

Performing the Idealized Judaism: Processes of Jewish Missionary Work at Franklin and

Marshall College

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Introduction

Sometime in March, I ventured into the Klehr Center for admittedly self-serving reasons - in search of a vessel for the smoothie I intended to make as an afternoon snack. “Swag,” as it is colloquially known, consists of branded items, such as reusable mugs, cups, stickers, and other commodities. In this case, these items bear Hillel International’s logo. I caught Dean Lewis on his way out the door, and asked, nervously, if there were any cups left.

“Of course! We’d love to have you promote us,” he told me, somewhat facetiously. I quickly wrote this phrase down when I returned home to make that smoothie. Previously, I had no understanding as to the motivations behind the seemingly endless “swag” that Hillel extends to its students. The table with these commodities features prominently when one first walks in, and students must pass it on their way to the dining room on Friday evenings. Clearly, students and administrators engage in this project of religious promotion at Hillel. The Jewish Engagement Fellows (JEFs) are tasked with finding unengaged Jewish students, and encouraging these individuals to attend Hillel. While Chabad may seemingly conform better to conceptualizations of missionary work, both organizations engage in distinct processes of missionization, as I will articulate in this thesis.

When I first began formulating this project, it looked quite different than it does now. In Spring 2016, I envisioned an ethnographic inquiry into Jewish political thought and identity on Franklin and Marshall’s campus. Quickly, it became clear to me that this was a tenuous proposal. F&M, as it is colloquially known, is nothing if not manifestly apolitical. Certainly, this changed, if only slightly, in the wake of Donald Trump’s election. Yet by then, it was too late to reevaluate my thesis.

Nonetheless, a deeply complex portrait of Jewish identity, and the forces that seek to shape it, emerged amid this disappointment. Indeed, on this campus, Chabad and Hillel, as the two Jewish cultural organizations here are known, act as Jewish missionary institutions. Their practices, both in terms of ritual and outreach, are radically different. In many ways, Chabad more plainly engages in missionization, yet simply because Hillel is more inconspicuous in its practices does not mean that its missionary work is nonexistent.

I argue in the thesis below that what is advertised on and around campus as outreach work is actually part of a broader cosmological project of intra-religion missionization. However, in order to do so, I must problematize my conception of missionary work in its usual sense. It is true that missionary work, particularly in critical anthropological studies, is invariably intertwined with narratives of exploitation and colonialism. In its manifestation at Franklin and Marshall, certainly those two phenomena are noticeably absent. Indeed, while the missionary work--if one may so describe these organizations' motives—is designed to mold identities, I would not describe it as exploitative. Judaism's status in the United States, and on campus, as a minority religion and the particular missionization practices that only target Jews (by Jewish law) makes Jewish outreach work distinct from other, mostly Christian narratives. It is also true that, until quite recently anti-Semitism existed in this country as a system of oppression, as it did elsewhere in the West. If missionary work suggests a hierarchal relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed (such as the colonizer and the colonized), Jewish missionization must be understood differently. Indeed, Chabad and Hillel's goals, broadly, consist of keeping young Jews Jewish. As a result of the intra-religious conditions of Jewish campus missionary work, the term "missionary work" functions less as a critique than as a description of the tactics and processes surrounding Chabad and Hillel's roles at Franklin and Marshall.

Jewish law dictates that Jews may not proselytize to members outside the faith; it does not therefore preclude intra-religion missionization, which allows for the sort of work undertaken on college campuses, mostly targeted towards Jewish youth, either those who identify as religious or culturally Jewish. Arguably, this fact functions as a loophole. Missionary work, even in its Christian context, does not necessarily exclude members of the missionary worker's own faith. Protestant Christians frequently seek to convert their comparatively "non-observant coreligionists," as Chabad does (Wertheimer 2014: 68). Undergirding such mission work is a sense that other types of religious practice—even that of one's co-religionist—are inauthentic and thus, by some measure, illegitimate. One can, however, be "saved" from this illegitimacy, and that is how the missionary work manifests itself first. Such salvation theology is, of course, prominently featured in Christian missionization. I argue that it is also an integral part of Chabad's theology, in particular. As one will read in chapter one, "drowning in assimilation" is an extremely powerful metaphor for the project Chabad engages in – to save assimilated Jews, who are drowning, from such a fate by introducing those individuals to Torah Judaism.

Ultimately, that purpose is rooted in a sincere desire for the survival of the Jewish people. This idea of survival is consistently debated, particularly among individuals of my parents' generation, children of Holocaust survivors who still feel an acute sense of threat and danger in the world. How can Jewish youth best be captured, and saved? It is true that assimilation is a phenomenon in diasporan communities, and by and large, members of the younger generation do not possess the same urgency to curb assimilation that their parents do (Pew Research 2013). Therefore college, which is notionally a time of self-reflection and the search for identity, as well as for liminality, may seem to be the ideal place to actualize the plans to curb assimilation. Of

course, these two groups envision very different Jewish futures, though they maintain similar urgency to enact their projects of constructing those futures.

In this paper, I will articulate the relationship between liminality and performativity throughout this paper. It must be stated again that there is a direct relationship between the cosmological considerations of Chabad and Hillel -- anti-assimilationist and in the former's case, messianic -- and the use of liminal space as part of the missionary project. Entrance into the liminal requires intentionality, thus, students (or visitors) are willing actors in curbing assimilation.

Both organizations perceive their own approach to Jewish youth to be legitimate, and the other to be illegitimate. Chabad's website, for example, describes its college mission as saving Jews who are "drowning in assimilation" (Chabad International). Hillel's official literature bears no such mention of anti-assimilationist aims, yet it is clear that its relationship to Birthright Israel, Israel Shabbats (themed Shabbat dinners centered on Israel and Israeli food), and frequent Israel-centric programming seek to situate Jewish identity as unsettled in America, and to suggest that a more stable Jewish identity may be found in Israel. An American-Jewish future, according to Hillel, must include Israel, and it is Hillel's role to foster that relationship. Miriam expressed the importance of Franklin and Marshall's Hillel in nurturing her relationship to Israel: "I think Hillel instilled in me how important Israel is, sure. I went on Birthright, now I'm leading Birthright trips. I already loved Israel before I came to school, Hillel really made me love it even more." The Klehr Center itself emphasizes the centrality of the American-Jewish relationship to Israel – from the multiple Israeli flags, to the branded Birthright stickers and pamphlets.

Jewish campus missionary work must offer something to students especially because the outreach work these organizations engage in is relatively passive—they can only reach those

who choose to attend. Thus, foodways function as one, integral aspect of outreach work. Food and commensality permeate each chapter of this thesis. The offer of a free meal, who cooks that meal, the type of food that is cooked (largely, traditional Ashkenazi Jewish cuisine), and the ritual practices associated with eating are all deeply intertwined in what I am calling Jewish missionization processes. For Jews, because food is “the lifeblood of daily material life and of the socialization of the body, food occupies a crucial place in the Judaic religious system, and, as a result, in the experience of Jews in history and culture” (Bahloul 2016: 95). As a result, food’s inclusion as part of the missionization process is essential. The determining factor for where to spend Friday nights for many Jewish students is contingent on their relative tastes for catered Hillel food or a meal cooked entirely by the Rebbetzen. Thus, food represents an important unifying tool in missionary work; even if ideological or theological differences exist, the processes of missionary work I describe below would be impossible without commensality.



For the purpose of this thesis, it is accurate to use the term “cosmology,” a larger worldview, or a system of ideas, which is deeply based in mythology and history, to describe the underpinning of Chabad and Hillel’s missionary work. Indeed, as we will see, though they are both Jewish organizations, their respective mythologies are quite distinct. Engaging with the organizations’ separate histories, which often transform into mythologies, is vital to understanding how and why these organizations conduct *kiruv*, or Jewish outreach work.

Chapter two concerns performativity most especially, as family and egalitarianism are modeled in Chabad and Hillel respectively. Egalitarianism describes a communal system as well as a philosophy of equality and, in seeming paradox, individualism. Hillel subscribes to this notion of idealized Judaism, one that is gender-inclusive, or even, gender blind. Further,

egalitarianism engenders the particular set of socialization practices evident at Hillel. On the other hand, performance of gender in Chabad centers on the familial, largely due to the processes of communal construction around the Goldsteins themselves. Idealized family and gender relations are modeled for students and the Goldsteins' children. Thus, the dichotomy between the social and the familial manifests in these two distinct communities, particularly in relation to gender.

Philosophically, these organizations appear very different. From the perspectives of the Rabbi and his family, and from those of Hillel's senior advisers, this is absolutely the case. This philosophical difference is especially evident in how gender norms and gender relations are performed for students in each of the organizations. While one (Chabad) emphasizes healthy, idealized familial relations, Hillel affirms that Judaism should be social and equitable. This is not to say that Chabad is not equitable; in fact, the *appearance* of equanimity is central for successful missionization to less observant Jews. In sum, chapter two consists of an analysis of the social and familial dichotomy.

Chapter three largely concerns liminality. College campuses are themselves liminal spaces. A sense of in-betweenness pervades collegiate—life—between legal adulthood, or independence, and the feeling that one has not yet achieved that crucial passage between states. The internet is rife with references to such college liminality; a casual search of the colloquial term “adulthood” (or “adulthooding”) will reveal this. Cliché or not, college in the United States remains a time both of self-discovery and of intense self-reflection. Religious spaces such as Chabad and Hillel, I argue here, are liminal spaces within a larger liminal space. Chabad “feels” liminal, far more than Hillel, because of its geographical orientation on campus—“off to the side,” according to one regular attendee, or between here (campus) and there (off-campus). Indeed, I argue that

missionization is deeply rooted in the negotiation of such liminal space, and takes advantage of how students consciously seek out in-betweenness as an escape from the stressful nature of quotidian college life. Liminal spaces such as Chabad and Hillel are also places where performativity of the familial (Chabad) or the communal (Hillel) thrives because they exist cloaked in nostalgia for home, which may or may not be more authentically Jewish than the space they choose to inhabit on Friday nights. This speaks to the puzzling nature of authenticity – that a particular set of practices could be foreign to an individual’s upbringing yet feel more “authentic.”

Proxemics also have a direct relationship to liminality that I will explore further in chapter three. The negotiation of time and space, and the feeling of in-betweenness, are central to how Franklin and Marshall’s campus, and Jewish life here, is made up of a series of concentric circles. Proxemics has its theoretical roots in linguistic anthropology, communications theory and social psychology, and chapter three will trace the term’s origins in that field and its applicability for my argument about Jewish missionization. In terms of that larger argument, I will also suggest that how students possess the agency to control their own time and space is crucial to the form of missionization in which Chabad and Hillel engage.

Methodology

Throughout the course of my research in Fall 2016, and the first part of Spring 2017, I attended Friday night dinners, alternating between Chabad and Hillel, every week. There, I engaged in participant observation, refraining from taking notes at Chabad out of respect for the immersive religious space that every attendee subscribes to when they walk in those doors. I also attended select weekly events. It should be clear that I am a cultural insider, having been raised religious in the Conservative Jewish tradition, and attended Jewish day school for virtually the

entirety of my primary and secondary education. I am, however, a self-identified non-practitioner, at least since my first year of college.

What is remarkable about the access I was afforded during my research is how disconnected I was from Jewish life prior to deciding to engage in ethnography with these organizations, in their spaces. I hardly attended Friday night dinners, though they are free, and I maintained my closest personal relationships with non-Jews. Yet my insider status and my upbringing immediately rendered this point moot; I was welcomed, and I immediately understood how to act, what to say, and how to participate in ritual at these dinners. Inasmuch as I may have perceived myself as an etic observer, it is clear that I am quite the opposite. I was self-conditioned to staying silent during prayers, as I had done for several years when I went home for the holidays. Even so, it was not difficult for me to reintegrate into Jewish practice; one hardly forgets the prayers one learns, and repeats, almost daily for twelve years.

I conducted several formal interviews with the Rabbi, Rebbitzen (his wife), Dean Lewis and Miriam (of Hillel), along with numerous student attendees. (All informants in this text will be referenced by pseudonyms.) These interviews took place over the course of the last two semesters. I have not conducted formal participant observation since the fall of 2016. As part of my research, I also consulted the archives of Chabad and Hillel, mostly during my formal interviews with the Rabbi and Dean Lewis, as well as online primary source documents. I largely relied on the Rabbi and Dean Lewis for my archival research because they both represent the most authoritative subjects in both of their organizations – the Rabbi, of course, founded his chapter of Chabad in Lancaster fourteen years ago and Dean Lewis has served as Hillel adviser since 1991.

Theory

For this thesis, I draw on classical theorists in the anthropology of religion such as Victor Turner, and E.E. Evans Pritchard's study of *The Nuer*. Turner's studies of liminality allow for critical analysis of how time and space are conceptualized on this campus, and his argument that liminality is illusory is an especially important aspect of how both students' and leaders' the negotiate time and space. Evans-Pritchard's studies of Nuer conceptualizations of time and space elucidates how the Nuer have very different sense of time, at least in the formal Western sense, yet that sense in reality exists. It is negotiated differently than in the West, and by, for instance, Western college students. College students, such as those who attend Chabad and Hillel, must navigate the busyness of collegiate life; many maintain complex and organized schedules in order to preserve a sense of order.

In addition to these classical theorists, Durkheim's theories about cosmology are extremely useful to this thesis. Durkheim argues that all religious groups have a cosmology, and that cosmology more often than not is transformed into an agenda, in this case by practioners. For Durkheim, "there is no religion that is not both a cosmology and a speculation about the divine," and moreover, "religion has not merely enriched a human intellect already formed but in fact has helped form it" (Durkheim 1912: 8). Stressing the centrality of religion in the formation of human society, for Durkheim, religion does not merely encompass belief in God – although that is certainly a major part – but also constitutes a way of thinking about the world, a cosmology. As such, cosmologies of Chabad and Hillel exemplify that latter statement, that these worldviews seek to shape the targets of their respective missions.

There are numerous contemporary anthropologists and sociologists who have done work in religious communities, not simply Jewish ones, who also provide informative perspectives for this paper. In addition, historians of Judaism in America, of whom there are many, provide the

basis for the historical parts of the first chapter. In the following chapters, I address how these organizations became missionaries, the processes through which they perform missionary work, and I contextualize the significance of Jewish campus missionary work within the larger question of survival.

Chapter I

Historical Context and Cosmological Constructions of Chabad and Hillel

“As you know, these shabbos meals would not be possible without donors. One of them asked me today, ‘Rabbi, why do students come to Shabbos at Chabad?’ I have several ideas, but I’m hoping you can help me answer this question. Why do you come to Chabad?” The Rabbi posed this question one Shabbat in February. It was the first meal with the Goldsteins I attended in the spring semester. Truthfully, I was happy to be back, not only because I craved the lovely vegetarian options due to my recent conversion to such a lifestyle, but because ethnographic moments like these seem to occur so frequently in Chabad.

Students, without a thought, answered.

“It reminds me of home. It makes me miss my family less,” Amelia, a sophomore, replied. This is fascinating because of Amelia’s secular Jewish identity. She represents the pull of the ideal family that the Goldsteins perform, and the disconnect between the religiosity of Chabad and the type of Judaism she practices at home. The liminality evident in Chabad’s space suggests that students such as Amelia crave the comforts of home even if the liminal space only slightly resembles what it means to be “home.” It is an approximation engendered by the in-betweenness of college itself -- feelings of home are real and material, yet for most students, merely embody a resemblance to the domestic.

I met Amelia through Chabad; a biology major, it is likely I never would have crossed paths with her otherwise. One of the more attractive aspects of fieldwork at Chabad, as an ethnographer with no prior relationships with the regular attendees nor the Goldsteins themselves, is how such a reality does not seem to matter. The notion that Chabad embodies the familial seemingly runs counter to that contention -- family life can, and arguably, should be intimate, in every sense of the word. The familial is comfortable, and intrinsically familiar. It was clear that though I had little interaction with students outside the liminal space, within those

walls, friendships are significant while simultaneously meaningless. In other words, prior relationships are unnecessary, though not entirely detrimental, to enjoyment at Chabad. Amelia told me how this provided comfort -- that she did not need, nor desire, friends to engage in Jewish practice, as she had few such individuals at Hillel.

In my formal interview with Amelia, she expressed that Chabad has helped her rediscover her Jewish identity; though still largely secular and cultural more than “religious,” her time at Chabad led to an intense period of self-reflection; on identity, what it means to be Jewish in America, and how she reconciles her confusion about God with the Goldsteins’ concrete feelings about God’s role in their lives. This introspection did not always take place in the context of conversations with the Goldsteins; quite the opposite, in fact. As Turner states in *Betwixt and Between*, “Liminality may be partly described as a stage of reflection,” in which questions are encouraged, confusion welcomed (Turner 1964: 53). Amelia’s religious confusion manifested through observing such dedication -- the Goldsteins, in other words, are effective performers of devotion to practice. In her words, that the Goldsteins live such a radically different life from her own, with a largely dissimilar theology, has allowed her to reflect on her beliefs:

It’s amazing to me. It’s amazing that someone can be so sure. I know some people find that threatening, or intimidating, like those people go to Hillel instead. I get that, I guess, but I don’t at the same time. In many ways, I’m more confused than ever about God and Judaism, but I love that confusion. I want to think about what it means to be Jewish. There are so many different ways. I never feel like the Rabbi expects me to be a certain way, or believe a certain thing.

During Shabbat dinners, Amelia consistently exudes happiness, yet also seems to possess a quiet, introspective side. She remains an intensely good listener; especially as others’ minds seem to wander during the Rabbi’s *d’var torah* (commentary), Amelia quite clearly relishes the time for thoughtful learning. She told me as much: “You know, other people see Shabbat as

break from school. And I still do, it's just, I need this structure. At Chabad, I'm so relaxed, and I always know I'll leave with new insight." That something can be structured yet relaxing may seem paradoxical, yet it makes sense in the context of the atmosphere at Chabad, where the illusion of unstructured time is evidently by design. This will be further addressed in chapter three, regarding space and time at Chabad and Hillel. Lubavitchers emphasize Jewish learning as part of outreach work. Amelia's inquisitive nature renders her popular with the Goldsteins, although truly, the Rabbi and Rabbitzen approach every student with warmth and a sincere desire to socialize with, and even nurture, them.



Some other informants expressed those feelings of intense confusion during formal interviews, and admittedly, not everyone is as comfortable with listlessness as Amelia. Contrasted with the Goldsteins, who never shared with me a period of shaken faith, young individuals such as Amelia present as impressionable subjects. Feeling as if faith eludes one, as if one needs a life preserver, fits neatly into the metaphor of "drowning in assimilation," prominently featured on Chabad's website. Confusion and disorientation are trademarks of drowning. Indeed, Menachem Schneerson himself, for reasons I will assert below, would describe such diaspora Jews as confused, or even lost. Drowning evokes an internal, self-inflicted violence that burning, for instance, does not.

The significance of the drowning metaphor, as opposed to burning, is paramount. The fifth and sixth Rebbes, the predecessors of Schneerson, emerged as powerful voices during and immediately after the destruction wrought by the Holocaust -- particularly of Ashkenazic Jewish communities that Chabad-Lubavitch counts itself apart. Of course, European Jews, including women and children, were famously burned in the crematoriums at various concentration camps

simply because of their Jewish identities. Burning is a slow, painful, often external form of violence -- for Jews, burning in the diaspora represents a powerful metaphor for danger and a crucial aspect of the formulation of post-Holocaust collective memory. It also evokes irreparable damage -- or, if such damage is repairable, its marks remain permanent and visible.

Drowning is certainly a form of trauma, yet complete recovery remains plausible and the trauma itself is temporary. Indeed, unlike burning, where one's life is irrevocably changed provided one survives, drowning evokes an internal listlessness in which a foreign entity may save the drowning person -- relatively easily, and without damage. Flooding and water represent powerful metaphors within Judaism, as well, most famously embodied by the story of Noah. The flood symbolizes destruction as well as rebirth. In this paradigm, Noah represents the savior of the earth and its animal inhabitants. Unlike the story of Noah, Chabad posits that those who are drowning, though drowning for a reason, may be saved. The embrace of Torah Judaism, an ideal that Chabad preaches, constitutes the ark; assimilation, the sea through which Jews are drowning.



In every Chabad house -- not just the one at Franklin and Marshall -- a picture of Menachem Schneerson, or, as he is affectionately known, "The Rebbe," features prominently on the wall. The legacy of Schneerson persists as Chabad-Lubavitch constantly grows and expands, and is evident in how he is revered by Lubavitcher practitioners, particularly *shluchim* like the Goldsteins, and the language surrounding him, as he relayed to me in my formal interview with the Rabbi: "We do all of this for the Rebbe." The Rabbi describes a debt, to Schneerson's wisdom, and to his awe-inspiring teachings. Sacrificing oneself requires extensive motivation, and for many *shluchim* such as the Goldsteins, Schneerson embodies that motivation.

In her book, *Unchosen* (2006), about the hidden lives of Satmar Hasidic rebels,

sociologist Hella Winston specifically states why she did not want to work with Lubavitcher Hasidim. She writes that, “Groups that are trying to attract potential members, even those with the purest of intentions, are not apt to expose such people to anything that might undermine this goal” (Winston 2006: ix). Winston describes the particular missionization process that Lubavitchers engage in: they capture many *ba’alei teshuva* (returned to devout), to vastly expand their ranks. It is true that, in my conversations with the Rabbi and his wife, they were careful not to say anything that would cause me to question the intentions of their organization. They do provide a safe space for religious and comparatively non-religious Jews to gather, eat, and pray. That alone renders Chabad a vital resource for young Jews on the Franklin & Marshall campus.

Stephanie Wellen, author of *Mystics, Mavericks, and Merrymakers: An Intimate Journey among Hasidic Girls* (2003), states that the messianic fervor experienced by Chabadniks is rooted in “their sincere belief that every act of kindness a Jew performs, each Judaic ritual she completes, brings the Messiah that much closer to earthly revelation” (Wellen 2003: 2). Missionary work in Chabad is thus an essential part of welcoming the Messiah because it causes Jews to engage in acts of kindness and to participate in core Judaic ritual, or, at the very least, it affords Jews an opportunity to do so. As Winston stated, because so many of these Lubavitcher Hasidim are *ba’alei teshuva*, their commitment to hastening the messianic period is unwavering. After all, families like the Goldsteins are rooted in place—permanently—they may not leave Lancaster unless they leave Chabad and their mission entirely.

Another scholar, Sue Fishkoff, writes extensively about the Lubavitcher missionary operation in *The Rebbe’s Army* (2003), paying particular attention to Chabad’s on-campus operations. According to Fishkoff, Lubavitcher Hasidim seek to subvert the misconceptions about their missionization practices—they are not merely trying to convert every secular Jew to

Orthodoxy. Instead, they are far more interested in fostering a love of Judaism, and affording Jews the sacred opportunity to perform Mitzvot (Fishkoff 2003: 24). Every Mitzvah, as Wellen noted in her text, brings the coming of the Messiah closer in this theology. However, while saying that Chabad simply engages in messianism is far too simplistic, as the motivations undergirding missionization cannot be divorced from the work they do on college campuses and everywhere else.

Several scholars therefore frame religious outreach work, *kiruv*, in messianic terms. Yet Fishkoff cautions her readers to view the *shluchim*, as Chabad couples are known, as human beings first and foremost. They are fulfilling a religious duty, and their lives are often difficult because of that duty. Curbing assimilation, or, in Chabad's terms, making secular Jews discover and fall in love with Torah life, means making deep sacrifices. Although they can conceivably leave if a placement is deemed by the *shluchim* unfit, it would be nearly unheard of to do so (Fishkoff 2003: 15). The *shluchim* are, for all intents and purposes, stuck where they have been placed. Practically this means that expressing frustration over something like the remoteness of Lancaster relative to the location of their children's school (Baltimore) can only be done in private. Chabad-Lubavitch does not provide a stipend to its *shluchim*; the Goldsteins are thus forced to subsidize their outreach work entirely on their own, through education and outside donors, many of who are not Orthodox. The Rabbi relayed to me that such non-Lubavitch individuals appreciate the presence of Chabad on campus. There are various reasons for this: some donors attended Chabad in their youths, others simply see Chabad as a recognizable vessel through which young Jews remain Jewish. This sacrifice is implicitly public, because it was made abundantly clear to me as an ethnographer that while life in Lancaster is deeply fulfilling for the *shluchim*, it is not always easy. Sacrifice is expected, and must be willingly given, and

shluchim like the Goldsteins understand as much.



Menachem Mendel Schneerson escaped the Holocaust and immigrated to the United States with his wife from the Ukraine (then a part of Russia) in 1941. His upbringing was unusual among Hasidic Rebbes in that he strayed outside the insular confines of the Eastern European *shtetls* and sought schooling in secular religious institutions. This, in turn, offered him a “unique perspective” through which to build his *kiruv* efforts. In other words, his early interactions with the secular world gave him insight into how to construct his movement (Ehrlich 2004: 37). Schneerson is unquestionably the most influential Chabad Rebbe; however, he did not invent the messianic theology that undergirds Chabad’s outreach efforts. He remains the most successful Rabbi of this tradition for implementing missionary work, and this could be attributed to his life experience working, and living, among the non-observant world.

The ideological justification for the performative aspects of Chabad’s ritual practice lies with Schneerson; *shluchim* owe any success to his vision. After all, he spearheaded the expansion efforts of Chabad, transforming it from an insular Hasidic community into the largest Jewish organization for outreach in the world. The legacy of The Rebbe, and every Chabad adherent’s personal relationship to that legacy, informs how Chabad conducts its *kiruv* efforts. Indeed, The Rebbe exists for many as the physical manifestation of their Messianic theology and aspirations. His followers and emissaries “have become avatars of religion and outspoken protectors of some sort of obvious Jewish identity” (Heilman and Friedman 2010: 12). The Rebbe, in other words, continues to exist through them because they are fulfilling a messianic vision by outwardly appearing Jewish. In other words, performative aspects such as dress, strict adherence to ritual, and other external markers of Jewish practice communicates Chabad’s

messianic vision. Engaging in authentic Jewish practice, even on a small—scale—for instance, one Mitzvah a day—brings Jews one step closer to fulfilling the coming of the Messiah.

Whether Schneerson is actually the Messiah is disputed, even among Chabadniks, and in some circles the notion is considered deeply heterodox (Ehrlich 2004: 229). There is nonetheless a cult of personality surrounding him. In particular, the language that is used by The Rabbi, as noted above, to describe him suggests an aura of divinity. On Chabad International’s own website, Schneerson is glowingly described as “the most phenomenal Jewish personality of modern times” (Chabad International). As Rabbi Goldstein relayed to me, The Rabbi’s religious devotion is to God (*hashem*); however, he also describes his commitment to the mission of Schneerson with fevered intensity. Some Lubavitchers regard Schneerson as “one of the greatest men who ever lived,” and Rabbi Goldstein certainly speaks of The Rebbe in exactly those terms (Ehrlich 2004: 21).

The origins of Schneerson’s messianic movement and outreach work may be found in the preachings of the fifth and sixth Lubavitcher Rebbes. The fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe established the first Chabad yeshiva, which formed the basis for the vast expansion of Chabad parochial schools under Schneerson. In addition, The Fifth Rebbe sent the first Chabad emissaries to remote communities (2004: 25). Throughout the Holocaust, the sixth Rebbe preached an intense messianic theology as a response to the atrocities carried out by Hitler, even going so far as to predict the coming of the Messiah in 1943 (2004: 28). This prophesy, however, constituted an ideological failure and threatened to fracture the burgeoning the Chabad movement more than the Holocaust already had succeeded in doing. Schneerson succeeded in uniting the movement principally through his charismatic personality. The Rabbi speaks of Schneerson’s inspiring manner of speech: “He could convince anyone of anything.” It is true, that if one analyzes video

of Schneerson, even taken late in his life, that he commands a crowd with immense skill. This is evidence of his infectious charisma.



Schneerson has certainly proved to be an enigmatic character for Chabad adherents such as the Goldsteins. For most Hasidim, the position of Rebbe shifts with each Rebbe's demise. The Lubavitchers also refer to each Rebbe serially by "First, second, third," and so on. However, the title of *The Rebbe* is reserved for Schneerson, especially as he is considered by many to be the final Rebbe. For Lubavitcher Hasidim, "The Rebbe" is representative of something greater. Schneerson is "The Rebbe," and whether or not he himself is the Messiah, it is known that he founded a religious movement designed to welcome the Messiah's arrival. In our formal interview, The Rebbetzen seemed rather reluctant to concretely establish Schneerson's messianic qualities, telling me that, "He is so inspiring, but of course, I can't say for certain if he's the *mosiach*. I suppose you would just know if he was." Such an admission constitutes a departure from the certitude that defines the Goldsteins. Trafficking in these ideological gray areas seems to make the Rebbetzen uncomfortable, yet she remains steadfast in the mission of Chabad.

Jewish conceptualizations of the Messiah tend to be quite diverse. Most Jews, at least in the mainstream sects, reject the notion of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This intrinsic divide between Christianity and Judaism contributed to European Jewish persecution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and well before. Such hostile attitudes still exist today, at least to a certain extent (Novenson 2009: 366). Some Jews, including ones to whom I spoke over the course of my research, argue that multiple Messiahs exist, even one for every generation. These Messiahs do not, as previously argued, bring about peace and social equilibrium; they do, however, strongly influence the lives of those around them. The Messiahs are inconspicuous in

that they blend into society and act as forces of good on a smaller scale than the grand biblical proclamations of Messianic ascendance. In that paradigm, Schneerson could certainly function as a Messiah – arguing for the expansion of Torah life, saving Jews from “drowning in assimilation,” constitutes a worthy ideal. For many Lubavitchers, his reforms exemplify the myriad of good deeds Schneerson wished to accomplish in his life.

The Lubavitcher Hasidim in the mid-1950’s, led by The Rebbe, asserted that the coming of the Messiah was close. Schneerson, proclaiming that the coming of *Moshiach* was near, specifically referred to the end of the messianic period (Friedman and Heilman 2010: 197). Schneerson’s ideas, therefore, constitute a real departure from the theories described above. I would argue that this set of proclamations contributed to the Messianic status now attributed to Schneerson. This mythological status arose after The Rebbe’s death, and was furthered by a faction of his followers. Just as I noted above, *shluchim* such as the Goldsteins speak of duty and sacrifice as a fulfillment of a debt – to someone with greater aspirations than their own. Indeed, though the Rabbi never admitted to me that he believes in Schneerson’s messianic qualities completely, it is clear that The Rebbe represents something otherworldly, even mythological; or else, sacrifice would be fruitless, and without reason.

Perhaps this occurred because messianism “demands a complete repudiation of the world as it is, placing its hope in a future whose realization can only be brought about by the destruction of the old order” (Rabinbach 1985: 81). Schneerson certainly could be described as obsessed with the Messiah. The aggressive expansion of Schneerson’s organization during his life, and certainly after his death, is consistent with this characterization. With his death, his followers sought not to destroy the Judaism’s perceived (by Lubavitcher standards) old, secular order, but to shift and alter it enough so the *moshiach* truly would come.

The vast majority of *shluchim* believe that the *kiruv* they conduct is designed to bring about peace on earth, by drawing non-religious Jews closer to Torah life, and saving Jews who are “drowning in assimilation,” which constitutes the Jewish version of salvation theology. At least, this is one way we can see parallels between the missionary work done by Christian missionaries and the *kiruv* of the *shluchim*, particularly in the American context. The language surrounding the mission—“saving” the comparatively non-religious—is remarkably similar. However, Lubavitchers would argue that they are not saving Jews from damnation by proselytizing; rather, they are bringing about the coming of the Messiah by doing so. Saving Jews from drowning in assimilation once again represents a powerful metaphor of sparing the world of suffering. Unlike the Noah story, however, the *moshiach* presumably creates peace on earth, and not destruction, after all.

Indeed, one might describe Chabad houses as a liminal space between the culmination of Jewish Messianic visions and what can be conceived of as reality, or, as described above, the present, secular order. The performative nature of ritual in Chabad—the smiling young children, the seemingly perfect marriage, the assumption that religiosity exists even when students are not present—owes much to the vision of Menachem Schneerson. To perform a proper Judaism for students, and other comparatively non-observant Chabad attendees, is designed to bring about the era of the Messiah because it is a *mitzvah* (commandment), and doing *mitzvot*, according to Chabad’s theology, contributes to the coming of the *moshiach*. Under Schneerson’s vision, Jewish identity must be contingent on performing Judaism in a specific way – adherence to *mitzvot* and Torah law. This is why Jewish learning is emphasized at Franklin and Marshall’s Chabad – “lunch and learn,” an activity in which commensality is combined with learning about Torah, is evidence of this. Torah is taught in a very specific way – how Judaism should appear.

Towards the end of his life, Schneerson frequently engaged in campaigns designed to strictly define Jewish identity. Friedman and Heilman write that that the Rebbe justified his intrusion occasional intrusion into religious matters in Israel because “redemption was at stake, and the question ‘who is a Jew’ was central to his messianic plan” (Friedman and Heilman 2010: 225). It is clear from this episode that the Rebbe believed in a right and wrong way to practice Judaism. In addition, it suggests that the coming of the *moshiach*, even if it brought peace on earth, would in Schneerson’s view, privilege Jews and a certain kind of Jew, at that.

Most students who attend Chabad do not inquire about the Goldsteins’ relationship with The Rebbe or the Rabbi’s views of Schneerson’s messianic vision. As Victor Turner notes about liminality in other contexts:

The subject of passage ritual is, in the liminal period, structurally, if not physically, “invisible.” As members of a society, most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture (Turner 1967: 95).

These visitors are “conditioned to see” and are drawn to the evocative, familial quality of Chabad’s ritual construction. In other words, visitors are taught to believe that this is authentic, traditional way to practice Judaism, because of the cultural imagination surrounding Hasidim. Lubavitchers, once defined by their insularity, construct this cultural imagination based on a perception that they are the successors of European Judaism nearly wiped out in the Holocaust. As a result, a fetishization of their practices – such as dress – often surrounds them. Though insularity no longer characterizes Chabad, some aspects of performative aspects of authenticity remain, particularly in how they approach liturgy. The definition of a distinct Ashkenazic Jewish identity evokes post-Holocaust collective memory, even for those who are not Lubavitcher Jews. As a result, the provides evidence of the cultural fascination with Chabad, and perhaps a justification for the frequent material support given to Chabad by those not affiliated.

My larger argument here suggests that Chabad and Hillel attempt to construct an idealized American Judaism, yet the Lubavitcher Hasidim are far more ambitious than that. They conceive of the ritual spaces they create for young Jews as places where time and space are seemingly nonexistent; the ritual is meant to be immersive, and it binds Jews (and any non-Jews who may attend) to the Judaism that is proper. Liminality engenders the centrality of Judaism and Jewish practice, evidenced by youth untethering from technology, if only for the evening. This is particularly true at Chabad, as it functions between the secular world (outside) and the religious world (inside). Amelia relishes the opportunity to let go, to seemingly remove herself from the outside: “I love how I feel like I’m really *there* when I’m there.” Those who enter Chabad are cognizant of who remains in control, and how one must navigate the religious strictures that the Goldsteins engage in, even if they are wholly separate from the student’s own systems of practice.

While I may have described Chabad’s motivations as something insidious above, that is not my intention. As I noted in the introduction, Durkheim’s theorizing about the cosmology of – religion—that cosmologies clarify the most abstract aspects of the universe, and that is where their power is derived—suggests that every religious movement has a particular cosmology and the religion’s adherents act in relation to it. Thus, it is not insidious to note that there is an agenda accompanying the more public face of Chabad’s missionary work.

Indeed, as Turner argues, “a normal man acts abnormally because he is obedient to tribal tradition, not out of disobedience to it” (Turner 1967: 100). “Obedience” to Schneerson’s vision, and even more so, belief in that vision’s power, is central to the distinct ritual practices of the Lubavitcher Hasidim. Schneerson, as noted above, became embroiled in defining Jewish identity towards the end of his life. As Chabad “also define[s] success in such a way that [it] can perform

successful outreach without changing any beliefs or life-habits of another Jew,” it might seem inaccurate to suggest that Lubavitchers blindly adhere to Schneerson’s vision. Rather, we should consider that Schneerson’s followers are entirely “obedient” to his cosmological principles. Owing to the backlash the Rebbe received when he waded into cultural and religious affairs, which was considerable, the movement adapted and changed. One sees, then, that Schneerson’s movement remains obedient to his legacy and experience. In other words, the missionary practices of the present day are still informed and shaped by the decisions that the Rebbe made while he was alive.



One does not perpetuate Orthodoxy, or become Orthodox, without considerable discipline. The Goldsteins, for example, are quite isolated in Lancaster. The Orthodox *shul* struggles to obtain a *minyan* each week, and as mentioned previously, the Rabbi shuttles his children back and forth from Lancaster to Baltimore because that city is where the family finds the closest acceptable schooling for ultra-Orthodox Jews. Although Turner’s conceptualization of “obedience” here if taken literally, Turner’s thesis applies. Turner refers to “obedience” to tradition to explain “abnormal” behavior, suggesting that the actions in the liminal state might be considered outside the norm. The performance of authentic Judaism might fit into this mold, that is, outside what is normal. The negotiation between the isolation of this Chabad family and their desire to remain devout Jews, at least in the sense that Chabad defines devotion, means that obedience is central to the successful implementation of Schneerson’s ideology. In framing *shluchim* as indebted to the legacy of The Rebbe, obedience makes perfect sense. From Lancaster, Pennsylvania to Montana and Dubai, Chabad establishes schools, houses of worship, and Rabbis in remote places without adequate Jewish support guaranteed for those who

undertake the work (Chabad International), in the spirit of sacrifice. Indeed, perhaps the biggest sacrifice *shluchim* like the Goldsteins make is the lack of material support to carry out their duties. Moreover, many are raised in communities such as Baltimore, with adequate communal support systems. Recently, Chabad held “Chinese Shabbat” in the Center rather than the usual dinner in the Goldsteins’ home. The Rebbetzen could not attend because, absent of an *eruv* (the boundary that extends the private domain of households to public areas, and allows for carrying on Shabbat), she could not carry her youngest daughter to the Center. In Baltimore, such a dilemma would be moot because it is surrounded by an *eruv*. Of course, the Goldsteins do not live in Baltimore, and that is a conscious choice they make to negotiate the strictures of religion in the absence of a like-minded community.

I would like to suggest that Schneerson is a symbol, in the manner described by Turner, and one that catalyzes the ritual practice that embodies Chabad. Turner describes such ritual action as “prescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine” (Turner 1967: 19). Yet if Chabad’s ritual is indeed performative, does it fit nicely Turner’s conceptualization? Chabad emphasizes a public demonstration of religious practice that Hillel does not. They are simulacra, as mentioned above, of what a Jewish family or community should look like. Their ritual service is very particular in its use of language and the Ashkenazi dialect of Hebrew. Students are expected to believe that Chabad is consistently devout, even when its proponents leave the liminal space. Yet there are some rituals to which students are not privy; this creates a dichotomy between public and private religion for the visitors in the liminal space. Chabad performs the familial – the notion that Chabad is “like family” frequently serves as the justification for weekly attendance. However, certain rituals, such as those performed in intimate spaces like a child’s bedroom (for instance, the twice daily *shema*, recited in the morning and

evening) are private. One assumes that these rituals take place, particularly if one has background in Jewish practice. Nevertheless, they are intentionally shielded from public view. Examples such as these demonstrate that the familial is performative – that the Goldsteins only show that which they wish the students to see. Students are not invited to witness such religious intimacies.

Thus, the question remains, if Lubavitcher ritual is performative, can there conceivably be a distinction between public and private religion? Students are “conditioned,” as Turner argues, to believe only what they see of cultural and religious practice; yet what they see is designed to exist beyond the liminal space. That which exists outside of the liminal space manifests in fond memories of the Torah Judaism that students practiced in college. Further, Chabad is clearly meant to feel extraordinary, a marker of its outsider status in the secular world; yet it also must remain inviting. All of these aspects encompass Chabad’s liminality, a space “in the realm of pure possibility” (Turner 1967: 97). The Goldsteins’ emphasis of carving out a niche within the subculture of Franklin and Marshall renders the Chabad house a space of “pure possibility,” where previous religious affiliations are irrelevant. What matters instead is that the particular form Judaism practiced at Chabad remains appealing, and idealized.

No students I spoke to reflect on the in-betweenness that Chabad’s ritual embodies, at least not in explicit terms; instead, they stress how it “feels like home.” As Amelia noted, Chabad may only be an approximation of home – and indeed, constitutes as such in a religious sense for many Chabad attendees -- yet college students like Amelia constantly seek out spaces and institutions that bear resemblance to home. Thus “home” exists as a liminal construct in college especially, where individuals enter that space and search for meaning in the reminders. These aspects of Chabad make home seem less distant, such as the home-cooked meal, the

domesticity, and the rituals that may differ slightly from those of their parents, though only slightly.

Many of the students who attend Chabad self-identify as progressive Jews, yet spend virtually every Friday in a liminal space defined by Orthodoxy and Conservatism. This is a boon for the Goldsteins, though I am sure they wish to have more men attend their Shabbat dinners than presently do. Progressive Judaism is a product of diaspora – it combines political progressivism and religious practice, with an emphasis on social justice, especially as this particular form of Judaism relates to the situation in Israel and Palestine. The Lubavitcher Hasidic are staunch Zionists, or at least the Goldsteins are; their Messianic vision does not preclude support for Israel, like some Hasidim. It might seem paradoxical, then, that so many progressive Jews find comfort in the Chabad house, because progressive and ultra-Orthodox Judaism are so diametrically different. Indeed, it would seem that they have inherently incompatible worldviews.

In the Chabad house, Judaism is practiced a particular way, yet the intrinsic conservatism of that practice is muddled for the progressive visitors by the warm, familial relationships, the wooden floors, and the homey and snug spatial layout of the home. Chabad is reminiscent of home for these students, even if the Goldsteins dress differently, use a different prayer book, have Ashkenazi accents and phrasing, among other departures from assimilated Judaism's norms.



Hillel has a somewhat less storied history than Chabad. The first Hillel chapter was founded at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1923, on the advice of a Christian professor distressed that his students had little to no knowledge of the Old Testament (University

of Illinois Hillel). It has grown exponentially since then, and generally dominates Jewish life on campus, whether there is a Chabad house present or not. Hillel counts itself a part of the Conservative movement and does profess any messianic vision that drives the work it engages in.

In the year that I conducted my ethnographic research, Franklin and Marshall's Hillel was in the midst of celebrating its 50th anniversary. I was given access to pictures and stories from alumni, some old, some more recent. Hillel has certainly changed over half a century, most starkly as demonstrated in the relatively new –building—constructed in 2008 with the generous donation of the alumnus who lends the building its name, the Klehr Center. The building serves as a study space as well as Hillel's home for events and Shabbat dinners. The Klehr Center itself is situated on College Avenue, quite close to campus such that it feels part of a cohesive whole. Hillel, in contrast to Chabad, maintains its distinct ties to campus life.

There is clearly a cosmology propagated by Hillel. That worldview is not too dissimilar from Chabad's, although without the messianism, of course. Indeed, there is a distinct push for anti-assimilationist Judaism in Hillel; Hillel simply has its own way of expressing, and realizing, this mission. On the cover of its annual digital magazine, *College Guide*, Hillel International lists three main topics that one would find inside: "Spotlighting the Arts," "Jews of Color," and "Best of Birthright Israel: Hillel." These subjects reflect a diversity for which Hillel strives. The topics also suggest a belief that there is not one way to look and act Jewish. In stressing the idea that Judaism is heterogeneous, Hillel tries to construct an inclusive Judaism, as will be made evident in the next chapter, in a discussion of how egalitarianism is part of an effort to be gender inclusive.

The histories of these two organizations directly inform their respective missionary

processes. History itself is integral to the construction of an ideology. The Chabad and Hillel at Franklin and Marshall do not exist in a vacuum; rather, they are part of larger organizations whose projects they claim allegiance to. These conceptualizations of a Jewish future dictate how systems of thought and practice are performed in these spaces. Performativity is thus linked to ideological considerations and the types of communal Judaism Chabad and Hillel wish to construct.

Chapter II

Gender Roles and Gender Relations: Performativity and Ritual at Chabad and Hillel

At each Chabad dinner, gender relations, and conceptualizations of domesticity, are clearly communicated through the structure of commensality. The meal, entirely prepared by the Rebbetzen, features traditional Ashkenazi fare, except on themed Shabbats, such as Chinese Shabbat mentioned above. Soup is served, preceding the buffet-style entrée service. The options always consist of chicken-based, homemade matzo ball soup, and a rotating option for vegetarians. Every week, the Rabbi notably thanks his wife for preparing the delicious meal; significantly, at the end of the meal, every attendee thanks God through the recitation of *birkat hamazon*.

A similar pattern emerges each week; after hand washing – a ritual in which all attendees are expected to partake – and the recitation of *Kiddush* (blessing over wine) and *motzi* (blessing over challah) led by the Rabbi, dinner service begins. Without pause, the Goldsteins' elder daughters, 13 and 15, respectively, understand that they must assist their mother in service. As she grows older, the Goldsteins' 6-year-old daughter will also learn what she must do in these situations; the Rebbetzen models domesticity so that her daughters may similarly engage in modeling for their own families. In addition, three or four female students -- as many as can conceivably fit in the Goldsteins' narrow kitchen – partake in this performance of domesticity.

The discussion of gender in this ethnography is deeply tied to performativity and the performative. Performativity is rooted in linguistic philosopher John L. Austin's conception of the performative as “not merely, saying something,” but in saying something, “doing something” (Austin 1965: 25). In other words, the performative suggests that one's words contain a web of underlying meanings, particularly those directly related to actions. Austin does not argue that all

language is performative; certain situations foster performativity, such as saying “I do” at a marriage ceremony (1965: 5). Other situations, Austin notes, are clearly *not* performative. For instance, statements that are simply “true or false” cannot be performative because they do not lead to an action (1965: 5). According to Austin, words that transform into meaning, and later action, are what constitutes his definition of performative language. I will argue below that, in performing gender roles and gender relations, Hillel and Chabad further their project of missionization, and missionization constitutes the action that renders gender performative in this context.

Beyond speech, performative behavior is actionable. Individuals who attend Chabad, particularly young women, understand the implicit expectations of women in that space. The Goldsteins do not merely model domesticity to their children; they also establish Chabad’s idealized version of familial relations. Such relations encompass clearly delineated gender roles, in which women inhabit the kitchen, and men command the dining room.

That said, Hillel and Chabad approach the performance of gender relations, and by extension, social relations, quite differently. There is a fundamental cosmological divide—between the embrace of Jewish egalitarianism, and the rejection of an assimilationist ideal. Hillel, of course, embodies the former, and that is enshrined in their enthusiastic propagation of egalitarianism as the right way to practice Judaism.

Many campus Hillels have a designated rabbi; Franklin and Marshall’s does not. This lack of a centralized religious authority in the group shifts the dynamic considerably, since religious leadership is carried out by various student leaders, the post-graduate fellow, Miriam, who received some training from Hillel in the field of religious education, and Dean Lewis. There is no specific religious figure at the heart of Hillel at Franklin and Marshall, which, of

course, is radically different from the Chabad house nearby.

Before the ritual begins at Hillel, a student, generally the religious chair, asks students that he or she knows are familiar with the ritual to lead certain aspects of the service – *kiddush* candle lighting, and *h'motzi*. Some take part in these ritual activities, while others balk at the thought of flubbing the prayers. This tradition may or may not be a function of the lack of a Hillel rabbi, but the lack means that all Jewish students are perceived to have access to a brief, small leadership role.

Those who choose to spend time at Hillel often speak to how Hillel feels “right” or “comfortable,” suggesting that Hillel aligns more closely to the assimilationist upbringing they are used to. Egalitarianism, or at the least the promise of it, is how gender relations are defined at Hillel. One student, considering the possibilities of ritual performance at Hillel, told me that, “I don’t know, I just feel more part of things, even though I never want to lead something. I like that I have the opportunity, if I want to.” The perceived equity is part of what brings students consistently through the door. Hillel is therefore often perceived by my informants as a social event, rather than as a religious one. This is in stark contrast to Chabad, and is informed by the gender norms inherent in each organization. The equitable division of leadership roles is deeply a part of the Hillel experience, and it shapes the atmosphere of Friday night ritual, particularly during dinner service.

As noted in chapter one, Hillel counts itself a part of the Conservative movement, although many of the attendees come from Reform backgrounds. Egalitarianism in Hillel, at least as the movement has evolved, is central to its mission. Yet it is emblematic of the liminality of Hillel’s space that the comforts of egalitarianism are unspoken reasons to attend. It was not ever made explicit to me that students attend Hillel because they crave the Judaism that is familiar to

them, that is, egalitarian. That egalitarianism was instead framed in implicit terms as “comfortable” or “approachable” Judaism, for instance.



The Chabad Rebbe and his wife, the Rebbitzin, have a loving, stable marriage. That much is true, and if it that was not the case, it would be a serious detriment to the Goldsteins’ missionary work. So, in some ways, the equitable nature of their partnership is not illusory. Yet there are clearly defined gender roles and gendered expectations within that family setting. When dinner service begins, the eldest Goldstein daughter, Ruth, who is only 15, helps her mother. Along with Ruth, three or four students always women assist. There is no expectation that Rabbi Goldstein should lend his assistance to his wife. This, after all, is her, and in the future, her daughters’ duty.

In her studies of a group of girls in an insular Hasidic sect in New York City -- arguably a much different setting than the one I observed at Franklin and Marshall -- anthropologist Ayala Fader examines the cultural conditioning of Hasidic women. She writes that Lubavitcher women, in particular, due to their contact with comparatively unobservant Jews, “have consistently engaged and rejected North American feminism” (Fader 2009: 25). Such a strain of feminism might take issue with the patriarchal gender roles inherent in the Chabad lifestyle. However, in the case of Rebbetzen Goldstein, it is far more complicated. As she told me,

I wasn’t born into this, of course. My family converted when I was in my late teens. We’re *ba’alei teshuva*. I understand what it’s like to not be this, but I wouldn’t say I’m doing anything I don’t want to do. It’s very rewarding. I love to cook, and I love to provide. There’s nothing else I’d want to be doing.

The Rebbitzin, like so many Chabadniks, was not born into the Lubavitcher culture. Indeed, some estimates claim that as many as 70% of Lubavitchers are *ba’alei teshuva*, which speaks to

the effectiveness of its missionary work (Levine 2003: 34). Thus, the Rebbetzen has a life experience that is almost entirely disconnected from those who were born into Chabad-Lubavitch, notably the experience of her children. Performing traditional gender roles, like the structure of commensality described above, not only serves as a model for students, but for her children, who were born into this subculture and are expected to perpetuate the family's legacy through their own, future families. For the Goldsteins' only son, age 10, such performative behaviors also constitute valuable lessons. Fader describes the domesticity inherent in Hasidic homes, saying that, "in the intimate space of the family, however, gender segregation can be more muted" (Fader 2009: 22). Boys frequently play with their younger siblings, which is evident in how doting and playful the Goldsteins' son is with his youngest sister, who is merely a baby. Thus, these expression of idealized domesticity function as lessons for girls as well as boys, who represent future Hasidic mothers and fathers.

These traditional gender roles may suggest an authenticity that is somewhat paradoxically comforting for progressive Jews. Students such as Jordan, a proud alumnus of socialist-Zionist summer camp, crave the familial nature of Chabad. Indeed, despite stark ideological and theological differences, Jordan expressed to me how comfortable they felt in Chabad, which subverted the previous misconceptions they held about Chabad's subculture. "The Goldsteins are great. I just couldn't with Hillel, the Israel stuff, and it just felt so cold and impersonal." The need for warmth, and resemblance to home, remains an important consideration for college students like Jordan. This is another example of Chabad's liminality: in between politics and religion, Chabad's domesticity exemplifies comfort for some; for others, particularly regular Hillel attendees, the patriarchal qualities of Chabad's gender relations manifest in an entirely opposite manner – students are made to feel uncomfortable. Many of the students who attend

Friday evening service at Chabad house self-identify as feminists, yet they do not perceive Chabad and these gendered performances as anti-feminist.

Considering the relationship they saw modeled in Chabad, Jordan told me, “I am a feminist, but I think that the Goldsteins have a good marriage. There’s nothing anti-woman about that.” Indeed, many students experience similar notions of a political disconnect when they confront Chabad. Feminism is a movement that advocates the subversion of patriarchal gender norms, and this may seem antithetical to the gender norms that permeate Chabad. However, even overtly feminist students who choose to spend time at Chabad do not object, and in fact, one informant forcefully denied my inquiry into whether the organization’s aims conflicted with her own values. One informant, Kimberly, asserted that, “No, of course not. Do you see how equal that marriage is? It’s better than my parents.” She further suggested that there are different ways to conceptualize egalitarianism, and the marriage modeled at Chabad need not look like Hillel’s version of gender relations to be considered equal under its own terms. This demonstrates a type of relativism, indeed, that Kimberly engages in. It begins with the idea that equality is not absolute, and one individual’s conceptualization of equity – egalitarianism, for instance – does not represent equality for those raised in different religious contexts.



Liminality fosters questions of what equality means for students who possess different definition of equity on the outside, in the secular world. In describing the relationship between liminality and performativity, Turner argues that:

Since liminal time is not controlled by the clock it is a time of enchantment when anything might, even should, happen... Liminality is full of potency and potentiality. It may also be full of experiment and play. There may be a play of ideas, a play of words, a play of symbols, a play of metaphors. In it, play's the thing (Turner 1979: 466).

It is not as if feminism dissipates for the young women who attend Chabad, in this liminal space; it is more complicated than that. When students enter Chabad, their background and their life experience may seem irrelevant because they are engaged in this state of play. For example, female students understand that they must assist in the domesticity performed at Chabad – though the Rebbetzen cooks every aspect of the meal, for effective commensality, young women function as willing actors in the project of familial domesticity. Helping serve guests encompasses the domestic, and in order to remain part of this extension of the familial, women must participate in the gender roles prescribed to them. Indeed, performativity is deeply rooted in liminality because in the liminal space, ideas, words, symbols, and metaphors turn meaning into action, as Austin theorized.

While performativity and intentionality are interconnected concepts, one group in Chabad's interactions certainly possesses more intentionality than the other. The Goldsteins embody performativity; the symbolism -- that model of familial stability -- of their marriage is intended to missionize. Most college students do not entertain the thought of marriage, thus, models of domesticity suggest a far more long-term project. Intended to represent the idealized Jewish marriage, it functions similarly to saving Jews drowning in assimilation by introducing Torah Judaism.

Emphasizing the familial is part of Jewish learning, or rather, learning how to be Jewish on Chabad's terms. Liminality fosters an in-betweenness between secularity – exemplified by feminism, frank sexuality, and perhaps even hookup culture – and the space of religiosity where gender relations are performed under the terms of the initiates, in this case, the Goldsteins. Turner characterizes the liminal as “that which is neither this nor that, and yet it is both,” much like the

choice to enter a space where gender is performed in such a way as to be wholly defined by intentionality and agency (Turner 1967: 99). College students are urged to engage in new experiences. For some Chabad students, such as Amelia and Jordan, participation in patriarchal notions of domesticity suggests that the familial need not resemble the relations they were taught at home, as children. Especially those female students who actively assist in performative domesticity find that warmth and intimacy, surprisingly, are perhaps better illustrated in patriarchal structures of gender that manifest at Chabad. Outside the liminal space, Amelia does not wish or desire a relationship structured in the same way as the Goldsteins, despite this, “they’re such a beautiful family.” Her admiration for the Goldsteins illustrates that the familial may not be entirely familiar, yet it is necessarily idealized.

As a result of the perception of idealized family, students are actors in this state of play, during which the Goldsteins claim ownership of time and space. This will be addressed further in chapter three, which concerns the proxemics of Jewish life on campus. In this way, the interplay between the Goldsteins and the students constitutes something like the negotiation between the initiate and the initiand. First advanced by Arnold van Gennep, who deeply influenced Turner’s work on the liminal, in the rite of passage, the initiand enters the liminal space of ritual, which must take place before he or she becomes an initiate. Anthropologist Bjorn Thomessan writes that van Gennep argues, “the formative experiences during liminality will prepare the initiand (and his/her cohort) to occupy a new social role or status, made public during the reintegration rituals” (Thomessan 2012: 322). Indeed, though in many ways the performance of gender serves to model domesticity for the Goldsteins’ children, it takes place in the context of commensality. Commensality acts as a major motivation to attend Chabad, and students enter the liminal space for such a purpose. They leave with “formative experiences,” with changing conceptions of

gender, and what “equality” means.



Dress is a particularly important way to differentiate the subcultural styles modeled in these two distinct communities. There are certain expectations surrounding dress when attending Friday night dinners at Hillel and Chabad, but these were almost always unremarked, unless I directly inquired of participants in the rituals. During my participant observation at Hillel, I noted that there is a peculiar mix of students who feel it necessary to dress up -- women, in a dress or skirt, or men, in slacks and a crisp shirt, but rarely in a suit and tie -- and those who attend in nothing more than the unisex T-shirt and jeans. I confess I engaged in the latter rather consistently. A representative of the other camp, Jamie, who is also the current Hillel president, told me that, “I just like to dress up. It feels good. How often do you get to dress up?” Yet there is no communal pressure to wear formal dress on Fridays at Hillel, and that is quite clearly by design. Modeling the comfortable, approachable Jewish lifestyle that Hillel is meant to represent requires allowing students to exercise freedom and agency over how they wish to be perceived, including through dress. After all, religion itself is an exercise in self-perception. Students who do choose to dress up at Hillel, such as Rachel, nonetheless acknowledge that it is a choice to do so. Some view Jewish practice as a formal exercise, and that formality can be performed through dress. Others define “comfortable Judaism” in such a way that engenders casual dress. Thus, religion has a symbiotic relationship with perception, and both religion and perception lead to performativity – this time, on the part of the students rather than the advisers.

As cultural historian Eric Silverman argues, many young Jews “experience Judaism as a negotiation for personal meaning, a broad cultural affiliation, and an ethical and aesthetic sensibility” (Silverman 2013: 185). The fluidity of expectations surrounding dress at Hillel

embodies this ideal. Silverman also notes, “ethnic Jews seek to reinvent Jewishness to fit, like a garment, their contemporary lifestyles and worldviews” (185). While not all Jews who attend Hillel would self-identify as cultural or ethnic Jews, which are increasingly popular terms of self-definition for young, assimilationist Jews, many to whom I spoke do identify as such. Silverman asserts that these younger Jews may be self-defined primarily by their desire for the freedom of religious expression. In other words, they wish to express their particular form of Judaism openly and on their own terms.

In not explicitly, or even implicitly, mandating a dress code, Hillel offers a model for the gender norms it wishes to perpetuate. One example of Hillel’s gender norms is the acceptability of uncovering. Women who attend Hillel will frequently wear dresses or skirts, hems of which fall above the knee. In addition, they may wear sleeveless dresses or blouses. Many female college students, as I have observed, wear this type of dress to class. Hillel clearly has no objection to the revelation of skin. I characterize this a gendered expectation because what such expectations manifest at Chabad quite differently, especially for women.

Chabad offers an implicit dogma that does mandate a specific dress code. The Goldsteins certainly model how students should dress, although there does not seem to be an expectation that students dress as modestly as they do. Before my first Shabbat, I sent a text to a friend whom I knew attended these dinners weekly, inquiring as to the dress code. She responded by saying, “I always wear something nice, that I would wear to synagogue. Definitely do not come in jeans and a T-shirt.” Nothing in my closet entirely fit the prescriptions of modesty I knew that the Goldsteins engage in. However, I closely approximated modest dress; a dark skirt, and crimson sweater. I do not have black tights, thus I substituted in white tights instead. Not every Chabad attendee necessarily wears dark clothing, and even the Goldsteins daughters do not strictly

adhere to such an unspoken rule. However, the clear communal expectation of modest dress permeates Chabad. Beyond students, The Rebbetzen wears a *sheitel* (wig), Rabbi Goldstein wears the traditional black and white suit with a *tallit katan* (*katan*, meaning small), which serves as a constant reminder of God's presence, as does his *yarmulke* (head covering). Aside from the two younger daughters, who are five and one-years-old, the children and the parents generally dress in very dark, modest clothing, with some exceptions for the older daughters (though only occasionally).

Students who attend Chabad do not wear stockings, long skirts and shirts with sleeves around campus, where I frequently happen upon them. However, as they enter a space that is acutely not their own, yet paradoxically feels like home, they choose to act respectfully, as guests do. This requires conforming to the wishes of the hosts. Thus, gender relations and norms are clearly defined by the Goldsteins, as one sees how women model their own clothing practices in the liminal space based on the wishes of their hosts. Thus, Chabad seems to engender conformity, in dress most especially. It is a choice to spend time at Chabad, and though the Rabbi and his family engage in some direct outreach efforts on campus, they practice passive missionization through their constant representation of what is "properly" Jewish. Nonetheless, the choice to enter than liminal space means that the initiates determine how the ritual will function, and what is good and proper in the liminal.

Modesty, or *tzniut*, is formally practiced by Lubavitcher women. *Tzniut* refers to a larger set of cultural practices as well as to a dress code (Hume 2013: 57). The sheitel, long skirts and sleeves, and dark clothing are all part of *tzniut*. The practice of *tzniut* at Chabad is also another way that an idealized Judaism is modeled for students, and how implicit religious expectations capture the attention of progressive Jews who spend time in Chabad houses. Such students

adhere to modesty conventions because they enjoy different aspects of the liminality offered by Chabad, and are willing to sacrifice, albeit briefly, a part of their secular experience to enter this space. College fosters in-betweenness, anyway, and Chabad offers its attendees a community of religious practice that is between here (their relatively non-observant upbringing) and there (the supposedly more authentic Judaism of Orthodoxy). In order to adjust to this reality of in-betweenness one must accept the rules and regulations of that space, however implicit. As I mentioned in chapter one, this is one way in which the Chabad experience remains extraordinary. In college, many individuals, especially in leisure time, relish the moments in which they are free from the strictures of authority. Yet students willingly enter the Chabad space, in which authority is quite clearly defined. Amelia seeks structure as she discovers her identity; she craves the intellectual and emotional comfort she gains from Chabad. Further, few students see themselves as conforming to patriarchy. Instead, they acknowledge that entering Chabad is a choice, with which they can disengage at any time.



At the heart of these stark differences in gender norms and gender relations among Hillel and Chabad lies two radically different visions for curbing assimilation. Hillel seeks to provide an approachable, egalitarian Judaism in which some adaptation to the larger, secular culture is necessary for the Jewish religion to survive in diaspora. If that means normalizing gender to fit the upbringing and favored activist positions of many college students, some sacrifice is permissible. In fact, this constitutes an essential part of the missionization project in which Hillel engages.

One can adopt what is perceived as the most authentic form of Judaism, by those who either describe Chabad as “too Jewish,” or those who find comfort in the fact that is “more

Jewish than Hillel,” parallel opinions shared to me by those who attend Hillel and Chabad respectively. That may involve gender norms perceived as traditional, and still be a Jewish-American. Simply put, the gender relations intrinsic to Chabad are modeled as conducive to the formation of the ideal Jewish family.

Though students are not expected to ruminate on the Jewish future, it is true that these organizations are influencing the construction of such a future based on what Judaism should look like. While Hillel stresses the communal aspects of Judaism, Chabad engages with the familial. Both perform idealized Judaism under those frameworks. Hillel establishes the communal as the best path to survival; Jewish families are not nonexistent in that paradigm, however, it is clear Hillel’s energies must be spent in the interest of perpetuating of a unified egalitarian community. Chabad, on the other hand, in the gender roles it performs, emphasizes that the future is familial.

Gender relations neatly reflect the missionary projects that both these organizations engage in. They function as a manifestation of the idealized Judaism perpetuated by Chabad and Hillel. Though both dictate that Judaism is a communal exercise, “community” possesses a multiplicity of meanings – in particular, social or familial. Those meanings are constantly modeled and performed in these spaces. In negotiating the idealized Jewish future, these organizations address gender through performance.

Chapter III

Proxemics: Between Here and There at Chabad and Hillel

During my first Hillel Shabbat I attended in the fall, I was admittedly quite nervous. Although I had many close, personal relationships with regular attendees, I knew I could not sit at a table with them. Hillel is an intensely communal atmosphere, yet the dining room is constructed in a rather truncated way. Space is demarcated along lines of familiar sociality. Individuals sit with friends, unless such friends are non-existent.

In truth, I had many fruitful conversations that evening, and even gained an informant. Although at the time I was conducting participant observation under the guise of a different project, with a different research question, the notes from that evening remain useful. Rachel, a Jewish senior, told me: “Hillel is great. I like that I know it’s always here. Judaism should be reliable, comfortable, approachable. That’s what Hillel is.” To Rachel, Hillel represents a reprieve from her exceedingly busy life at Franklin and Marshall. Highly involved in a myriad of extra-curricular activities, Rachel is a recognizable member of the class of 2017. At Hillel, she largely blends in with her usual cohort. This, I have noted, is by design. She is not faceless nor nameless, per se, yet her socialization practices remain constant from week to week. Arguably, one should frame a community as a collective sum of its parts rather as an assemblage of individuals, each with distinct identities. Hillel embodies such a notion. Indeed, inasmuch as socialization practices feel truncated, to an extent, Hillel portrays the ideal Judaism as a communal exercise.

In many ways, Rachel’s description of Hillel reminds one of a good friend. Although Hillel is an institution, it also encompasses a community made up of students and advisers. Rachel speaks fondly of Hillel because the building’s warm, evocative color scheme, the aroma

of Challah mixed with roasted chicken, and the couches where one could easily fall asleep are examples of how Hillel is, “comfortable, reliable, and approachable.” Further, in contrast to Chabad, which she describes as, “way too Jewish,” Hillel feels part of the larger college community. To spend time in the Klehr Center is a negotiation of one’s secular and Jewish identity, provided one is Jewish. Yet because of its prominent place within the structure of space and geography on Franklin and Marshall’s campus, it is never much of an imposition to take valuable time to engage in the ritual.

Proxemics, at its most basic level, concerns the negotiation of time and space. The concept has its roots in linguistics. The term was first coined by anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who characterizes proxemics as “the interrelated observations and theories of man’s use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture” (Hall 1966: 1). This means that an individual’s, or community’s, use and negotiation of space and time contains an array of meanings that cannot simply be expressed through words. Like Austin’s conceptualization of performativity as a means through which to obtain deeper meaning behind words or phrases, Hall argues that space and time, as well, are categories of cultural “elaboration” that must be understood separately from other linguistic categories. Hall states that a given culture’s use of space is “multisensory” (Hall 1966: xi).

I argue that it is the multisensory dynamics of these liminal spaces that allow performativity to flourish, and that these spaces must be conceptualized based on their liminality. Once again, commensality remains the best example of the liminal experience. Students formulate preferences for each space largely based on foodways – food’s evocative nature, its relationship to religious practice, and its propensity for community building. Food itself is intrinsically multisensory, taste, smell, touch (in some cases), all factor into the enjoyment of

food. As commensality represents the greatest motivation for so many Jewish (and non-Jewish) students to engage in ritual, food allows these organizations to construct makeshift homes. Students feel comfortable in spaces that resemble home, and Chabad and Hillel intentionally structures space around the constructions of home they wish to convey – and their particular missionization practices.

Concentric (spatial) circles are one element of proxemics that also have their roots in the visual mapping out of linguistic principles. First conceived by linguistic anthropologist Braj Kachru in his work, *The Alchemy of English* (1990), the concentric circle model of language represents the relative statuses of cultural insiders and outsiders, and demonstrates how cultures change and adapt. We can also use this spatial mapping of concentric social circles on Franklin and Marshall's campus to represent Jewish practice spatially and temporally. Hillel and Chabad clearly construct space based on how each organization performs the idealized Judaism. If one examines the demarcation of each respective dining room, one sees how proxemics and commensality once again intersect. Hillel's dining room is constructed based on a series of tables, in which a given table does not generally interact with another. Students sit with friends, and rarely stray from that dynamic. Food is to be enjoyed socially. In other words, Hillel's dining room performs the communal Judaism it wishes to portray as idealized.

Chabad's single elongated table demonstrates the that Goldsteins performance of the familial. Though conversations diverge during the Shabbat meal, one can conceivably navigate multiple discussions based on how space is demarcated, as I did frequently. The Rabbi sits at the head of table, and the Rebbetzen towards the middle. As the head of a Hasidic household, the Rabbi commands the space that he shares with his family and his guests. In this space he enjoys authority, yet the space maintains religious intimacy. In this way, Chabad argues that family

centric-commensality is key to an idealized Jewish future.



For the purposes of the thesis, I will also draw on the theories of E.E. Evans-Pritchard, particularly on chapter four of *The Nuer* (1940), entitled “Time and Space.” Indeed, though published over seventy years ago, Evans-Pritchard’s conceptualization of time and space is deeply relevant to my work. Time and space, for Evans-Pritchard, are invariably intertwined. For instance, Jewish college students at F&M are constantly trying to find a balance between too little time, and too much space. By that I mean that spaces to engage in ritual are readily available especially for those who frequent Hillel and Chabad. Choices of where to spend Friday evening abound. Yet time is considerably more elusive. One cannot engage in organized religious practice without the time to participate.

The concentric circles of religious practice at Franklin and Marshall suggest some of the ways that Jewish practice is performative. To spend time at Chabad and Hillel is to announce, essentially, that one has chosen to be Jewish *and* religious. However, this is problematic. In linguistics, the concentric circle model places “native speakers at *core*,” thus privileging their perspectives, and their choices (Rindal 2013:8). At Franklin and Marshall, those who perform a sincere religiosity exist at the core of the Jewish circles. Secularism is prohibited in the liminal spaces of Hillel and Chabad, even if one identifies as a cultural or ethnic Jew, because the choice to engage in ritual is voluntary and intentional. One becomes a “native speaker” of Judaism when entering the liminal space of Friday services.

Evans-Pritchard asserts that the Nuer are “fortunate” because their points of reference regarding time are “mainly the activities themselves, which are generally of a leisurely character” (Evans-Pritchard 1940: 103). He portrays Nuer people as largely carefree, with little

regard for the temporal stressors of European life with which he is familiar. No one would describe the average Franklin and Marshall college student's life as "leisurely," though – far from it. One informant in this study was adamant that there is a culture of busyness at the college where "leisure time," is virtually non-existent. In fact, there is a cultural ethos of competition, with many students seeking to claim the mantle of busiest Franklin and Marshall student. This means that choosing to spend leisure time is a privilege, and even a somewhat stress-inducing calculation in and of itself.

The anthropology of time was, before Evans-Pritchard, advanced by Durkheim (1912), who asserts that "what the category of time expresses is the time common to the group, a social time, so to speak" (Durkheim 1912: 11). Durkheim argues that time is to be understood structurally, and that appears to be true at Franklin and Marshall. Social time manifests in the five-day school week, in which students attend classes and generally, most regular extracurricular meetings are held. The weekend, understood as Friday, Saturday, and most of Sunday, engenders unstructured time. For many students, the weekend represents freedom from responsibilities, yet still must remain largely structured. Indeed, while nearly every student attendee contends with the same concept of western time -- a 24-hour day, 60 minutes in one hour, 60 seconds in one minute -- how each student negotiates his/her own time is quite varied. Shabbat dinners take place on Fridays, and the choice to attend is a highly intentional one. This student problem with time is made apparent in the use of liminal, Jewish space, since each visitor has consciously chosen to enter that space on Friday evenings and to spend his/her allotted time there.

There is a stark difference between this negotiation of time and space with respect to Chabad and Hillel. Students at Hillel, though they are far more numerous, rarely stay for *birkat*

hamazon (grace after meals), or *benching*, which is the colloquial term. There is little to no communal pressure to do so, although the president will occasionally ask his or her friends to stay. *Birkat hamazon* is generally not a significant part of the average American Conservative or Reform household's Shabbat dinner ritual, and this is particularly the case for Reform Jews, the largest Jewish denomination in the United States (Zamore 2011: 267). Certainly, while Hillel engages with the ritual, it does not ask students to sacrifice time to make space for *birkat hamazon*. Unlike the sensory processes that permeate Chabad's religio-spatial configuration, where ritual is a consistent, ongoing part of every Friday evening, Hillel's ritual has a concrete start and end point. In this way, Hillel does not require the sacrifice of time that Chabad does.



The Goldsteins possess a strong sense of place, yet they also must contend with a great deal of in-betweenness in their everyday lives. Lancaster, Pennsylvania is where they live and work, yet they shuttle their children to Baltimore, where most of their family lives, and they do this each week day, so that their children can receive proper Jewish schooling. While the Rabbi and his wife met in Pittsburgh, they do not maintain roots there. Most of their extended family has moved to Baltimore, a city (as noted above) with a significant Orthodox Jewish population. They never complain, although the Rabbi will occasionally express his exhaustion when, in those rare moments, he makes a mistake in prayer. Lancaster has a significant Jewish population, though the Orthodox synagogue, which is not the Chabad house but the local Lancaster congregation, struggles to obtain a *minyán* (the ten men required for communal prayer). In many ways, they are socially isolated by their strict religious practice, while at the same time, the Goldsteins are surrounded by those who enjoy engaging in devout Judaism with them. The latter

group, unfortunately, leaves after four years, to be replaced by another cohort of Jewish youth seeking religious identification.

Space and time are therefore important challenges for the Rabbi and his family, just as they are for the students who frequent the Goldstein home weekly. Recognizing this kinship gives students a sense of obligation to stay for hours after the meal. This family has made sacrifices, about which they are open (perhaps by design), in order to maintain their home and mission in Lancaster. The temporal commitment that students make when they enter the Chabad house is fostered by knowledge about and their affirmation of the Goldsteins' temporal (and spatial) sacrifice. One knows that life is not easy for the Goldsteins in Lancaster, and one therefore agrees to treat their time and space with respect.

As an example, Chabad creates Facebook events two weeks before each Shabbat, to gauge event interest and to promote them. Under the description of the event, the Goldsteins note that Chabad has "a strict come and go as you please policy." Though this is true to an extent, time and space are clearly structured around ritual and commensality. Students understand that this is merely a suggestion, though the negotiation of their time is not difficult due to the students' enjoyment of Chabad.

As I relayed in chapter two, the Rabbi's question as to why students attend Chabad elicited numerous answers, among them, "It feels like I'm going off-campus but I'm still basically on-campus. I like that." Here again, the construction of a makeshift home for students constitute an integral part of Chabad's missionization practices. The extraordinary experience of Chabad lies in its foundation of domesticity, which can only be realized through its outsider status. Yet it must, at the same time, feel somewhat part of the college experience. Going home represents an imposition, provided one does not live in Lancaster. Spaces such as Chabad, which

are liminal constructions of home, illustrate the symbiotic relationship between space and time.



Another way we might see the assimilationist compromises of Friday worship at Hillel is in how it tolerates the use of electronics, although Dean Lewis does try to discourage students from using their cell phones on Friday nights. Conceding this point might seem insignificant; however, on a campus -- or rather in a world -- where youth are tethered to their phones, allowing students to stay connected is yet another negotiation of time and space. Hillel is a space where the use of electronic devices on Friday nights is condoned, if not preferred, thus rendering student time “less wasted” by student standards. On the other hand, among those attending Friday night services at Hillel, most do not use their cell phones. In a sanctuary space, such a practice is still deemed to be sacrilegious. Rachel told me that, “Yeah, I’d never use my phone in synagogue.” If one observes the dining room during rituals, few, if any, students play on their cellphones. However, during the meal, the dynamic shifts considerably.

Because the use of electronics is strictly forbidden at Chabad due to *shomer Shabbos* (observance of Shabbat) rules, the sense of time during these dinners more closely mirrors Evans-Pritchard’s discussion of Nuer temporality. In his ethnography, Evans-Pritchard asserts that:

We may conclude that Nuer system of time-reckoning with the annual cycle and parts of the cycle is a series of conceptualizations of natural changes, and that the selection of points of reference is a determined by the significance which these natural changes have for human activities. (Evans Pritchard 1940:104).

For the Nuer, time seems like a natural process, and they do not adhere to anything like the strict timekeeping system that Americans, and particularly college students, do. Each society, however, has its own conception of Durkheimian social time, and Chabad, too, has its own temporal modalities. Students leave Chabad when it seems right to leave, not based on an exact

schedule. Leaving feels like a natural part of the ritual process, especially when discussion has waned, and when yawning begins to become frequent and highly contagious.

To put away one's cellphone, to cross a busy street, to stay for hours at a Friday night dinner, all suggests considerable effort, especially for college students. This is not to paint most college students as lazy, yet it is certainly a reality that to attend Chabad requires more effort (or perceived effort) than to attend Hillel. Those who make such ritual choices understand this, and it informs their decision-making. Perceived effort is intertwined with perceived commitment for Jewish students looking to confirm their religious and social identities on Friday evenings; one must make the effort to attend Chabad, which is perceived as more religious than Hillel, thus mirroring religious commitment. Effort, in other words, is one way to negotiate and measure one's religious and social identity, and whether those two are linked or not. There is no tangible reward for effort, except in the sense that students may assert ownership over their own temporal and spatial choices. Any reward, then, is internalized by the visitor. Students may feel as if they engaged in valuable rather than wasted time – as the culture of busyness permeates Franklin and Marshall, the perception that no time should be wasted proves very powerful.

Religion, after all, is—among other things—a performative exercise in self-perception. Identity, surely, can be related to one's upbringing or one's family, and college provides ample opportunity to question and redefine that identity over four years. Those four liminal years are itself an expression of the impact of space and time on constructing an identity. For instance, two of the most active members of Chabad were raised in a progressive Jewish tradition, attending the socialist Zionist Habonim Dror camps and practicing Reconstructionist and Reform Judaism. Neither of them is intent on converting to Hasidic Judaism; nonetheless, they firmly reject the atmosphere at Hillel in favor of Chabad. In fact, Chabad's religiosity, which is stark and evident,

does not bother them, but neither is it the particular attraction of Chabad for them. Instead, they both appreciate the familial nature of Shabbat dinners, which evokes fond memories of home. I found myself feeling the same emotive draw as I conducted ethnographic work. Arguably, this is another factor in the liminal atmosphere of college itself, where kin ties are redefined and altered in a span of four years, or sometimes more. Students still crave the intimacy of family, even if the performance of family is radically different from their own, as they begin to build new models for familial and social life through their college experience.

Inherent in all of these dichotomies is the notion of competition. Evans-Pritchard asserts that, “Tribal sentiment rests as much on opposition to other tribes, as on common name [and] common territory” (Evans Pritchard 1940:120). It is not clear what students who frequent one organization more than the other would do if Chabad or Hillel did not exist on this campus. It is clear that many Jewish students define their religious identity in relation to the spaces of organized Judaism on this campus, whether they neatly assimilate with each organization’s religious or political goals or not. When I asked about this, students with a devotion to either group would deride the rival organization. Chabad students, I noted in my interviews, would engage in this competitive behavior more stridently than their counterparts at Hillel. Indeed, it seems the nature of Chabad’s place on this campus, including how they are dwarfed in size compared to Hillel, along with the popular perception of Chabad as a missionary organization causes Chabad attendees to engage in sometimes aggressive, competitive commentary.

Students have thus internalized, at least to a degree, these organizations’ attempts to define the right way to practice Judaism, or to be the ideal Jew. Authentic Judaism is not necessarily Orthodox, but it is perceived to be grounded in strong familial ties and traditional, home-cooked Ashkenazi food – at least according to students at Chabad. Neither is performed in

quite the same way at Hillel, where the food is catered, aside from the Challah which is always a tad underdone. Yet the Hillel atmosphere is warm, and Friday nights teem with the aroma of roasted chicken and baked Challah. This, in turn, is quite evocative of home. That Judaism is best practiced among family and friends, it seems, is a guiding principle in Jewish college missionary work. Indeed, outreach workers at both Hillel and Chabad provide safe, comforting spaces to practice Judaism, although in ways particular to each.

The principle of sacred space is an ancient one in Judaism. Anthropologist Seth Kunin, analyzing the notion of God's place in the world, argues that Jews have throughout history laid out the geography of synagogues and other sacred spaces to fit their conceptualization of God's place in the universe (Kunin 1998: 3). While the gathering places discussed in this thesis -- the Klehr Center and the Chabad House -- are not explicitly houses of worship, they nonetheless reflect the goals of ritual space in Jewish history. Hillel's layout fosters a sense of separation, by design, and acts as a social space as much as a religious one. Chabad, in modeling family and a ritual authenticity, constructs a more intimate space -- one elongated table at which Jews eat and worship. If one returns to the question of commensality in missionary work, it is the greatest illustration of how missionization manifests, and sometimes succeeds, at Franklin and Marshall. This demarcation of space further exemplifies each organization's conception of the Jewish future -- one that is social or religious, both, or more one than the other.

Negotiating time and space is integral in the project of defining the Jewish future, an exercise I have described throughout this thesis. One sees the manifestation of structures of time and space as indicators of the type of idealized Judaism that Chabad and Hillel wish to perpetuate. In Hillel's case, communal Judaism is necessarily social; in Chabad's, it is familial. Though there remains potential for overlap in these paradigms, it is clear that these organizations

seek to construct an particular Jewish future distinct from one another.

Conclusion

Just as I was finishing this project, Jordan approached me on Hartman Green. They wanted to let me know that they left Chabad a few weeks earlier because they, “just don’t agree with their values.” This was a fascinating development, largely because they expressed to me in our formal interview that such value judgments were irrelevant to their enjoyment of Chabad. In fact, to them, the Goldsteins once seemed to subvert the stereotypes surrounding Hasidic Judaism and its patriarchal attitudes towards gender.

College is a time of personal growth, and for many consists of a constant negotiation of identity -- religious, cultural, intellectual, among others. Jordan thought they had found home, yet what this demonstrates is that makeshift homes such as Chabad (the familial) and Hillel (the social) are merely constructs. They may function as homes only if one believes the performance. They work well, as liminal spaces between home and away, for many individuals who I spoke to. For some, like Jordan, however, the liminal space disintegrates. What remains is uncomfortable confusion, rather the prescription made for comfortable confusion upon entering the liminal space. Jordan told me they are still searching for a place to practice Judaism, but they are no longer satisfied with the performance of religious confusion that takes place at Chabad.

It is true that merely two years ago, I would have expressed similar sentiments to Jordan - still in search of a religious identity, and rather negative about the religion in which I was raised, such a project would have been at best unproductive. This project, however, took place in a different context. Initially, it tested the limits of my own comfort with Judaism and Jewish practice. The conscious choice to disengage from Jewish life at Franklin and Marshall constituted an integral part of my identity as a college student, as a young person living away from home. Nonetheless, I soon found that I enjoyed attending these dinners. Even as I no longer

needed to conduct formal participant observation in Spring 2017, I continued to take part in Shabbat observances almost weekly. Chabad and Hillel have become something to look forward to, reliable spaces of commensality and commonality. Even if my religious views remain largely unchanged, my views about religious practitioners, whether they identify as cultural or practicing Jews, have altered considerably.

In the final appendix of his ethnography, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, E.E. Evans-Pritchard writes an ode to fieldwork:

It used to be said, and perhaps still is, that the anthropologist goes into the field with preconceived ideas about the nature of primitive societies and that his observations are directed by theoretical bias, as though this were a vice and not a virtue. Everybody goes to a primitive people with preconceived ideas but, as Malinowski used to point out, whereas the layman's are uninformed, usually prejudiced the anthropologists are scientific, at any rate in the sense that they are based on a very considerable body of accumulated and sifted knowledge. If he did not go with preconceptions he would not know what and how to observe (Evans-Pritchard 1937: 241).

I certainly went into this project with preconceptions. Whatever I expected to learn, think and feel about the individuals I studied, the project has become an important test of my own positionality. I learned a lot about my informants, however, I learned much more about what it means to research, and how research has the potential for radical reinterpretation of a researcher's own identity. Evans-Pritchard is cognizant of how fieldwork changes the anthropologist, even on a small scale.

To conclude, one could argue that both of these organizations successfully missionized me; as a committed non-practitioner, I entered these spaces and came out at least somewhat more committed. As religious identities possess such potential for fluidity, missionary organizations such as Chabad and Hillel must count a small progression such as my own as a victory. After all,

I will certainly graduate with fond memories of the Judaism I practiced in college, if only for a year.

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