jewish philanthropies was linked with Jewish social-service providers and allowed for collective fundraising and a centralized budget. This model was eventually widely duplicated throughout the United States. The Jewish Federation (as it is now known) has undeniably played, and continues to play, an important role in the Jewish community, but these federation councils represent just one strata of American Jewish communal life. Synagogues, schools, and Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) also play a salient role in American Jewish life, as they provide not only a setting for prayer and worship but act as centers for education, social events, youth groups, and affiliated men’s and women’s organizations.

The beginning of Jewish denominational organizations began toward the end of the 19th century. Under the guidance of Rabbi Wise of Cincinnati, American Reform Judaism was established as the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1873), with
the Hebrew Union College (1875), and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) (1889) as affiliates.

Along with the Jewish Federation and synagogues, JCCs also act as havens for Jewish learning, recreation, and organization. The JCCs’ many activities include the support and sponsor of sports programs, preschools, day camps, residential camps, learning for older adults, and the promotion of social-justice and Israel-advocacy activities. The Jewish community also embraces a multitude of political and cultural organizations representing the wide spectrum of Jewish beliefs and interests. For example, Hadassah is the worldwide women’s Zionist organization; B’nai B’rith is a humanitarian and advocacy organization with an international presence; the American Israel Public Affairs Committee is a political organization whose mission is to enhance the relationship between Israel and the United States; J Street is a pro-Israel, pro-peace organization. The Anti-Defamation League is a group originally organized to fight anti-Semitism; Jewish World Watch fights genocide throughout the world; and American Jewish World Service is an organization that supports community-based organizations and projects in 35 countries throughout the world. The aforementioned organizations constitute a small fraction of the hundreds of Jewish organizations reflecting the wide diversity and pluralism of the Jewish community.

**Contemporary Definitions of Jewish Community**

Recent definitions of localized Jewish community acknowledge the pluralism inherent in the larger Jewish community, while also recognizing the potential for Jewish community existing beyond the normative structures of synagogues, community centers,
social and fraternal groups, and political organizations. Leiner (2010) presented community as a structure capable of sustaining and strengthening Jewish life. Nussbaum (2011, p. 102) described community as an environment that enabled members “to take ownership of their own Jewish identity, encourage people to find personal meaning in Jewish experiences, and consciously foster social connections to create a strong sense of community.” Jacobs (2011) presented contemporary community as a “sense of shared destiny, manifested in the obligation to care for other members of the community, as well as in the joy of partaking in others’ celebrations” (p. 3). L. A. Hoffman (2006) proposed that the model Jewish community should be an environment in which learning, worship, meaningful relationships, and acts of social justice also enable its members to celebrate each other’s sacred stories and encounter the holy. Eisen (1997) stated that the Jewish community is the environment where ritual is celebrated, social justice is practiced, and Jewish culture is transmitted. Wolfson (2006) presented community as an environment facilitating engaging prayer and ritual, welcome and hospitality, and opportunities for acts of social justice. Even though the definitions and terminology differ slightly, these definitions agree that the idealized community must satisfy many of its inhabitants’ spiritual and physical needs through the deepening of social relationships, communal celebration, educational activities, participation in each other’s physical and social welfare, and a perception that the specific community is part of a greater whole.

Jewish Summer Camp as Community

Jewish summer camp embodies the attributes and concepts of Jewish community, historically and more recently. Although summer camp is only a temporarily constructed
community existing for a few months each year, the camp functions as community, with the staff, counselors, and campers gathering to celebrate Jewish life and ritual, foster social connections, express a shared destiny, and encourage camp participants to find personal meaning in Jewish experiences. Individual camps define their concept of community through articulated mission statements, publicity, and advertisements. The mission statement for Camp Hess Kramer (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 2011) also articulated the theme of camp as community, while stressing the ability of camp to enable campers to develop a personal sense of Judaism:

Being part of a cabin, of a unit, of a camp calls on each member to actively engage in the community and to allow each member space to be who they want to be, specifically the Jew they want to be in this world. At Wilshire Boulevard Temple Camps, we strive to build a place where everyone is equal and included, supported and cared for, connected and challenged. Wilshire Boulevard Temple Camps gives children a better understanding of their Jewish background while giving them a summer they will never forget. (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 2011, para. 1)

Camp Newman, in Santa Rosa, California, also articulated the concept of camp as community and as an experience that could potentially enhance personal identity:

Our mission is to inspire campers and staff to take camp home and apply their Jewish learning to their daily lives, ultimately bettering themselves, their communities and the world. We fulfill this mission by creating a spiritual oasis that bestows on campers and staff enhanced self-esteem, a more positive Jewish
identity, a greater knowledge of Judaism and lifelong friendships. We create an enriching, enjoyable community of living Judaism for all ages, all seasons and all of life. (Union for Reform Judaism, Camp Newman, 2011, p. 1)

Camp Alonim, located in Simi Valley, California, articulated similar themes in its vision statement:

Camp Alonim strives to spark a love for Jewish culture, tradition, and community in our campers by exposing them to a multitude of ways to be Jewish. We see every activity we offer as a “gateway”—a means by which they might engage with being Jewish. (Camp Alonim, 2011, p. 1)

Camp as an environment that not only builds a local community, but aids in the construction of community outside of camp is presented in The Foundation for Jewish Camp’s (2011) response to the question: “Why Jewish Camp?”

Camp builds community. Jewish camp offers all the benefits of other summer camps, while giving your child the chance to experience Jewish community in a safe, supportive setting. Camp presents your child the opportunity to mature and gain independence, to learn social skills, and explore personal interests. At Jewish camp, daily activities are often enriched by Jewish values and the culture of Judaism. (Foundation for Jewish Camp, 2011, p. 2)

The Jewish summer camp exemplifies the definition of the kehillah—the Jewish community. This kehillah is an environment in which the ideals that all are welcome, all participate equally, and all are cared for are manifest. The camp embodies not only the attributes of kehillah—that all-embracing sense of community—but camp becomes a
Kehillah kedoshah—a sacred community. Nichols (2011a, 2011b), a prominent camp song leader and a composer of popular Jewish songs, extolled this concept of sacred community in the composition Kehillah Kedoshah. With words derived from Deuteronomy 29:9 that originally stated, “You are standing here this day, all of you, before Adonai your God” Nichols sang:

If you are “atem” then we’re “n’tzavim.”

We stand here today and remember the dream.

Kehilah kedoshah, kehilah kedoshah...

Each one of us must play a part. Each one of us must heed the call.

Each one of us must seek the truth. Each one of us is a part of it all.

Each one of us must remember the pain. Each one of us must find the joy.

Each one of us, each one of us. (Nichols, 2011a, p.1)

Nichols’ lyrics remind people that being part of this sacred collective requires each individual to have an awareness of the imperative of individual and of communal responsibility. This is a message not only presented at many Jewish summer camps; it is one of the axiomatic principles of Judaism.

This discussion of Jewish community acknowledges the Jewish camp as a distinct form of Jewish community. However, camp is not just a community; it is a holy community—a kehillah k’doshah—with roots in Jewish theology and history. This sacred community participates in a variety of rituals that include communal song as a prevalent feature. These rituals help coalesce the community; those rituals that exploit the “in

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3 Atem nitzavim is the transliterated Hebrew of Deuteronomy 29:9. It may be translated as “You stand this day.”
between spaces” occurring in the lives of those attending Jewish summer camp are especially powerful. I theorize that part of what makes Jewish camp so memorable and such a formidable force in the shaping of Jewish identity are the various rituals that provide opportunities for encountering these transitional spaces and times, which Victor Turner (1969) referred to as liminal.

The Theory of Liminality

A summer at Jewish residential camp puts campers into an environment presenting multiple opportunities for encountering the liminal, due to the camp’s environment, activities, and the campers. Before a discussion of camp as an environment filled with liminal opportunity is presented, a review of this concept, presented by Turner (1969), is warranted.

The theory of liminality was initially presented in Van Gennep’s *Rites of Passage* (1960) and further developed by Turner in the 1960s. Van Gennep delineated three phases in a rite of passage: separation, transition, and incorporation. In the first phase there is a clear demarcation between that which is sacred and that which is profane. This act of separation, according to van Gennep, is accompanied by rituals involving the subjects’ detachment from their previous status. It is this next state—the one of transition—that van Gennep labeled limen (Latin for threshold). This limen is a period of ambiguity often devoid of the elements of either the separation or incorporation phase, and it is this liminal stage that is often marked by formation of communal effervescence. The third phase—that of incorporation—is marked by symbolic acts that place the participants in their new status or station. Jewish summer camp is just such an
environment in which these liminal states and statuses abound. I have identified three overarching liminal spaces at Jewish summer camp: the physical environment of camp, the rituals of *Shabbat*, and adolescent campers as liminal beings.

**Camp as a physically liminal environment.** The physical setting of camp is itself a liminal environment. Most residential camps are located in rural or semirural locations, but they are not totally isolated from the outside world: food and supplies arrive by truck, mail is delivered, care packages from home are eagerly anticipated, and campers are often connected to parents through the Internet, cell phones, and social media. Camp becomes a liminal space, as it is neither home nor school. Campers are free to take risks and explore new experiences in the physically safe and emotionally protective environment of camp, devoid of the strictures of home and the rules of school. Camp even exists in a liminal space in relation to the school year: at the end of one year and before the beginning of the next.

Jewish summer camps were "constituted as a quintessential 'liminal' space" (Prell, 2009, p. 6) and were used as an opportunity to explore Jewish life in America through education. This in-between environment, according to Prell (2009), was a perfect place to explore the paradoxes facing the Jewish community during the mid-20th century. Campers discussed such topics as *Where do Jews fit in society? What are the ethical and religious responsibilities of a Jew living in America? What is the relationship between the past and the present?* The questions and decisions facing campers "took on a different meaning in the context of summer camp than they did in the classroom because, however artificially, in the liminal space of camp, these answers were lived within community"
(Prell, 2009, p. 8). Camp as an environment in which campers seek answers to social, ethical, and religious questions continues to the present day, and therefore the educational aspect of summer camp remains strong. Jewish summer camp became an environment noted for personal philosophical and theological exploration as well as an opportunity for clarification of individual values.

**Camp ritual as liminal.** The celebration of *Shabbat* at camp is one that emphasizes the physical and spiritual movement from the sacred to the profane. On Friday afternoon at Camp Hess Kramer, campers are led in procession from the cabin area to the chapel. Before entering the outdoor chapel, song leaders hold the campers until all are assembled at a wooden footbridge leading into the chapel. With the bridge as a liminal space, the anticipation of physically and spiritually moving into *Shabbat* is heightened.

In *From Ritual to Theater* (1982), Turner noted that this movement from one social status to another is often “accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another” (p. 25), and in *The Ritual Process* (1969), Turner described the liminal environment as “a status or state or cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (1969, p. 94). The wooden footbridge provides this place of transition.

At Hess Kramer and many other Reform-affiliated camps, the song session following the Friday night service and the *Shabbat* dinner is not a religious ritual *per se*, but is certainly ritualized behavior that functions quasiliturgically. This song session exists in the liminal space after the Friday night dinner when certain rules or conventions
are discarded. For example, in many camps, Friday night is the one night when campers are not required to sit with their assigned cabins, but rather seating is open and unassigned. This is congruent with Turner’s (1969) assertion that liminality and communitas “emerges where social structure is not” (p. 126).

Chandler-Ezell (2008) wrote that the liminal state typified as “repetitive and rhythmic singing, dancing, and chanting together, participants enter a mild trance state. This increases suggestibility and feelings of solidarity with other participants, a phenomenon called communitas” (p. 11). The service and the song session provide contemporary examples of rituals occurring in liminal environments.

**Adolescents as liminal.** Although environment of camp and the rituals presented in the course of a summer can clearly be seen as liminal, adolescents may also be considered liminal beings. Not quite children and not quite adults, adolescents truly represent the state of being in-between. Sardiello’s (1994) discussion of “Dead Head” culture and Hebdige’s (2002) analysis of the Punk movement both noted that adolescents are liminal beings seeking group experiences or activities to provide them with a sense of identity or belonging. Sardiello noted how the music at the concerts, Grateful Dead iconography, and certain recreational drugs provided adolescents with group cohesion and solidarity. Similarly, Hebdige indicated that adolescents participating in punk culture assumed certain dress codes, styles of dancing, and haircuts as a way of finding unity. The adolescent Jewish camper, as a liminal being in a liminal space, finds group solidarity through the songs and dances learned and the shtick developed as their own form of personal agency and group identity.
Since their inception, American summer camps in general and Jewish summer camps more specifically have fostered children’s identity, sense of self, and provided “the first experience of community beyond their immediate family and neighborhoods” (Paris, 2008, Kindle location 109). The following discussion of the historical development of Jewish camping in the United States provides an understanding of how these themes of sacred community have been present since the origin of American Jewish residential camping.

**Jewish Residential Summer Camps**

The study of the Jewish summer camp experience is limited. In “How Goodly Are Thy Tents”: *Summer Camps as Jewish Socializing Experiences*, Sales and Saxe (2003) discussed the value that Jewish summer camp has in developing feelings toward Judaism and community. They based their research on visits to 18 Jewish camps over the course of one summer. In *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Jewish Camping*, Lorge and Zola (2006) provided an array of articles and analyses that presented the history of Reform Jewish summer camping in the United States. As the curators of an exhibit on Jewish camping, Weissman-Joselit and Mittelman edited the catalogue, *A Worthy Use of Summer* (1993), which provided insight into the development of the Jewish summer camp, how it related to the development of Jewish American identity, and how a variety of different Jewish summer camps expressed the ideologies and philosophies of their sponsoring organizations. Krasner (2011) presented an historical overview of early developments in Jewish camping as it related to the philosophies and programs advanced by Jewish educational pioneer Benderly.
Paris (2008) presented a comprehensive historical overview of the development of American sleep-away camps from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1940s and provided great insight into early Jewish camping. The historical background of camps, Jewish and not, assisted in providing a contextual understanding of Jewish-camp development. The author’s emphasis on the representation of campers’ inner lives and how “children made their own meanings out of what was offered them” (Kindle location 319) provided valuable insight into concepts of children’s personal agency, regardless of the examined time period. These sources aided in the following historical overview of Jewish residential camping.

Non-Jewish residential camping in the United States began during the 1860s and 70s, initially serving predominately wealthy White boys from the Northeast, and often featured soldier or Native American themes as part of the camping experience. However, by the turn of the century, a variety of social-welfare organizations and religious groups developed residential camping opportunities for poor immigrant children to provide a momentary respite from the conditions of the urban centers. According to Zola (2006), camping as a social movement developed as part of American Progressivism, with doctors, clergy, and educators as camping’s initial primary advocates. The advent of greater industrialization and manufacturing in the cities, accompanied by a surge in foreign immigration, created unsanitary and crowded living conditions. Camping was viewed as an antidote to urban squalor that provided much needed access to open space, clean air, and wholesome food. Zola presented the following theoretical ideals that eventually shaped American camping and Jewish camping:
1. In its early years camping was clearly influenced by Dewey, as the camp was seen as a supplement to formal education and with a clear philosophy of learning through doing.

2. Camp was also presented as an environment that promoted “the values of learning, personal growth and increased spiritual awareness” (Zola, 2006, p. 6).

3. The heritage, folklore, and myths of Native American peoples played a large role in camp culture. The proponents of using Native American folklore, decorative motifs, and mythology believed that the “communal experiences with Native American culture ultimately would produce a better adjusted adult who would be furnished with the emotional tools needed to ‘rebuild American homes’” (Zola, 2006, p. 6).

4. Advocates of camping contended that increased leisure time among adolescents posed great danger to society. The camping experience and its emphasis on wholesome recreation and physical activity were seen as a needed antidote.

Along with these theoretical ideals, Jewish residential camping, according to Zola (2006), also exhibited three developmental phases:

**First phase: Social progressivism.** The first phase (from the last years of the 19th century through approximately 1910) was advanced by social progressives hoping the summer-camp experience would prove beneficial for immigrant children living in crowded urban conditions. These camps also hoped to “Americanize” immigrant children
as well as provide educational, recreational, and spiritual enhancement. A parallel goal was also true for Jewish summer camps.

Although some Jewish camps retained the Native American motif that had been popularized in non-Jewish camping, others began to use concepts from Jewish culture and Jewish history (e.g., cabins were named Jerusalem or Tel Aviv rather than Apache or Mohawk). Camps organized by Zionist organizations also began to use Hebrew vocabulary and terminology in the camp environment.

**Second phase: Revitalization of Jewish education.** The next phase of development commenced with the establishment of the Central Jewish Institute (CJI) in 1916 on Manhattan’s Upper East Side. CJI’s mission was to “vitalize Jewish education by integrating Judaism within the context of Americanism” (Zola, 2006, p. 15). Classes were offered for adults, children, and adolescents, and CJI eventually established two camps: Cejwin (an acronym derived from Central Jewish Institute) and Camp Boiberik, a secular camp that featured Yiddish language and culture. The success of Jewish camping was reinforced by the theoretical statements of educators whose “research suggested that camping programs strongly influenced the attitudes and habits of campers” (Zola, 2006, p. 16).

According to Krasner’s (2011) volume tracing the history of Benderly, the founder of the first Bureau of Jewish Education in New York, and followers known as the “Benderly Boys,” much of Jewish educational camping in the first quarter of the 20th century was influenced by philosophical leanings of antimodernism and embraced the romantic notions of poets such as Walt Whitman (Krasner, 2011, p. 283). These early
camp pioneers
treated the wilderness as a place of refuge and endowed it with the transformative power to Americanize the immigrant soul. But what especially attracted them to the isolation of the summer camp as an educational setting was the ability to simulate an idealized Jewish environment where ... camp would be a total environment where exposure to external, potentially corrosive forces could be regulated and minimized (Krasner, 2011, p. 283)

The camp setting permitted children to be removed from the influences of family, home, school, and the synagogue, and “potentially corrosive forces could be regulated and minimized” (Krasner, 2011, p. 283). These early Jewish campers were provided with an atmosphere that permitted them to experience Jewish life around the clock in which the campers were to be provided with life skills and lessons that would influence their current behavior and that of their adult lives.

Schoolman, an early advocate for educational camping, referred to camp as an “experience in the art of Jewish living” (as cited in Krasner, 2011, p. 269). Schoolman’s philosophy depended on the notion that learning about Judaism and living Judaism could not be disassociated from each other, and even in these first years of Jewish camping, “Jewish culture, motifs, and practices were imbedded into the camp’s practice and integral to its activities” (Krasner, 2011, p. 269). Central to this initial philosophy was the incorporation of Jewish ritual and Jewish culture, including art, ceremonial objects, and music. This early generation of camp educators saw ritual and music as central to the Jewish camping experience. These camps were largely supported by a corps of volunteers
who understood and were motivated by the importance of the Jewish values of *tzedakah* (charity), *gemilut chasidim* (acts of loving kindness), and the Talmudic dictum: *Kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba-zeh* (all of Israel is responsible for the other’s well-being). These concepts continue to be fostered in Camp Hess Kramer and other Jewish camps across North America.

**Third phase: Growth of the suburbs.** By the mid-20th century, as Jews left the urban centers for the suburbs, camp provided an immersive Jewish environment that the suburbs lacked. The third phase of Jewish-camp development began approximately in the late 1940s and early 1950s and was also marked by the development of camps that served the various Jewish religious movements in the United States. The Conservative Jewish movement established Camp Ramah in 1947; the Reform movement opened its Union Institute in 1952. Camp Hess Kramer, the camp featured in this research project, was established in 1952 in California.

Music is recognized as an important feature of the Jewish camp experience (Lorge & Zola, 2006; Sales & Saxe, 2003), but there is little research specifically about the phenomenon of communal singing at Jewish summer camp. Posen (1993) presented a history of singing at Jewish summer camps as part of the exhibit catalogue and documented the ways singing at camp helped spark Jewish campers’ awareness of personal Jewishness and Zionism. Singing also served as a socializing mechanism, as learning camp songs helped new campers fit in. Posen also acknowledged the lack of standardized camp music repertoire because of the wide variety of religious and political orientations of Jewish camps. Jewish camps not only incorporated many of the campfire-
type songs of non-Jewish camps, but also included a wide variety of songs that include singing in Hebrew, Yiddish, and Ladino (a Spanish-Jewish dialect spoken by Sephardic Jews), as well as prayer texts. In an earlier study, Posen (1975) presented a history of singing at summer camps, although the study was not limited exclusively to Jewish summer camps. J. M. Cohen (2006a, 2008) provided a history of song leading, tracing its origins in Reform Jewish camps to 1939. In this work he addressed the tradition and significance of the Shabbat song session and its importance as a crucial element in the summer campers' religious experience. This dissertation assists in filling this void in comprehensive research regarding communal song at Jewish summer camps.

Through all the changes and developments of the Jewish summer camp, communal song has remained an important element of the camp experience. The following section presents theories regarding transmission of music and ritual from camper to camper, how campers learn music in this environment, and how this practice aids in the development of identity and community.

Cultural Capital and Communities of Practice

In this literature review I initially presented the concepts of Jewish community and camp as community. Now, moving from the outer layers or rings of this metaphorical tree toward the center, I present how this community learns, shares information, and acquires knowledge.

J. M. Cohen (2006a, 2006b, 2008) indicated that the song session at Jewish summer camp provides campers not only with spirit and identity, but also with liturgical and textual information, as well as a Hebrew vocabulary (J. M. Cohen, 2006b). Jewish
summer camp as a community facilitates a high rate and great volume of information exchange among campers. The intensity of the camp environment, with its close living quarters and activities extending from early in the morning until late at night, is a fertile environment for the vivacious exchange of music, concepts, and practices. As my interviews with camp alumni indicated, much of what is learned at camp may become assimilated into adult life and help campers affiliate as members of the greater Jewish community. This sharing of information is best explained through two theories: Bourdieu’s (1972, 1986) theories of cultural capital and habitus, and the concept of communities of practice represented by Wenger (1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Bourdieu’s (1986) theory of cultural capital presented acquired skills, information, and education as a personal resource potentially used to achieve economic gain, financial success, or to advance one’s social status. Bourdieu (1986) also proposed a theory of embodied cultural capital represented by the acquisition of certain skills, competencies, or training. Bourdieu believed,

> the accumulation of capital in the embodied state … presupposes a process of embodiment, incorporation … which must be invested personally by the investor.

Like the acquisition of a muscular physique or a suntan, it cannot be done at second hand. (p. 48)

Cultural capital is gained through doing, and the recipient of this capital must actually be a participant in the acquisition process. For campers at summer camp this concept represents skills obtained that enable participation in Jewish life and ritual. When
campers learn how to recite certain prayers, internalize prayer choreography, or use Hebrew expressions, they acquire a form of embodied cultural capital.

Bourdieu's (1986) premise also presented cultural capital acquired through material goods. These material goods included media such as "writings, paintings, monuments, instruments etc." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 50). These material goods become objectified, as a certain amount of embodied cultural capital is necessary to use and understand them. For example, for the summer-camp population, sacred objects and holy texts function as material capital, and for these objects to become part of their cultural and religious life, campers must learn how to use them appropriately and properly.

Obtaining cultural capital, even in the environment of the summer camp, may permit entrance into the power, status, and privilege associated with inclusion in that self-selected group, as well as through the knowledge acquired there for those who have attended camp, compared to adolescents who do not have the financial means to go to summer camp, or those who do have the financial means and choose not to attend.

In the summer-camp experience, the Torah scroll may be used as an example of capital, with the scroll as objectified cultural capital, and the ability to read and chant it as embodied cultural capital. The scrolls, however, are most frequently not privately owned, but are the property of institutions. Therefore, it is not the ownership of the scroll that produces capital, but the ability to demonstrate to the community that one has the skills to chant knowledgeably from the Torah that becomes a valued skill. Other ritual skills representative of embodied cultural capital include knowledge of songs and their hand movements, recitation of blessings, chanting of prayers, and the ability to recite the grace
after meals (*Birkat HaMazon*). All of this capital not only aids an adolescent in the summer-camp environment but forms the basis of an embodied practice informing personal and communal identity throughout life. Eventually the group and the individual obtain habits, skills, actions, and thoughts that become embodied practice, seen as essential to the development of religious identity: “Gestures, postures, music and movements tell the story and signal our location in it” (Ammerman, 2003, p. 215). Much of the cultural capital an individual possesses is also related to Bourdieu’s (1972) concept of *habitus*, which he defined as:

systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends. (Bourdieu, 1972, p. 72)

Turino (2008), an ethnomusicologist and anthropologist, considered this *habitus* to be composed of dispositions and habits that are products of the environment and are then internalized into “what we think, do and make (practice)” (p. 120). Longhurst (2007, pp. 185–186) explained that *habitus* not only includes the habits an individual develops, but also the ways in which the world might be viewed.

For Jewish summer campers, the concept of *habitus* is central to the deep sense of attachment to camp and to other camp alumni, and essentially becomes part of their worldview. The musical cultural capital the campers obtain from successive summers at
camp not only binds them to the camp community, it also helps to inform their sense of individual Jewish identity and affiliation to the greater Jewish community.

This acquiring of skills, of essentially “becoming” something or someone, is well documented in the literature. Benor (2012) presented how *baalei teshuvah*—those Jews who have recently become religiously observant—acquire the cultural norms of their new Orthodox communities. These newly Orthodox Jews consciously learn everything from manner of dress, hairstyle, foods to eat, and language. In a study of drug users, Becker (1953) noted that a specific sort of behavior is predicated on a “sequence of social experiences during which the person acquires a conception of the meaning of the behavior” (p. 235). Becker added that for someone to become part of a culture, they must learn behavior through the “indirect means of observation and imitation” (1953, p. 237).

In their discussion of “doing gender,” West and Zimmerman (1987) asserted that “doing gender” means “creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological” (p. 137). According to the authors, gender is a learned behavior and a self-regulating process, in which gender ideals are observed, assimilated, and become habituated behaviors (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 142). As in the culture at large, adolescents at summer camp learn gender roles, in this case through song. Many of the songs at camp present gender portrayals that are part of camp culture and tradition, and difficulties arise because of these gendered songs. These issues and possible ameliorations are discussed in the fourth chapter of this dissertation.

Many of the skills obtained at summer camp are used throughout campers’ adult lives. The camp functions as a learning environment in which campers obtain certain
knowledge, enabling them to function as members of the camp community and as more knowledgeable participants in the greater Jewish community.

**Communities of Practice**

Wenger's concept of "communities of practice" (1998) provides a theoretical framework applicable to the situated musical learning at summer camp. First, I present a summary of Wenger's theories; then I explore how communities of practice aid in the formation of identity.

**Defining communities of practice.** These "communities of practice" are defined below:

Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. ... These people don't necessarily work together every day, but they meet because they find value in their interactions. As they spend time together, they typically share information, insight, and advice. They help each other solve problems. They discuss their situations, their aspirations, and their needs. (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4)

Communities of practice, proposed by Wenger, are not only reserved for the workplace: Communities of practice are everywhere. We all belong to a number of them—at work, at school, at home, in our hobbies. Some have a name, some don't. Some we recognize, some remain largely invisible. We are core members of some and occasional participants in others. Whatever forms our participation takes, most of
us are familiar with the experience of belonging to a community of practice.

(Wenger et al., 2002, p. 5)

**Summer camp as a community of practice.** Jewish summer camp may be considered a community of practice, as much of the knowledge presented and shared at camp is in line with Wenger’s (1998; Wenger et al., 2002) theories and examples. The camp atmosphere fosters all forms of learning: explicit and tacit, formal and informal, individual and communal. Summer camp is an environment with a sense of shared responsibility for problem solving, where a fluid exchange of ideas is present, and various modes of learning occur.

Wenger et al. (2002) proposed that all communities of practice share three structural elements: (a) a domain of knowledge, (b) a community that cares about this domain, and (c) the practice they share to be effective in their domain. The domain creates a sense of identity, is its *raison d’être*, and presents the community’s place in the world. The community is “a group of people who interact, learn together, build relationships, and in the process develop a sense of belonging and mutual commitment” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 34), whereas practice is a community’s way of examining a preexisting body of knowledge and the latest advances in the field. “As a product of the past, it embodies the history of the community and the knowledge it has developed over time” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38). Interaction takes place, and members of the community share ideas and learn from each other. Practice implies a “set of socially defined ways of doing things in a specific domain” (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 38). This is represented by a common or shared repertoire of problem-solving tools and techniques.
At summer camp, counselors, specialists, and administrators often gather to solve problems, share expertise, and learn from each other’s experiences. Song leaders will often gather formally and informally to share new music, learn techniques for better song leading, or set texts to new melodies. Similarly, campers will often teach each other new dances, moves, or gestures for use at song sessions outside the dining hall. All of these constitute active communities of practice.

Comunities of practice and identity. According to Wenger (1998), the community of practice does not only represent a functional model for the sharing of information but also aids in identity formation and development. Wenger’s research indicated four ways these communities of practice assist in the formation of identity, all of which are applicable to summer camp:

1. Communities of practice aid the formation of identity through negotiated experiences. Wenger stated: “We define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation as well as by the ways we and others reify ourselves” (1998, p. 149). Communities of practice define a community through three dimensions: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. Mutual engagement implies that one learns “certain ways of engaging in action with other people” (Wenger, 1998, p. 152). Identity is formed in the community as each person comes to understand his or her role in relation to the community.

2. Trajectory. “We define who we are by where we have been and where we’re going” (Wenger, 1998, p. 149). Identity is constantly changing and
incorporates the past and the future into the present.

3. **Membership in multiple communities of practice.** As members of multiple communities, people are self-defined by the ways they reconcile and negotiate these various communities into one identity. For example, a camper is not just a member of the camp community. The camper might also be part of a community at a high school, a synagogue youth group, a soccer team, and a marching band.

4. **Communities of practice are negotiated between the local and global.** Wenger (1998) stated, “Identity in practice is therefore always an interplay between the local and the global” (p. 162). Campers, then, must be understood to have identities as members of the camp community and members of the larger Jewish collective.

These identity-enhancing streams are operational in the summer-camp environment.

This strong connection between identity, or “becoming-ness” and communities of practice is demonstrated in a wide variety of situated learning environments—formal and informal—that resemble Wenger’s communities of practice. Walford (2008) indicated this strong link between identity and practice in an investigation of Muslim schools and how local and global identities are negotiated through the development of a community of practice. J. M. Cohen (2009) described how the community of practice allowed students in a school that trained cantors for Reform Jewish synagogues to negotiate religious authority. Sardiello (1994) illustrated how followers of the Grateful Dead (“Dead Heads”) essentially learned behaviors, customs, and rituals to enable entrance or
belonging to this community; and Downey (2005) illustrated the community of practice for those engaged in learning the Brazilian art of capoeira.

At Jewish summer camp, multiple forms of learning take place, numerous issues are negotiated throughout the summer session, and identity is strengthened through "a very complex interweaving of participative experience and reificative projections" (Wenger, 1998, p. 150). Campers learn how to be members of this community by learning the songs, chants, behaviors, rituals, and dances that are part of the camp experience. Much of this information is shared through peer learning, and since a large percentage of campers return from year to year, this shared knowledge is reinforced and passed from one generation of campers to the next. Campers experience Judaism in an idealized setting and then see themselves as full participants not only in the camp as a microcosm of Jewish community, but in the Jewish community that exists outside the boundaries of camp.

At summer camp, there are many opportunities for the "participative experiences" of which Wenger spoke. Camp alumni reported that the Friday night Shabbat service, the chanting of Birkat HaMazon (grace after meals), and the song sessions (especially on Friday nights) were all foundational in aiding individual identity development. One of the outstanding features of these communal musical events is the rhythmic singing and chanting, accompanied by clapping and dancing and coordinated body movements. Because camp is a community of practice, many of these hand and body movements are part of camp tradition and are learned by campers and counselors who then teach them in turn to new generations of campers. New traditions develop that are often incorporated
into the camp rituals. The excitement and electricity campers feel while participating in these rituals—especially the song sessions—is a form of effervescence, as presented by Durkheim in his 1912 book, *The Elementary Forms of Religion*.

**Collective Effervescence**

The concept of effervescence (Durkheim, 2001) refers to the rhythmic and coordinated movements, songs, chants, cries, and gestures that take place when a group assembles for a religious ceremony. Durkheim initially presented the idea of communal effervescence in *The Elementary Forms of Religion* in 1912, where he reported what occurred when an Australian tribe gathered for a religious ceremony:

> The very fact of assembling is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are assembled their proximity generates a kind of electricity that quickly transports them into an extraordinary degree of exaltation. ... Probably because a collective feeling cannot be expressed collectively unless a certain order is observed that permits the groups harmonious movements, these gestures and cries are inclined to be rhythmic and regulated, and become chants and dances. ... The effervescence is so intense it often leads to unpredictable behavior. (Durkheim, 2001, pp. 162–163)

Those engaged in this collective effervescence often report feelings of being outside themselves, of being transported, and being “led by some external power” (Durkheim, 2001, p. 163).

At Jewish summer camp, a form of this communal effervescence is often experienced during rituals associated with *Shabbat*. The observance of *Shabbat* (and
especially the after-dinner song session) at camp is a celebration filled with singing, dancing, chanting, and associated rhythmic movement. *Shabbat* at camp is remembered for its ecstatic qualities, often leaving campers with vivid memories of the experience. Lorge and Zola (2006) acknowledged that “[o]ne of the most vital, visual, and memorable musical experiences at camps occurs when the camp gathers to welcome the Sabbath” (p. 173). The entire camp, according to Lorge and Zola, “gathered as a collective community to celebrate *Shabbat* in song” (p. 173). They quoted Rabbi Shapiro, who recalled,

> Camp music made Shabbat holy. We would just sing through the Shabbat repertoire with no words of explanation. It was much more than fun, more than even community-building; we were touched by the transcendent and we were never the same again. (Lorge & Zola, 2006, p. 173)

Friday-night communal singing was recalled as highly spiritual and exhilarating and as helping to establish a sense of community (J. M. Cohen, 2008). At the conclusion of the summer camp experience, it was this sense of community that campers often missed most (Splansky, 2006, p. 154).

This feeling of communal effervescence has been documented in religious and nonreligious settings. Austin (1981), Phelan (2008), and Titon (2006) each described the sense of belonging that arises through group singing and how this communal activity helped to spiritually transform communities. Music’s centrality to communal effervescence is also evident in nonreligious musical events. Goosman (1997) and Trosset (1988) presented examples of the ways group singing provided transcendent
moments among amateur singers. In Goosman’s analysis of African American group
harmony, the power associated with group singing was emphasized by those interviewed.
Trosset investigated feelings of effervescence among audience members who participated
in a Welsh rock opera. In this study, spectators reported a sense of solidarity and
collective identity as their voices joined with the actors singing on stage.

Jewish summer camps’ rites and rituals exhibit elements of this communal
effervescence. Campers encounter “a transformative experience that goes to the root of
each person’s being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared”
(Turner, 1969, p. 138). The energy and ecstasy experienced during Shabbat services and
the song session created the feelings of being apart from oneself but at the same
time being part of the larger group.

Many of the actions exhibited during moments of collective effervescence were
remembered years later. For example, participants shared with me the hand motions used
during Birka t HaMa zon and demonstrated a tango-like dance integrated into the song
“Cherish the Torah.” These hand motions, the choreography, or the feelings of being
surrounded by hundreds of summertime friends, become part of their being and physical
memory. It is this physical embodiment that helps inform their identity years later.

Physical Embodiment

There are very few moments at Jewish summer camp when singing or chanting
does not integrate the entire body. Camp song and prayer are filled with hand gestures
and dances. This movement is a form of physical embodiment, not only enhancing the
experience in the moment, but acting as a mechanism for remembering the event,
recalling the songs or prayers, and providing a physical means for uniting members of the group. In the introduction to Merleau-Ponty’s (1948/2004) *The World of Perception*, Baldwin noted that it is this embodiment that “brings the possibility of meaning into our experience by ensuring that its content, the things presented in experience, are surrounded with references to the past and future, to other places and other things, to human possibilities and situations.” According to Merleau-Ponty (1948/2004, Kindle location 3072), the body cannot separate itself from its environment, for “to be a body, is to be tied to a certain world. … Our body is not primarily in space: it is of it.”

Coordinated group movement, gesture, and dance are essential parts of ritual, as expressed by Blacking (1973), Durkheim (2001), and Turner (1969). According to Warner (1997), embodied movement helps create “consciousness of kind” and “bond[s] persons to one another and create[s] new communities” (p. 232). Ammerman (2003) indicated that these embodied practices are essential to the ritual act and the shaping of identity. “Gestures, postures, music and movements tell the story and signal our location in it” (p. 215). Mattern (1998) acknowledged the sheer physicality of music, compared to other art forms, and the power music has to coalesce groups, with the movement and the singing acting as a form of communication:

Unlike some other art forms, however, music is directly physical. Listeners experience music with their bodies as sound waves. This physicality allows musicians to turn their moods and emotions into sounds that listeners directly share, without recourse to language, in a way that produces immediate quality of experience. Such sharing can occur at both large-scale events and more intimate
settings. In both places, performers and audience members communicate with each other in a variety of ways, including singing, dancing, clapping, and swaying. (Mattern, 1998, p. 17)

In addition to traditional movements, including bending, bowing, or genuflection, campers often personalize their music with *shtick*. These motions serve an important function in ritual practice, the formation and perpetuation of tradition, the development of personal agency, and ultimately the formation of community.

Three YouTube videos provide a glimpse of the strong embodied nature of the camp experience. One video from Camp Harlam (2007; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vAfxwkudXg&feature=related), a Reform Jewish camp in Kunkletown, Pennsylvania shows a table of campers, dressed in white, presumably as part of the *Shabbat* celebration, reciting the blessing after meals—the *Birkat HaMazon*. What is notable is not only the campers' memorized recitation of a rather lengthy and complicated blessing, but the associated hand motions. The campers reciting the blessing are both engaged vocally and demonstrate choreographed physical movements universally known to this group. Two other videos (Camp Coleman, 2010; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yvUNIVIYI; Goldman Union Camp, 2006; http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8vAfxwkudXg&feature=related) show song sessions in which campers sing, dance, jump, and use a variety of coordinated hand and arm movements.

Turino (2008) asserted that the ability to perform in a specific style becomes a symbol of “belonging and social identity, because performance competence is both a sign and simultaneously a product of shared musical knowledge and experience—shared
h habitual movements and embodied practices to many songs and prayers and participate in these rituals not only because it is enjoyable, but because these rituals provide the camper with a way to enter the community and experience identity and belonging.

Camp becomes a community of practice in which shared ideas, songs, beliefs, and practices will help in shaping campers’ future identity. The movements associated with the prayers and songs become part of the embodied practice, acting as long-term reminders of campers’ summers at camp. This embodied practice becomes part of their memory that aids in the formation of a lifetime of Jewish ritual engagement. These feelings are long lasting and serve as the source for memory—both individual and collective—years after camp has ended.

**Music, Camp, and Memory**

Profound, deep, and long-lasting memories are created through the experience of Jewish summer camp. Friendships are created and previous relationships are strengthened. New skills are learned and the practice of long-established camp traditions and rituals are reinforced. Campers return year after year (often to the same camp), and the process is repeated. As the years pass, summer-camp participants age out of the camp experience, and as research has demonstrated, these once-adolescent campers become members of the “adult” Jewish community with greater levels of affiliation in the Jewish community compared to their peers who did not go to camp (S. M. Cohen et al., 2011).

But the camp experience does not end when the summer session concludes. Instead, the camp experience lives on through both individual and collective memory.
Halbwachs (1952/1992) demonstrated how an individual relies on the larger group to provide memory of experiences involving the individual and the group. Specific places (such as the physical layout of camp) also figure significantly in the creation of this collective memory. Connerton (1989) proposed that collective memory is also situated in the bodily practices of a group through commemorative ceremonies, with the repetition of ritual providing a link to both the individual past and a collective history.

Yerushalmi (1996) expanded on Connerton and referenced Halbwachs in formulating another view of Jewish history and the continual search to create and recreate Jewish identity. According to Yerushalmi, the historical narrative is not the only fundamental element in Jewish memory. Ritualized actions play a large role, too: “Memory flowed, above all, through two channels: ritual and recital” (1996, p. 11). When singing stands as the centerpiece of the ritual, it aids the development of memory, because when that music is encountered in the future, a specific time, place, or event is often recalled. DeNora (2009), citing Urry (1996), noted that music may even have the ability to make manifest a memory that “may have been latent or absent the first time through” (p. 66). The musical experience has the power to recall specific moments or relationships and acts as a “resource for the reflexive movement from present to future” (DeNora, 2009, p. 66).

For summer-camp participants, the totality of the camp experience embraces Jewish life in a most vibrant manner. Two sites of memory—music and engaging Jewish ritual—are interwoven to create powerful memories, images, and practices that campers reference throughout their lives. Reimer (2001) noted how the experiences of summer
camp are remembered in lasting ways:

When reluctant or ambivalent Jews get surprised and experience themselves—in the company of trusted peers—swimming in powerful Jewish currents, they take notice. ... They are singing *Lecha Dodi* at camp and the Sabbath Queen is dancing before their eyes. They are holding their friends’ hands in the dark as they bid farewell to *Shabbat* by the light of a hundred *Havdalah* candles. They are talking about God at 2 a.m. ... They are doing Jewish and not feeling strange or awkward about it. Is it any wonder these moments stand out and are not forgotten? (Reimer, 2001, p. 2)

One of the privileges of watching adolescents at summer camp lies in seeing their unabashed enthusiasm and the sense, as Reimer (2001) indicated, that “they are doing Jewish” without feeling self-conscious about their engagement in Jewish rites, rituals, and socialization. Memory is created and strengthened through communal space, attachment to the group, the recall of ceremony and ritual, and bodily practices. The summer camp is a fertile laboratory for the creation of memory, which is aided by the development of cultural and social synesthesia.

**Synesthesia**

Some individuals experience a mixing or crossing of the senses. For example, when reading certain letters of the alphabet, these individuals may taste specific flavors; when they hear music in a certain key, they may see a variety of colors. This crossing or combining of the senses is a neurological condition known as synesthesia. Estimates vary on how many people are synesthetic. In *Musicophilia* (2007), Sacks estimated that one in
every 2,000 people exhibit true synesthesia. But these numbers are a mere estimate, as many synesthetes refuse to self-identify for fear of social ostracization or because they are unaware that anyone else shares their condition, or they assume everyone else experiences the world as they do.

This neurological form of synesthesia is discussed at length in recent volumes by Ward (2008), van Campen (2007), and Seaberg (2011). Ward presented a look into the neurology of synesthesia; van Campen interviewed contemporary synesthetes and contrasted their experiences with noted composers, poets, and writers throughout history who claimed to have been synesthetes; and Seaberg approached the subject from a personal perspective. As a synesthete, Seaberg provided a vivid firsthand account of synesthesia and her decision to embrace it to its fullest.

**Cultural and social synesthesia.** There are other synesthetic experiences that are also intersensory experiences—but without the medical or neurological basis of the synesthesia described above. This cultural or social pseudosynesthesia is a fusing of the senses through memorable events that subsequently implant deep-seated memories in individuals. These synesthetic moments are so profound “that the boundaries of the senses actually merge, and the multivariate sense qualities—colors, sounds, flavors, tactile and thermal sensations—all seem to melt into a continuum of feeling” (Odin, 1986, p. 256).

Odin (1986) employed the Japanese tea ceremony as a way to illustrate this form of pseudosynesthesia. The tea ceremony includes visual elements (the various vessels and pots used for making and holding the tea), aural stimulus (the sound of water boiling in
the kettle), scent (incense burning), and even touch (the asymmetry of the raku tea cup). Events such as the tea ceremony are described as a synesthesia forged through the "simultaneity and harmony of multivariate sense-impulses" (Odin, 1986, p. 259) with the end result being a gathering "of diverse sense impulses within a physiological sensorium" (p. 259). This form of synesthesia is one in which the senses are not joined together but rather the "multivariate sensations of color, sound, scent, and flavor interpenetrate in profound unity while simultaneously retaining their unique qualitative natures" (Odin, 1986, p. 270).

The synesthetic is possible in even more everyday events. In Music and Theology, theologian Saliers (2007) presented the example of his young daughters and neighborhood friends learning jump-rope songs. The fusion of words, music, and communal dancing produced a multisensory form of embodied ritual that enhanced childhood community. According to Saliers, these children participated in a form of synesthetic matrix as they sang and jumped to Miss Mary Mack, with the union of activity producing "a simultaneous blending or convergence of two or more senses, hence a condition of heightened perception" (Saliers, 2007, Kindle location 171). According to Saliers, this synesthesia not only heightens our awareness, but assists in encoding memory and creating long-lasting associations.

Ethnomusicologist Feld expanded on this notion by stating, "as places are sensed, senses are placed, and as places make sense, senses make place" (1996, p. 91). Place and the senses are intrinsically intertwined, providing an appreciation and awareness not only
of the event itself but of the event’s location, participants, emotions, and feelings associated with the event.

**Synesthesia in a Jewish context.** Although many synesthetic occurrences take place in the secular realm, sacred ritual provides ample opportunity for the synesthetic. Rituals and liturgies inviting the participation of all the senses not only serve to create deeper and richer memory and help form cultural, religious, and ethnic identity, they also “have the capacity to give value and meaning to the life of those who perform them” (Connerton, 1989, p. 45).

One of the most famous literary synesthetic events in the history of communal Jewish life occurred after the Israelites were presented with the Ten Commandments:

Now all of the people were seeing
the thunder sounds
the flashing torches
the *shofar* sound
and the mountain smoking;
when the people saw,
they faltered
and stood far off. (Exodus 20:15, The Five Books of Moses, trans. Fox)

According to the Torah, a communal synesthetic experience was present at Sinai: the multitude *saw* the sound of thunder; the Israelites *saw* the sound of the shofar. So powerful was the moment of revelation that boundaries between sight and sound momentarily vanished and the synesthetic occurred. Much of Jewish ritual presents this
synesthetic matrix. For example, the Passover Seder, like the tea ceremony, involves all the senses. Songs are sung, narrative passages read, symbolic foods are tasted and smelled, and sacred ceremonial objects are not only visually stimulating but are also touched and held. This total body engagement contributes to the synesthesia of the event.

A variety of senses are employed as part of the Seder, which creates a sense-rich layering that in turn triggers other sensual memories and awareness. The Seder is not recalled in sequence or as a series of atomistic moments, but rather in its totality.

Likewise, the ceremony of havdalah, the ritual that concludes Shabbat after sundown, also provides this sort of synesthesia. The symbols of the wine, braided candle, and spices serve to awaken the senses. At camp, the ceremony is often conducted in a circle with participants linking arms. All the senses are integrated in a single ritual further enhanced by the greater environment of the camp setting. Leach (1976) described this type of synesthetic event as one of condensation and fusion. By the end of the evening, all of the multiple and multichanneled elements of the ritual are combined and condensed into a single, memorable experience.

**Synesthesia at Jewish summer camp.** Shabbat at camp is considered to be one of the most salient and long-enduring memories of the total camp experience. I propose that the multisensory summer camp Shabbat celebration creates a form of synesthesia, enabling this experience to remain in the body and mind and thus act as a focus of profound, long-lasting, and rich memories. Because the initial experience was so profound, even isolated elements from the camp experience (the scent of baking challah, or a favorite melody from the after-dinner song session, for example) can serve as a
mental trigger that kindles a remembrance of the camp Shabbat experience, even though it initially took place many years before.

The creation of synesthetic experiences forms deeply embodied memories that are foundational in the development of collective memory. These multisensory experiences also enhance the development of personal Jewishness and a sense of Jewish Peoplehood. Central to this research is an understanding of the relationship between these synesthetic events, communal song, the environment of Jewish summer camp, and individual and communal Jewish identity.

**Identity Formation through Music**

Early psychological models of identity demonstrated that its formation is influenced by many factors (Erikson, 1959, 1968), but these models gave little consideration to music as a significant element in identity formation. Identity, when viewed through the lens of cultural and social forces, reveals that music plays an important role in the formation of communal and of individual identity. Blacking (1973) stressed that a community experiences its communal transformation through music. Writing on the creation of ethnic identity in Afghanistan, Baily (1997) indicated,

> Music is a potent symbol of identity; like language (and attributes of language such as accent and dialect) it is one of those aspects of culture which can, when the need to assert “ethnic identity” arises, most readily serve this purpose. (1997, p. 48)

Davis (2005) acknowledged the importance of music education as a significant force in the development of national culture, and Mattern (1998) recognized music’s potency in
forming communities, identities, and political entities. Regev and Seroussi (2004) confirmed Baily’s understanding of the power of music to establish national identity in their study of the creation of national culture through popular music in Israel.

Folkestad (2002) also claimed that music has always played a significant role in “forming the identities of individuals and of groups of people” (p. 151). Music as a source of national identity “becomes even more important when the cultural context cannot be taken for granted” (p. 155). For those uprooted from their native lands and living elsewhere in a diaspora community, the transmission of songs and dances seems especially important to maintaining ties to ethnicity, creating ethnicity, or strengthening the bonds between members of a group. This concept is important in providing an understanding of how music at Jewish summer camp functions to create individual Jewishness and Peoplehood, because it serves to illustrate how ethnic and religious connections are made for members of a group.

Hargreaves, Miell, and MacDonald (2002) described two different ways of looking at identity and music. “Identities in music” may be defined by “social and cultural roles within music” (p. 12). “Music in identities” is described as the way music is used as a resource for developing “aspects of our personal identities, including gender identity; youth identity; national identity; and disability and identity” (2002, p. 14). The study of “Music in identities” provides insight for the present research, in which a better understanding of the development of Jewishness and Peoplehood through informal music education practice was sought.

Campbell, Connell, and Beegle (2007) also found evidence of identity formation
through music for a group of over 1,000 adolescents in middle and high school. An inductive analysis of essays written as part of a nationwide contest revealed that adolescents expressed the role music had in shaping their identities, the social aspects of music, and music’s benefits in building character. A. Hoffman’s study (2008) examined the impact a middle-school band had on students’ identity and in forming inter- and intragroup bonds. Although music is recognized as an influential force in identity development and formation among adolescents, there is no research or literature on the impact music at Jewish summer camp has on the formation of Jewish identity.

Summary

The experience of Jewish summer camp is recognized as an important element in identity formation on both individual and communal levels. Research has been conducted on the phenomenon of the American residential camp and the Jewish sleep-away camp, and a moderate amount of study has been devoted to communal music at Jewish camps. By building on previously presented sociological, anthropological, and educational theories, this dissertation establishes how communal song at Jewish summer camp is fundamental in the development of “Jewishness” and a connection to Jewish Peoplehood.
Chapter 3: Strategies and Methods

Overview of Research Design

This dissertation employed case-study research to discern the role of music at Jewish summer camp in the formation of Jewishness and a sense Jewish Peoplehood among camp participants. The use of a case study permitted me to concentrate on the experience of communal singing at one specific Jewish summer camp, and a narrative approach to this research afforded "an experiential understanding of the case" (Stake, 1995, p. 40), as interviews presented documentation of the participants' recollected past.

This research project examined how past experiences and events impacted the personal trajectory of Jewishness for a group of summer campers. For the purposes of this study, I was not initially concerned with current activities at Camp Hess Kramer—a Jewish residential camp in Malibu, California that was the site selected for this study. Rather, I was concerned with how experiences that took place at Camp Hess Kramer 20 or 30 years ago impacted the development of an individual’s sense of Jewishness. My research took the form of interviews, a focus group, and archival research, piecing together the lived experience of these now-adult campers.

Through the interview process I unveiled memories that had often been dormant or unarticulated for years. As I sat with participants and began asking them about their experience at Camp Hess Kramer, they often commented, "I haven't thought of that in years." I realized that participants' abilities to portray their experience were limited by the accuracy of memory and the ability to present that memory in a verbal format. I also gained understanding that memory is inherently unstable and the recalling of memories
does not correlate to objective realism, although memory provided a powerful mechanism for presenting adolescent recollections.

My effort as a researcher to adequately portray participants’ stories and to provide an appropriate image of the summer camp environment was often fraught with concern:

☐ I wondered if I would be able to present the participants in a fair and just manner.

☐ I was concerned that my own biases were impacting my observations and analysis.

☐ I was apprehensive about whether I could adequately portray the depth and richness of summer camp to readers who had never experienced the Jewish-camp environment.

☐ I wondered if the voices of all the participants would be heard faithfully and equitably.

The use of a qualitative approach implies an acknowledgement that independent “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (Merriam, 1998, Kindle location 149) and even though participants’ memories of summers spent at Camp Hess Kramer bore similarities, each participant expressed recollections through an individualistic lens. Each participant also created a personal reality regarding how these experiences influenced adult Jewishness and attachment to the community.

Camp Hess Kramer, the site of this study, is a residential Reform Jewish summer camp located in Malibu, California, affiliated with the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. The camp is more than 60 years old and has a long history of creativity and excellence in
camp music. Hess Kramer also has a well-organized alumni network that made contacting participants, arranging interviews, and organizing a focus group possible. Because Hess Kramer is located in southern California, where I lived at the time this research was undertaken, site visits were also readily possible. It should be noted that I have had a long association with the camp, as I worked there as an administrator while in graduate school. In addition, many of my friends and acquaintances were campers and counselors there.

**Narrative Research**

Interviews with participants explored memories of summers at Camp Hess Kramer that were often decades old and were filled with both vivid reminiscences and hazy recollections. Narratives included moments from the camp as well as contemporary events, as each participant presented a unique and nonlinear story of his or her experience at camp and how it informed his or her current Jewish life.

In this dissertation, I investigated personal and communal concepts of Jewish identity and how this identity was impacted by the experience of communal music making at a Jewish residential summer camp. The use of narrative was particularly well-suited to study identity, especially in this research, where there was an intersection of fields of study. This juncture of subject areas included identities based on religious experience, musical performance, music education, and the experience of Jewish religion and culture.

Webster and Mertova (2007) indicated that narrative inquiry is best used when the issues being investigated are understood to be complex, human-centered issues, and the
researcher aims to portray the "whole story," not just certain subjects or specific phenomena at certain points in time (p. 3). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) affirmed the appropriateness of narrative research for investigating identity:

Yet, from the narrative point of view, identities have histories. They are narrative constructions that take shape as life unfolds and that may, as narrative constructions are wont to do, solidify into a fixed entity, an unchanging narrative construction, or they may continue to grow and change. ... The identities we have, the stories we live by, tend to show different facets depending on the situations in which we find ourselves. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 94–95)

Music educators Bowman (2006), McCarthy (2007), and Barrett and Stauffer (2009, 2012) acknowledged the importance of narrative inquiry's role in providing greater understanding when investigating music's role in shaping identity. Bowman stated that although narrative inquiry cannot be seen as the "salvation of the world" (2006, p. 14), it makes audible the voices and stories of people marginalized or silenced in more conventional modes of inquiry. To that extent its aspirations or ambitions are emancipatory and transformative. It seeks to open up what grand theory too often tends to shut down. Narrative is a way of keeping alive questions, conversation, and controversy, by stirring up the sedimentary deposits of official discourses. (Bowman, 2006, p. 14)

McCarthy (2007) stated that the use of narrative enhances the researcher's ability to probe the interfaces of music and identity, to articulate
forms of musical knowing that are difficult to access, to illustrate how music is embedded in aesthetic values, to illuminate the relationship between social and cultural context and individual life stories, and to describe with greater precision the relationship between music and the human need to engage in narrative. (p. 10)

Barrett and Stauffer (2009) reasoned that narrative inquiry may not only "provide alternative accounts of why, when, and how people engage in music experience and learning" (p. 2) but also is the preferred method for much phenomenological study in music, as it is a way "to make audible the voices, experiences and individuals engaged in music and to raise those questions that are often left unasked" (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p. 19).

Narrative inquiry has been advocated as a viable method for understanding religious experience by Yamane (2000), Ammerman (2003), and Roof (1993). According to Yamane, researchers cannot study the "experiencing" of a religious event, along with its associated emotional, physical, and mental components, in real time (2000, p. 173); therefore, narrative inquiry provides the researcher with a more accessible comprehension of what has transpired. Narrative, according to Roof, is "motivated by a search for meaning" (1993, p. 2). He noted, "We tell stories not so much as to illustrate as to affirm who we are and what gives meaning to our lives" (1993, p. 2). Ammerman (2003) indicated that narratives "may provide a helpful metaphor for understanding the nature of identities" (p. 213). Therefore, if one is to better understand religious experience, it must be studied as retrospective stories or accounts of the experiences themselves, with the methodology of narrative inquiry best suited for this exploration.
Narrative as a way to provide insight into issues of Jewishness has been advanced by Horowitz (2002) and Prell (2000). Horowitz (2002) illuminated the case for narrative inquiry:

The narrative approach is particularly useful in this regard, because I believe that the “story” told for a person for whom Jewishness has become central and meaningful differs qualitatively from the story told by a person who is indifferent to Judaism. (Horowitz, 2002, p. 28)

Prell (2000), advocating narrative, stated, “What a life story offers is the opportunity to look at the development of a Jewish self and in particular to understand how Jewishness is constructed in relationship to the life course” (p. 39). Narrative clearly provides the opportunity to explore an individual’s religious and communal trajectory.

Prospective researchers have been reminded that no single method exists for narrative inquiry (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Webster & Mertova, 2007). Narrative inquiry is not only concerned with the stories told and heard in the course of research, but also seeks to include “observations, interviews, documentation and conversations that can enhance the time, scene, and plot structures of critical events” (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p. 23). For complex issues such as identity study, narrative permits the use of an amalgam of methods, approaches, and researcher lenses combined with innovative and traditional approaches to allow the narrative voice of the persons being studied to emerge (Chase, 2005, p. 651). The voice of the researcher becomes part of the world studied, and through the process of inquiry researchers confront their own past, present, and future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 60).
Disclosure of Potential Bias

In the interest of full disclosure, I acknowledge that I was acquainted or friends with some of those who participated in the focus group and interviews. I believe that my familiarity with Camp Hess Kramer, knowledge of the camp’s history and philosophy, and my acquaintance with the participants provided the interviews and focus group with a relaxed and candid atmosphere. That relaxed atmosphere enhanced the ability of interviewees to provide narrative filled with rich description, openness, and an exchange of true emotions.

Throughout this study, I recognized that I was one of those adolescents, now an adult, whose identity was shaped, in part, by the “magic” of summer camp. Although I did not attend Hess Kramer, I was a camper at other camps similar to Hess Kramer. As I listened to the words of those whom I interviewed, I constantly reflected on my own experiences. The role communal song had on my life’s trajectory and my own identity formation has been too formidable to allow me to set it aside and stand as a disinterested third party to the discussion of it. This involvement is part of the research process. Barrett and Stauffer (2009) acknowledged that narrative inquiry is a “collaborative conjoining of lifeworld experience. Researchers and their participants live in each other’s storied accounts and data are generated through an intersection and interweaving of researcher and participant experience” (p. 37). This intersection and interweaving portrays my own experience. Throughout the research process (and especially during interviews, transcription, and coding) I was continually aware of hearing my own experience in participants’ words. This awareness permitted me to better understand the investigated
phenomenon and to have great appreciation and empathy for the emotion and sentiment that was part of their stories.

My personal relationship with Camp Hess Kramer extends back to 1985, when I served as program director for the camp. Throughout the years I have maintained a relationship with camp staff, administration, and with many of those counselors and campers who had attended camp that summer, thereby providing me with the unique position of being somewhat of an insider, as it permitted me access to archival material. For example, I was given access to camp programs that documented schedules, maps of the camp, out-of-print recordings, and multiple editions of camp song books.

Once it became known throughout the community of Hess Kramer alumni that I was researching music at camp, I received a wealth of unsolicited information and insight, informal in-person exchanges, e-mail, and phone calls. During the data-collection phase of this research project, Camp Hess Kramer was in the midst of preparations for a gala 60th anniversary celebration. As a result of this commemoration, the Camp Hess Kramer Facebook page was filled with multiple postings featuring pictures, video, and camp-alumni remembrances. Although these data were not analyzed or treated in the same fashion as the interview and focus-group transcripts, the public postings provided insight into the depth of campers’ feelings and attachment to the camp.

Participants

Data from this research derive from 23 individual interviews (eight men and 15 women) and one focus group comprised of five participants. All those interviewed had been campers at Camp Hess Kramer for at least 3 summers. Camp Hess Kramer was
chosen as the site for this case study due its geographic accessibility, the camp’s long and rich history of camp music, its active alumni association, and the large concentration of camp alumni living in the greater Los Angeles area.

Many of those interviewed had advanced into counselor or administrative positions after their years as campers had finished. Two of the participants became song leaders. Those interviewed ranged in age from 25 to 60 years old. The focus group was comprised of five female participants who had also spent at least 3 summers at Camp Hess Kramer. Three focus-group members were 20 years old, of whom two were returning to camp as counselors. The other two participants were 53 and 55 year old and had each spent many years as campers and went on to serve as camp administrators.

All participants received an information sheet before the interview and the focus group, as required by the Boston University Institutional Review Board. For participants who were interviewed, the information sheet reminded them that each interview was being recorded, participation was totally voluntary, the interview could be terminated at any point, and that confidentiality was assured. Focus-group participants were presented with similar information as part of Institutional Review Board compliance and were asked to use only first names during their discussion. Participants were also requested not to share any information discussed in the focus group with anyone else. Participants in the interviews and in the focus group were recruited through camp newsletters, online discussion boards, and word of mouth.
Collection of Data

Data collected for this dissertation included digital recordings and transcripts of interviews and a focus-group and archival analysis that included song books, song lyrics, video and audio recordings, camp yearbooks, and camp programs. Old song books were furnished by current camp administration. One long-time song leader provided me a copy of the first recording made at Camp Hess Kramer, as well as remastered digital versions of the songs on this album. Members of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple camp staff also provided me with copies of schedules, photographs, and maps of Camp Hess Kramer. Additionally, as part of the camp’s 60th-celebration activities, a series of interviews with camp administrators from the 1950s and 1960s were placed online. Interview participants also shared photo albums, journal entries, and song books. For example, a recent compilation of songs featuring the “best of Hess Kramer” was useful in analyzing song lyrics for themes, photos of camp on Shabbat confirmed styles and manner of dress consistent with participants’ statements, and song leader “play-lists” and chord charts affirmed participants’ statements regarding the musical arc of the song session.

Individual interviews. In-depth interviews were the primary method of investigation in this study, with the interviews recorded digitally. Before transcription took place, I listened to the recordings repeatedly, listening for themes or critical events presented as part of the narrative. As I listened I took preliminary notes for each participant, summarizing responses to the interview questions. I also made note of any vocal tics, stutters, laughing, crying, or long pauses. In the transcription, these were noted. However, in the excerpted sections presented as part of this dissertation, if these
tics, stutters, laughs, cries, or pauses lessened the intelligibility or the flow of the narrative, they were removed. If I believed that these vocalisms enhanced the participant’s narrative, they were included in the transcript. The following questions were used for each interview, with additional questions presented as follow up.

1. Tell me about yourself. When did you go to camp? How old were you then? How many years ago was that?

2. Share with me some of your strongest memories of the summer-camp experience.

3. Tell me about your experience of music at summer camp.

4. Tell me about the memories of music at camp.

5. Share with me ways in which you think the camp experience influenced your life.

6. What do you think are the long-lasting effects of your summers at Camp Hess Kramer?

7. How do you think the music at camp or the camp experience influenced your identity?

Following recommendations from Seidman (2006), questions were designed to be open-ended and semistructured to encourage participants to provide thoughtful reflections. Although some of the questions appear to be repetitive, the inquiry was designed in this manner to promote nuanced responses from participants. Interview questions were designed to allow participants to fully explore their pasts and life experiences, encouraging participants to tell their personal stories. This mode of
questioning enabled a conceptual shift from the participant as interviewee to the participant as narrator (Chase, 2005).

The use of NVivo9 software assisted in the organization of the coding process and subsequent analysis. The interview transcripts were formatted to enable the use of the NVivo9 autocode feature, which assisted with the first phase of the coding process. NVivo9 has specific parameters regarding page layout to enable autocoding. For example, spacing is specified and headings consistent and congruent with the questions asked must be employed. Autocode is a useful feature of NVivo, but does not create nodes; rather, it helps to preorder the data so that that nodes may be created. Although the autocoding feature of NVivo9 was helpful as a preliminary measure in the coding process, further discernment and refinement of the coding was needed. The interview transcripts were then reviewed manually, new coding nodes were developed, and codes developed previously were refined. Although only seven parent nodes initially were created, the rich data provided during the interviews allowed for the creation of over 100 additional (child) nodes to account for the variety and complexity of participant responses.

NVivo9 was also helpful in providing an initial overview of the transcripts through the use of word-frequency analysis, word-tree development, and basic queries of terms, people, or places mentioned in the interviews. NVivo9 also aided in providing initial insights through its modeling feature, which presented a preliminary graphic representation of the research questions and the manner in which questions, responses, and theoretical and philosophical underpinnings interrelated.
Focus group. A focus group composed of five adults was also organized as part of this case study. Two focus-group participants were in their mid-50s; the remaining three members of the group were 20 years old. This focus group was cross-generational to ascertain commonalities and differences in the camp music experience, as perceived by two different age cohorts. The focus-group discussion was lively and highly interactive, and facilitated a vibrant discussion between respondents. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) acknowledged that focus groups permit participants to engage in conversation that facilitates interaction and stimulates participants to “state feelings, perceptions, and beliefs that they would not express if interviewed individually” (p. 245). Focus groups additionally represent “important formations of collective inquiry where theory, research, pedagogy, politics converge” (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005, p. 688).

The size of the group is an important factor, as participant number can be a determining factor in the level of participation of the group’s members and ease of facilitation by the moderator. Krueger (1994) recommended that the optimal size for a group in which each participant will feel as if they are adequately participating and has an opportunity to share insights and observations is between six and nine participants. Smaller groups, like the one presented as part of this research study, are preferable if it is the intention of the researcher to discuss complex issues or participants will be recalling intense experiences (Krueger, 1994, pp. 78–79).

Questions for the focus group were designed to be open-ended, as questions of this sort reveal, “what is on the interviewee’s mind as opposed to what the interviewer suspects is on the interviewee’s mind” (Krueger, 1994, p. 57). The pattern of questions
followed a rubric recommended by Krueger (1994, pp. 54–55):

- **Introductory questions:** These questions introduce group members to each other and participants answer a short question.

- **Transition questions:** These questions function as a link between the introductory questions and the key questions.

- **Key questions:** These are the inquiries that are central to the research questions.

- **Closing questions:** These questions begin the process of concluding the group interview, but also permit participants to add any information they may have not contributed to this point.

Examples of questions used included the following:

- **Opening question:** Please introduce yourself and tell us when you went to Camp Hess Kramer.

- **Introductory question:**
  - Think about your time at camp. What are some of your favorite memories?

- **Transition question:**
  - Let’s talk a little bit more in depth about some of the experiences at camp.
  - Tell me about music at camp:
    - What were some of your favorite songs?
    - Can you sing them for me? Who else knows these? Let’s all join in...
Key questions:

- Let's talk about Shabbat at Camp Hess Kramer. Tell me about your Shabbat experiences at camp.
- Tell me how, in any way, you think the music at Hess-Kramer may have influenced you.
- Looking back on your experience at Camp Hess Kramer, what did you take away from the camp experience?
- What lessons did you learn from your camp experience?

Closing Questions:

- Suppose you had 1 minute to tell me how the music at camp influenced your life; what would you tell this group?
- We've really discussed a lot this afternoon. Have we missed anything? Is there anything else about your experience with music at summer camp that you want to share?

The focus group was recorded digitally, transcribed as described in the individual interviews through a process of repeated listening and note taking, followed by verbatim transcription. The transcripts were then coded manually using NVivo9. The recording of the focus group revealed much cross-talk and tangential conversation, and even though many of these side conversations were transcribed, there were some sections of the focus-group conversation that were either inaudible or were too difficult to comprehend due to multiple voices speaking simultaneously. Although the focus group frequently deviated from the questions initially presented, these verbal detours often provided fascinating
glimpses into the experience of Jewish summer camp and the role music played in the lives of the five participants.

**Why Should We Believe You?**

According to Riessman (2008), narrative researchers, like storytellers, ultimately face an audience and the researcher as the storyteller must be able to answer the question: “Why should we believe it?” (Bock, as cited in Riessman, 2008, p. 184). Narrative researchers face two levels of validity that are important: the validity of the story told by the research participants and the validity of story told by the researcher—that of the analysis. But the traditional measures of reliability, objectivity, replicability, and validity cannot be applied to narrative projects (Lieblich et al., 1998) as personal narratives such as those presented as part of this dissertation cannot be read as historic documents or an exact record of what happened.

Instead of relying on unsuitable criteria based on scientific method, narrative researchers have presented other ways of evaluating narrative. For example, Webster and Mertova (2007) quoting Huberman (1995), proposed that attributes such as access, honesty, verisimilitude, and authenticity be employed as evaluative criteria. Clandinin and Connelly suggested that the hallmark of good narrative is that it have an explanatory and invitational quality, combined with authenticity, adequacy, and plausibility (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 185). Riessman (2008) suggested that the concepts of coherence, persuasion, and presentation may be applicable.

For narratives camp alumni shared with me, I looked for elements of coherence, correspondence, persuasiveness, and verisimilitude. These qualities permitted me to
simultaneously look at each narrative as an individual retelling of the summer camp experience, as well as determine if there were points of commonality between the narratives.

Riessman (2008) indicated that a sense of coherence in a narrative provides an element of trustworthiness. According to Riessman (2008, p. 189), questions to consider are “Do episodes of a life story hang together?” “Are there major gaps or inconsistencies?” and “Is the interpreter’s analytic account persuasive?” I also examined the narratives for what Riessman (1993) termed “correspondence” (p. 66). According to Riessman (1993, 2008) there are two levels of correspondence. At the first level of correspondence the researcher asks “if the reported sequence of events in a personal narrative match accounts from other sources?” (Riessman, 2008, p. 187). The second level of correspondence “concerns the interpretative work by the investigator” (Riessman, 2008, p. 188) and “it is desirable to take work back to the individuals who participated in the study. … It is important what participants think of our work and their responses can be a source of theoretical insight” (Riessman, 1993, p. 66).

Readers are also persuaded by good narrative. Persuasiveness is enhanced when the researcher’s theoretical claims or stance are supported with evidence from participants’ narratives and “negative cases are included, and alternative interpretations considered” (Riessman, 2008, p. 191). Persuasiveness is also strengthened when the processes used for collecting and analyzing data have been well documented and the reader is not distracted by shoddy methodology or poor record keeping.

Verisimilitude or truthfulness in narrative accounts is represented by three
concepts according to Webster and Mertova (2007). First, there should be a sense of resonance between the researcher and the described events. The story should resonate with the researcher’s own experience. Second, the story should sound plausible; and third, the truthfulness of events reported by participants will “be confirmed through like and other events” (p. 99).

As I listened to the recorded interviews and reviewed the transcripts multiple times, I felt confident that participants had shared memories as well as they could remember. All the narratives presented coherent structures with the episodes of the narratives seemingly linked together. The two abovementioned levels of correspondence were also addressed as part of this dissertation. After reviewing the tapes and transcripts, I was able to ascertain a high level of correspondence between all the narratives, as the narratives presented similar descriptions of the musical life at summer camp, although each participant presented a different way that the musical experience at camp had influenced personal Jewishness or a sense of Peoplehood.

The second level of correspondence was addressed through the review and analysis of transcripts by some of the participants. I wanted to evaluate if I had accurately portrayed their spoken words and my understanding of them. I also shared with participants an excerpt of the ethnographic fiction of David Newman. The two participants who read the David Newman text reported to me that David Newman’s account of his time at camp sounded true and believable.

The narrative portrayal of the experience of communal song at camp was filled with such vibrancy and thick description that it does present a very persuasive, plausible,
and convincing case that Jewish summer camp music and the overall ritual experience
has the ability to change lives and inform Jewish identity. I also made sure to document
my data-collection method and the procedure used to analyze the interviews.

Finally, there was tremendous verisimilitude among all the interviews. The
experiences presented in the interviews resonated with my own Jewish camp experiences.
Also, there was much overlap between stories, and this was additionally corroborated by
other descriptions of camp (Sales & Saxe, 2003; Lorge & Zola, 2006; Paris, 2008) and
archival copies of camp programs and daily calendars from Camp Hess Kramer.

**The researcher as part of the narrative process.** Narrative inquiry in music
education is also the story the researcher brings to the narrative. As the researcher speaks
with participants and hears participants’ stories, the researcher is constantly aware of the
researcher’s personal story in relation to the story or narrative being recounted. My
process of being a narrative researcher involved what Barrett and Stauffer (2009) deemed
a “slow recursive shifting back and forth from the field, to field texts, to interim texts, to
research texts—a process that is organic and dynamic” (p. 24). Narrative inquiry
acknowledges that there are multiple ways of understanding and constructing knowledge,
and that “accepting epistemological complexity, particularly in matters of interpretation,
resonates with the ethic of respect for participants and responsibility towards their
interpretations” (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009, p. 25). Rather than detach myself from
participants’ presented experiences and memories, I allowed myself to enter their world,
gaining an appreciation for what the experience of communal singing at summer camp
meant to them.
Summary

This dissertation was a case study examining how music at Jewish summer camp informed Jewish identity development. Identity is a complex issue, and for the purposes of this study Jewish identity is defined as being permeable, malleable, fluid, based on personal perception, and not necessarily defined by quantifiable attributes or practices. Individuals' personal and communal sense of what it means to be Jewish may change throughout their lifetime, depending on a variety of environmental and circumstantial factors.

The use of narrative as part of this study allowed participants' stories to emerge and present a vivid picture of summer camp and how the musical experience of camp impacted their lives. Narrative is recognized by researchers in religion and in music education as one of the preferred ways to understand this phenomenon of identity formation. Through a series of interviews and a focus group, a vibrant image of the musical and ritual life of Camp Hess Kramer materialized.

Narrative inquiry cannot be evaluated using the standard rubrics of validity and reliability often used for scientific or quantitative studies. Instead, I looked for the appearance of coherence, correspondence, persuasion, and verisimilitude in the participants' narratives.
Chapter 4: Themes and Analysis

Taking a Walk through Camp Hess Kramer

Although Camp Hess Kramer is less than 50 miles from central Los Angeles, it is truly worlds away. Situated alongside the Pacific Ocean, the camp is approached by driving north on Pacific Coast Highway to where Los Angeles and Ventura Counties meet. This is the “county line” made famous as a prime surfing spot by the Beach Boys in their song “Surfin’ U.S.A.” Summer days are often mild, accompanied by morning fog, an afternoon breeze, and an evening coolness requiring campers to wear sweatshirts and light jackets.

The 187-acre facility is situated in a wooded canyon extending approximately one mile from the Pacific shore to the local mountain range. The camp features a small creek and abounds with sycamore, oak, and eucalyptus trees. It has safe and direct access to the ocean and beach through a tunnel under a nearby highway. The facility includes a large dining hall, an outdoor chapel, an amphitheater with a fully-equipped theatrical stage, two multipurpose program areas, an infirmary, an arts and craft shed, assorted athletic fields, a ropes course, hiking trails, a swimming pool, a campfire area, and 28 cabins of various sizes and styles that provide sufficient housing for all campers. In addition, there are separate residential facilities for staff, administrators, seasonal employees, and guests (C. Lauterbach, personal communication, April 9, 2012).

Camp Hess Kramer is a residential, coeducational Jewish summer camp operating under the auspices of the Wilshire Boulevard Temple, a 2,500-family Reform Jewish congregation in the Los Angeles area. The camp, currently celebrating its 60th
anniversary, is in session from the middle of June until the middle of August. At any
given time, there are approximately 350 campers and over 100 counselors,
administrators, and staff in attendance. The summer is typically divided into three
sessions ranging from 8 to 26 days in length, serving campers 8 to 16 years old. A
majority of campers come from the greater Los Angeles area, but each summer the camp
attracts many campers from San Diego, San Francisco, Las Vegas, and Phoenix, AZ.
Counselors are often camp alumni, and each summer additional staff members from
Israel are welcomed into the camp community.

The camp’s curriculum and programmatic activities are designed to help build
personal identity, Jewish commitment, and self-esteem. The Jewish Sabbath is a central
activity of camp life, and camp meals are blessed with traditional prayers. Many of the
songs sung in the after-meal song sessions are either in Hebrew or have Judaic themes.
Programmatic activities feature Jewish themes. Like other residential camps, Camp Hess
Kramer also features many athletic activities, and the summer concludes with a
Maccabiah—an all-camp sports competition.

Camp Hess Kramer is not only a physically beautiful environment, it is an intense
one as well. This intensity is created because camp operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a
week and “[f]or campers, there is no going home at the end of the day, no vacations from
camp, no weekends off” (Sales & Saxe, 2003, p. 48). Meals are shared, most activities
and programs are conducted in cabin groups or large assemblies, and cabins are in close
proximity to each other. It is in this “total environment” of camp (Sales & Saxe, 2003,
p. 48) that campers learn to cooperate, solve problems, communicate, and forge deep and
lasting friendships.

**Themes**

Analysis of the transcripts from the interviews and focus groups revealed three
common themes:

1. Music at Jewish camp enhances personal Jewish identity and creates some
   awareness of Jewish Peoplehood.

2. Music's centrality at camp is a result of purposeful and intentional practice,
   which is in turn an important part of the creation of a redemptive community

3. Jewish summer camp should encourage and enable greater participation and
   inclusivity.

David Newman's narrative appears in this chapter as a way to illustrate these
three narrative themes. As in this dissertation's prelude, this ethnographic fiction serves
as a way to present thematic concepts through one consistent voice. David's words are
derived from the transcripts of the interviews and focus group. Words were occasionally
modified or added to maintain tone or persona and to permit logical and dramatic flow.
Each of David Newman's narratives is followed by an analysis that looks at the thematic
material in light of the philosophical and theoretical background provided as part of this
dissertation. Occasionally, I have chosen to amplify David Newman's words in the
analysis with additional quotations from research participants. This was done because I
often wanted to provide a slightly different perspective or enhance a particular point from
David's narrative.
Theme 1: Music at Jewish Summer Camp Enhances Personal Jewish Identity and Creates Some Awareness of Jewish Peoplehood

No problem. ... I'm totally ok talking more about camp with you. You asked me about the music? Well, the music, I think, it gave me a stronger Jewish identity. It gave me ... roots; it gave me a base. I think it definitely shaped who I am today; I mean it gave me a whole repertoire of Jewish music that ... 'cause I was musical—I mean I don't play an instrument anymore—but as a kid I did. I remember how I would sing. I would sing all these songs. I'd come home and sing them. Here—look—here's my copy of the song book from one of my summers at camp. Grape juice stains, even. [David places the song book on my desk].

One of the things I looked forward to at camp was being together to sing them again. We didn't do [the songs] at temple but I knew I would hear them again at summer at camp. And as I said, it gave me a definite Jewish identity ... to know these songs and know the words, what they meant, the Hebrew.

I don't consider myself a very religious person but culturally I feel very strongly about my Judaism. And I think it's from camp. ... It is the reason why I feel so strongly about my Jewish identity. I grew up in a Jewish home and my house is definitely a Jewish house, but I have this good feeling about Judaism ... because it's now very, very familiar, because every single day you're singing in the morning, you're singing in the evening, all the prayers. And when I say singing, it includes singing and chanting—even chanting the prayers, but I call it singing.
There’s a sense of spirituality and those core values—the centrality of *tikkun olam*, the idea that one person can make a difference and has the responsibility to repair the world, the idea that new realities begin with dreams—are all lessons, are all ideas that emerged from the music, from the words of the music and from the singing experience. You know, I read those prayers over the course of my childhood. Those lessons, those core values—made their way into my bones, into my body, into my way of being until they got sung repeatedly and with the kind of spirit and emotion and energy that came out of those song sessions. All of the values are echoed in the music, so that if you’re learning positive values at camp, what’s important, not only in being Jewish but being a good person. ... It’s all echoed in the music so that it’s reinforced every moment of the day. You may or may not know the words, but all the words of the songs reinforce who I think we want to be as Jews.

Ultimately, I think camp tries to teach people about doing things for other people, and being generous, and being sympathetic or being kind. And I think a lot of the songs are about that, either overtly, where they talk about those values, or they’re about that because they bring up certain emotions that we feel when we hear them. And I think a lot of that connects with as you get older, and you try to emulate some of those values. ... I don’t know if you could say that those values come from the songs, but as you were developing those values as a kid, and you hear the music—kid or young adult—and you hear the music, it would all come together. ... And maybe that’s something that drives some of my behavior, some of my values today. I do know that
the best version of myself was when I was at camp. I was sort of like two people: my camp self and my home self. What I mean by that is that camp was a place where I was safe. I was less concerned about what others thought about me. I got a chance to define myself—my Jewish self and my own self. And there was a certain age when the two collided—my home self and my camp self—and they became the same person.

And the music was like—I mean, I said it before when I used the word soundtrack. It really, really was. I mean, it'd be like if you took the soundtrack out of a movie if you took music out of camp. Well you know it just, it really is—the music is a backdrop for everything else. It's like movie music; it's the backdrop for everything else you're doing in camp. It's what kept everything moving ... even when I'm not in Los Angeles.

I don't know about you, but when I'm in a foreign country, one of the things I do is look for a synagogue. The music and the chanting became ingrained in me and so when I travel I always like to go to a synagogue because it's familiar. It's like eating at McDonald's in a different kind of—it's always going to taste the same. If you go into a temple, it feels like home. It's sort of part of the experience of being in a strange place, I guess, and there is nothing like knowing the prayer book, being able to find your way through it, 'cause when you’re in Spain, and it's Friday night and you’re thinking, “I don't know what I'm gonna do,” you can find a synagogue and you can follow along. I especially like when they even sing some of our songs.
One summer I went to Israel with other kids from Hess Kramer and ... the entire time I'm thinking like this isn't camp. Even when we'd sing the same songs in Israel, I thought, but this isn't camp. By the end of the summer, I was really enjoying the group and being in Israel, but I kept thinking that Shabbat at Hess Kramer was somehow missing. ... Being in Israel wasn't camp. But in Israel we met other kids—kids who went to other camps. And it's like six degrees of separation when you meet other Jewish people and you say, "Oh I went to Hess Kramer and another one says, oh, I went to Ramah." I think that many kids in other countries go to Jewish camps, too. I may not know them, but I'm sure they've got them.

**What David's narrative tells us about identity.** Like David Newman, all those interviewed believed the musical experiences at Camp Hess Kramer had a direct bearing on their personal sense of Jewishness. Although a few respondents acknowledged that personal identity development could not be attributed solely to the music at camp, the majority acknowledged the significance that the experience of communal song at camp had on their lives. Some claimed, as David Newman did, the transformative power of song lyrics. Others spoke of the influence of singing as part of a Jewish community with scant attention paid to lyrics. Participants also differed on exactly how this sense of personal identity manifested in their lives. For example, although some camp alumni expressed their personal Jewishness through active participation in synagogue life and Jewish communal organizations, others believed their Jewishness was manifest in their vocational choices whether, for example, they became lawyers, nonprofit executives, rabbis, cantors, accountants, or physicians. Still others believed the experience of camp
music informed their worldview and prompted their involvement in a variety of civic and
group volunteer organizations.

Participants understood their experience of music at camp and its influence on
their Jewish identities in a variety of ways. For some, the music at camp provided a
foundation for their Jewish lives as adults. Others came away with a skill set or
proficiencies that enabled them to further explore their own ritual practice. For many, the
music at camp was partially responsible for presenting camp alumni with Jewish values
and lessons. Others viewed camp music as a “soundtrack” for their lives, presenting a
gateway into the discovery of personal spirituality. Camp alumni also expressed how
music at camp provided them with an understanding and appreciation of other Jewish
communities.

Respondents consistently linked their experiences as campers to their practice as
adults, with the music at camp acting as a foundation for their adult religious practice and
observance. Even those former campers who expressed ambivalence toward religion
recognized the camp’s role in their religious and spiritual development. Charlie, a camp
alumnus who spent 13 years at Hess Kramer, recalled that going to camp was just
something he always did, “like brushing my teeth.” Although in his interview he
expressed uncertainty toward organized religion, he reminisced about his time at camp
with great fondness, especially with regard to the music and how it has impacted his life:

I’m sure you’ve heard this from a lot of people. I just have a soft spot for [camp
music]. It’s my childhood. It’s my Jewish identity. It’s how I connect with being
Jewish. To me, that’s the biggest expression I have of it. ... Well, camp is my Jewish identity. Shaped my Jewish identity.

David Newman’s recollections highlighted the ways in which the experience at camp provided him with an understanding and fluency of the service that enabled him to participate in Jewish liturgy even when in a foreign country. The participants’ experiences of music at Camp Hess Kramer were noteworthy in that it provided those interviewed with skills supporting the development of their Jewish identities, enabling them to explore Judaism or Jewish practice later in life and beyond the camp environment. Camp alumni seem to have internalized a repertoire of songs and blessings, facilitating the ability to participate in prayer services at other synagogues. Although many Reform synagogues use a common repertoire of songs and chants, many participants believed the musical background provided by Hess Kramer prevented them from feeling “intimidated” when they would venture beyond their home synagogues. Those interviewed pointed out that camp music made them feel more connected to Jewish ritual and practice. Amy, a member of the congregation I served in Los Angeles who is currently on the board of directors of another local camp, noted, “Well, yeah, [the music at camp] definitely shaped a lot of my identity as a Jew, because during camp and after camp, it made me much more involved in practicing Judaism, I would say for a long time.”

David Newman spoke of the important ways that camp provided him with “core values” and aided in the development of his “best self.” He attributed this not only to the act of singing, but to the words of the songs. Other participants mentioned how songs
sung at camp expressed core Jewish values and ethics. For example, the Hebrew song
"Ani V'atah" (I and You; Einstein & Gavrielov, 1971) presents a future in which the
singer is empowered to change the world. "Armstrong" (Stewart, 1969) expresses an
awareness of the injustices in the world, and the popular song "One Tin Soldier"
(Lambert & Potter, 1969) suggests ironic and sarcastic justifications for war.

David also spoke of a physicality associated with these values. He claimed that
the songs "made their way into my bones, into my body, into my way of being." He also
spoke of the music of camp acting as a "soundtrack" for his life and served as a
mechanism for propelling him forward toward future actions. These concepts—
embodiment and a constantly playing soundtrack—will become more significant as I
examine the identity-building processes that Jewish summer camp provides.

Although most of those interviewed revealed that music at Camp Hess Kramer
provided or engendered a sense of a more localized community, only six of those
interviewed felt that the musical experience of camp connected them in any way to the
greater Jewish collective. The connection to the greater Jewish community was expressed
in terms of Jews known and imagined, current and from times past. Campers mentioned
that this awareness of Peoplehood was aided through talks and discussions with rabbinic
faculty at camp who promoted the concept of historic and of worldwide Jewry. Rick, a
camper who eventually became a member of the Hess Kramer staff said,

I think [an awareness of Jews around the world] was mostly through the
discussions of the rabbis and the people that spoke at the services. I think that it
wasn't some kind of an overt spiritual thing or whatever, but we just talked about
the specialness of Shabbat and that Jews all over celebrated it. Celebrate it or acknowledge it or experience it in different ways, and this was just such a cool time and a cool way to experience it.

Ilana, a preschool educator interviewed, described how a certain melody from camp heightened her awareness of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. She recalled how singing a contemporary setting of the text *Ani Maamin* triggered thoughts of *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass). On the evenings of November 9 and 10, 1938, the Nazis commenced an organized massacre that was later known as *Kristallnacht* due to the shattering of thousands of windows in synagogues and storefronts throughout Germany and Austria. Although the text she recalled was written centuries before the Holocaust, it is often associated with the Nazi atrocities. *Ani Maamin* derived from Maimonides’s Thirteen Principles of Faith and stated: “I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah. Though he may tarry, I still believe.” Ilana stated,

So I can once again remind myself of what happened to my people. Now I don’t think you get a sense of my people—I guess you do—for me going to camp definitely helped to give me a sense of “let’s go look at what happened to my people of Kristallnacht.”

Although Ilana had no family members perish in the Holocaust, the text of this song was sufficient to create images of the Nazi Holocaust for Ilana. Additionally, though she only had rudimentary knowledge of *Kristallnacht*, she had strong associations and affinities toward this community of Jews. Through musical association, Ilana created what Landsberg (2004) referenced as prosthetic memory. These are memories that are
“transplanted across geographic and temporal chasms” (Kindle location 1689 of 3179). In Ilana’s case, they became the bedrock of her Jewish identity. Similarly, David imagined communities of campers and other Jewish adolescents who they surmised existed, but of whom they had no knowledge.

**Camp memory as a three-part process.** I propose that much of the former campers’ Jewishness is informed by the creation of deep-seated, long-lasting memories: memories that are embodied both in voice and in body. Camp alumni not only have vivid memories of the past, but these memories inform the present. For camp alumni currently involved in Jewish life, many songs and prayers are not just memories; they are current, vital actions. When these alumni attend synagogue services as adults and encounter a prayer or melody from their camp experience, they are transported back to their childhoods. When they sing songs from camp, especially if they encounter melodies from their childhood in a prayer service, these former campers are engaged in a three-part process: (a) remembering the initial experience in the past, (b) the act of living the experience in the present, and (c) moving toward the future.

Liturgist and theologian Don Saliers (2007, Kindle location 236) described how music, especially music in worship and ritual settings, has the ability to create memory with strong connotations. According to Saliers,

> Whether around campfires, in fields of harvest, or in temples and churches, the communal act of singing has formed and expressed deep human emotions. Such emotions are not simply passing states of feeling or mood; they are capacities to consent to a sense of being in the world. If music is the language of the soul made
audible, then human voices conjoined in community are primary instruments of the collective soul—a medium for what transcends the immediately commonsense world. ... Music has the power to encode and convey memory with powerful associations. (Saliers, 2007, Kindle location 236–242)

Hope, who spent many years at camp and has two teenaged children at Hess Kramer, recalled what happens when she recites the Aleinu prayer and Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals) in synagogue:

I'm back, it’s 1973 and I’m standing [in the chapel]. It’s amazing. Isn’t that weird? That’s a very strong association. ... When we’re here, like sometimes on Tuesday nights when the kids are doing ... the Birkat HaMazon, oh yeah I’m sittin’ at that table and it’s Friday night and we are just shouting out the Birkat HaMazon.

Worship at Reform Jewish summer camp incorporates ancient texts with modern, singable settings for much of the liturgy. Yerushalmi (1996) acknowledged the continual interplay of ritual and recitation of text as providing the Jewish worshipper identity and purpose. When this worship takes place at camp, the recitation includes the traditional text, but the ritual is made more dynamic, and its impact is long lasting because of the incorporation of communal song, creative movement, and a memorable environment. Summer camp’s ritual environment aids in the creation of a synesthetic experience that yields rich and deep memories. These memories are accessed, often involuntarily, years later in a variety of settings, with just a few notes of a particular song or chant prompting fond and loving recollections.
Tia DeNora (2009) noted that music has the power to take one back to a specific place or time, recall a relationship, and act as a prosthetic biography, with music acting in a way to invoke past remembrances and feelings. She described the sort of musical memory encountered when hearing a favorite song on the radio as one is driving on the freeway and recalls the summer they spent at the beach when that song was a hit. Music becomes “a device for unfolding, for replaying, the temporal structure of that moment, its dynamism as emerging soundtrack” (DeNora, 2009, p. 67).

What is interesting to note is that there are scenarios when the music cannot transcend the environment. When David Newman recounted his experience in Israel, he remembered how the songs may have been the same, but the Shabbat experience was not like that of Hess Kramer. For David, space and music were intrinsically intertwined and the songs could not return the campers to the more familiar environment. David is at ease in a prayer service in an unfamiliar synagogue in Europe, but he finds discomfort in Israel when the Shabbat melodies he loves cannot kindle the Friday night experience he recalled from camp. Perhaps there are expectations of the camp experience that cannot be replicated—except in the actual environment of camp. Surrounded by camp friends in Israel, and singing some of the same songs, David assumes that Shabbat will be just like in Malibu. When he traveled to Europe, his level of expectation may have been lower, so he was pleased that he was able to relate to the service the way he did, which was mostly through the songs.

For camp alumni, these memories are simultaneously individual and collective and inform personal Jewishness and the sense of Peoplehood. Personal memories are
created as campers recall words, gestures, and feelings extending from a specific song, moment, or place. These remembrances are also collective, as the camper remembers the songs and rituals in relation to others and in their social context. According to Halbwachs (1952/1992), the group provides individuals with a “framework” on which other memories are constructed.

However, for former campers, music in a liturgical and ritual setting functions in a manner a bit differently from the ways asserted by Halbwachs (1952/1992) and DeNora (2009). Music as part of the camp experience of communal song prompted recall of collective events, but initial recollection was prompted not by other members of the group, but rather by the music itself. It seems as if collective memory for the campers is triggered by recalling music in a setting somewhat similar to the original setting (a prayer service)—but without the presence of any of the original actors. When Hope chants *Aleinu* as part of worship or sings the Hebrew grace after meals, she recalls camp—and the collective memories associated with camp because the rituals and rites from the camp experience are bodily imbedded. Singing these melodies become “re-enactments of the past, its return in a representational guise which normally includes a simulacrum of the scene or situation recaptured” (Connerton, 1989, p. 72). The power of the ritual, the remembrance of the effervescent moment, is so strong that just a few notes of the melody are enough to evoke the event and its initial locale. For camp alumni, music triggered a reliving of the ritual experience, and participants recalled the initial event while participating in a similarly constructed ritual moment years later. The music they heard as adults transported them back to a time and place when they were teenagers. This recall
does not just replay the initial moment; it strengthens the present experience and enhances the desire for similar experiences in the future.

**Durkheim at summer camp.** This process of recall is also enhanced by the highly somatic activity associated with communal singing at Jewish summer camp. Camp alumni spoke of feeling the music “in their bones” or “in their bodies.” These embodied sensations are congruent with Durkheim’s description of group ritual and ceremony in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (2001). Durkheim provided a theoretical foundation for understanding how dynamic ritual in combination with text is responsible for shaping religious life. This ritual, according to Durkheim, renews religious beliefs and convictions through the power of the group process that Durkheim called “collective effervescence.”

David Newman mentioned this excitement as a part of the camp’s Friday night song session: “It was like a great rock concert where it’s escalating step by step in emotion and energy and participation.” This effervescence manifests as the dynamic energy present when a group comes together, and at summer camp, this is highly prevalent when there is group singing, dancing, praying, chanting, or rhythmic clapping and stomping. Campers often describe these moments as “ecstatic,” “amazing,” and “being apart and being together at the same time.” Although this effervescence is often associated with great physicality, at summer camp this feeling of coalescing as a group or being part of something greater than themselves is apparent even when the singing is mellower and is accompanied by the intertwining of arms around shoulders and swaying. Micah, currently a Los Angeles government official, stated, “I think back to everybody
putting their arms around each other and just feeling a closeness with everybody there, even though these were 300 of my not necessarily closest friends, but feeling a connection with people there.” Whether this effervescence is experienced as part of the communal song session on Friday night or during a more intimate setting, such as a friendship circle, the interrelationship between movement, touch, singing, text, smell, and all other sensory input contributes to the creation of a synesthetic effect.

The synesthetic matrix. The synesthesia created as part of the rich physical and sensory stimuli found in the summer-camp environment in turn acts as the backdrop for the formation of individual and of collective memory and identity formation. Saliers (2007) explained that when music is part of this matrix, the worshipper achieves a deeper and fuller understanding of the text and the ritual experience:

Music is not therefore simply an ornament of something already understood, such as a text. Neither is music, in ritual and devotional contexts, an enhancement of something already fully determined by the text. Rather, music mediates multiple senses and the reception of religious significance precisely by crossing over to what is not heard. (Saliers, 2007, Kindle location 288–291)

Jamie Ward (2008), a professor of cognitive neuroscience at the University of Sussex, presented evidence regarding ways true synesthetes retained information better and had enhanced memory capacities:

Why does synesthesia give a natural memory advantage? The answer seems simple. Storing a memory using a variety of codes—verbal, sensory, and spatial—is better than using one code. … It just so happens that synesthetes are able to do
this by virtue of their unusual sensory experiences. The same is probably true for most, if not all varieties of synesthesia. (p. 137)

If enhanced memory is viable for true synesthetes, those experiencing a synesthetic matrix with communal song at its core may also have enhanced memories. Summer campers, like true synesthetes, access a variety of sensorial codes that then implant those memories.

Those interviewed mentioned the smell of the outdoor chapel, especially the scent of the ocean and the sycamore and eucalyptus trees that surround Camp Hess Kramer as part of the prayer experience. Steve, one of the camp alumni interviewed who is currently a management consultant, recalled not only the smells from camp, but recounted how these scents triggered remembrances of place, were interpolated with songs, the song leaders, and feelings of being alongside while singing:

So probably the strongest smell at camp, I now realize, is the smell of the eucalyptus trees and the sycamore trees. And the area around the amphitheater in particular, when the breeze would blow at night, it would get—that would be a very strong smell. And so some of the songs that we might sing at the end of the camp day would bring back those memories of being in the amphitheater, and there’d be a cool breeze blowing, and you’d be very close together and locked arms, if you’re with your friends from camp.

And the day was over, and there was that idea of reflection, and the camp director would talk about camp, and they’d sing those songs and song leaders would lead them. And that’s probably—other than Shabbat—the strongest
The service was filled with a lot of music. A lot of music. I mean a lot of prayers. It’s sort of one—every prayer is a song, essentially, so it’s a very musical service ... I remember a lot of songs. I loved it. Being outdoors with nature. I think that anyone feels closer to God being outside with nature, and that ... particular setting at that chapel is so beautiful, you know, with all the trees. And there’s a slight wind. You’re near the ocean, and those leaves just—you know, it’s just incredible. It’s an incredible place. And, you know, you’re with all these people that you’ve come to know, and yeah. It’s a special place.

So one example comes to mind and that is that my first sense of a spiritual moment, the moment that felt truly sacred and deeply personal, happened in the outdoor chapel at Camp Hess Kramer. It happened many times thereafter. ... There would be a prayerful moment happening, or a song being sung, and there was this sort of overwhelming sense of connectedness with what we were saying or singing and the beauty and the natural environment around.

I can remember literally ... looking into the light coming through the big sycamore tree at the center of the chapel, the light hitting the amazing marbled bark on that sycamore tree, and having this amazing sense of gratitude and connectedness with the ground, with the natural environment, and with the people around me as well. All of those things sort of converged in that moment and created this really powerful emotional experience for me, and the song was certainly part of that.
example of that connection between the music and the smell of camp, just the feeling of that evening kind of mood.

For campers, the synesthetic matrix from camp included the smell of eucalyptus and sycamore trees, the embrace of friends, the evening breeze, and the music that would conclude the day’s program. These elements combined to initially formulate and then reinforce memory. Steve later described how the scent of these trees and the music transport him back to Hess Kramer even when he is in a different locale:

There are smells that trigger the camp experience. The smell of sycamore trees absolutely bring me back to camp. There are for sure melodies. If I hear them at a Jewish event or at a JCC event here, they absolutely bring me back. I return to camp on a regular basis, probably once a year, and they’re still singing a lot of the same songs, and that brings me right back to my own childhood and to those song sessions.

This synesthetic interweaving of communal song, prayer, scents, physical motion, and the total environment of the camp create enduring memories that are accessed even when campers like David Newman are thousands of miles away from Malibu and decades past the initial event. These memories are so deep and so strongly implanted, that they become a vibrant part of the camp alumni’s sense of Jewishness. I theorize that they remain attached and affiliated to the Jewish community as they are continually seeking this experience in any of its possible forms or permutations.
Theme 2: Music’s Centrality at Camp is a Result of Purposeful and Intentional Practice. This, in Turn, Forms the Basis of a Redemptive Community

Starting on Friday afternoon, just the whole pace of camp changes, and you know, it’s much more pronounced in an environment like that than it is at home when you’re not—when everybody around you isn’t doing the same thing. Right? You’re observing Shabbat, and you start your observance of Shabbat after work on Friday, and … maybe if you observe Saturday … you don’t do a lot on Saturday, but everybody around you isn’t. Life goes on. Right? You’re the only one who’s doing it. Camp is different. [At] camp everybody is doing the same thing, so that change in pace in the afternoon … and the changing into light white-colored clothing for Shabbat, and … everybody gets cleaned up and showered and dresses up, and … you walk into the outdoor sanctuary, you’re with nature, and the music starts with the guitars, and it just, you know—that whole evening is just really special at camp.

And cleaning camp up a little bit, which is what I think was involved. But then there was this kind of everybody running around getting cleaned up; putting on nice, clean clothes and all of that. And then the Shabbat service starting, where we walk into the chapel and the music was there. It was just a uniquely different 4:00 or whatever—4:30 to 5:30 in the afternoon. And to a large extent, it feels like everybody’s coming together for that event, which is kind of different from some of the activity that goes on in summer camp. There’s so many other things going on that when there’s a time that
everybody starts to go to the same thing, or just does the thing together, that’s a very
good feeling, and it’s one that I think forges that whole sense of community.

Everybody wears white. That was a big deal. This was also when I was—my
memories of Shabbat—it’s strange that we talk about this because now I’m
remembering when I was younger as opposed to when I was older. ... But that was—
camp would be shorts, sweats, tennis shoes. And then boom! Friday night happened
and everybody cleaned up. So as a camper, it was all about the white shirt. It was all
about making sure my shirt was white, looking good, and being clean, and just getting to
the chapel early enough to be able to hang out with people, and we were all held at the
bridge of the chapel and all entered together to music, to usually a guitar player leading
us across that bridge and into the Sabbath spirit. ... The whole camp would be held at
the bridge in the girls’ cabin area. So 300 people would just be crowded outside the
boundary of the chapel and then together we would enter together in song and unison
and take our seats.

You would go into the chapel singing ... this little, incredibly beautiful chapel
that’s all nestled up on an oak tree I hope is still there. And you sit on the wooden
benches in this little enclave and it’s amazing. It’s outside. Maybe it’s cloudy; maybe it’s
cold. Maybe it’s hot; maybe it’s sunny, but you do that before dinner. ... It was amazing;
it was amazing. It was just ... so alive. ... Well, it sounds corny, but it wasn’t—just—I
guess because we were sitting there with the trees over—it was an amazing place to
be—it just was.
Later on after the service in the chapel we’d have dinner and after that was the song session. There were moments during the song sessions where it was just happy—you don’t care about anything else in the world. Like everything just feels good, and I’m trying to think. I don’t know if I felt that so much with the services, but definitely during, like, a Shabbat song session. It just felt warm and comfortable, and you’re surrounded with love.

The song session started with the same songs, and you learned them and you got more proficient with them, so that by the time next week came along, or even next summer came along, you knew what to do but it didn’t feel old. It didn’t feel old. It didn’t feel like it was drudgery. It was just enthusiasm and dance ... the song leaders created this rise and fall to a song session, but it was just reaching, trying—you know, reaching that crescendo of energy and enthusiasm for the songs that you were singing.

I don’t know why, but the song session was a big deal, especially as you got older. I kind of don’t know why. It was just kind of like that soundtrack, I guess. It was what kind of moved everything forward ... but the first song was always ‘The Sun on the Treetops.’ When you would just hear that, it was like that was like the—that was a big deal. That was like, ‘Okay, that’s like the beginning of a movie when it’s like “da-da-da-da.”’ It’s the same thing. That was the kind of signal that we were really beginning.

Well, I can tell you, you start with this. ‘The Sun on the Treetops’ and then you go to, ‘From earth to heaven, a ladder stands unbending. ... Angels with glowing wings.’

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4 The Sun on the Treetops is the opening line of the sung English translation of “Shabbat HaMalke,” with text by Bialik and music by Minkowsky (n.d.).
can sit here all day and sing. We'd eventually move into the Hebrew songs then we get into more the English ones and the ones that were written at camp—a lot of the old ones written by Chuck Feldman. The 'Cherish the Torah' and all that. ... It was very structured. I mean you got to the point you didn't need the songbook.

The room was ... happy. Excited. You know, loud. 'Cause everybody was singing, we would sing and laugh and be pretty happy. I mean, I think there was just a sense of happiness. It was a very sort of powerful experience to hear as much song and voices, you know, singing together loud. Right? Could almost shake the room. I mean it was—it's a very powerful thing, you know, when you have a couple hundred people that are all singing, you know, in a coordinated kind of a way.

We would have this 2-hour singing after dinner before we did the evening program, where you had a sore throat because everybody was singing, you know, intensely, and I really looked forward to that night, and that singing.

I think one of the interesting things about singing at camp is that it has this sort of vocal part to it that we are singing at the tops of our voices and we are harmonizing, and together we're creating something really powerfully communal that can only be done together. ... So to be a part of that, of creating this sound that was so magnificent, to know that we were doing it together was really amazing.

Examining Shabbat at camp. Although communal song is part of much of the day-to-day camp activity, singing takes center stage during the celebrations and rituals surrounding the Jewish Sabbath. This section examines aspects of the Shabbat ritual to
show how these numerous activities and rituals are vital to camp life. I will demonstrate how the celebration of *Shabbat* at Jewish summer camp is a result of intentional and deliberate musical practice and the ways in which this celebration aids in the development of a community that is an expression of the sort of redemptive community envisioned by Franz Rosenzweig (2005).

At Camp Hess Kramer, the primary religious observance is the celebration of *Shabbat*. All those interviewed concurred that the musical experience of *Shabbat* was one of the central elements of their camp experience. When participants were asked about their favorite recollections of their summers at Camp Hess Kramer, the celebration of *Shabbat* was among their most distinct and vivid memories. The recollections were rich in detail and specificity. For that reason, the celebration of *Shabbat* functions as the primary activity through which this analysis of music’s centrality at camp is considered.

In Judaism, *Shabbat* is understood as a sacred time and is considered *kadosh*, the Hebrew word for sacred and separate. Abraham Joshua Heschel (1951) described *Shabbat* as

The armistice in man’s cruel struggle for existence, a truce in all conflicts, personal and social, peace between man and man, man and nature, peace within man; a day on which handling money is considered a desecration, on which man avows his independence of that which is the world’s chief idol. The seventh day is the exodus from tension, the liberation of man from his own muddiness, the installation of man as a sovereign in the world of time. (Kindle location 489–492)
It is a time set apart from all else, and no other time or event at Camp Hess Kramer is as deeply sacralized and ritualized.

At Reform Jewish summer camp, Shabbat is not just theoretical or philosophical; Shabbat at camp is a form of enacted ritual in which the entire community participates. Philosopher and theologian Arthur Green (2003) presented an image of Shabbat as closely aligned with Shabbat at camp:

Shabbat is, if you will, contemplation turned into a way of living. Rather than the lone and silent contemplative act, which lies at the heart of all prayer, Shabbat is that same contemplation turned into the mode of family and communal joy and celebration. In its ideal form, it is an exquisite sharing with those we love of our awareness that we, the world around us, and love itself are all gifts from the one source of life. (Kindle location 846–848)

As a Jewish camp affiliated with a local synagogue, Camp Hess Kramer places great importance on the observance of Shabbat. The Camp Hess Kramer website (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 2012) embraces the perspectives of Heschel (1951) and Green (2003) in portraying the camp Shabbat experience:

Shabbat is one of the most exciting parts of the week. Friday night starts the Shabbat experience through tefillah [prayer], a special dinner meal, an energy filled song session, and the entire camp is in one place doing Israeli dancing! The rest of Shabbat captures the essence of the day with services, reading from the Torah, and relaxing cabin time. All week long, campers and staff alike wait for Shabbat, not only because it is the day of rest, but also because it is the day
separate from the rest of the week, a day filled with *ruach* (sense of spirit), friendship, time, and space. (Wilshire Boulevard Temple, 2012, para. 4)

**Distinct episodes of Shabbat observance.** At Camp Hess Kramer, the Friday afternoon and evening celebration of *Shabbat* can be delineated into five distinct but connected episodes, with music functioning as an important aspect of each: the *Shabbat* procession from the cabin area to the Chapel, the transition at the Chapel Bridge, the Friday night service, the song session on Friday night, and Israeli folk dancing.

Those interviewed expressed agreement about the special and singular nature of the community that *Shabbat* created and the general excitement surrounding *Shabbat* preparations. Camp feels different as *Shabbat* approaches. During these hours of preparation, the public spaces at camp are quiet, but the cabin area is busy with activity as campers ready themselves with showering, cleaning the cabins, and other personal preparations as the entire camp works to get ready for *Shabbat*.

This sense of *Shabbat* as being special or apart from the rest of the week is a major component of the traditional *Shabbat* observance. The *Shabbat* celebration at Camp Hess Kramer reflects the unique character of *Shabbat*. Micah reported,

I think that the structure that the camp created for it really lends itself to that. Not that the rest of the week was work, but it felt like a very clear separation with lots of—it had a very positive, uplifting feeling ... the division between the rest of the week and *Shabbat* was very palpable. I mean, it was something that you could feel, that people—it was more relaxed.
Shabbat in its entirety is a sacred event, but even the events prior to Shabbat (camp clean up, shower hour, and procession with the song leaders) become sacralized when these mundane activities become part of the greater Shabbat celebration. For example, the pre-Shabbat ritual of cleaning the cabin becomes a sacred activity because of its proximity to the Shabbat celebration. When certain symbols and signs such as ritualized time, place, language, music, food, physical actions, and music enter in relation to sacred symbols, these seemingly mundane symbols are also then viewed as sacred (Bell, 1997; Grimes, 2010).

**Analyzing the Shabbat musical experience.** At Camp Hess Kramer, the Friday afternoon and evening celebration of Shabbat can be delineated into four distinct but connected episodes, with song functioning as an important aspect of each—the Shabbat procession from the cabin area to the chapel, the transition at the chapel bridge, the Friday night service, the song session on Friday night—with each episode having associated music and movement.

Prior to the procession of campers to the chapel bridge, time was set aside for personal cleanup and changing into white clothing. Wearing white for Shabbat has its roots in the practices and teachings of the 16th-century mystic and sage, Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed, Israel, who was one of the founders of modern Kabbalah, the Jewish mystical tradition. Traditionally, white is symbolic of purity in Judaism. On festivals and the High Holidays, the Torah scrolls are garbed in white coverings. At their weddings, Jewish brides wear white and Jewish grooms often wear a kittel—a white, belted robe, and traditional Jews are also buried in a white robe.
The act of changing into white clothing as an outward manifestation of the approaching *Shabbat* was seen as key to the commencement of the celebration at camp. Campers not only put on white shirts and shorts or skirts, but much time was spent with personal preparation, including of makeup and hair. David Newman recalled how this represented, for him, an immediate transformation.

Just as the campers' behaviors and practices are guided on *Shabbat* by the texts of the prayer book and then later in the evening by the camp song book, the wearing of white clothing also serves as a form of text as conceptualized by Derrida. This "text" of white clothing indicates to campers a change in their personal and communal status, and provided the initial individual indication of *Shabbat*-specific ritual. The white clothing is also statement of welcome and hospitality, as it announces the Friday night service. This service, known in Hebrew as *Kabbalat Shabbat* or the "welcoming of Shabbat," officially demarcates the start of the day of rest.

This change of clothing also presents the campers as liminal entities: they are about to cross the threshold from the everyday into the sacred space of *Shabbat*. Turner (1995) stated,

> Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions.

(p. 95)
Participants felt that the campwide simultaneous preparation for Shabbat helped cement feelings of community. Caryn noted that the preparation for Shabbat produced not only feelings of excitement, but of a total community:

It was excitement. You know, we would all go back and shower and get ready and clean, and put on our white clothes. You know, the excitement of Shabbat is coming. It’s different; it’s special. We’re going to be all together as a camp, and not separate in our chugim [Hebrew for electives] or whatever it was. We’re all together. At Shabbat service, we’re all together, and then we’re going to go to the dining hall and have dinner all together, special food—it was like the best meal of the week.

You know, challah and chicken, and then lots of singing. Just the fact that we would be together as one community as opposed to, you know, the rest of the week you’re all doing your separate things; that we all came together as on community.

Once the cabins were cleaned, “shower hour” completed, and all the campers dressed in their white clothing, Shabbat itself began. The Shabbat songs and the procession provided aurally and physically embodied cues for the approaching Sabbath. Ellen recalled, “But singing was a big, big part of sort of signaling, too, that Shabbat was starting.” Those interviewed did not have clear memories of what songs were sung as the procession came down the hill, but a mood of the sacred was created in the transitional walk from the cabins to the chapel bridge. In this procession, representing the physical, emotional, and spiritual movement into Shabbat, it was the physical gathering of the
community and the social act of singing as they walked down the hill toward the chapel that seemed most important, rather than the specific songs. None of those interviewed recalled particular songs or melodies as part of this moment of procession, rather they commented how the walking, the white clothes, and the singing created a portal to holiness. Singing is an important part of the transformational process; what is sung at this moment less so.

As the campers approached the bridge that led into the chapel, they would be stopped. This was an anticipatory gesture and a deliberate attempt, on the part of the song leaders, to enhance the drama of entering Shabbat. The chapel bridge served as a transitional space between the cabin area and the chapel itself. This bridge served as the in-between space mentioned by Van Gennep (1960), who referred to these places of waiting, transition, and uncertainty as “territorial passages.” Those in this liminal place or state are ambiguous in status or structure. Turner, building on Van Genepp’s theory, referred to these liminal spaces as the “realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise” (1969, p. 97). As the campers stood on the bridge ready to enter the ritual space of Shabbat, they were able to feel the potentiality of Shabbat, as the entire week had built to this moment. Through dress, procession, and song, they began the movement of leaving the world of the everyday and were positioned to cross over into the realm of the sacred.

Although the processional songs were not recounted specifically by those interviewed, at the moment when the campers entered the chapel via the footbridge and therefore crossed over into the space of Shabbat, the songs were remembered with
Ilana recalled not only the singing of “L’cha Dodi” (literally, “To You, My Beloved,” a 16th-century liturgical poem sung to welcome Shabbat) but the sound of the campers’ feet crossing the bridge. This added another aural layer to an already sonically rich experience:

Everybody would put on a white shirt and you’d get a little dressed up and [song leader’s name] ... would meet us at the bridge and the sounds are very important, too. The feet going across the bridge right thump-thump-thump, singing “L’cha Dodi” ... and you would go into the chapel.

It is noteworthy that the camp had not developed a traditional “crossing the bridge song” as so much else of camp life is ritualized. It is likely that this crossing over the bridge was quite profound and therefore did not need any more liturgical or musical enhancement. Ilana’s observation of the feet on the bridge presents a synesthetic level to this liminal moment and it is this layering of the liminal with the synesthetic that serves to make these camp memories deeper, more vivid, and longer lasting.

**Friday-night prayer service.** Once the campers crossed over the bridge, Kabbalat Shabbat, the service welcoming the Sabbath commenced. The service takes place in the outdoor chapel—a place camp alumni recalled with great fondness and reverence. The chapel is rustic in nature, with benches made from logs placed in a semicircle. In describing their prayer experiences in the chapel, most participants spoke of the chapel’s physical beauty and the spiritual environment it created. The chapel has been referred to as a “special place,” or a place in which one felt “cloistered.”
Dina, who admitted she hardly ever attends synagogue, remembered the chapel as the place where she first encountered God and sensed feelings of holiness:

I have a very distinct memory of ... being at the chapel in camp, looking up through the oak trees, looking at the sky, and just feeling like, “Yes,” you know, “there’s a God, and I’m connected to that God right now.” I think that that, in some ways, is the only time in my life I have ever had that sort of powerful of an experience.

Like Ilana remembering the interplay of the singing and the footsteps on the bridge, this extra layer of sensory awareness adds to the depth and recall of the memory.

The physical space (the chapel) and the moment in time (welcoming of Shabbat) emerge as more memorable than the actual music of the service itself. Part of the reason may be that the chapel was only used as a prayer space on Friday and Saturday, so it was a unique space by nature. But very few participants recalled actual songs sung as part of the service. Campers did remember the service being filled mostly with group singing, which for many proved to be a contrast to the synagogue services in their home congregations, but outstanding individual prayers or songs were not recalled. Again, as with the procession down the hill from the cabin area, the larger musical event is remembered and the actual songs sung are not part of the presented recollection. This is not the case for all of the episodes of the Shabbat celebration. In the next section, the analysis of the after-dinner song session, specific songs are remembered in great detail. A discussion of why some events are remembered with such detail and others are not follows.
**Song session in the dining hall.** The Friday-night song session is the climax of the Friday night Shabbat ritual. For Shabbat, the dining hall is transformed. Long tables are covered with white tablecloths, hand-made decorations are taped on the walls, and challot, the braided bread eaten as part of the ritual of the Shabbat meal, are placed on each table. The dinner served on Friday night was always considered special by the campers—not necessarily because it was so extraordinary in its culinary attributes, but because it was always the same and was reserved for Shabbat: chicken, broccoli, a rice dish, and apple pie. As the last dinner dishes were cleared, the song books were distributed—some a little sticky with grape juice residue from the previous Friday. While Birkat HaMazon, the grace after meals, is chanted, campers punctuate the prayer with gestures and vocal shtick.\(^5\) This shtick consists of banging on the tables to punctuate the sung text and echoing the rhythm of the words with foot stomping and hand gestures. All the staff and campers harmonize on the prayer’s final words, “Adonai oz l’amo yitein, Adonai y’vareich et amo b’shalom” (May Adonai\(^6\) grant strength to our people; may Adonai bless our people with peace).

As the entire camp breathes in the peace, beauty, and majesty of Shabbat, the song leaders sing the opening lines of the song “Shabbat HaMalkah” (The Sabbath Queen, n.d.), a metrical English translation of a Hebrew poem by Chaim Nachman Bialik:

> The Sun on the treetops no longer is seen

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\(^5\) As mentioned in Chapter 1, *shtick* is a Yiddish term literally meaning “a piece” but refers in this context to any vocal or physical additions to the original prayer or song.

\(^6\) Adonai is one of the Hebrew terms for God.
Come gather to welcome the Sabbath, our queen

Behold her descending, the holy the blessed
And with her ascending peace and rest.

My personal recollection of the song session is of an initial sweetness, with the entire camp singing, arms wrapped one around another, swaying in place while seated at the Shabbat tables. I was always amazed how the song leaders could take the campers on a musical journey from one song to the next, with momentum and excitement building as the songs continued into the night. Specific hand motions and dances accompanied several of the songs. At times the entire camp would be dancing—steps passed from generation to generation. I remember seeing new campers—novices to all of this—and how they initially seemed like outsiders, at first a bit clumsy and awkward. But in a week or two, they felt right at home and it appeared as if they had always known these songs and dances.

The songs almost imperceptibly increased in tempo and energy, and just as seamlessly the song leaders began a gradual musical and emotional diminuendo, and the song session ended with the singing of “Sabbath Prayer” from Fiddler on the Roof (Bock & Harnick, 1964). The campers sang multilayered harmony and divided themselves instantaneously where antiphonal singing was warranted. With arms wrapped around each other’s shoulders or waists, white shirts soaked with sweat, the song session came to a conclusion. For so many campers at Camp Hess Kramer, this hour of group singing on Friday night was the highlight of the week and would be recalled years later as a favorite camp memory.
When discussing the Friday night song session, participants mentioned feelings such as joy and love, the high level of participation among the campers, intensity and volume of the singing, the impact of harmony and antiphonal singing, the musical trajectory of the song session, the quality of energy in the room, and the effect of hand and body movements. Participants described the song session as “exciting,” “mega,” “intense,” and “filled with energy.” Steve described the song session as an “upward spiraling emotion,” and Micah said, “There were moments during the song sessions where it was just happy—you don’t care about anything else in the world.” Hope described the song session as a time when, “You’re completely submerged in this ruach—this spirit of Shabbat,” and Ellen said the song session gave her a feeling of “unity.” According to Lawrence, Shabbat and the song session created an evening of joy: “The power was that everybody was just focused, you know, and singing and enjoying and smiling and laughing and, you know, people really looked forward to that, that night of celebration.”

The discussion of the song session prompted strong emotional responses from some participants. Deborah began crying as she recalled Friday night at camp. When asked why remembering the song session brought forth such strong emotion, she said that the dining hall on Shabbat was

The happiest place in the world. It really was. I mean it was—we would—there was a song leader. And it was, it was wonderful. I mean we all sang. We all participated. We’d do harmonies ... and it was great.
In addition to the feeling of great happiness in the room, camp alumni recalled the loud and reverberant sound of the singing in the dining hall. Hope remembered that the dining hall was very loud and very happy. Very excited. It was definitely like what you look forward to and it’s now looking back, it’s really a letting go. Like you’re just totally—you’re completely submerged in this spirit of Shabbat and everybody is and nobody’s—I mean everybody’s excited and you’re really talking loudly and singing loudly and it could get really, really loud.

In addition to the high volume and intensity, participants remembered the singing on Friday night as having the special qualities of soaring energy, spontaneous harmony, and antiphonal singing. Ellen spoke about the tremendous feeling of excitement and energy in the room and the power of the group. She used the Hebrew word kavannah (the intention that an individual brings to prayer) to refer to the special feeling created by the group singing:

You know, you’ve got everybody singing the same song and the—I can’t—it’s hard to explain. You probably understand this, but the tonal quality of everybody singing, there’s just some sort of vibrational power in everybody singing certain songs, certain prayers as a group, I guess. So there’s a power in the group, and then there’s also ... Kavannah?

The growing intensity of the song session did not occur by accident. The song leaders, as community musicians, fostered this atmosphere through a deliberate musical development. Camp alumni who had served as song leaders spoke about the planning that
went into the song sessions. Song leaders purposefully created an arc that facilitated this effervescent behavior that assisted in creating the shared experience of the camp community.

As the intensity of the singing increased, the accompanying stomping and banging was amplified until, as Laurel said, “an energy just pervaded everyone” in the entire room. This energy was not just vocal. The choreography is also a part of the overall collective effervescence that helps campers forge community and provides them with a sense of personal agency. According to Craig, all these motions eventually become embodied practice and are part of the camp’s collective memory:

And so I really do remember that being a huge part of what it felt like, that we were sort of, you know, on our own—I don’t know—on our own little plane, the Camp Hess Kramer plane, and you learned how to maneuver it and around it … in your own way, but with the same group of people. And so these traditions, these rituals, these things just really do become a part of … your experience, and I think that’s probably why I remember those more than I remember specific, you know, days or weeks of any given summer.

The song session is another liminal occurrence that is part of the Friday night celebration. The campers put on white clothing before the evening ritual begins, in procession, down the hill. As a community they sing songs and are held at the chapel bridge until they are allowed to enter the sanctuary—the outdoor chapel—as a cohesive group. From the chapel they move, again as a group, to the dining hall, where they are served a meal steeped in tradition. After the meal, they join in a blessing of thanksgiving.
in which the chanted blessings are accompanied by multiple hand gestures. Following this, the group moves into the song session.

The Friday ritual is composed of a series of events in which there are multiple moments of liminality. The campers are constantly crossing over boundaries and thresholds as they move into the physical and spiritual space of Shabbat. It is finally in the song session where they simultaneously achieve a degree of personal agency (by creating harmony and dancing or moving) while simultaneously remaining members of the community (as when they replicate the same traditional dances week after week, year after year). It is also in the song session that they encounter feelings of release following this day-long period of preparation.

The reason they recall the song session so much more vividly than the other events is that it is only in the song session that they have such a high level of autonomy, movement, and personal freedom. Although the music is prompted by song leaders, campers feel a sense of individual agency as they dance and sing, and therefore the high level of somatic movement serves to implant these songs and their associated choreography deeper into the campers' memories. Additionally, the amount of social, emotional, and physical release felt during the song session also makes this event highly memorable.

In the following section, I provide an introduction to communal song as an element in the construction of redemptive community. This is followed by David Newman's recollection of the Shabbat morning service and an analysis of how this worship, with the reading of the Torah as its centerpiece, acts as a recontextualized vision
of Rosenzweig’s (2005) redemptive congregation.

**Saturday morning at camp.** The communal singing on *Shabbat* at Reform Jewish summer camp combined with the elements of movement, gesture, sensory stimuli, and specific clothing or costume, not only evokes memory, but also serves as an important element in the expression of redemption. In *The Star of Redemption* (2005), Rosenzweig theorized that communal song is exemplified through the singing of the psalms. In *Jewish Liturgical Reasoning* (2007), Kepnes explained,

Rosenzweig considers the psalm as it is sung by the community in synagogue. Here, the psalm is taken up into the community and enlarged through the communal chant, through gesture, and through sacred space. ... The liturgical chanting of the psalm suggests that the experience of the deepest dimensions of time requires the participation of the community and the body. (Kindle location 1525–1528)

Rosenzweig (2005) also considered the physical gesture associated with the singing to be instrumental to the elevation of the liturgy beyond mere words:

Hence it turns out that the height of liturgy is not the common word, but the common gesture. Liturgy frees the gesture from the chains of being the clumsy maidservant of language and turns it into something more than language. Only in the liturgical gesture is the “purified lip” anticipated that is promised for “that day” to peoples always linguistically divided. (pp. 313–314)

As has been shown previously, the environment of camp is one in which the elements of communal song, costume, and gesture enhance community liturgy.
Rosenzweig (2005) recognized that artistic expression, in all of its forms, was a necessary part of the worship experience, for “in art, man already possesses language in a time when his innermost is still inexpressible, and so art is the language of what would still be otherwise inexpressible” (p. 205). *Shabbat* at camp, with all of its specific gestures, clothing, and style of singing, is the art-filled environment in which a community comes together in song to model the liturgical setting of which Rosenzweig spoke.

Rosenzweig called the community coming together in song, *Gemeinsamkeit des Gesanges* (as cited in Kepnes, 2007, Kindle location 1562)—the “community of the chant.” According to Kepnes, this community “provides the unity of the human soul and world under God that will occur in the future redemption” (Kindle location 1534). Not only will this community of singers serve as a model for all of humanity at the time of redemption, but the liturgy itself, following Rosenzweig, is a pathway to redemption.

Building on Rosenzweig’s (2005) philosophical stance, I theorize that the liturgical celebration serves as part of a communal and collective memory, permitting campers to effectively travel through time, experiencing past, present, and future through a pathway of songs and chanted prayers. Ritual commemoration also provides campers with a life-long cultural synesthesia that permits recall through a variety of stimuli. The initial fully embodied experience connects the worshipper to the community and to the sacred. The interplay of movement, music, spoken liturgy, communal song, the Friday night “costume” of white clothing, and other artistic and natural elements, not only contribute to a synesthetic experience, but also are a presentation of Rosenzweig’s idealized worship experience. This established community ultimately plays a role in the
development of redemption through the action of the liturgy itself, and also through messages and lessons learned from song text. This may be illustrated by an analysis of the Saturday morning service and the ritual for the reading of Torah.

In the following narrative, David Newman recalls Saturday at Camp Hess Kramer:

Saturday morning at camp ... most of my camp Saturday mornings were at Camp Hess Kramer, and they began with a lazy day breakfast of the sleeping late, the making your way back to the cabin from the dining hall, the going to get clean and showered for Shabbat service on Saturday morning, and waiting near the bridge, on the creek, not entering the outdoor chapel and being led into the chapel by someone playing guitar. That immediately—the musical experience was there and used to set the tone of our entry into the chapel, to create that kind of sacred entryway as we crossed the bridge into this beautiful worship place.

The tradition was to not just sort of walk into the chapel but to wait on the other side of the bridge and to be led in. So—yeah, yeah, it’s very similar to the Friday night experience in terms of the entry into the chapel on Saturday morning. Saturday morning did feel different. Well, for one thing, because there was a Torah service, there was more Hebrew. And also on Saturday morning there was a sermon or d’var Torah. The service also felt less accessible to me—maybe it was the change of mood, but I’m pretty sure it was because of the extra Hebrew added. But I always looked forward to one of
the rabbis, or rabbinic students—or maybe even one of the counselors—talking about or teaching about what had just been read.

You’re asking what the Torah service was like? Yeah. Well in the early days of camp, when I had just come to camp—there was an ark—you know the place where the Torah is kept, and it was nothing special that I can remember, but later on, Gerry Schusterman and a group of campers that included me, created the stained glass ark structure. It’s still there today. It was our art project elective for the summer.

And as part of the Torah service, the Torah was taken out. It was taken out to music. I can remember, especially in the really early days, like in the early ’70s, there was actually a piano set up and Chuck Feldman was still active at Hess Kramer, in those days, as the musical director. And there was a song that they would play, that I think he probably wrote, in English. It goes something like this [Singing]:

It is a tree of life to them that hold it fast, and its supporters are happy, happy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace. And all its paths are peace, peace, peace, are peace.

[Speaking]: And I can remember that, when we sang ‘Are peace,’ the Torah would be slowly lowered then, you know, onto the table. That was a clear memory of a Chuck Feldman song. It was a song I understood. It was, in this case, it was in English.

And it set this sort of, again, this sacred tone, this tone, this message of, you know, we are part of this tree of learning of wisdom and what was powerful, I think too, is that—my relationship with that worship space is all about a tree that was—may still be in the center of the chapel—a very large sycamore tree. And the light used to come
through on Saturday mornings, through the branches and leaves of that tree, in a really beautiful way. You couldn’t help but feel like you were in this place where a higher presence was operating. That that’s so much of what made the worship experience, for me, so powerful was this connection to the beauty and the mystery of the natural world and what we were chanting and what we were saying, in the words, and so that this idea, this imagery of the tree of life, in the Torah and in the grand tree in the center of the space, I can remember, really, almost feeling like I was singing to both the Torah and to the tree all at once.

But I’ll admit to you that there was one part of the service I didn’t really get. I never related to the ritual when someone walked around with the Torah and people would reach out and kiss it. Very early on—from a very early age, it seemed a little close to idolatry to me. The—my understanding of idolatry and sort of the worship of an object, it felt strange to me; it always felt awkward and inauthentic to me. It’s just me—I guess.

All of the Saturday morning service—including the Torah service, I think, was more contemplative and more intellectual. There was more teaching that happened. More explaining. But I also feel like there was more what we would call ‘traditional’ worship, both silent and recitation—some of it felt a little like the service from home. Because it was familiar.

On Saturday—it was—it had a different tone, and that tone, you know, I mean, even the song that I just sang, you know, it has a certain kind of rhythm, and it moves to
minor chords at the end, you know, in kind of a really interesting way, and I just think that’s a really, you know, important tone. And then there’s another song that, really, for me, marks the Saturday experience. I might have shared this in our first interview; I have this really distinct experience of hearing Janet Kirksmith and Helen Ginsberg and a third camper, all who had amazing voices and were known for their voices, that they came up to the bima and they sang this three-part harmony. I can’t remember how it starts, although it’s a prayer. It’s a prayer that—name of which I don’t know. [He sings a few bars and I recognize it as V’shamru—words from the Torah set to music by Debbie Friedman].

It was during—at least during a certain summer or group of summers. For me, it was the sort of signature Saturday morning that was transcendent. Those three-part harmonies, and they did it—they sang it in English and they sang it in Hebrew were—was a transcendent musical experience, being in that chapel and witnessing and being part of and singing with their harmony. For me, it means that the music lifted me to a place where I felt the kind of presence of something higher, that, as a kid, you know, that’s what music did for me. And the combination of music and that beautiful natural setting, you know, I mean, put me in touch with something that was bigger and higher than me, that was—that I would have called, at the time, ‘God.’

And there was something that was evoked by—I mean, that kind of beauty in music is not something I’d experienced a lot, other than maybe Stevie Wonder’s Inner
Vision album. This chapel—when we were all together—was where Jewish spiritual experience happened for me. It was not in the congregation where I grew up.

I mean, we're regular members of synagogue now and we do many rituals and ceremonies at home. And, like I told you before, my work now, I know was influenced by those years—those songs at camp. Yeah—we definitely have a Jewish home. And there's nothing's as sweet as watching my kids do Shabbat together on Fridays at home. But I think the day that I left camp and the worship experience at camp, it might have been, you know, the day that I had my last really Jewishly, deeply spiritual experience.

The Saturday morning service. David Newman's recollection of the Saturday morning service places the ritual for reading the Torah at its center. The Torah is a compelling symbol exerting great influence in crafting Jewishness and communal affiliation. According to anthropologist Ochs (2007), “Religious objects have great power. Serving as spiritual agents, they produce a sense of religious identity, prompt holy and ethical actions, and forge connections between the individual and the Jewish community” (p. 87). The Torah links the past to the present and the present to the future. As I will demonstrate, not only do the words of the Torah serve as a generational conduit, the blessing before the chanting from the scroll and the chant itself serve to link the generations.

The Torah scroll, handwritten with a quill on parchment, is perhaps the most enduring symbol in all of Jewish life. It is the words inscribed on the parchment that defines the Jewish people, as it is the ur text from whence all other text and commentary are derived. Although the Torah is venerated, it is not kept behind glass or in a locked
cabinet. It is taken out and publically read in a continuous lectionary every week on *Shabbat* and for the Jewish holidays and festivals.

The complexity of the ritual surrounding Torah reading acknowledges the worshipper as part of the communal Jewish past, present, and future. The scroll serves as a symbol of connection, with the blessing for the reading specifically recognizing the Torah as part of this continuity. The ritual for the reading of Torah at camp (and in most synagogues) begins with the singing of Biblical verses. The Torah is then taken out of the ark and the *Sh'ma*—a doxology proclaiming the belief in one God—is then sung. This is followed by the *hakafah*, or procession through the congregation with the scroll. After the Torah is brought through the congregation, the outer fabric covering and other ritual adornments are removed. The scroll is then lowered onto the reading lectern and a chanted blessing precedes the reading. This blessing, which will be discussed in greater detail below, states:

- **Bless Adonai (God) who is blessed.**
- **Blessed is Adonai now and forever.**
- **Blessed are You, Adonai our God, sovereign of the universe, who has chosen us from among the peoples, and given us the Torah.**
- **Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.** (Frishman, 2007, p. 250)

The blessing indicates that God gave the Torah in the past; God gives the Torah to us in the present; God will give the Torah in the future. Revelation for Reform Jews is seen as

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7 There was disagreement on this among camp alumni. One said the procession occurred after the reading. Another camper believed it took place before. Both recollections might be correct as camp ritual and practice often changed from summer to summer and traditionally there is a *hakafah* before and after the reading of the Torah.
an ongoing action, with each individual in each generation experiencing this receiving of
the Torah for him or herself.

The ritual for the reading of the Torah is designed for maximal dramatic effect
and presents the elements of a synesthetic matrix. At Camp Hess Kramer, the ark holding
the Torah was built and designed by campers and sits on a slight hill in the outdoor
chapel, just as David Newman mentioned. This placement requires the prayer service
leader to ascend to the ark, thereby imitating Moses going up Mount Sinai. The scroll is
then literally brought down the mountain to the campers. Although this ritual plays out
similarly in synagogues across the world, at camp on Saturday mornings the Torah
symbolically belongs to this community of campers. The scroll is then taken from the ark
and processed through the congregation with joyous music and great celebration, with
this procession serving to “highlight the Torah and it draws worshipers’ attention to a
unifying, group-specific symbol: the Torah” (Friedman, 2012, pp. 75–76).

The melody for the blessing at Hess Kramer is the same as the one used in a
majority of North American synagogues. This familiarity enhances identity, affiliation,
and sense of Peoplehood. Friedman (2012) stated,

The familiarity of this music is itself a symbol of group identification. Regardless
of how geographically or generationally dispersed the congregations may be, they
share a bond through these heritage-laden melodies. Aside and apart from their
messages, the melodies fuse together all who cherish them. (p. 76)

Through the chanting of a blessing that is so widely used and familiar in the camp setting,
campers understand they are part of the greater Jewish community, but the unique nature
of the camp environment and camp-specific rituals also permits them to claim the blessing as “their own.”

Although the musical system of chanting from the scroll is an ancient practice with many ethnic and regional variants, the manner in which the Torah is chanted at Camp Hess Kramer is similar to the chant used in many North American synagogues and functions in a similar manner as the chanting of the blessing. The Torah blessing itself and the chanting from the scroll affirm individual and communal identity, and aid in the creation of collective memory through the recall of the Jewish historic past and the reification of the present.

The rituals of procession, blessing, and chanting from the scroll also form a type of *habitus*, or behavior that becomes physically embodied in the camper. The actions of holding the Torah, walking with the scroll through the congregation, reaching out and kissing the scroll as it passes, chanting from the scroll, and even presenting a *d’var Torah*, or interpretation of a specific Torah portion, are activities in which campers may participate. These behaviors are learned actions transmitted as forms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) by counselors, camp faculty, and campers. This cultural capital acts as a resource throughout the campers’ lives as they become adults and establish their own religious practice, thereby linking their summer camp experience with their future adult lives.

The procession of the Torah scroll and subsequent reading in the context of a Reform Jewish camp can also be viewed as an act of hospitality. The scroll is brought from the ark for all to witness. No one is prohibited from being part of this ritual, which
reenacts the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. According to Ofrat (2001), Levinas considered this moment of revelation, this revisiting of Sinai, to be a moment of hospitality; an “opening the great gate to messianic Otherness” (p. 144).

This act of receiving the Torah is congruent with the verses from Deuteronomy 29 in which all of Israel receives Torah:

You stand this day, all of you, before the LORD your God—your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to waterdrawer—to enter into the covenant of the LORD your God, which the LORD your God is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions; to the end that He may establish you this day as His people and be your God, as He promised you and as He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the LORD our God and with those who are not with us here this day. (Deuteronomy 29:10-15)

The ancient words from Deuteronomy acknowledge the inclusion of all members of the community, past, present, and future, in the revelation of the Torah. Reform Jewish theology recognizes that each member of the community experiences and interprets the Torah in his or her own way. This is consistent with the ritual for the Torah presented at Reform Jewish camp, as the elements constituting the ritual for the Torah reading permit a polyvocality that encourages multiple viewpoints regarding the same text.
Although the ceremony itself is ancient, campers recalled how the camp setting, with its emphasis on participation and accessibility, presented great contrast to the ritual for Torah reading presented in most synagogues during the time period (1960s–early 1980s). The borders and boundaries of ritual and interpretation are enlarged and widened through participatory music, an informal setting, and the invitation of multiple perspectives and voices engaged in this reenactment of revelation, in which the past, present, and future coexist and “mystical and historical notions of time interpenetrate” (Kepnes, 2007, Kindle location 1218); the stage is set for redemption.

**Analysis of David Newman’s narrative.** The ritual of the Torah service is a metaphoric representative of revelation itself, and through the songs, prayers, and chant, the campers once again stand at Sinai every Saturday morning, as if they are receiving it anew, with each member of the community experiencing the message of the Torah in his or her own way through the reading and chanting. The particular view of the Torah that David Newman recalled was one of accessibility, peacefulness, and being part of this community engaged in prayer and song.

The Saturday morning service, with its ritual and environmental elements, presents a synesthetic mix that, according to Kepnes (2006), illustrates the role of Jewish liturgy, which is “to convert the Jewish past into cultural memory and the Jewish future to messianic expectation” (Kindle location 1509). The Saturday service, as presented in the Jewish summer camp setting, presents a liturgical experience that ultimately approaches a redemption-like experience, as envisioned by Rosenzweig (2005).
David Newman remembered the Saturday morning service as an experience filled with images of sound, light, prayer, music, and ultimately feelings of transcendence. The narrative also demonstrated the theological movement from creation to revelation and then to redemption. His description of the Saturday morning service presented a synesthetic matrix created by the variety of sensual elements that created deep memories and feelings of encountering the sacred. His observations also provided a contemporary presentation of Rosenzweig’s (2005, as cited in Kepnes, 2007) paradigm of creation, revelation, and finally redemption. As stated by Kepnes (2007):

For Rosenzweig, each successive unfolding is a miracle in that it was predicted by the preceding stage. The individual is prepared to anticipate the future redemption because she already experienced the miracles of creation and revelation. Revelation predicts the miracle of redemption as the love that is given in it naturally overflows to the world through the person who God loves. Revelation predicts the future redemption. (Kepnes, 2007, Kindle location 1503–1506)

In this first section of the narrative, David Newman presented his personal story of creation and recalled his involvement in the building of the camp’s *Aron HaKodesh*—the Holy Ark. He and other campers not only came together to worship as members of Rosenzweig’s (2005) idealized singing community, they participated in the creation of the structure that holds the Torah itself. Through this act of artistic endeavor, they not only entered into relation with the Holy, they came into relation with each other and formed a religious and artistic community.
David then spoke with great clarity regarding a song sung ("It is a Tree of Life") as the Torah was lowered onto the lectern to be read every week and his connection between the Torah and a feeling of calm and serenity. For David, and other campers, the ritual of the Torah service is a metaphoric representative of revelation itself. The particular view of the Torah that David recalled was one of accessibility, peacefulness, and being part of this community engaged in prayer and song.

David continued his recollection by drawing a parallel between the lyrics of the song and the physical environment of the outdoor chapel. Feelings of transcendence were initiated by the light streaming through the branches of the trees. He then created a comparison between the Etz chayim—the Torah as a metaphorical tree of life—and an actual tree: the sycamore standing in the center of the chapel. This narrative continued with an awareness of a connection between chanting prayers and the natural world.

David acknowledged the liturgical experience as transcendent and described how images of the Torah, the metaphor of the Tree of Life, and the actual trees cascaded into each other so that he lost a sense of where his prayer was directed. His recollection concluded with a vivid description of another musical event that occurred during the service: the trio of young women singing a harmonized version of V'shamru.

David’s narrative recollection of the Torah service presented a compelling image of how powerful the camp music experience can be. For David, the liturgy created a transcendent atmosphere in which the sacred was encountered and he sensed something beyond himself—"bigger and higher"—that he named as God. When David remembered joining the girls’ vocal harmonies and combined his voice with the trio, he came together
with the rest of this liturgical community as a “community of chant.” I suggest that it is this moment of harmony and transcendence that is a preview of redemption. Rosenzweig (2005) was unable to precisely describe what redemption will look like, but was certain it was not just an event reserved for the future. Putnam (2008) explained,

Central to Rosenzweig’s whole theology, his whole picture of the life of the ideal Jew is the concept that he or she experiences redemption as something both future and present now; that is to say, he or she anticipates the future redemption so strongly that it virtually is happening now. (p. 51)

The campers do not just anticipate a future redemption by singing songs and prayers of peace and brotherhood; they actually experience redemption in the present moment. All that David described leads to this redemption in the present, in which the natural physical environment, the ark created by the campers, the songs and the harmonies, and the words of the liturgy come together; the embrace of the community and the presence of the sacred are apparent. In the *Cultural Writings of Franz Rosenzweig*, Galli (2000) noted that for Rosenzweig “there is a connection between art, choral music or language, and redemption, or the end of all suffering” (p. 71). The environment of Jewish camp brings all these elements together.

David’s entire reminiscence centered on the singing community and the influence song has to create not only memory, but also a sense of theological redemption. Because of this, the importance and salience of communal song and the liturgical experience at camp cannot be underestimated. However, David’s last comment is one of great concern and cannot be glossed over: “But I think the day that I left camp and the worship
experience at camp, it might have been, you know, the day that I had my last really Jewishly, deeply spiritual experience.”

David Newman is one of those campers, now adults, whose lives have been influenced from multiple directions because of the Jewish summer camp experience, and yet he asserts that since leaving camp he has not had a Jewish spiritual experience that can match those spiritual moments experienced at Camp Hess Kramer. This is an indication of the strength of the musical and liturgical Jewish camp experience, but it is also serves as a commentary on the lack of experiences available to him and others, or to the nontranscendent nature of any experiences of which David has been a part.

**Theme 3: Expand Participation and Increase Inclusivity**

When I met with participants, there were often sections of the interviews that were immediately noteworthy due to vivid descriptions, emotional reactions, or the depth of the discussion. However, there were some narratives that prompted responses weeks after I had recorded, transcribed, and begun the process of analysis. Such was the case with the excerpts presented below. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) indicated, texts that comprise narrative research are often reviewed multiple times: “We return to them again and again, bringing our own restoried lives as inquirers, bringing new research puzzles, and re-searching the texts” (p. 132). Though these moments in the interviews were short and concise, they revealed much about the music at Jewish summer camp.

When I first got to camp it [the song session on Friday night] was very meaningful. ... I was really very young and I really liked to sing. ... But you just didn’t sing. I guess boys at that age didn’t sing. But I liked to. So, again, it’s about the community. If
I’m the only one singing ... If I’m the only one that wants to sing ... I’m not gonna sing. It’s funny—boys in general didn’t sing. But at camp, somehow, as you got older, it become cool to sing, it was cool to be part of the singing. The older you got, but it was more acceptable there. It was more part of what we did.

I am certain that there were the kids who were too cool to participate, or didn’t want to participate, and there were always people that wandered outside onto the deck, or would sit in the back and mope, or be less interested in participating. But I would say probably 80%, 80, 85% of the kids that were there would participate. And thinking about watching what some of the older kids do that some of the kids just—some of them, you’re able to break through the ‘it’s not cool to do this’ and get them to participate, and actually find that they enjoyed it. And others, it was a little bit harder, and there were some that were pretty stubborn that this was not something they were going to do.

I remember on Shabbat all the boys would line up on the side and have their arms around each other and all the girls would be on the other side and then they’d run towards each other. And it’s literally a rush—very physical. The boys come first and run at the girls and then the girls run into the boys. When I was a camper, I had no idea what the song was—but I realized later it’s ‘Od Yishama’—a wedding song. As soon as we’d hear that song you’d get into a line and there would be four rows of girls and four rows of boys and you’d try not get trampled. The boys would sing: Kol sasso v’kol simcha and then the girls would Kol chatan v’kol kallah ... or maybe it was the other way
around (laughs). We’d also split up on “Sabbath Prayer” from Fiddler. We’d be in a circle and we’d take the parts—the boys and girls singing the parts ... or sometimes just split down the middle of the room.

David’s narrative raised issues of participation and inclusivity at Jewish summer camp. In his narrative, David spoke about his experience as a young boy who wanted to sing but did not really feel free to do so because it was not perceived as “cool.” He also remarked that there was widespread participation—perhaps 80 or 85%. An analysis of videotapes from Camp Hess Kramer shows that the level of participation is high, but in all the videos of song session I viewed, there are always children on the margins of the screen who seem less engaged than the rest of the campers. These campers showing less interest in the song session can be observed chatting with friends, doing something contrary to the group’s activities, or just sitting. David’s comment, combined with my observations, made me wonder if there is a way to engage more campers in the song session so that all campers can participate in experience of Shabbat song and reap its benefits.

David also remembered two songs in which the camp split along gender lines: “Od Yishama” and “Sabbath Prayer.” In “Od Yishama,” a song adapted from the traditional Jewish wedding blessings, additional participants reported that not only did boys and girls sing parts antiphonally, they also assumed caricaturized gender roles. Participants recalled these songs, as well as “Elijah Rock,” as instances in the song session where camp was divided into boys and girls. From this brief narrative, I began to think of ways in which participation during these song sessions could be enhanced.
David’s recollection also encouraged me to think about issues of inclusivity. If adolescents are asked to split up or separate along gender lines, we must wonder, to which side of the room does the gender-questioning adolescent go? Does camp cease to be a haven for certain campers when activities such as these take place? Dividing campers based on gender for a song also reinforces a binary separation in which issues of power, status, and control arise.

These issues are worth exploring, and I thank Lee Higgins for raising these matters with me. Although I initially minimized the concept of gender separation during the Shabbat song session at camp as being problematic, I have learned from Lee that a song is never just a song. As I’ve indicated previously in this dissertation, the music at summer camp has the power to change lives and the messages received from songs in which women’s and men’s roles are stereotyped or spoofed must be taken as seriously as songs in which the pervading textual themes is about obliterating racism, ending war, and eliminating worldwide hunger. This approach is Derridean in its nature: the song becomes a text and the text is then open for analysis, interpretation, and a deconstructionist approach.

An additional issue was not directly addressed by David, and except for one other passing mention by another participant, was barely touched upon at all in any of the interviews. This is the issue of the cost of camp tuition, which runs about $4,500 for 3 weeks, and how these costs act as an impediment to participation. It is an issue that is deserving of discussion, because if the communal song at camp informs Jewishness and Peoplehood, then it would be in the greater Jewish community’s interest for all children
to spend time at Jewish summer camp. To better understand these concerns, a return to the philosophical framework and a discussion of hospitality and how this philosophy of welcome is manifest in Jewish summer camp is warranted.

**Absolute hospitality.** In *Of Hospitality* (2000), Derrida proposed what absolute hospitality would look like:

To put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner, but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. (Derrida, 2000, p. 25)

But this situation, according to Derrida, “must be, owes to itself to be, inconceivable and incomprehensible” (Kindle location 5358). Hospitality is presented as an *aporia*, which is defined as

an absolutely impassable situation, one which cannot be resolved through rational analysis or dialectical thought. Neither can such a “situation” be answered by a discourse that would be capable of taking the *aporia* as an “object” of knowledge. In other words, the *aporia* is as much unsuitatable as it is an identifiable “situation.” (Wortham, 2010, Kindle location 185–201)

Derrida (2002) presented this concept through a series of contradictions that serve to highlight the difficulty of this situation:

Hospitality must wait and not wait. It is what must await and still [*et cependant*] not await, extend and stretch itself [*se tendre*] and still stand and hold itself [*se
tenir] in the awaiting and the non-awaiting. Intentionality and non-intentionality, attention and inattention. Tending and stretching itself between the tending [le tendre] and the not-tending or the not-tending-itself [ne pas se tendre], not to extend this or that, or oneself to the other. It must await and expect itself to receive the stranger. (Derrida, 2002b, Kindle location 5319–5322)

The absolute hospitality theorized by Derrida (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) is not constrained by laws, governances, or limitation, a condition that presents both its possibility and impossibility. Unconditional hospitality implies that it is the uninvited guest who is provided with a welcome into the home; and the asylum seeker, immigrant, and exile are provided safe haven without constraint of borders, frontiers, and boundaries.

Jewish tradition embraces concepts of redeeming the captive and welcoming the guest, which forms a foundation for hospitality:

You shall not turn over to his master a slave who seeks refuge with you from his master. He shall live with you in any place he may choose among the settlements in your midst, wherever he pleases; you must not ill-treat him. (Deuteronomy 23:16-17)

Jewish tradition honors the concept of absolute hospitality as presented in Deuteronomy 23. However, this form of hospitality cannot exist at Jewish summer camp, as the maintenance of community requires the exclusion of outsiders to facilitate the physical safety of campers and the mission of the program. Summer camp creates community through the erection of walls (literally and figuratively), keeping those outside the community apart from those inside the community. But it is not only the gates
and fences surrounding the camp that allow some campers in and prevent others from entering. Although Camp Hess Kramer is a summer haven to thousands of campers each summer, many of those who wish to attend may not be able to do so, with one of the primary barriers being the cost of a session at summer camp. Camp Hess Kramer, like most other camps, charges fees for attending one of its summer sessions, scholarships are limited, and even when some funds are available, they are often not sufficient to permit enrollment.

This concept of welcome and hospitality also applies to issues of musical participation once campers are in attendance. Song leaders facilitate an environment in which all campers are invited to join in the communal song, but sometimes campers are reluctant, participate half-heartedly, or may even be disruptive. Song leaders, acting as hosts at the daily song sessions, cannot fully anticipate how campers, as guests, will respond. Derrida (1999b) also stated that an environment of unconditional hospitality implies that you don't ask the other, the newcomer, the guest to give anything back, or even to identify himself or herself. Even if the other deprives you of your mastery or your home, you have to accept this. It is terrible to accept this, but that is the condition of unconditional hospitality: that you give up the mastery of your space, your home, your nation. It is unbearable. If however, there is pure hospitality it should be pushed to this extreme. (pp. 70–71)

In the setting of camps, the aporia lies in the fact that the song leader cannot really abide by these rules of unconditional hospitality and still facilitate communal music for the camp. One cannot give up their space or surrender their artistic home, as
Derrida suggested, to those who do not want to participate. But Derrida’s (1999b) admission of *aporia* is an acknowledgment of the situation’s difficulty.

Derrida’s (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) philosophy challenges the song leader, as a community musician, to push the boundaries of hospitality. The song leader needs to be prepared to be unprepared for the arrival of what Derrida referred to as the “unexpected Other.” At camp, in the milieu of the song session, the Other might be defined as those who are disruptive, nonparticipatory, feel like “outsiders,” or do not fit in, for whatever reason. The negotiation with this Other is in actuality a paradigm for how the individuals interrogate their ethical relationship with humankind. How those facilitating music negotiate this threshold of unconditional hospitality and how I imagine them stepping beyond this boundary will be presented in the next section as I move from theory to practice.

This welcoming of the Other and the love of the neighbor provide a pathway toward redemption, as presented through the philosophy of Rosenzweig (2005). Rosenzweig also presented a philosophical system in which human beings are the primary actors in the hastening of redemption. All humanity, according to Rosenzweig, takes part in a process of not only individual action but through acts of community, and communal song as part of this redemption. For Rosenzweig, “redemption takes place in the future tense” (as cited in Gibbs, 1992, Kindle location 1191), but this future is a time that could happen right now, as the present actors are responsible for creating it. Rosenzweig’s vision of redemption is predicated on a future that must be brought into the
present, and one of the keys to this redemption is communal song, with the Book of Psalms central to the experience as he envisioned it. Gibbs (1992) explained,

Here the narrative and the dialogue are replaced by a choral song. ... That song is antiphonal: a human voice sings its love of its neighbor, and the world answers with its coming to life. What the two voices sing together is the acknowledgment of God as good—as good creator and as good lover. The “moral” effort of individual people is balanced by the transformation of the world, at its own pace and in its own way. ... When the world comes alive, moving beyond its existence as creation, it too does so because it was made for redemption, for life. (Kindle location 1162-1167)

This antiphonal song is presented in the music at Jewish summer camp.

Repeatedly, campers discussed how, while singing, they felt more alive and embraced not only community, but felt a sense of transcendence or of the Holy. This is possibly the redemption of which Rosenzweig (as cited in Gibbs, 1992, Kindle location 1191) spoke. This message of redemption is initiated through the music and its textual message, but it is further realized through the way these songs have influenced campers' identity and actions as adults.

Some of the songs and their associated choreography ask campers to divide themselves into gender-specific groupings. The previously mentioned “Od Yishama”—a song adapted from the traditional wedding blessings—and “Sabbath Prayer”—from the musical Fiddler on the Roof—serve as examples of instances when campers were split along gender lines. This separation violates the spirit of Rosenzweig's (2005)
conceptualization of the idealized community coming together in song as a necessary step in the redemptive process. The division of the singing community is also contrary to the philosophies of Levinas (1969, 1974/1981) and Derrida (199b, 2000, 2002b, 2004), as the division of campers in this manner while in the midst of song, creates an immediate Other. This sense of being apart from the larger group may be especially harmful for campers who are questioning their gender or sexuality. At the moment a camper becomes uncomfortable and has to choose a side on which to sing, or a gendered role to play, marginalization and stigmatization may take place. If the community is to function as a choir, as Rosenzweig imagined, then the community needs to function as a musical whole.

Campers who feel even slightly ostracized essentially leave the presence of community momentarily. They are displaced from the socialized, choral musical experience of welcoming Shabbat, and the process of achieving redemption is hampered. Campers may feel a great sense of Otherness through which the entire community is diminished. If camp is truly to be considered a safe place where all can pursue their “best selves,” then the presentation of songs that could be potentially threatening or damaging should be reevaluated.

**Increase overall participation.** According to the Foundation for Jewish Camp (2011), approximately 10% of camp-age children attend Jewish not-for-profit camps in North America. There are multiple reasons for this: children may show no interest, parents are often unaware of the value and long-lasting effects of camp, and for many, the cost is prohibitive.
A 3-week session at Camp Hess Kramer costs approximately $4,500; in this, it is much like tuition at other residential camps. The divide between those who can afford to go to camp and those who cannot potentially creates a two-tiered system for the American Jewish community. Research indicates that those who attend camp are positioned to become more involved in Jewish communal life, maintain stronger ties to Israel, and have a greater sense of personal and collective Jewishness.

One organization in particular, the Foundation for Jewish Camp, works to increase the number of children and adolescents attending Jewish summer camp through a scholarship program. The Foundation’s mission and vision statement stated:

Our Mission

The Foundation for Jewish Camp unifies and galvanizes the field of Jewish overnight camp and significantly increases the number of children participating in transformative summers at Jewish camp, assuring a vibrant North American Jewish community.

Our Vision

Summers at Jewish overnight camp turn Jewish youth into spirited and engaged Jewish adults, laying the groundwork for strong Jewish communities. The Foundation for Jewish Camp aspires to elevate the field of Jewish camp, conferring proper recognition and granting appropriate support to expand its impact across our community, so that camp can be a critical element of every Jewish young person’s education. (Foundation for Jewish Camp, 2012, para. 2)
In 2012, 8,400 children benefited from $1,000 scholarships, enabling them to attend camp. The “One Happy Camper” program has proven successful, allowing many first-time campers to return to camp for successive years, according to an independent analysis of the program (Summation Research Group, 2012a, 2012b). Following these summers at camp, “One Happy Camper” scholarship recipients were also more likely to increase their involvement with Jewish activities in their respective communities, and these campers and their families also reported a greater connection to the larger Jewish community.

Even though this program aids in bringing many young people to camp and increases their long-term involvement, the North American Jewish community would benefit greatly if a camping initiative similar to the Birthright Israel program was organized and promoted. In 1994, Birthright Israel was launched as a program designed to provide free 10-day trips to Israel for young adults. Since the trips began in the winter of 2000, over 300,000 Jewish young adults from across the globe have traveled to Israel. Kelner’s (2010) research on the Birthright Israel experience reported that participants felt more connected to Israel as a result of the trips and developed stronger personal Jewish identities. These trips, however, come at a substantial cost: almost $500 million of donated funds have been spent as part of this program. Just as Birthright Israel has changed college-age Jews’ relationship toward Israel and themselves, a similarly wide-reaching initiative concerning Jewish summer camp based on a Birthright Israel model could do the same for adolescent Jewish-identity development.
A move toward greater participation during communal song. It is seemingly axiomatic: to receive the benefits that communal song and ritual at camp offer, one has to be at camp and has to participate in these events. In *Musicking* (1998), cultural musicologist Small acknowledged that participation in a musical performance extends beyond those playing the instruments or seated in the audience:

It reminds us that musicking (you see how easy it is to slip into using it) is an activity in which all those present are involved and for whose nature and quality, success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility. It is not just a matter of composers, or even performers, actively doing something to, or for, passive listeners. Whatever it is we are doing, we are all doing it together—performers, listeners (should there be any apart from the performers), composer (should there be one apart from the performers), dancers, ticket collectors, piano movers, roadies, cleaners and all. (p. 10)

For Small (1998), the assigned roles that everyone has in the production of a concert-hall performance constitutes the act of musicking. If Small’s thesis were to be applied to Camp Hess Kramer, the result would be that everyone in the dining hall during the Friday-night song session would be a participant. The campers singing, the song leaders strumming guitars, those clearing dinner tables, and even those adolescents sitting in the corner talking and refusing to sing would be part of this music making. Analysis of video recordings of a Friday-night song session (Rosen, 2011) show many campers engaged in singing, dancing, and attempting to learn choreography. However, other campers, especially those on the perimeter of the room, seem disengaged. Small’s
assertion is that they are involved in the process of musicking, but in Jewish life much of ritual participation requires engagement that is more deliberate and intentional. For example, the recitation of a blessing for eating bread requires that bread be eaten to complete or fulfill the blessing. For this, and other reasons presented below, the concert hall cannot be equated with the ritual, liturgical experience of the song session on Friday night at camp.

Although the song session on Friday evening is not prayer service per se, it is a continuation of the overall celebration of Shabbat and should be viewed as part of the larger structure of sacred celebration. The Shabbat song session is not just an extension of the Shabbat worship. In fact, Rosenzweig (2005) considered the communal singing of psalms at the Shabbat table to be part of the redemptive experience. Because it is desirous that all campers be part of this redemptive experience and process, an evaluation of those who are seemingly not interested, and a potential remedy for their lack of engagement, is warranted.

In much of Jewish life, prayer is a communal activity. A minyan—or a quorum of 10 adults—is required for a prayer service in Jewish tradition. A majority of prayers are written in the first-person-plural form, indicating a sense of shared responsibility. Judaism does acknowledge that some in the community may not have the necessary knowledge or facility to recite certain prayers, but because of this sense of communal obligation and a desire that all participate in the prayer service, the tradition permits that a shaliach tzibur—a prayer leader—facilitate prayer on behalf of the congregation. An
individual may answer “Amen” in lieu of reciting the entire prayer. This is further elucidated by Talmud scholar Rabbi Dvora Weissberg:

The preference of the tradition is that each individual pray for him/herself. The rabbis acknowledge that for those who cannot pray or cannot pray with fluency, an agent may fulfill some aspects of the obligation for prayer (in particular, by saying amen to blessings, an individual may fulfill the obligation connected to blessing—Kiddush\textsuperscript{8}, Amidah\textsuperscript{9} et al.) Of course, not all prayers are covered by this—for example, you cannot say amen to the Shema.\textsuperscript{10} And even in those cases in which agency is effective, being in the room in and of itself doesn’t “count;” you have to be responsive. (D. Weissberg, personal communication, March 10, 2013)

Even if someone is praying on behalf of another, the obligation for prayer has not been met, according to Weissberg, if the one being prayed for is in the sanctuary and not paying attention. A sense of kavannah or intention must be present for the obligation of prayer to be fulfilled.

When extending this principle to the song session at camp, it can be reasoned that even if the camper is physically in the dining room with the song leaders and other campers singing, if he or she is sitting and talking with a group of friends, that person is not truly a participant. There is no engagement in the activity of singing, and following

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\textsuperscript{8} The blessing over the wine.
\textsuperscript{9} The Amidah is the central prayer of the Jewish prayer service. It is called the Amidah because Amidah literally means to stand, as this section of the service is recited while standing.
\textsuperscript{10} The Sh’ma is an affirmation of the belief in one God. Tradition requires it be recited in the morning and in the evening.
Rosenzweig’s (2005) vision of the community singing as part of the process of redemption, that person is not an actor in this process. It is possible, however, to remedy this situation to provide an environment and musical opportunities for those campers who are not engaged, are not interested, or seem oppositional to the act of communal song, thus bringing together all the members of the community.

The Shabbat song experience at the Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI) camp in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, provides another illustration of communal song that misses the opportunity to fully involve campers in the redemption-building experience of song. The Shabbat song session takes place in a large assembly hall (Port Hall) where campers sit a circle, with song leaders in the center. A video recording (Kline, Silver, Swirsky, & Taubman, 2008) indicating the physical arrangement and layout shows campers sitting in assigned areas on the floor demarcated by taped lines, with song leaders standing in the center with another taped line separating them from the campers. Song leaders loom physically above the campers and are separated by both height and distance.

Dan Utley, a rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles reported that this arrangement “allowed for better crowd control and eliminated the problem of kids not participating.” Lara Regev, also a rabbinic student and experienced song leader, relayed that campers at OSRUI “know all the words—and really sing”, whereas at other camps the song session has been moved to a space that allows the campers to “just dance and jump around.”
Tina, a former Camp Hess Kramer camper, spoke about the song session at Camp Hess Kramer and how it has moved from the dining hall to Baruh Hall, which is a space without chairs, which allows campers to move freely about. Tina described the song session and the display of incredible, youthful energy:

Like people change out of their nice clothes and put like jerseys on and gross clothes because they’re just dripping sweat. We used to set the fire alarm off a lot and they would just chant “Baruh, Baruh, Baruh is on fire” because literally the fire alarm would be going off. ... Everyone’s screaming the whole night, lost their voices, sweating just to the point where it’s disgusting and everyone smells around you.

Because the OSRUI campers are seated, the jumping, dancing, and spontaneous movement that typifies the song sessions at other camps, including Camp Hess Kramer, is absent, although the video of OSRUI’s song session did show a significant number of choreographed hand motions. Although the Hess Kramer style of song session of which Tina spoke permits great freedom of personal expression, allowing for extemporaneous singing and dancing, there are many campers who opt out of the experience. OSRUI’s song session lacks the spontaneous, collective effervescence that aids in the development of community, because of the stringent space parameters. Is there a compromise between the rock concert style of the Friday-night song session that is currently practiced at some camps and the more controlled style of song leading practiced at OSRUI?

In a discussion of “participatory performance,” ethnomusicologist Turino (2008) provided insight into how these seemingly divergent styles of Friday-night song session
may be modified to enable greater overall participation. Turino proposed that the most inspiring participatory performances are those in which all participants are stakeholders in the performance and there are no artist-audience distinctions. Events like song sessions are made more successful when everyone is participating and the event presents an ever-expanding "ceiling of challenges, or a range of activities that can provide continuing challenges" (Turino, 2008, p. 31). To guarantee engaged participation, everyone who is part of the event must have a role, according to Turino. For some it might be clapping, for others playing instrumental accompaniment, for others it is singing. In truly participatory events, "everyone’s contribution to the performance is valued and in fact considered essential for a performance to be deemed successful" (Turino, 2008, p. 33).

Although the song leaders’ role as community music facilitators has been acknowledged previously, approaching the Shabbat song session as a form of participatory performance changes their role appreciably. If the goal of this newly envisioned song session is to maximize participation in a setting in which all campers share a stake in the music making and ultimately play a part in the creation of redemption, then the leaders may need to reimagine how they present each song. Song leaders might want to present music for song sessions as having multiple layers of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and choreographic elements, permitting participation at many different skill levels from all campers. They will need to rethink available musical opportunities for campers in addition to singing.
Song-leaders need to find a methodology and practice that will include everyone. By doing this, they will begin to cross over the threshold toward the unconditional hospitality advocated earlier. Hospitality is a decidedly Jewish act and “it is the essence of the Torah, but it is also universally human; hospitality is humanitarianism itself, but it is not merely human, for it is also divine” (Caputo, 2000, Kindle location 5753).

Some recommendations for maximal inclusion might be the use of rhythm instruments, encouraging the composition of harmonies and ostinati; development of a cadre of “junior” song leaders who apprentice with the established song leaders. There are likely to be some adolescents who will be deliberately oppositional, those who are “too cool for school,” and others who will feel they lack appropriate musical skills and talents to contribute adequately to the group music making. Full participation, though desirable, is unlikely, but striving toward it represents the commencement of an appropriate translation of Derrida’s (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) vision of hospitality and Rosenzweig’s (2005) philosophy of redemption into the camp environment.

I suggest a move beyond good song leading, as guides and handbooks for this already exist (Breger, 2013; Klepper & Glaser, 2011), and the Reform movement has training opportunities for the development of good song-leading skills, such as Hava NaShirah (Union for Reform Judaism, Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, 2013). Rather, I propose a recasting of communal song at Jewish summer camp. Adopting Turino’s (2008) approach and thereby re-envisioning the Shabbat song session as a form of participatory performance encourages participation from all campers, provides a higher
level of group accountability, and may present a more varied and interesting musical experience.

**Turino, Levinas, and Derrida.** According to the dictates of Levinas’s (1969, 1981) philosophy, the fundamental obligation one has as a human being is to attend to the needs of others. It is a willingness to act on behalf of another human being, to accept the challenge of answering and mitigating the suffering of those around us. Putnam (2008) recast Levinas’s “me voici” into the Hebrew term *Hineini*. *Hineini* infers a willingness to act and to answer the call of one’s fellow human beings. It announces accountability to others and a belief that all people are worthwhile.

An adaptation of Turino’s model of participation makes all those who are part of the song session responsible to each other, with the success of the song session based on the level of participation and the feeling of emerging effervescence. Turino (2008) explained that the success of this sort of performance “is more importantly judged by the degree and intensity of participation than by some abstracted assessment of musical sound quality” (p. 33). The goal is for everyone to be a part of the experience and for all performers to perform in a manner that will not exclude others.

This inclusivity will require an adaptation of the song leaders’ traditional “center-stage” role to allow other musical voices to emerge. Turino’s (2008) vision does not diminish the role of song leaders. Instead, song leaders’ authority and knowledge as music educators, liturgical experts, and transmitters of cultural history and camp tradition will be regarded more highly. Song leaders will have to be more creative and inventive as they create musical opportunities of various levels of difficulty and skill for all campers.
It is natural that campers will emulate song leaders, and in adapting Turino’s (2008) model for camp, perhaps this could be approached more purposefully with the development of “song leaders in training” who would be mentored by the song leaders. Turino pointed to Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow as a basis for encouraging and gauging involvement. Musical expression must include “the proper balance between inherent challenges and the skill level of the actor” (Turino, 2008, p. 30). When people of all levels and skills play music together, people at each level “realistically aspire to and practically follow the example of people at the next level above them” (Turino, 2008, p. 31).

Although Derrida’s (1999b, 2000, 2002b, 2004) unconditional hospitality can never be attained, by adapting Turino’s (2008) model for communal song at Jewish summer camp, a more hospitable environment can be created. Borrowing a biblical image, Turino’s model creates a musical “tent” for all campers, in which everyone is welcome. By following Turino’s model, the resulting musical experience as a participatory performance will be more spontaneous and less predetermined, with a greater sense of personal agency for all participants.

The Shabbat song session features musical elements that are congruent with Turino’s (2008) conceptualization of participatory performance: songs with open form, repetition of melodic material, opportunity for improvisation and harmonic layering, and easy-to-learn melodies. Niggunim (songs without words) and many contemporary Hebrew songs feature highly repetitive forms and rhythms that are well suited for participatory performance. The repetition and multilayering “actually add to the intensity
of the performance because more people can join in and interact—through synchronized, interlocked sound and motion” (Turino, 2008, p. 41). Turino’s model would guide the expansion of participation.

In reshaping educational methods to meet this increased participation, song leaders should turn to the writings and teachings of such music educators as Campbell (1995, 2010), Green (2002), and Jaffurs (2004), to better understand popular music learning and peer instruction. Song leaders also might look to recent decades for clues about future song sessions. The incorporation of popular songs that speak to issues of social justice might be adopted by the camp community as a way to appeal to campers who are less enthusiastic about singing. Examples of this genre include John Mayer’s “Waiting on the World to Change,” Sheryl Crow’s “Redemption Day,” Dave Matthew’s “Cry Freedom” and “Don’t Drink the Water,” and Ben Harper’s “With My Own Two Hands.”

Choosing sides? As mentioned at the beginning of this section, there are songs at camp that require boys and girls to “split up,” with each group singing gender-based parts. Songs mentioned in this context include “Od Yishama,” “Sabbath Prayer,” and “Elijah Rock.” These songs also involve choreographic role-playing with stylized or caricatured gender interpretations as part of the song.

Liturgical change is a hallmark of Reform Judaism. This historic imperative should extend to liturgy presented in summer camps affiliated with liberal Judaism. The song session functions quasiliturgically, so adjustments in liturgy regarding sensitivity to gender should be reflected in summer-camp music. This awareness should extend not
only to pronouns or God language but to revising those song texts or song choreographies that are heterocentric.

In the song "Od Yishama," adapted from the traditional wedding ceremony, campers recalled how, when singing this song, two lines were formed—one for girls and one for boys. At specific places in the song, the lines ran toward each other, with the boys singing, "Kol chatan" ("The voice of the groom") and the girls singing "Kol kallah" ("The voice of the bride"). A camper who is gay or lesbian, questioning his or her sexuality or unsure of gender might find this song and its choreography troubling. He or she might be asking, "Which line should I stand on?" or "Which words should I sing?"

But in fact, the heteronormativity that a song such as this presents should be examined for the good of all campers. "Od Yishama," as sung at Camp Hess Kramer, reinforces sex-role practices and prejudices that promote the binary hierarchy of male/female, with male being superior. A disruption of this traditional bifurcation follows Derrida (1997) and can begin the process of discarding assumptions regarding gender, sex, sexuality, and structures of power and dominance.

Similarly, in "Sabbath Prayer," from the Broadway musical Fiddler on the Roof (Bock & Harnick, 1964), campers divide along gender lines and bless each other. In the original show the lyrics were as follows:

May the Lord protect and defend you.

May He always shield you from shame.

May you come to be
In Israel a shining name.

May you be like Ruth and like Esther.
May you be deserving of praise.
Strengthen them, Oh Lord,
And keep them from the strangers’ ways.

(Men) May God bless you and grant you long lives.
(Women) May the Lord fulfill our Sabbath prayer for you.
(Men) May God make you good mothers and wives.
(Women) May He send you husbands who will care for you.

May the Lord protect and defend you.
May the Lord preserve you from pain.
Favor them, Oh Lord, with happiness and peace.
Oh, hear our Sabbath prayer. Amen. (Bock & Harnick, 1964)

In *The Complete Jewish Songbook: Shireinu* (Eglash & Komar, 2002), which contains words, chords, and lead sheets used extensively by Jewish summer camps and song leaders, the lyrics are revised to show gender sensitivity. In this version, men and women still have designated parts, but the men no longer bless the women, hoping they become good mothers and wives. However, God is still gendered and is referred to as “he”: 
(Men) May God bless you and grant you long life.

(Women) May the Lord fulfill our Sabbath prayer for you.

(Men) May God keep you and shield you from strife.

(Women) May he in his wisdom always care for you. (Eglash & Komar, 2002)

In the Shireinu Songbook (Weiner, 1997), a song anthology with only text, the same words are included as in the abovementioned edition. However, the sung parts are not designated Men and Women, just group “A” and “B”. Why the later edition included gender and the earlier version just designated different parts is not known—but the earlier version is preferable, especially in an attempt to present an environment of tolerance and inclusion. As in “Od Yishama,” this binary separation is unnecessary. Rather than singing in parts based on gender, the melodies of Shabbat should unify the community, as Rosenzweig (2005) intended. One’s individual isolation is overcome when this singing community is formed, and a cohesive community cannot be established when these separations are presented along lines of sexuality or gender.

Writing in the anthology Torah Queeries (Drinkwater, Lesser, & Shneer, 2009), Wenig (2009) asked for tolerance, acceptance, and inclusion for the entire lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual (LGBT) community, as all are created “in God’s image” (Genesis 1:27). Wenig also requested inclusion for those who are intersexed or transgendered, based on Biblical and Rabbinic text:

For the assertion that God created human beings in the divine image comprises only half of the verse. The verse continues with an equally challenging second half: “male and female [God] created them” (Gen. 1:27b). This assertion is a
challenge of a different kind, for its simple statement appears, at least on its surface, to fly in the face of what many know to be true: that gender and gender identity cannot be neatly divided into immutable categories of “male” and “female.” (Wenig, 2009, Kindle location 469–472)

Wenig’s (2009) argument is based on a biblical verse that presents two versions of the creation of human beings, one of which established gender parity from the start. Using this as the basis of the debate, Wenig advanced an argument that there is no binary division in the creation story in Genesis. Gender and identity, the author maintained, cannot be placed in discrete, separate groupings. Wenig advocated for inclusion to extend to all aspects of Jewish life, which certainly would apply to the camp environment and ways to make the song session more inclusive.

This is not just a theoretical discussion regarding gender inclusion at Jewish summer camps; it is an issue with which summer camps currently are grappling, as Sarah Seltzer (2013), writing in The Forward, stated:

Jewish summer camp—with its gender-segregated bunks, bathrooms, activities and rituals, not to mention emphasis on heterosexual “hookups”—can be a minefield for transgender kids and their families, a newly-visible population that is gaining increasing recognition in the Jewish and political mainstream. (Seltzer, 2013, p. 1)

Seltzer reported that some camps consider themselves inclusive and have had training sessions for camp staff to be aware of different family configurations, but LGBT camping experts, according to Seltzer, do not believe this approach is extensive enough.
Seltzer’s (2013) report also included input from the director of a camp in the Pacific Northwest that hosts campers and their families with a wide range of gender and sexual identities. According to Airen Lydick, this camp’s administrator, camps need to consider how transgender campers come out over the summer. Some campers might want to sleep in a different cabin or bunk, others might express identity through clothing, a change in pronouns, or perhaps a name change. “If camp officials don’t go out of their way to make transgender kids feel welcome, campers are in the same place they are in the rest of their lives: a world that doesn’t understand” (Lydick, quoted in Seltzer, 2013, p. 2)

Because ritual and communal song are intertwined, and song has been shown to be a salient force in identity formation, it would be prudent for camps to examine, with the assistance of an educator or mental health professional trained and sensitized to inclusivity, the rituals and music that are part of the life of the Jewish summer camp. Many songs easily could be adapted to enable a more inclusive environment.

**Changing text and amending tradition.** To achieve the goal of inclusivity in camp music, Jewish feminist theologian and philosopher Rachel Adler suggested that the text for “Od Yishama” be amended:

Has anyone put David’s words about Jonathan to music? What about Ruth’s oath to Naomi? There are lovely psukim (verses) from Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs) that praise the male lover or the female lover without indicating the gender of the speaker. My preference always when confronted with gender stereotyped imagery is to supplement with less stereotypical images. (Rachel Adler, personal communication, June 21, 2012)
Wenig suggested that the text be interpreted differently to express inclusivity:

As for *kol chatan v'kol kalah* the way I understand that now and the way I translate it is “the voices of grooms and the voices of brides” which does not imply that the grooms are with brides or the brides are with grooms. Grooms could be marrying grooms and brides marrying brides. And I’d make that clear if using it with a crowd that didn’t understand my understanding of it. As for all boy and all girl line dances, I think we have to do away with them. Some folks are not girl or boy or don’t yet know. (Maggie Wenig, personal communication, June 20, 2012)

For “Sabbath Prayer,” Wenig recommended the following changes (presented in uppercase letters)

May the Lord protect and defend you.

**MAY GOD ALWAYS SHIELD YOU FROM PAIN**

May you come to be

In Israel a shining name.

**MAY YOU BE LIKE JOSEPH, RUTH, ESTHER OR MOSES**

May you be deserving of praise.

Strengthen them, Oh Lord,

**AND KEEP THEM FROM DANGEROUS WAYS**

May God bless you and grant you long lives.
May the Lord fulfill our Sabbath prayer for you.

MAY GOD MAKE YOU GOOD, HONEST AND KIND

MAY GOD GRANT YOU DEAR ONES WHO WILL CARE FOR YOU

May the Lord protect and defend you.

May the Lord preserve you from pain.

Favor them, Oh Lord, with happiness and peace.

Oh, hear our Sabbath prayer. Amen. (Maggie Wenig, personal communication, June 21, 2012)

Wenig’s suggestions presented the song text as more inclusive, thereby permitting anyone to sing any of the parts previously designated by gender. The revision of the line “Strengthen us oh Lord and keep us from the strangers’ ways” to read “Strengthen them, Oh Lord, and keep them from dangerous ways” is also more in keeping with Jewish tradition and contemporary philosophy’s request to embrace the stranger, rather than shunning the stranger.

Sensitivity and education. Both Wenig and Adler introduced real-life solutions to highlight issues of gender and heterocentrism presented in the song session. Beyond changing lyrics and choreography, an additional challenge lies in modifying attitudes and reeducating campers. These songs (and many others) are considered “traditional” and almost sacrosanct, and any change to words that have been sung for many years could be met with dismay and resistance. Any change to music representing camp tradition must be approached sensitively and as part of a larger process of education. If not, song leaders
and administrators risk hearing multiple cries of “We’ve never done it like this” and “It was better last year.”

Summary

Three themes were presented as part of the analysis of the transcripts of those interviewed: (a) Music at Jewish summer camp aids the development of personal and of communal Jewish identity. (b) Communal song plays a central role in camp ritual. The song sessions themselves are quite deliberate in nature and structure, helping to enable the camp community to engage in song and worship that is ultimately a modern reconceptualization of Rosenzweig’s (2005) redemptive community. (c) The Jewish community needs to enable greater participation and inclusivity in the activity of communal song. We need to educate song leaders and camp administrators to be more critical of songs and lyrics that promote gender separation, as those songs reinforce gender stereotypes and roles.
Chapter 5: Implications and Next Steps

Four questions guided this dissertation from its inception:

1. What are the structures and mechanisms that place music at Jewish summer camp as central to camp activity?
2. How does music at Jewish summer camp influence the concept of personal “Jewishness”?
3. How does music at Jewish summer camp enable the development of an awareness of the greater Jewish collective (often referred to as Jewish “Peoplehood”)?
4. In what ways does music at Jewish summer camp assist in the development of community?

The responses to these questions not only present a summary of my research, but they also provide a starting point for discussing the implications for this research and may guide future inquiry.

Music becomes the center of camp activity due to implementation of Jewish religious and liturgical traditions with communal song featured as a prominent feature of these rituals. Communal song in these rituals is facilitated in an organized and intentional manner by the camp song leaders who act as community music professionals. Music is so pervasive and so intrinsically associated with ritual that it is almost inconceivable to imagine a Shabbat commencing without the requisite sung musical procession from the cabin area to the outdoor chapel or the Friday night Shabbat celebration without the jubilant, ecstatic song session. The music selected for these rituals is carefully planned by
the song leaders to reflect the mood, liturgical moment, and the physical environment of the event.

The Friday night song session, for example, is not a haphazard play list chosen by the song leaders. Rather, it is a well-structured and organized list of songs that successfully propels the song session in first increasing and then decreasing arc of energy and effervescent behavior. Song leaders carefully choose songs with changes in rhythm, tempo, mood, and feeling in order to create this rise and fall of energy. Through music, the song leaders effectively transport the camp community from moments of solace and reflection to ecstasy and effervescence and back to a contemplative mood. In a conversation I had with Jewish singer-songwriter Debbie Friedman shortly before her death in January 2011, she reinforced this idea. While discussing the song session at camp she said, “We made it look spontaneous, but it was anything but that…”

Essentially, the music chosen by song leaders is a vehicle for affecting the community physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Music aids in the development of Jewishness and a sense of Peoplehood when the songs and chants from camp become physically embodied. The songs and the lyrics to which campers are exposed become part of their physical and social beings and are literally carried with them throughout their lives. For many camp alumni, these songs are not only part of their body and soul, but they inform their actions, career choices, and their world view for decades after the initial musical experience.

This embodiment occurs through effervescent activity and a synesthetic matrix. Singing and the associated movement that accompanies the music, resides within the
campers' bodies and serves as a constant reminder of camp. Lyrics also become implanted and serve to inform campers' opinions, actions, and ultimately their identity. The communal song is also a part of process of pseudo-synesthesia. The music at camp is one element of the sensually rich and complex camp environment and this group singing serves as a trigger that recalls smells, tastes, sights, or even touch associated with camp years after its initial occurrence. This synesthetic matrix figures greatly in the creation of both individual and collective memory.

Music at camp enhances a sense of Peoplehood (the acknowledgment of a greater Jewish community and an expression of affinity to this community) through the utilization of musical melodies and chants that are familiar to the camper from their home congregations, but are recontextualized for camp. This is especially prevalent in the music and liturgy of the Saturday morning ritual for reading Torah. The chant used for reading of the Torah and the blessings chanted before and after the reading are almost identical to what a camper would hear in his or her home congregation. Music affirms that the campers are part of both the camp community and the greater, larger Jewish collective. The music presents campers with an understanding that they are part of a larger Jewish community—a community that extends beyond the boundaries of camp.

Many participants also indicated that much of the musical experience from camp was transferable. That is, when away from camp or at in an unfamiliar prayer environment in a distant city of foreign country, they accessed the knowledge of liturgy and ritual to enable participation in a new or different prayer setting. For many participants, the movability of music and liturgy presented a greater appreciation of being
a part of a global Jewish family.

Music also aids in formation of community by acting as a coalescing force for the campers. As campers move across the thresholds of sacred space and time, their actions are accompanied by communal song that joins and links these separate liturgical and ritual elements. Victor Turner (1982, 1995) indicated how communities come together in these liminal spaces. With music guiding their actions, the summer campers also forge deep communal relationships as they take part in the rituals of the Jewish Sabbath.

Music is likewise central to the formation of a redemptive community as envisioned by Rosenzweig (2005). The community formed at Jewish summer camp through prayer, song, and vocal harmony is a version of what Rosenzweig (2005) referred to as the “community of the chant.” This singing and chanting community becomes a cohesive group that has experienced the “world to come.” The sharing of this profound experience of redemption coalesces the group into a community that identifies with this experience for the remainder of their lives.

What can we learn from these experiences? How can we apply the lessons learned from communal song at Jewish summer camp to synagogue liturgy? How can this experience be adapted for music education?

Returning Home from Camp

When campers return home from a summer at camp, there is often great disappointment when they attend prayer services at their home congregation. Hundreds of their friends are missing, there is no outdoor chapel, the song session is absent, the melodies are different, and the spirit that pervades camp is hardly felt. No one in the
synagogue seems to know what to do with their hands and bodies when the time comes, and campers feel out of place. Although campers often return to their home synagogues with good intentions of integrating into the synagogue experience, they often feel frustrated and miss the community of which they were so much a part. Regarding the great divide between camp and synagogue, Rabbi Donald Splansky (2006) stated:

> The big difference, however, lies in the loss of community and the style of worship. The home synagogue cannot hope to duplicate the camp worship services. The home synagogue serves people of all ages, not just the camper’s contemporaries. … Many rabbis, probably the majority, do not know how to meet the increased needs of a camper who has recently returned from such an experience. (Splansky, 2006, p. 163)

Ruth Schapira (2013) writing in the blog “Jewish Teens” suggested there are multiple ways the synagogue could be more connected to camp. She recommended that parents (a) find a way to make Shabbat more special at home by creating special ritual; (b) enable campers to find ways to connect throughout the year with camp friends; (c) encourage the synagogue to have a camp-style Shabbat service; (d) make sure children returning from camp are part of the temple youth group, thereby providing them an opportunity to socialize with other teens; and (e) try to have a camper on the synagogue ritual committee, to infuse the synagogue ritual with new ideas.

These are all seemingly good suggestions, however the synagogue can go even further. Knowing what we know about the potency of communal song at camp, perhaps it is in the synagogue’s best interest to take those salient elements from the camp liturgical
and musical experience, adapt them, and use them in the synagogue. There is a certainly a
greater correspondence between camp music and synagogue music than a generation ago.
Cantors are regular attendees at Jewish summer camps, and a high percentage of today’s
synagogue cantors and rabbis attended Jewish summer camp. Many synagogue clergy are
well versed in the style of music and how to integrate this music and mode of worship
into a synagogue venue; as a result, current Reform Jewish synagogue liturgies are filled
with the best musical works of contemporary composers.

Proposing Synagogue Synesthesia

I am asking for something greater than the music from the synagogue leadership;
I am proposing a paradigmatic shift in what the synagogue service looks like, smells like,
tastes like, and moves like. I suggest that synagogue services adapt a model of the
synesthetic environment from camp in the hope that this will lead to deeper spiritual
experience, a stronger connection between members of the congregation, and stronger
feelings of Jewishness. I also recommend that the synagogue embrace movement as a
modality conducive to the enhancement of worship.

Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are the apex of the Jewish liturgical year and
attract the most congregants to synagogue; an attempt to maximize the synesthetic
experience could be attempted during these holidays. These High Holidays already create
memories for most congregants with remembrances forged from the sheer emotion,
sacred importance, and liturgical depth of the holidays. Music and communal song
undoubtedly play a large role in the creation of memories, especially the stirring melodies
of “Kol Nidre” and “Avinu Malkeinu.” But, I wonder, can the High Holidays become
more sensually integrated like the Jewish summer camp Shabbat and the Passover Seder, and thus ultimately provide the congregation with an experience that is not only synesthetic in nature but is also more memorable. This would create a deeper connection to community and to the sacred. These synesthetic opportunities are possible through the development of those senses not normally part of the Jewish liturgical experience: taste, smell, and touch.

**Taste and Smell.** The High Holidays are filled with speech, song, and written word, but lack the elements of touch and taste. Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews have a tradition of an *Erev Rosh HaShanah* seder-like ceremony with Talmudic roots (Horayot 12a) in which a variety of fruits and vegetables are used to represent aspirations for the New Year. Congregants should be made aware of this custom to share with guests around the *Erev Rosh HaShanah* dining table, but it is also possible to bring this *Rosh HaShanah* seder into the synagogue. Imagine how delighted the community would be to see tables laden not only with the requisite apples and honey but with festive fruits and vegetables accompanied by blessings and explanations available to be tasted as part of a prelude to *Erev Rosh HaShanah*.

The ubiquitous honey cake could also enable an enhanced *Rosh HaShanah* synesthesia. Honey cakes baking in the synagogue kitchen and then served at the end of services could help enhance the relationship of scent and taste to the holidays. Like Proust’s *madeleine*, the aroma and taste of honey cake could become associated with myriad memories connected with the joy of *Rosh HaShanah*.
Touch. The sound of the shofar is one of the most ancient sounds present in the synagogue’s musical repertory and when the *baal tekiah* raises the shofar and the calls of *tekiah-teruah-shevarim* resound through the sanctuary, the ancient world meets modernity. The most ancient of musical instruments could be used to create a synesthetic matrix featuring not only sound, but sight and touch as well.

The sounding of the *shofar* (ram’s horn) is one of the highlights of the High Holidays. The shofar’s calls are simultaneously stirring, haunting, and primordial. The editors of the Reform Jewish movement’s new High Holiday prayer book have proposed repositioning the three rubrics for the sounding of shofar (*Malchuyot, Zichronot, Shofarot*) throughout the service rather than having them appear sequentially as in traditional High Holiday prayer books. This is a first step in highlighting the *shofar* as elemental in the ritual of the High Holidays. (In the interest of full disclosure, it should be noted that I am a member of the editorial committee).

However, more can be done to enhance the *shofar*’s power. For example, in lieu of just one shofar blower, a more dramatic approach with potential for greater impact would the organization of a *shofar* “choir” comprised of multiple *baalei tekiah* (those who sound the *shofar*) lining the aisles of the synagogue. This choir of *shofarot* would present greater visual impact, surround the congregation with the clarion call of the ram’s horn, and present worshippers with a vibrational and tactile energy from the *shofarot*. A singular *shofar* provides incredible impact; a *shofar* ensemble would be an unforgettable addition to the Rosh HaShanah liturgy.

11 The first section of the *shofar* service recalls God’s sovereignty; the second section focuses on remembrance; the third section explores the sound of the *shofar*. 
Other opportunities for enhancing touch exist in the liturgy. During the chanting or singing of the prayer for healing (*Mishebeirach l'cholim*), congregants could be asked to hold hands or put their arms on each other’s shoulders. Additionally, as the cantor recites the Priestly Blessing or a final benediction, all those wearing *tallitot* (prayer shawls) could be asked to share their *tallit* with those around them and feel enveloped not only by the one *tallit* but by the community as well.

Clergy should also encourage congregants to experience the power of full prostration while chanting the Great *Aleinu* during the *shofar* service. The physical act of falling to one’s knees in the presence of God is not only humbling but a physical representation of full emotional and spiritual supplication before the Almighty in which we physically declare, “We surrender. Please help us, God. Protect us. Guide us.” There are no words in the liturgy that can fully express this moment of physical prayer; no text in the High Holiday liturgy can adequately describe the moment of supplication that is a part of the Great *Aleinu*.

If synesthetic events are created as part of the synagogue service, these experiences, like the synesthetic experiences from summer camp will become encoded and implanted in the worshipping community. These memories will be retained and reflected upon as years pass. I propose that beliefs will be enhanced and feelings of being part of a community will be strengthened.

The experience of worship will be greatly enhanced if synagogues make a concerted effort to move beyond the pages of the prayer book and provide congregants with ritual that encompasses more than music and spoken or read text. Synesthetic
worship provides an opportunity for the congregation to pray with all their senses and moves worship to a higher spiritual plane. Creating synesthetic worship may transform the High Holiday liturgy from beautiful and emotional words to life-altering, fully embodied ritual. Don Saliers (2007) reminded,

If we only take in the literal surface of what we hear in words and song, the awakening of the deeper dimensions of reality and of the soul are prevented. When the singing and the hearing allow us to “taste and see,” we come to “hear” more. The soul is awakened to a humanity stretched more deeply before the mystery and the glory of God. (Kindle location 301)

**Dance and Movement in Worship**

The Friday night services at Camp Hess Kramer and the song session following dinner are examples of the effervescence of which Durkheim (2001) speaks. If one were to enter most Reform synagogues on a Friday evening, it would be obvious that much of the communal movement present at Jewish camp is absent in the synagogue sanctuary. There would be, of course, some ritual movement. But much of this is quite narrow in scope and involves bending the knees slightly, covering the eyes, or some motion limited in range and direction.

Movement at Jewish summer camp provides the effervescent atmosphere that campers recall with fondness. Through dance and choreography, the camp community coalesces and moves as one organism. There is a sense of momentarily losing oneself, but finding one’s place among the group. Camp alumni recalled feelings of transcendence and spirituality as they danced and sang. Is it feasible to attempt to capture this feeling in
the Reform synagogue? Is it possible to introduce movement into an environment such as the Reform synagogue that is fairly void of any movement?

Liz Lerman, a choreographer and dance educator, proposed it is possible for the whole body to be involved in the worship experience. Like Turino (2008), Lerman (2011) advocated for dance as a form of “participatory art-making” (p. 133). When she works in congregational settings, she has presented a creative process in which the entire congregation is involved in generating movement to accompany the words of a prayer or music of a song.

Lerman will often begin by asking an open-ended question. As each congregation member shares their responses, Lerman, a keen observer, watches how the respondent moves and will use one aspect of their physical motion to become part of the dance. Lerman now moves onto another congregant and through an additive process (and some artistic license) the motions are linked together. Lerman’s role as a choreographer is quite similar to the community music facilitator as she guides the process and weaves the congregants’ movements together.

She described one evening in Temple Micah, a Reform congregation in Washington, DC as they prepared to create movement that would lead them into the Kaddish—a prayer said in memory of the deceased:

I asked people to get in small groups, think about someone they would want with them in Paradise, and then describe their choice to each other. Up to this point in the service, all of the dancing and movement choices had come from me. I literally showed them, and people copied. But now I was about to ask them to
choreograph a movement for the person they were describing. (Lerman, 2011, pp. 133-134)

Movement like this, in this setting, evokes strong memories and facilitates multiple layers and levels of connectivity between members of the community. What cannot be expressed is described through movement and members of the congregation quickly break down barriers. The integration of sacred text into Lerman’s work provides participants with a fully integrated mind–body experience:

The aesthetic rigor of concert work and the social value of participatory engagement have become united in the act of prayer, danced by the whole congregation, sitting or standing, committed to using their bodies in connection with their minds and the ancient texts in order to reach what I think each individual calls a spiritual place. (Lerman, 2011, p. 131)

Lerman’s (2011) process also seems to be unthreatening and nonjudgmental; perfect criteria for self-conscious congregants. She described how the process permitted multiple voices and perspectives to be heard and honored through movement and dance:

Many could do this with ease, making all kinds of choices from their own intuitive base or from what they had come to learn from other movement services we had done. But this time I also gave them new information with a quick demonstration in which I told them a fragment of a story of my mother and used a movement from earlier in the evening to underscore it. It is favorite postmodern activity, allowing the same movement to have multiple meanings. (Lerman, 2011, p. 134)
The creation of a choreographic environment in which multiple meanings coexist is in line with the philosophy of Derrida presented as part of this dissertation. Lerman’s (2011) educational objectives also permit all involved to treat each other with respect and to minimize anyone’s perceived sense of Otherness or judgment in the creative process.

A technique such as Lerman’s (2011) not only encourages purposeful movement but allows congregants to access the spiritual and transcendent. Movement becomes another aspect in the synesthetic matrix of which Saliers (2007) spoke, but it also serves as a vehicle that permits “human beings to grasp what they otherwise could not comprehend” (Lerman, 2011, p. 133). Creative dance in a synagogue setting permits the entry of another sensory element (movement and touch) and allows greater access to the spiritual:

I continue to look for the links between the mind and the body, knowing that when they combine, people experience something that transcends both, whether it happens onstage, in a studio, or in a place of worship. I am convinced that it is the human connection to the body, and the body’s connection to the mind, that provides a ladder, a safety net, or a trampoline, enabling people to experience the spiritual. (Lerman, 2011, p. 134)

The effervescence of communal song at Jewish summer camp cannot be replicated, except through intentional, somatic movement.

**Application in Music Education**

On the first day of religious school at Sinai Reform Temple in Bay Shore, New York, Shelley Wolfson, an older woman with silvery hair, a hearty laugh, and seemingly
a place on her lap for every one of us in that kindergarten class, taught me the first Jewish song I remember. But before we all joined in singing “Apples Dipped in Honey,” a tune for the upcoming celebration of Rosh HaShanah, she cautiously guided our 5-year-old hands in slicing apples and pouring honey into small plastic dishes. Then we said a short blessing, dipped the apple slices in the honey, ate the apples, and sang.

Each year as I sit down at my Rosh HaShanah holiday table, with dishes of apples and honey before me, and my family and my guests, I cannot help but recall that story and remember the song. Miss Wolfson was not a music educator (during the week she taught third grade in a local public school) but she intuitively understood the power of the synesthetic in relation to music and the creation of long-lasting memory. When Shelley Wolfson guided my small hand in cutting, pouring, and dipping, she provided a synesthetic approach to learning and memory creation. Although my 5-year-old hand movements were not as physically bold or extravagant as the tango campers recalled dancing during the singing of “Cherish the Torah,” they achieved the same result: implanting memory and association.

I suggest that the music education classroom can create lessons and memories as profound and long-lasting as those found at Jewish summer camp where communal song is integrated with the body. Although outstanding texts on music-education pedagogy and philosophy such as Regelski (2004) and Elliott (1995) addressed the connection between the physical body and music making, it was only presented peripherally. Others, fortunately, have addressed this issue, and I am indebted to them for forging a philosophical and pedagogical path where the possibility exists for integration of entire
Bowman (2004) acknowledged the inseparability of the body and mind in music making and music education: “We recognize the profundity of the somatic/corporeal moment in human cognition, generally, and that we recognize music in particular as a kind of celebration of this moment—of our here-and-now, embodied action based mode of being” (Bowman, 2004, p. 46).

According to Bowman (2004), music acts powerfully on our physical beings “activating, guiding, facilitating, enabling, shaping” (p. 47). Westerlund and Juntunen (2005) also argued for greater inclusion of the body in the development of musicianship and the creation of personal agency. Accordingly, the mind and body are considered “a naturalist framework of holistic duality, but without the dualism” (p. 112). Embodied personal agency implies a situation in which “the body and mind function as complex interacting allies of the experiencing and acting organism as a whole” (p. 119). The body and mind acting as together is epitomized through the Jewish summer camp communal song experience.

The difficulty, as stated previously, is that the music classroom cannot replicate camp and it may be unfeasible to create and promote in the classroom or rehearsal space the sort of effervescent behavior that is part of the camp experience. But it is possible to make students in the music classroom more body aware and more engaged with their entire physical body as part of the musical experience. Westerlund and Juntunen (2005), for example, look to Jaques-Dalcroze’s system of eurhythmics and Richard Shusterman’s (2004) concept of somaesthetics. In Jaques-Dalcroze’s system of eurhythmics, the physical
space, energy, and physicality used to express “music in movement are remembered in the brain as kinesthetic images” (Westerlund & Juntunen, p. 119). Shusterman (2004) defined somaehtetics as “a discipline devoted to the critical, ameliorative study of the experience and the use of the body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning” (p. 51). Modalities such as Feldenkrais, Alexander Technique, Tai-chi, and yoga could also be employed to assist the music student in forming a dynamic partnership where music, motion, all the senses, and thought are interwoven. These practices of body integration and awareness would aid music students and performers in achieving the all-encompassing body/mind connection that was expressed by Jewish summer camp alumni.

Next Steps

Isidor I. Rabi, the 1944 Nobel laureate in physics who died in 1988, was once asked to explain why he became a scientist rather than a lawyer or an accountant or a doctor like all of the other immigrant children living in his neighborhood. Dr. Rabi’s answer was profound. He said,

My mother made me a scientist without ever intending it. Every other Jewish mother in Brooklyn would ask her child after school: “So? Did you learn anything today?” But not my mother. She always asked me a different question. “Izzy,” she would say, “did you ask a good question today?” (as cited in Sheff, 1998)

Similarly, for this dissertation I presented research questions and through my investigation, I have provided responses, but in turn have created other questions that warrant additional inquiry.
More research needs to be conducted concerning the cultural or pseudosynesthesia that camp participants experienced. Other such environments with rich sensory input and a musical framework need to be investigated. A better understanding of how synesthesia aids learning, enhances memory, and promotes recall is warranted.

Additional study regarding the intersection of memory and music seems to be warranted. The participants in this study, presented evidence of a sort of musical recall and associated memory not mentioned by other researchers. I would suggest that future research take a look at the implications for music, memory, and the establishment of community in ecclesiastical and liturgical settings.

The campers I interviewed went to Camp Hess Kramer during an era when English-language songs were popular. The song books of that time are filled with so-called “folk songs,” protest songs, and popular songs of the 1960s and 1970s. These campers have indelible impressions of learning and absorbing concepts of healing the world and tikkun olam. In the late 1970s, more Hebrew-language songs were introduced at camp. I am particularly interested if campers received the messages from the foreign-language songs with the same level of profundity as when the songs were sung mostly in English.

Campers recalled the Friday-night song session in great detail and especially spoke of the singing’s effervescent qualities. Additional research into how this effervescence aids in the development of collective or communal memory in a musical environment is needed.

This entire dissertation began as a reaction to an analytical study that examined
Jewish summer camp alumni’s sense of Jewishness and attachment to the Jewish community and my desire to determine the role that communal song at camp had in the development of this sense of Jewishness. This study concluded that camp really does “work.” Those adults who attended Jewish summer camp had higher rates of affiliation, and demonstrated stronger attachments to synagogues, the Jewish community at large, and Israel. They also participated in leadership roles in the Jewish community at a higher level than their peers who did not attend summer camp.

Research is warranted in order to better understand this “non-camp” population and to determine why they did not go to Jewish summer camp. Narrative inquiry would be a particularly profound way of investigating this as researchers could listen to life stories and examine personal trajectories and critical events. Similarly, researchers should study the communal song experience at camps outside of North America and determine the cross-cultural nature of this phenomenon.
Epilogue: David Newman

‘Camp is life, the rest is just details’ is a phrase campers and camp administrators frequently use. I heard it first from some campers or song-leaders from Camp Newman up north. And you know, for the camper spending the best summer of his life, away from parents and living in a cabin in the woods with friends who will remain part of his life forever, it certainly does seem as if camp is life. But if I could, I’d tell those campers at camp—even though they wouldn’t believe me, I’d tell them that camp really is not life. And on some level those campers know that.

But the experiences shared over the course of the summer—especially those moments when arms are linked together and we’re singing and welcoming Shabbat and you can hear the ocean and the smell of the sycamore is all around. Those moments—that becomes life. If I could, I’d tell those campers at Hess Kramer this summer that all of those songs, all those prayers, will be a part of you for the rest of your life. That time you got up and led the camp in a prayer—that memory will become your life. And when you stood with your best friends around the table after dinner on a Friday night and you watched the summer fog come in through the canyon and you sang Ha motzi lechem—that will be a part of your life.

And some summer, if you’re really lucky, you’ll drop your own kid off at camp, and that too will be your life. And as they sing on those busses leaving from the parking lot, you’ll relive the best moments of your life all over. All over again and again.
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