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“ONLY I CAN SEXUALIZE ME”: EXAMINING THEMES OF EMPOWERMENT IN
NORTHEASTERN RENAISSANCE FAIRES

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ABSTRACT

Renaissance Faires are a recreation venue which have seen a marked rise in popularity during the last two decades. Unfortunately, due to their relatively recent appearance in the public eye and reputation for being on the fringes of social acceptance, little literature exists to frame the sociological implications of this type of tourism for leisure professionals. This study sought to provide exposition into the use of erotic capital in Renaissance Faire culture through the lens of the “independent performer”—a type of performer who travels between various Faires to earn their keep. It focused particularly on equal discussion with men *and* women through semi-structured interviews, as men are underrepresented in current literature related to erotic capital. Researchers analyzed results of 27 surveys and eight depth interviews using emergent codes and SPSS software. Thematic coding of semi-structured interviews revealed four main focuses—empowerment, community, diversity, and sexuality; while erotic capital was occasionally discussed by performers, themes of empowerment became prevalent throughout the respondent narratives. This study provides insight into the discussion of empowerment and erotic capital as they relate to the independent Renaissance Faire performer. Data discussed herein can serve to inform leisure service professionals of social trends within this unique culture to better direct future events.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION	1
Study Significance	2
Statement of Purpose.....	2
Research Questions	3
Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	4
Erotic Capital	4
Summary	8
Chapter 3 RESEARCH METHODS.....	9
Study Locations.....	9
Data Collection	10
Instrumentation	11
Analysis.....	12
Potential Bias	13
Chapter 4 RESULTS.....	14
Demographics	14
Research Question 1: Interpersonal interactions at Renaissance Faires.....	17
Research Question 2: Sexuality as expressed by independent performers.....	27
Chapter 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.....	31
Erotic Capital	31
Culture of Empowerment.....	32
Limitations and Future Research	34
Appendix A Interview Question List.....	37
Appendix B Performer Questionnaire	38
Appendix C Terms and Definitions	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Performance Type.....	14
Table 2. Cumulative Experience.....	15
Table 3. Gender Identity	16
Table 4. Target Market	16
Table 5. Sexual Intentionality	30

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Every year, hundreds of thousands of Americans attend modern Renaissance Faires and Festivals, where they eat, drink, and are wooed by “men in kilts and tight velvet pants, and women in voluminous skirts and leather bustiers” (Markijohn, 2009). Here, where the concept of gender presentation is pushed to its limits, sexuality is flaunted (not subdued), and performers work avidly for tips from smitten patrons, is an ideal location to explore the diverse uses of erotic capital. The concept of erotic capital (addressed by Martin & George (2006) as ‘sexual capital’) is an understudied sociological theory describing the use of sexuality for personal gain (Hakim, 2010); one that around which most research has concerned women. There is ample evidence, however, to conclude that men (and presumably other genders) make extensive use of erotic capital as well (Hakim, 2010; Martin & George, 2006), and while misconceptions surrounding it exist, so will the pervasive social stigmas which condemn it (Hakim, 2010). More literature, therefore, is needed to increase public understanding and acceptance of the use of erotic capital by *all* genders in leisure settings.

While the oldest Renaissance Faire (the Renaissance Pleasure Faire of Southern California) had its opening year in 1963 (Sneed, 1987), the vast majority of Faires have opened their gates within the past three decades—from the mid 1990’s onward (Renaissance Magazine, 2017). This perhaps indicates either an increase in public acceptance of their “sexual tropes and thinly veiled references” (Newmahr, 2014), or a decrease in the pervasiveness of these themes.

This study was conducted with the intent to gain insight into social norms surrounding interpersonal interactions and the use of erotic capital at Renaissance Faires. To provide greater

insight into these topics, researchers examined Faires through the lens of the independent, traveling performers who work at them.

Study Significance

The recent increase in both number of Renaissance Faires around the country and public attendance at those events signifies a need for more established literature surrounding their sociological and economic impacts. While still considered by many to be on the fringes of society, the past two decades have seen a clear shift in the relevance of Renaissance Faires in popular culture from a “deviant event” to a welcoming source of family entertainment (Johnson, 2010). Any insights, therefore, that leisure service professionals can gain into this up-and-coming tourism attraction will help to shape the location, entertainment content, and atmosphere of future events. This study is one of few focusing on the sociological aspects of the modern Renaissance Faire, and perhaps the only one to examine erotic capital and empowerment by using narratives of female *and* male performers equally. Testimony from these performers can be used to provide insight into overarching themes that are prevalent in multiple Faires in the Northeastern region. Additionally, this literature may be able to provide leisure service professionals, such as Entertainment Directors and Faire owners, with information regarding what independent performers ‘look for’ in a Renaissance Faire, and what factors they believe lead to satisfaction among other performers and patrons alike.

Statement of Purpose

Through analysis of semi-structured interviews and surveys this study aimed to determine in what ways performers make use of erotic capital and how it affects their interactions with patrons and other performers. Examining interactions through this lens provided the opportunity to analyze how the Renaissance Faire atmosphere fosters empowerment and self-expression, and

how independent performers capitalize on this phenomenon through their use of erotic capital.

This information serves to reinforce the understanding about how an atmosphere of empowerment increases the appeal of Renaissance Faires to patrons and performers—knowledge that may be used by leisure service professionals to shape the future of Renaissance Faires as a tourism destination and increase the acceptance of qualities they boast which may traditionally be considered “purple leisure” (see [Appendix C](#)). Finally, by examining these more challenging themes (such as erotic capital and sexual empowerment), this study aimed to break taboos often associated with Renaissance Faires and expand the scope of sexual/erotic capital literature to all genders from its current female-focused perspective.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of interpersonal interactions at Renaissance Faires?
2. What is the nature of erotic capital and sexuality at Renaissance Faires as expressed by performers? Is use of erotic capital intentional or unintentional?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will analyze existing literature relating to the role of erotic capital in society and the tourism/recreation industry. Definitions of erotic capital, as well as insight into various theories will be provided. Finally, this section will highlight areas of erotic capital theory and literature which are in need of further study and exploration.

Erotic Capital

Thus far, only one study conducted by Diane Parry (2016) has addressed the uses of erotic capital within the world of leisure studies. Her study, which focused on Flat Track Roller Derby, and other research performed surrounding the theory has so far failed to outline the ways in which demographics other than white, cis-gendered women demonstrate and use erotic capital. In order to have a comprehensive picture of erotic capital, *all genders* interacting with this personal asset must be examined.

In 2010, Catherine Hakim published an article titled simply, *Erotic Capital*, which aimed to identify a fourth personal asset in addition to the economic, cultural, and social capital widely accepted in the world of social sciences. Erotic capital, here, is identified as a multi-faced asset containing six elements which individually may be more or less prominent depending on circumstance. These first of these aspects include *beauty* (noted to be fluid within various cultures), *sexual attractiveness* (which may include physical attractiveness *as well as* factors like masculinity, femininity, or charisma), and what Hakim addresses as the *social* asset, or one's ability to interact with others—using charisma, flirtatious behavior, and charm to establish connections. Furthermore, *liveliness* (or the mixture of physical fitness, social energy, and

humor) is identified. This, coupled with the aspect of *social presentation* (how one dresses, uses perfume, jewelry, etc.), shows the relevance of one's image to the value of their erotic capital in Hakim's interpretation (Hakim, 2010). Lastly, Hakim identifies *sexuality/fertility* itself as an aspect of one's erotic capital. This can include such things as "sexual competence, energy, erotic imagination" (Hakim, 2010), and child-bearing abilities. To summarize,

"erotic capital is thus a combination of aesthetic, visual, physical, social, and sexual attractiveness to other members of your society, and especially to members of the opposite sex, in all social contexts" (Hakim, 2010).

Hakim's presentation of erotic capital as a way for women to self-empower has since been widely disputed by social scientists and feminists alike, who decry her examination of the phenomenon as "overstretched, inconsistent, and a-sociological" (Green, 2012). During her article, Hakim purports that women have "a longer tradition of developing and exploiting (erotic capital)" (Hakim, 2010), and that the reason this is available/possible is something called the "male sex deficit" (Hakim, 2010), or the idea that men are in a more constant state of sexual deprivation than their female counterparts.

In his article rebutting and revisiting Hakim's explanation of erotic capital, Adam Green attempts to debunk the concept of the "male sex deficit" by drawing to attention to how she "glosses over the ways in which (statistics regarding the male sex drive) may represent as much artifacts of the gendered constructions of sexuality, as *actual* differences in sexual desire" (Green, 2012). In glossing over this fact, Hakim may lose sight of the distinctions between "normative construction and biological distinction in sex drive" (Green, 2012). Another key criticism that Green presents of the Hakim literature is its tendency to disregard other societal structures such as race, class, age, and context, that

may add or detract from the desirability of a subject (Green, 2012). By erasing these distinctions, Hakim presents the concept of erotic capital as a level playing field for all women, when in reality it is both much more simultaneously accessible (to other genders), and inaccessible (to women who may not be equipped to adapt their erotic capital to suit their culture or social expectations) than what she represents.

In her article *Skankalicious*, Diane Parry (2016) examines the concept of erotic capital on a literal 'level playing field': a flat-track roller derby rink. Her study was the first of its kind to represent an analysis of erotic capital as a facet of leisure studies (Parry, 2016), and provided a qualitative insight into the motivations of women who participate in a sexually charged, often stigmatized sport. Though she drew heavily on Hakim's working definition of erotic capital throughout her piece, she, too, comments specifically on the lack of intersectional representation and diversity within the theory (Parry, 2016).

As both Green and Parry addressed in their research and analysis of Hakim's theory, as well as other works surrounding sexual and erotic capital, there are large gaps in the research surrounding this theory. By examining erotic capital through such a narrow lens (which includes the concept of 'fertility'), Hakim omitted a large portion of the population who consistently make use of erotic capital from her analysis: those who identify as gender non-binary, genderqueer, trans, or otherwise. The inclusion of fertility or perceived fertility serves to silence and isolate this section of the population.

Meanwhile, Hakim purports that women are the primary users of erotic capital (Hakim, 2010), and therefore have the most to gain from its extortion, but admits that "in sexualized, individualized modern societies, erotic capital becomes more important and more valorized for both men and women" (Hakim, 2010). This indicates that she is aware

of male use of erotic capital as a personal asset, and elects to disregard it for the purpose of the study. Both Parry and Hakim's studies are left wanting for intersectional representation (of women who don't identify as cis-gendered, as well as other races, ethnicities, cultural, and economic backgrounds); while Hakim's study glosses lightly over those women who have limited access or altered access to erotic capital, Parry's study consists entirely of women who identify as "white Canadians from Ontario" (Parry, 2016).

A study which validates and includes perspectives from a wide variety of demographics (in addition to the standard white cis-gendered woman) will set a precedent for further comparative studies in the field of leisure and gender research. Deeper understanding of driving factors in the use of male, female, and other gender's erotic capital will allow more informed discourse when addressing the concept of "purple" leisure (or deviant leisure), and its relevance in the modern world. Additionally, examination and analysis of personal anecdotes from performers will grant insight into how the leisure industry can take steps to normalize the use of erotic capital (where appropriate) to its own benefit. In her article analyzing gender performance of Renaissance Faire performers, Andie Markijohn (2009) discusses at length the strategies both male and female performers use to improve attendance and profits of their show through use of erotic capital (though she refers to it as 'sex appeal'). In this context, erotic capital is beneficial for both the performer *and* the patron, cultivating a symbiotic relationship (Markijohn, 2009). It is important to consider that the understanding of how individuals (of all genders) adapt their erotic capital to maximize personal gain allows for a more thorough understanding of societal constructs surrounding sexuality and its perception.

Summary

Erotic capital is defined by Catherine Hakim as a “combination of aesthetic, visual, physical, social, and sexual attractiveness to other members of your society” (2010).

Literature regarding the theory of erotic capital largely focuses on traditional gender roles (e.g. Hakim addressing that erotic capital is relevant “especially to members of the opposite sex” (2010)—a statement that can be construed as heavily heteronormative) and discuss women as the driving force behind the use of erotic capital in society. The cited studies on erotic capital also lack diversity of representation for people of color, other genders (such as non-binary), and socioeconomic variety. The majority of literature discussed erotic capital as it is used by the layperson moving through society (not someone using erotic capital with the expressed intent of maximizing monetary gain or profits)—further work could be done to determine how those who work in performance art use erotic capital to maximize their profitability.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Study Locations

Data collection for this study was conducted between May 27th and September 24th, 2017 at the Great Lakes Medieval Faire, the New Jersey Renaissance Faire, and the Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival.

The Great Lakes Medieval Faire takes place in Northeastern Ohio in the town of Rock Creek. The Faire originated in 1993, making 2018 its 25th annual event, and its 22nd consecutive year at its permanent (Faire-owned) location, which was purchased in 1996 (Kolman, 2011). This location consists of 12 permanent stages and shop structures on 13 wooded acres (not including parking areas). As of 2007, the Great Lakes Medieval Faire attracted about 45,000 patrons during its six-weekend yearly run (Great Lakes Medieval Faire, 2017). According to attendees, the plague of legal issues with Trumbull Township/Ashtabula County as well as the loss of the Faire's liquor license has caused a significant decline in attendance during more recent years. During the 2017 season it hosted 34 independent acts, consisting of 47 independent performers (many of the performers are involved in multiple acts) (Great Lakes Medieval Faire, 2017).

The New Jersey Renaissance Faire is located in Bordentown, New Jersey, and hosts an average of 12,000 patrons during its three-weekend run as of the 2017 season. The Faire premiered in 2010 and takes place on a 60-acre site (including a seven-acre lake) at Liberty Lake Day Camp, where temporary structures are erected to house the Faire each year. During the 2017

season it hosted 18 independent acts on its eight stages, which consisted of 41 performers (New Jersey Renaissance Faire, 2017).

The Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival is located on a permanent property in West Newton, Pennsylvania which includes about 20 acres of Faire Grounds (not including parking areas) (Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival, 2017). The festival opened in 1994, and has occurred annually except for the 2006 season, in which the event was cancelled due to lack of attendance, and ownership changed hands prior to the 2007 re-opening (McCaffrey, 2007). Available data from their website suggests that the Faire hosts about 55,000 patrons annually. In the 2017 season, Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival had a schedule boasting 18 independent acts on nine stages. These acts contained a total of 35 independent performers (Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival, 2017).

Data Collection

In order to select an ideally diverse group of participants and avoid selection bias, announcements were made at the “morning meetings” (a meeting held before opening which is attended by all independent performers) of each Faire where data would be collected, requesting volunteers to participate in semi-structured interviews and survey (See [Appendix A](#) and [Appendix B](#)). During these announcements the nature of the study was explained, and it was requested that interested performers notify researchers following the morning meeting to schedule a time that was appropriate for an interview.

In addition to providing surveys to those who agreed to be interviewed, survey opportunities were extended to those not wishing to participate in the interview portion of the study.

A petition for volunteers was made at the morning meeting of each Festival four times (Saturday and Sunday of two weekends). During this time, 91 independent performers were encountered by researchers (this total accounts for performers who performed at multiple Renaissance Faires during data collection by omitting double-counts). From these 91 performers eight depth interviews were scheduled and completed, as well as 27 anonymous surveys. This indicated an effective response rate of 9% and 30% respectively. When selecting performers to participate in interviews from the pool of volunteers, care was taken to ensure equal representation between male and female performers for the purposes of this study.

Interviews were conducted during evenings following the Faire days (Saturday and Sunday) with the intent to last 30-45 minutes (although some exceeded this time-frame). With the exception of performers who participated in the interview (who completed their anonymous surveys following their interview), questionnaires were distributed during the morning meetings of Faires and returned via an anonymous drop-box at the Faire office throughout the weekend. Interviews were recorded with both audio and video recording devices and later transcribed to text by researchers for data analysis.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire and depth interviews for this study were conducted separately, though it should be noted that each performer who participated in the interview portion also completed an anonymous survey.

The quantitative portion of the survey addressed demographic information, such as the age of the performer, how many years they had been performing, the type of performance they are a part of, and what gender they identify as. Open-ended questions included on the survey addressed their target markets for their performance, and what strategies they use to increase

their monetary success. Finally, a Likert scale (see Q9, [Appendix B](#)) addressed the intentionality of sexuality in their show and patron interactions.

The depth interviews which were conducted with eight independent performers aimed to provide more detailed information regarding the day-to-day interactions of performers and patrons. Questions were focused on determining why performers were drawn to the Renaissance Faire, and how they perceive themselves within it. Additionally, themes of sexuality and its role in Renaissance Faires were explored at the end of each interview (see [Appendix A](#)).

Analysis

Following the data collection period, analysis of responses for the quantitative portion of the survey was completed through SPSS software. Open-ended responses were analyzed by determining emergent codes within the performer's responses. These codes were then compared and contrasted with emergent codes from the depth interview portion of the data collection (see below).

Depth interviews were analyzed using emergent codes, the final iteration included of which included empowerment, community, diversity, and sexuality. Subthemes within the empowerment category included female empowerment, empowerment of marginalized populations, and empowerment as capital. The community theme included performer/performer interactions, performer/patron interactions, and atmospherics, while the diversity theme included inclusivity of diverse patrons and diversity of performance. Finally, the sexuality theme included subthemes of sexuality as capital, sexual empowerment, atmosphere of sexuality, and sexual intentionality.

Potential Bias

A number of precautions were taken to eliminate potential biases from this study. Firstly, a group of researchers (most of whom had never attended a Renaissance Faire) coded data individually and discussed findings to agree upon the four themes of empowerment, community, diversity, and sexuality. The use of this team was intended to safeguard the purity of the data collected through the interview process. Additionally, questions for these interviews were formulated with intent to avoid leading respondents directly to answers about erotic capital or other research topics—researchers took care to establish questions that allowed respondents to reach these areas of discussion (or not) of their own accord. Finally, the lead researcher’s awareness of her bias as a woman who had a career as an independent performer in Renaissance Faires allowed the team to move forward with the knowledge of potential biases and take the aforementioned precautions to eliminate them.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This section will discuss quantitative data from the questionnaire distributed to independent performers as well as qualitative results of depth interviews conducted for the study. From the depth interviews, researchers used emergent coding to establish four main themes present within respondent narratives: empowerment, community, diversity, and sexuality.

Demographics

As stated in [Chapter 3](#), 27 responses to surveys were collected from various independent performers across the three examined Faires. This section will address results collected from these surveys regarding performer demographics.

Performance Type.

Table 1. Performance Type

Type of act surveyed performers were involved in during Summer 2017

<u>Performance Type</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Musical	44.4
Drama	0
Historical	14.8
Sideshow	18.5
Improvisational	59.3
Acrobatic	3.7
Comedy	66.7
Fire	7.4
Fighting	33.3

Note. Respondents were able to select multiple performance types.

As seen in Table 1, the type of act with which performers identified varied greatly across those surveyed. The largest majorities within the data were musical, improvisational, and comedic performances with 44.4%, 59.3%, and 66.7% respectively (it should be noted that performers were permitted to select more than one category for their act). The least represented performance demographics were fire and acrobatic performances, with 7.4% of respondents and 3.7% of respondents respectively. Drama was the only category to which no respondents attributed their act.

Cumulative Experience. As addressed by Table 2, the number of years which independent performers had been performing in the Renaissance Faire circuit was skewed slightly toward fewer years; 59.3% of those surveyed had been performing for fewer than 10 years, while 40.7% had been performing for 10 years or greater. The smallest demographic of performers polled had been performing for 20 years or greater (18.5%). This could potentially be attributed to a early retirement age among Faire performers, or the relative longevity or location of the individual Faires (relatively “young” Faires may tend to host performers with less experience due to factors such as cost of performer and popularity of the Faire site).

Table 2. Cumulative Experience

<i>Number of years that independent performers have been actively performing.</i>	
<u>Years Performing</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
0-5	25.9
5-10	33.3
10-20	22.2
>20	18.5

Age of Performer. Within the survey, performers were asked to report on their age to compare these results to their responses about cumulative experience. From these responses, the

age range of performers was between 18 and 53 years of age, with a mean age of 33.3, a median age of 32, and a standard deviation of 9.38. This aligns with the data from Table 2, suggesting that the majority of performers had been working for less than 10 years, as the average performer was in their mid-thirties.

Gender Identity. Of the performers surveyed, 13 respondents identified as male and 13 as female, with one respondent identifying as gender non-binary (a gender classification which eschews traditional gender roles and identifications). Though the options were presented, no respondents identified within the “Trans” (transgender) or “Other” categories of gender.

Table 3. Gender Identity

<i>Gender identity of independent performers</i>	
<u>Gender</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Male	48.1
Female	48.1
Gender Non-Binary	3.7
Trans	0
Other	0

Target Market.

Table 4. Target Market

<i>Age range that independent performers focus on when tailoring their act to their target market.</i>	
<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Children (<12 y.o.)	63.0
Teenagers (12-18 y.o.)	66.7
Adults (18+ y.o.)	92.6

Note. y.o. = years old. Respondents were permitted to select multiple age ranges.

In addition to questions related to performers’ target markets during the depth interviews, survey respondents were asked to categorize the age range of the audience they typically catered

their performance toward. While the majority of responses confirmed their target audience was adults over 18, over half of respondents confirmed their interest in children and teenagers as their target market.

Research Question 1: Interpersonal interactions at Renaissance Faires

This section will include respondent data relevant to the first research question as listed in Chapter 1: “What is the nature of interpersonal interactions at Renaissance Faires?” Answers to this question will be drawn out in the form of three major themes established during the semi-structured interviews: empowerment, community, and diversity.

Empowerment. Within the overarching theme of empowerment, researchers determined three sub-themes: female empowerment, empowerment of marginalized populations, and empowerment as capital. It should be noted that sexual empowerment was a prominent theme throughout the interview narratives but was coded under the theme of sexuality (in section for Research Question 2) for clarity in analysis.

Female empowerment. Among the discussions of empowerment within the interviews conducted, female empowerment was most frequently referenced and discussed—often by male interviewees as well as female. The majority of female interviewees specifically stated that they find the Renaissance Faire environment empowering and safe for female performers and patrons alike.

The Renaissance Faire was often addressed as a place where female performers could reclaim their sexuality—somewhere that they could advertise their sexuality to their own ends, instead of being sexualized without their consent. In reference to this empowerment of women, one female musician said:

“In place of being made into an overtly sexual creature in your (the patrons) head, I’ve actually turned it around on you and now I’m a badass and *you’re* cheering for *me*.”

Researchers opted to code the concept of reclaimed sexuality under female empowerment (instead of sexual empowerment) because in interviews the phenomenon was attributed entirely to the female gender. They believed, therefore, that this reclamation was as a *result* of the empowerment inherent to Renaissance Faires themselves.

Sexual empowerment is used to various ends by the women who employ its use at Faires. This diversity in use of empowerment is represented in a variety of forms—from women’s roles in performances to song lyrics themselves:

“I mean, there’s songs out there about women using their sexuality basically on both sides of the fence. Not just to win a husband and have babies and gain power, but also to sit back and go ‘Yea, I’m a woman, what of it? I’m going to kick your ass equally as hard as any man, if not harder, with a bigger sword.’”

This quote well represents the various outcomes of female empowerment in songs and other media present at Renaissance Faires (though it does not necessarily represent the *actual* Renaissance era in a realistic light). Renaissance Faires, accordingly, place women in a number of roles which would not have been historically acceptable; they are knights, musicians, and actors in addition to their more “traditional” roles as shopkeepers and tavern wenches (bartenders).

Finally, it is important to discuss the transfer of empowerment from performers to patrons in this context. Caitlin, a fire performer, mentioned:

“People bring their shy daughters up to me at the end of a show and they’re like ‘She loves you, she talks about you all year. You’re such a great role model for these young

girls.’ Because there aren’t a lot of independent, solo women on the circuit and in the Ren Faire scene. I really hold that place with honor.”

In this way, female independent performers often serve as role-models for female patrons of a variety of ages, especially young attendees. Many are keenly aware of this role, and pointedly address and empower young female patrons; one interviewee has gone so far as to directly confront a patron overheard telling a female child that she “Can’t be a knight, because you’re a girl.”

Regardless of how female independent performers express their empowerment, they share a similar sentiment, here summarized by one of the male interviewees, Radagast:

“Women will proudly wear the name wench, and wear their bodice high, and take back their sexuality, which I wholeheartedly believe in—more power to them.”

Empowerment of marginalized populations. In addition to the encouragement of female self-expression, sexuality, and empowerment, Renaissance Faires also lend themselves to the empowerment of marginalized populations. Here, marginalized refers to minority populations, those with different abilities, as well as those who would, in other social environments, be “considered non-conforming” (whether intentionally or unintentionally) (Dumas, 2013).

To counteract the typical isolation that these marginalized populations feel, performers often go the extra mile to empower these patrons to feel wanted and included in the Faire experience.

“I’ll flirt with old women, I’ll flirt with people who aren’t necessarily considered good looking or beautiful by modern standards. I’ll flirt with older chubby guys, the dad, or the grandfather.”

The above quote by The Bard (a male historical/dramatic performer) well illustrates the relaxed attitude that performers often have about flirting and other behaviors intended to empower patrons to feel welcomed. He specifically mentions flirting with patrons of both genders (though later in the interviews he designates his character as ‘vaguely asexual’) with the intent of making patrons feel special and included. Later in his interview, he mentioned:

“If there’s a little black girl, make her feel like a princess—if there’s a little black boy, make him feel like he’s a knight who can conquer the world, or make him your apprentice and turn him into an actor and a star.”

These strategies of inclusivity extend across both performers and performance types. Radagast, a male comedian, summarizes it well by saying:

“(Performers) duty is to make (the patron) feel endowed with the beauty and grace of everyone they’ve ever wanted to be.”

In addition to inclusivity and empowerment that performers attentionally provide to marginalized populations, the culture of Renaissance Faires itself lends to empowerment of these groups. Here we see social norms and standards of beauty which often contradict or challenge those of modern society. For example, women of larger size are welcomed and widely desired among Renaissance Faire culture.

“Instead of being a plus-sized lady, she’s the belle of the ball because she’s got the greatest set of tits that anybody’s ever seen.”

Valerie, a female comedian, here captures the way that Renaissance Faires push the boundaries of societal norms and expectations with regards to desirability.

Whether it is through direct performer interaction, or merely the culture of the Renaissance Faire, the performers interviewed all expressed similar sentiments, here said by Radagast:

“The creed of the cast of a Renaissance Faire is solely to make the patrons feel wanted, loved, accepted, and powerful.”

Empowerment as capital. The final category within the theme of empowerment is also the one which was discussed the least by interviewees. The concept of using empowerment as capital (a social commodity with which to gain benefits, such as improved tips or show attendance) was mentioned often enough that it did not escape the notice of researchers. Regarding empowering patrons and show attendees, Caitlin said “It makes people feel good, it gets more fans. If somebody feels good coming to your show, they’re gonna come again.” This was the general sentiment agreed upon by those who mentioned the use of empowerment as a way to improve their own profits.

Community. Within the semi-structured interview responses, researchers encountered extensive discussion on the topics of camaraderie and familial bonds between players (performers and patrons) at a Renaissance Faire.

“It’s really that all-inclusive conversation that I really love about Ren Faires. I mean it doesn’t matter who or what you are, you’re a part of the family for that day.”

The above quote by A Capella musician, Sadie, demonstrates the acceptance and intimacy of community that was often discussed by interviewed performers. These responses led to the division of three sub-themes that fit within the main ‘community’ code: performer/patron interactions, performer/performer interactions, and atmospherics. Here, the sub-theme of ‘atmosphere’ refers to the culture and environment that is fostered within the Faires.

Performer/patron interactions. Of the countless relationships and interactions between various persons at a Renaissance Faire, most widely discussed was the relationship between the performer and the patron. Independent performers rely heavily on patrons by their very nature—without patrons, there would be no way to be paid by the Faire for their employment. Additionally, many acts rely on patrons to supplement their income by tipping or purchasing merchandise in the form of t-shirts, CD's, and other novelty items.

The entire relationship between performer and patron should not be written off as one of reliance and necessity, though. Those who were interviewed spoke very highly of patrons at the Faire as a whole and insisted that they (the performers) strive to create a sense of community that allows attending patrons to feel at home. As part of the introduction to his show, The Bard well summarizes the unique relationship that the performers and patrons establish:

“You are awesome people who come dressed to the Renaissance Faire. You’re the ones who wear a red shirt and understand you will not survive the first five minutes of this show. You’re the ones who understand *really* nerdy language. Words like ‘Bazinga,’ or ‘Hodor,’ or ‘Wibbly-wobbly, timey-wimey.’ So, you are my people. And I shall lead you to freedom.”

Upon entering a Renaissance Faire, the patron enters what is considered to be a broadly consensual environment—where it is generally accepted that performers will interact directly with them in various ways throughout the day. When speaking about this implied consent to Radagast, he mentioned that “in a costume you can bust through people’s personal bubble space very quickly.” This demonstrates the level of comfort which the performers have in audience and patron interaction, and that patrons themselves often feel likewise at ease with the performers. Their comfort with the performers was further discussed by The Bard, saying:

“When you maintain distance, when you offer your hands palms up, oftentimes when you take off your hat in a swooping bow, it lets everybody know that you are friendly, that you are open, that you are safe, and that you are here to play.”

Performer/performer interactions. Though performers spoke less about their relationships with other performers than their relationship with patrons, there was a positive tone of camaraderie and support when they were discussed. Familial-like bonds are often formed between performers, even those who only see each other once or twice each year “on the circuit”. Savannah, a female musician, said of these bonds:

“Even though you don’t really see each other very often, every time you do see (other musicians) they get really excited to see you. They’re always inviting you to play with them and share music. And it’s way more of a shared, familial experience.”

Other common points of discussion surrounding performer/performer interactions were the support that these relationships provide when at Faires in the form of performer safety, assistance, etc. and networking opportunities that these relationships provide.

Atmospherics. In her 2016 work regarding the effect of festival atmospherics (see [Appendix C](#)) on visitor emotions, Jenny Lee found that “well-managed festival ambience and satisfactory service encounters significantly contributed to bringing about positive emotions, which, in turn, strongly influenced visitors’ overall satisfaction with festivals.” Although the festivals that Lee observed were not Renaissance Faires, one could see how her findings may correlate with them, as festival ambience and satisfactory performer/patron encounters were both discussed by interviewed performers for this study.

When speaking with researchers, performers agreed that the atmosphere of Renaissance Faires is part of what creates their appeal to both patrons *and* performers. Many of the

performers who participated in interviews are classically trained musicians, actors, etc. and feasibly could be employed in other locations—when asked what motivated them to work at the Renaissance Faire, the vast majority agreed that they were motivated by the environment of the Faires, the sense of community and shared cultural experience that they could be a part of there. When Sadie, a musician, first attended a Renaissance Faire, she was thrilled at the prospect of working and performing in that atmosphere. She turned to her sister-in-law (who was accompanying her), and said

“I found my people. I found my tribe.”

This environment of “kindred spirits” (according to Tessa), is a driving force behind the careers of a number of independent performers, and one that they strive to preserve through their performance and work. For example, The Bard mentions,

“I see musicians of all forms walking beside patrons and letting them know that the ambiance they create is there for them.”

Another crucial facet within the culture of Renaissance Faires is sexuality—whether explicit or implied. This will be further discussed in the ‘sexual atmosphere’ section below, but Pierre, a comedian and sideshow performer, summed it up nicely when he said,

“This is where people come to let loose.”

Diversity. Within the diversity narrative, two sub-themes emerged: inclusivity of diverse patrons, and diversity of performance. Upon closer analysis, the sub-theme of inclusivity could be further broken-down to include categories specific to the type of diversity represented; in particular, performers were apt to discuss sexual orientation and gender identity.

Inclusivity of diverse patrons. Welcoming and including diverse patrons from all walks of life was a continually discussed topic by the independent performers who were interviewed

for this study. They focused on not only the general inclusivity of the Faire environment (“Call yourself what you need to call yourself, just know that you have a safe haven here” -Sadie), but their strategies of including diverse patrons as well:

“I use my privilege and inherent power as a cis white male as a bridge for those who are less than progressive, or resistant to the change that has happened in society over the last 10 years or so.”

In this quote, Radagast discusses how he uses what he terms his “inherent power” as a “cis white male” to attempt to broaden the inclusivity of the Renaissance Faire culture as a whole and inspire change in the minds of “those who are resistant” (in this case referring to those who treat people with alternative gender identities in a negative way). Here is a great example of how many performers strive to use their performances to bridge social gaps and create commentary on current social issues that are occurring outside of the Faire walls. Other ways that Faire performers do this is by being conscientious of what they can do to make patrons feel more comfortable and accepted. Radagast continues,

“When I call volunteers, I ask ‘What is your name, what is your pronoun?’ to encourage those who watch me to co-exist with people who are otherized...What I do involves everyone and anyone who wants to join in and play make-believe.”

Sexual orientation. Renaissance Faires are notorious for fostering a bawdy (see [Appendix C](#)) atmosphere, and this implicit sexuality has a tendency to be inclusive of all sexual orientations, according to interviewees. The Bard, in particular, discussed LGBTQIA+ (see [Appendix C](#)) representation when discussing how he ‘casts’ his performances (which often use audience volunteers). Oftentimes when performing he uses same-sex couples on-stage, bringing greater diversity to age-old plays such as Macbeth and A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

Gender identity. Gender identity was even more widely discussed by interviewees than sexual orientation. The atmosphere of Renaissance Faires seems to lend itself to pushing gender boundaries by nature. In some cases, this openness can lead to a disregard of gender entirely by performers.

“You don’t have to tailor (your show) to one gender or another—and that’s the beauty of Ren Faires—a lot of it is just interacting with humans on a human basis. It doesn’t matter if they’re a boy, girl, transgender, bi—it doesn’t matter. It’s just the fact that it’s human interaction.

This quote from Sadie discusses how she believes gender (and gender identity) of the audience comes into play when planning a performance. She herself identifies sometimes as female and sometimes as gender non-binary and calls herself a “blurred line” of gender.

A larger theme within the discussion of gender identity, though, was performer’s desire to maintain the comfort of their patrons by addressing gender identity in an appropriate way. Following the previous quote, Sadie went on to say,

“If I see an obviously—male or female—if they’re in a dress, I’ll say ‘My Lady!’”

This sentiment of inclusivity and respect for the autonomy of patrons and performer’s identities was pervasive in many interviews conducted for this study.

Diversity of performance. At various points throughout the interview process, independent performers mentioned the value of diversity in performance content and type. According to performers, having a wide skillset and unique act are important factors in one’s ability to be hired by Faires and solicit tips and show attendance from Faire patrons.

Research Question 2: Sexuality as expressed by independent performers.

This section will summarize data related to research question number two, which asked: “What is the nature of erotic capital and sexuality at Renaissance Faires as expressed by performers?” Following this data, the sub-question “Is use of erotic capital intentional or unintentional?” will also be addressed in a section discussing sexual intentionality.

Sexuality. Sexuality was the most widely discussed theme within the semi-structured interview data, and accordingly had multiple sub-themes which could be attributed to it. Researchers were able to discern three individual sub-themes within the ‘sexuality’ theme: sexuality as capital (erotic capital), sexual empowerment, and atmosphere of sexuality.

Sexuality as capital. According to Radagast, sexuality is used by performers “from the moment the group or individual submits their show for consideration to a Renaissance Faire.” He went on, following this quote, to address the use of erotic capital when being hired by various Faires. Similarly to any professional acting job, headshots which can be used to assess the aesthetic of performers are included in the “press packs” that are sent out to prospective Faires—these press packs also typically include video footage of the performance, links to performer websites, and testimonials or reviews from prior Faires and patrons.

If the use of erotic capital by performers begins with the hiring process, it certainly does not end there. Of those interviewed by researchers, a portion of performers denied intentionally using flirtatious behavior or enhanced sexuality to improve their monetary or promotional gain from the audience (in the form of tips and increased performance attendance). Despite denying making use of these strategies, these respondents openly acknowledged the existence of performers who *did*. A small number of performers who were interviewed admitted to

intentionally making use of erotic capital, and agreed that the use of this capital is particularly important when considering the target demographics of their acts:

“Our target audience is usually men between the ages of...21, legally able to drink, and...50? So, my target demographic pretty much stays where it is because those are the people who are willing to spend money on pretty girls.”

Tessa went on to discuss her perception of the appropriateness of using sexual suggestion to increase profits by saying,

“Because sex sells, because we’re entertainers, I am totally fine with people showing off their breasts.”

This attitude of entertainer empowerment was pervasive when discussing the use of erotic capital with interviewees. Also pervasive was a sense of professional identity that accompanied this use—the concept that their status as entertainers separated their use of sexuality at Faires from their “real lives”.

Sexual empowerment. As mentioned extensively in the ‘empowerment’ section above, both the environment and performers of the Renaissance Faire encourage sexual confidence and empowerment within its walls. This is represented by performers in a number of ways, as performers themselves “try to represent different types of sexuality” through the diversity of their characters and Faire personas, according to Tessa.

Sexual empowerment can also stem from the concept of safety and security. When juxtaposing the atmosphere of a Renaissance Faire with that of the outside world, Tessa elaborated:

“It’s really just in reaction to the modern world that we want people to know what we’re doing is acceptable and fun, and that this is the place and time—we are asking for it. We

actually say, please come and enjoy us. We are showing off our breasts for a reason, we have a great time with it. I am feeling safe and feeling secure and this is how I feel confident about myself. And in other environments I'll walk around in a t-shirt and jeans, and I'm not asking for anything there. I'm not saying 'Hey, throw \$20 in my boobs.' Different story here. And I always feel a lot more confident and safe in this environment."

This quote well illustrates an interesting point that was brought up by multiple interviewees—the Renaissance Faire environment seems to foster not only a sense of empowerment and confidence, but a feeling of safety and security among like-minded people. The active choice that Tessa and other performers are making to let the audience “come and enjoy them” allows them to set their own terms for how they are sexualized and revoke those terms if they become uncomfortable or feel they are taken advantage of.

Atmosphere of sexuality. Discussions on the Renaissance Faire atmosphere by interviewees, as mentioned previously, paint the environment as implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) sexual. From both the perspective of the casual patron and the independent performer, it can be safely stated that there is a broad understanding of Renaissance Faires as an inherently sexual environment. “In Renaissance Faire culture it is almost expected to ‘flirt and jive’ with someone, if you will,” according to Radagast. He was far from the only respondent to discuss the phenomenon of sexuality; The Bard attributed the sexuality of Renaissance Faires more to the patrons themselves than to performers, saying,

“Patrons run the gambit from being completely non-sexual to overly sexual. They feel that the Renaissance Faire can and should be something that lives up to an old reputation of it—which was that it is a little bit of a kink-fest.”

Regardless of who the sexual overtones can be attributed to, their presence is seen by many as a source of empowerment and freedom for the patrons and performers. Radagast nicely summed up his mentality by stating:

“If you are in a Renaissance Faire setting you are surrounded by sexuality. And it can either be a miasma which suffocates you, or it can be a cooling mist which allows you to be who you are and flirt with who you want.”

Sexual Intentionality. One of the questions on the survey discussed the concept of sexual intentionality to represent research questions (see [Chapter 1](#)) which addressed whether the use of erotic capital and sexuality by performers was intentional or unintentional (if, indeed, such strategies were used). Interestingly, the same number of respondents answered “Strongly Disagree” as answered “Strongly Agree” in response to the statement “My performance is intentionally sexual”. Overall, though, more respondents answered “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” to this question than “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”. Conversely, responses to “My performance is intentionally conservative” were strongly skewed toward the negating responses of “Strongly Disagree” (40.7%) and “Disagree” (14.8%) while the “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” options had only 11.1% and 3.7% respectively.

Table 5. Sexual Intentionality

<i>Degree of sexual intentionality in performance</i>							
<u>“My performance...”</u>	<u>1(%)</u>	<u>2(%)</u>	<u>3(%)</u>	<u>4(%)</u>	<u>5(%)</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Could be construed as sexual	11.1	11.1	22.2	25.9	29.6	3.52	1.34
Is considered ‘family friendly’	11.1	14.8	29.6	18.5	25.9	3.33	1.33
Is intentionally sexual	22.2	11.1	25.9	18.5	22.2	3.07	1.47
Is intentionally conservative	40.7	14.8	29.6	11.1	3.7	2.22	1.22

Note. Question was presented as Likert scale; 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. SD=Standard Deviation.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The intent of this study was to investigate how independent performers function socially within the environment of three Renaissance Faires in Northeastern America. More specifically, it attempted to address whether or not these performers use what researchers have coined ‘erotic capital’ as a bargaining chip to improve their interactions with patrons—and, if they do, whether they do so intentionally. Additionally, this study attempted to parse out performer’s views on these subjects *by gender* (accordingly, researchers took care to select an even number of male and female respondents). While examining these factors, the study sought to document how these independent performers perceived the Renaissance Faire, how those perceptions affect their performance, and how leisure service professionals (such as Entertainment Directors) can better accommodate performers based on this information.

Erotic Capital

When analyzing collected interview data related to erotic capital, it should be noted that all independent performers who were interviewed openly acknowledged *other* performer’s use of sexuality to “sell” themselves (increase profits and attendance) at the Renaissance Faire. Interestingly, less interviewees would openly admit to using erotic capital *themselves* with the intent to drive these profits—even performers who are members of acts which are considered in the Faire culture to be bawdy or “blue humor” (Appendix C).

The majority of those whom admitted to the use of erotic capital themselves were female, while male respondents were less likely to admit to its intentional use. Researchers noted that women were also more likely to attribute use of sexuality to *all* genders of performers (male,

female, non-binary, etc.) while men who were interviewed tended to attribute this use of sexuality *solely* to female performers. This aligns with the cultural norms and expectations for erotic capital use that were discussed in literature during Chapter 2, (that women are the sole wielders of erotic capital) and begs the question: why are men reluctant to acknowledge their use of sexuality and erotic capital?

Data collected from the questionnaire accounts for gender and sexual intentionality, but the small sample size does not allow for statistical relevance if researchers analyzed responses for correlation.

With the knowledge from this study, as well as other studies on the ethnography and culture of Renaissance Faires, future research can take shape that will grant deeper understanding into the use of erotic capital by additional demographics. This may give further insight into how patrons, cast actors, and performers of various genders, ethnicities, and sexual orientations use erotic capital to their benefit.

Culture of Empowerment

While the intent of this study was to establish the use of erotic capital and sexual intentionality among independent performers, strong themes of empowerment emerged in the data collected from the depth interviews. Questions to interviewees were designed around themes of atmosphere and sexuality, so it is unsurprising that the concept of empowerment was heavily discussed (as Faires are often considered to be environments where sexuality is empowered and fostered by a tight-knit community of patrons and performers).

This concept of environment and atmosphere is one that researchers who have studied Renaissance Faires seem to take to heart. Despite few published studies existing within the world of Renaissance Faire research, the vast majority of those which have been completed focus on

the unique culture and environment of the Faires which empowers attendees (Johnson, 2010).

Interviewees discussed that this can take many forms, such as empowering those with socially taboo gender identities and sexual orientations, differently abled attendees, people of color, and women.

Andie Markijohn (2009) focused heavily on Faires empowering alternative performance of gender in her dissertation, entitled *“Wet, Dirty Women” and “Men Without Pants”*: *The Performance of Gender at the American Renaissance Festival*. In this work, Markijohn questions the very nature of gender roles at a Renaissance Faire, noting how they are both “normed *and* put into question in the space of the Festival” (2009). This work heavily suggests that, despite the traditional and rigid historical context of gender that is being portrayed at a Renaissance Faire by cast actors (typically those who play royalty), independent performers such as the Washer Well Wenches are consistently pushing the boundaries of what is considered “acceptable” behavior for their gender, even by modern standards (Markijohn, 2009). The widespread popularity of Washer Well Wenches and other, similar independent performances signifies a culture within the Renaissance Faire that is empowering of these non-traditional expressions of gender (Markijohn, 2009).

Markijohn’s work was quickly followed by a work titled *An Ethnography of the Bay Area Renaissance Festival: Performing Community and Reconfiguring Gender* by Matthew Johnson (2010). This work claimed the purpose of “analyzing the means by which performers at Tampa’s Bay Area Renaissance Festival constitute community and gender in and through Performance” (Johnson, 2010). Within this study, Johnson examines Renaissance Faires as a type of performance art—and brings about implications that the community experienced within a

Renaissance Faire is all part of the ‘performance’ of the patrons, the cast actors, and the independent actors alike.

These works, in addition to the testimony of the respondents for this study, contribute to the notion that Renaissance Faires create a culture of empowerment which allows patrons and performers to express themselves confidently within their walls.

Limitations and Future Research

Data collected by this study provided insight into the culture of Northeastern Renaissance Faires, and unique perspectives from the independent performers who were surveyed and interviewed on a variety of topics. Collected information may be used as a stepping stone for future research on the sociological implications of Renaissance Faires and the use of erotic capital in event-style entertainment. Though the data did provide detailed first-hand accounts of Renaissance Faire culture, the limitations of the study were numerous.

Firstly, survey and interview opportunities were only provided to independent performers within the sphere of three Renaissance Faires (Great Lakes Medieval Faire, New Jersey Renaissance Faire, and Pittsburgh Renaissance Festival) out of the roughly 180 Faires currently operating in the United States as of 2015 (Renfaire.com, 2015). Due to the proximity of these Faires the number of potential respondents was severely limited, as many performers are employed at all three locations. Trends found in the data collected for this study may also be skewed by the locale from which they were collected (i.e. independent performers in Arizona and Colorado may have vastly different experiences than these performers working predominately in the Northeast). In addition to the localization of the data, the sample sizes (eight performers for semi-structured interviews, and 27 for survey data) were too small to be considered a statistically significant representation of Renaissance Faires as a whole.

Furthermore, extending response opportunities only to independent performers omits the input and opinions of cast actors, office staff, and vendors at various Renaissance Faires. Collecting data from a more comprehensive group of employees, while potentially less indicative of overarching themes and culture (due to most cast and office staff working at only one Renaissance Faire during their careers), would provide detailed insight into the micro-cultures formed at individual Faires by staff and patrons.

On the subject of erotic capital and sexuality as capital, more research focusing on the experiences of varying genders is paramount. While the interviews conducted for this study gave a glimpse into the potential use of erotic capital by the male gender as well as one non-binary respondent, the vast majority of the sexual encounters they discussed were regarding female performers, not themselves. Despite this reluctance to discuss their use of erotic capital, multiple male interviewees discussed the need to ‘defend’ themselves from patron advances with multiple strategies, including wearing fake wedding rings. Whether this is indicative that men are oblivious to their own use of erotic capital, or intentionally make use of it less (and attract patrons nonetheless), has yet to be seen and requires more thorough research and examination. Alternative strategies may be required to get to the heart of this topic and acquire honest responses from respondents—whether through more specific and detailed anonymous surveys or use of a male interviewer to increase interviewee comfort.

Despite the information recorded here and other studies referenced within this piece, studies on Renaissance Faire culture, as well as erotic capital, is considered a “new” territory in leisure research. One could therefore imagine any number of forms that future research on the topic could potentially take. As mentioned above, the expansion of research to include opinions of staff at individual Faires, patrons, and cast actors is a viable direction for future work.

Additionally, studies that provide a more expansive and diverse sample of Faires from which to collect data will prove invaluable to leisure professional's knowledge of the genre. To this end, if we can keep our finger on the pulse of Renaissance Faires (and their sociological and economic implications), we can ensure that they remain a thriving facet of the tourism industry in America for decades to come.

Appendix A

Interview Question List

1. Describe your performance
 - a. *What type of performance?*
 - b. *How many years involved?*
2. What demographic of patron do you consider your ‘target market’?
 - a. *What aspects of your act allow you to focus on this market?*
 - b. *Are you open to expanding your target market? Why/Why not?*
3. Talk about what motivated you to work at Renaissance Faires
 - a. *Do you perform elsewhere in addition to Renaissance Faires?*
4. Talk about how you interact with patrons
 - a. *Has your interaction with patrons changed over time?*
5. Are you available to patrons for interaction between performances?
6. Talk about how other performers interact with patrons
 - a. *Does watching other performers affect how you present yourself to patrons? (both during shows and in your ‘off-time’)?*
7. Talk about some commonly used strategies for “hawking” shows and increasing tips
 - a. *Do you use any of these strategies personally?*
8. What gender do you identify as?
9. Talk about how your gender affects your persona at the Faires you perform in
10. Talk about how sexuality is used in the Renaissance Faire setting
11. Tell me about the use of the terms ‘wench’ and ‘rogue’ in Renaissance Faires
12. What factors influence your ability to be hired by Faires?
 - a. *Do you believe these factors affect other performer’s hire-ability as well?*
13. Talk about your relationship with other performers
14. How important is the historical context of gender to your performance?
15. Talk about how you would present your act if you identified as a different gender

Appendix B

Performer Questionnaire

Q1. What is your age? _____

Q2. What type of act do you perform? (Check All That Apply)

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Musical | <input type="radio"/> Sideshow | <input type="radio"/> Comedy |
| <input type="radio"/> Drama | <input type="radio"/> Improv | <input type="radio"/> Fire |
| <input type="radio"/> Historical | <input type="radio"/> Acrobatic | <input type="radio"/> Fighting |

Q3. How many years have you worked as an independent performer? (Circle One)

0-5 years 5-10 years 10-20 years 20+ years

Q4. What is the age of your target audience? (Check All That Apply)

Children Under 12 Teenagers (12-18) Adults (18+)

Q5. In what ways do you take the age of audience members into consideration when planning your act?

Q6. In what ways do you take the gender of audience members into consideration when planning your act?

Q7. List some strategies you use for optimizing (or improving) tipping from your audience members and patrons:

Q8. List some strategies you use for optimizing (or improving) show attendance at the Renaissance Faires you perform at:

Q9. The following section contains a number of statements with which some people agree and some disagree. Please rate how much you personally agree or disagree with these statements, and how they reflect on you personally. Circle the number between 1 and 5 that corresponds with your feelings (1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Neutral; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly Agree):

- Words and actions in my performance...
 - Could be construed as suggestive or sexual
 - Are considered “Family Friendly”
 - Are intentionally suggestive or sexual
 - Are intentionally conservative

- When selecting my performance attire, I...
 - Carefully consider each costume piece
 - Draw inspiration from other performers
 - Dress according to what my audience enjoys
 - Dress based on what I enjoy wearing
 - Select clothes that are comfortable to wear

Q10. How do you identify? (Circle All That Apply)

Male

Female

Trans

Gender Non-Binary

Other

Appendix C

Terms and Definitions

- *Atmospherics*: Originally defined as “the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance purchase probability” (Kolter, 1973), this term has expanded to include environments (such as festivals) where the atmosphere and experience *are* the product.
- *Bawdy*: Obscene, lewd. Boisterously or humorously indecent (Merriam Webster, n.d.)
- *Blue humor*: Obscene or lewd jokes and humor. Often used interchangeably with bawdy.
- *Erotic Capital*: A multi-faceted social asset divined by Catherine Hakim (2010) which includes factors such as beauty, sexual attractiveness, charisma, liveliness, social presentation, and fertility (see Erotic Capital for further discussion).
- *Hawking*: Action that a performer may take to advertise upcoming performances and increase crowd size and attendance.
- *LGBTQIA+*: An acronym denoting sexual orientations other than heterosexual; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, & asexual. The + leaves room for others not mentioned.
- *Purple Leisure*: Also known as “Purple Recreation” or “Purple Tourism”. Leisure or recreation pursuits which may be considered socially taboo or deviant behaviors.
- *Renaissance Faire*: Term used to denote any event or festival which invokes trends (cultural, fashion, and otherwise) of the Renaissance or Medieval eras.
- *Renaissance Festival*: Term interchangeable with “Renaissance Faire,” see above.
- *Sexual Capital*: (Capital) accruing to an individual or group due to the quality and quantity of attributes that he or she possesses which elicit an erotic response in another, including physical appearance, affect, and sociocultural styles (Green, 2008).
- *Social Assets*: A quality or attribute that has value only because of social institutions or ‘norms’ (Mailath & Postlewaite, 2006).

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Title: *Environmental Education Intern*

Description: *Educate students and public about stewardship and natural history*

Institution: *Shaver’s Creek Environmental Center, Petersburg PA*

Supervisor’s Name: *Douglas Wentzel*

Grants Received

- Erickson Discovery Grant; Department of Undergraduate Research

Awards

- Evan Pugh Scholar Award
- Alumni Recognition for Student Excellence Award in HHD

Professional Memberships

- National Association for Interpretation
- Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators

Certifications

- Wilderness First Responder/CPR

Activities

- Outdoor School Camp Counselor
- Outdoor School Learning Group Leader
- RPTM Student Society