

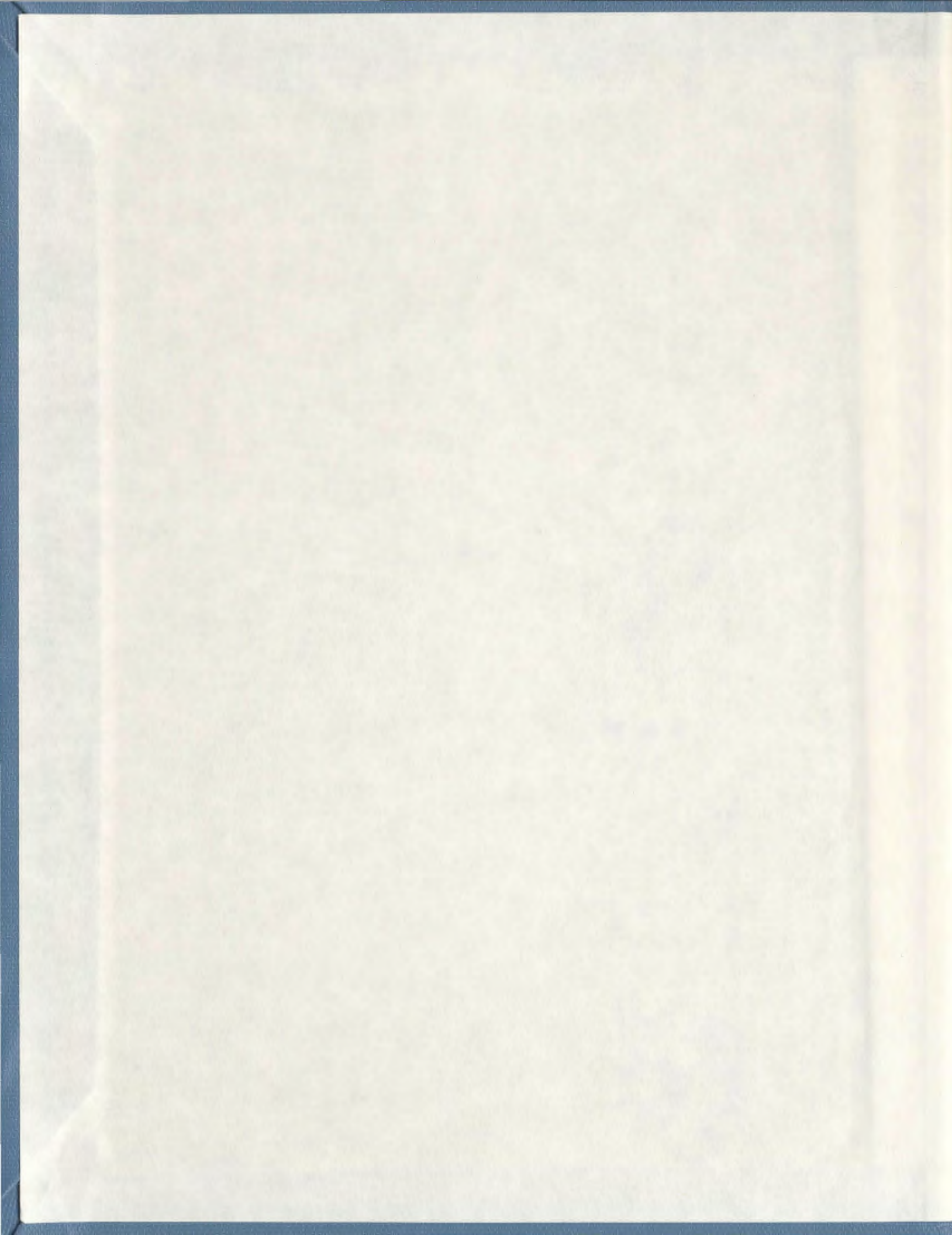
SACRED SPACES: ALTERNATIVE RELIGION AND
HEALING IN GLASTONBURY, ENGLAND

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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HANNAH MARY DROWN



**Sacred Spaces: Alternative Religion and Healing
in Glastonbury, England**

by

Hannah Mary Drown

A thesis submitted to the
School of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the
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**Sacred Spaces: Alternative Religion and Healing
in Glastonbury, England** by Hannah Drown (B.Sc.)

Abstract

From April 26 to July 27 1999 I conducted field research in Glastonbury England. During this period, I studied the manifestation of alternative religious beliefs and the provision of alternative healing in the context of seven alternative Bed and Breakfast accommodations. The following thesis probes issues relating to the manifestation of the alternative identity of these establishments, the characteristics of alternative healing in the B&B's, and the nature of health and healing as understood by proprietors of these accommodations. Further, I examine the importance of the physical, spiritual and symbolic landscape of Glastonbury to the practice of healing. I also discuss the nature of the town as a centre of 'alternative' pilgrimage in relation to the model proposed by anthropologist Victor Turner. Lastly, I explore the nature of tourism in Glastonbury and the tensions which exist between the alternative spiritual world of the B&B proprietors and the secular world represented by the Tourist Board.

Acknowledgments

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I am grateful to Stefanie, Matthew and Myrah for their friendship - may we meet again someday. A special thanks to Edward, Phillip, Dean, Mary and Arthur for giving me a vacation from Glastonbury when it was desperately needed. Many thanks to Dr. Mark Tate who steered my course, and to the Department of Anthropology and the School of Graduate Studies for their generous financial support.

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Introduction

The Setting

Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon these clouded hills
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark satanic mills?

-William Blake

It was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon by the time I arrived in Glastonbury after five hours of air travel and several buses which took me along winding country roads bordered by stone walls and hedgerows, past sloping green pastures dotted with sheep, and through villages nestled in the lush, green countryside of England. For the next three months this picturesque agricultural and tourist supported town of nine thousand five hundred people would be my home and the setting for my field work. During this time, I intended to study the ways in which alternative¹ or complementary healing was practiced in the context of several Bed and Breakfast accommodations operated by proprietors who

¹ "Alternative health care" refers to the "vast range of approaches to prevention and treatment of disease that are not accepted by the regular or conventional medical profession" (Crellin, Andersen and Connor 1997:3). It is often an eclectic collection of rituals, symbols, and healing practices borrowed from diverse sources, "guided by a central underlying idea, such as the nature and use of healing energy" held as an alternative to the biomedical model (McGuire 1993:148-149). Such practices may be considered "marginal" in terms of social and political acceptance, and include aromatherapy, acupuncture, herbalism, homeopathy, and naturopathy (Crellin et al 1997:3). In Britain, the term "complementary medicine" is favoured in recognition of "patients' diverse responses to ill-health and desires for choices", and it also indicates that users of alternative medicine "rarely avoid regular medicine altogether" (1997:5).

were themselves healers or therapists. In this section of my introduction, I present the setting of my fieldwork as I experienced it the day of my arrival, April 26, 1999.

After depositing my gear in my first Bed and Breakfast accommodation, The Grail Quest, I resolved to begin my fieldwork in Glastonbury with a walk. Without my heavy backpack I was better able to appreciate the scenic beauty of the town. I followed a road uphill which soon became a lane with steep banks down which the roots of huge trees crawled strangely like wax which had been poured then hardened. The golden light of early spring was flooding through the clouds and below the lane spread pastures where cows grazed and made use of a rambling old house for their barn. The other side of the lane was alternately bordered by thick hedgerows and an orchard of apple trees in blossom. Beyond the spreading pastures lay the town of Glastonbury, with the spire of St. John the Baptist Anglican church standing head and shoulders above all. Further along, the lane turned to begin its descent towards the town, and I caught sight of Glastonbury Tor for the first time since my arrival, a strange conical hill rising five hundred and twenty five feet above the pastures where sheep grazed idyllically. There were people winding their way slowly to the top where the remains of a fourteenth century church and a spectacular view of the countryside could be accessed via two footpaths. They looked tiny and insignificant, ants creeping up the spine of a huge sleeping dragon lying just below the surface of the earth. Glastonbury Tor is by far the most dramatic landmark of this area of Somerset, and it became a central focus of my research.

I turned onto Chilkwell Street, and wandered past the entrance of Chalice Well Gardens, believed by some to be the resting place of the Holy Grail after it was brought to England by Jesus' uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, and, before Christianity arrived in the British Isles, the location of a Druid² college of wisdom.³ Chilkwell was a long, narrow road which carried much more traffic than it had obviously been designed for. It was lined with old houses, an interesting looking pub, and a large office building which offered sheepskin and wool products at factory prices. I turned left at the Rural Life Museum, a well-advertised tourist attraction which presents the history of life in Glastonbury's past. Two ominous peels of thunder later, big drops of water began to darken the sidewalk. Within seconds the skies opened and rain fell in sheets; the drenching warm spring rain which paints the countryside of England its characteristic green. I hurried on, turning right onto Magdalene Street where the ruins of Glastonbury's great Benedictine Abbey loomed above well-manicured grounds separated from the road by great mediaeval style wooden gates. I passed the Town Hall and several shops before Magdalene Street curved right and became the High Street where bakeries, butchers, banks and churches supplied the needs of Glastonbury's population. These buildings were visibly older, although some had undergone modernizing renovations.

² One of an order of priests or teachers of an ancient Celtic religion (Funk and Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary: Revised edition 1976)

³ The landscape of Glastonbury has been richly imbued with myths and legends. It is believed by many to be the site of the first Christian Church founded in AD 63 by Jesus' uncle, Joseph of Arimathea and therefore the "cradle of English Christianity" (Bowman 1993:29). In addition, many believe that Jesus himself set foot on its soil, brought by his uncle during one of the latter's many trading expeditions to Europe. As well, the famous legend that King Arthur may have been "taken after his last battle" to Glastonbury (Bowman 1993:29) links the town to Avalon itself and makes it a centre for Arthurian legends. Indeed, in 1190 the Benedictine Monks claim to have discovered the bodies of the famous King and his Queen Guenevere resting beneath the Abbey grounds.

At the corner of Magdalene and High Street was a wide paved area surrounding a tall monument. This was Market Cross, a remnant of Glastonbury's once bustling market economy. Although an in-depth historical analysis of Glastonbury's economic development is beyond the scope of this thesis, I became interested in why Glastonbury developed as it did - a market town turned major New Age centre of England. Bowman (1993:53) suggests that "the development of 'alternative' Glastonbury took off in the late 1970's and was to some extent connected with local economic conditions". A railway, which had passed through several Somerset towns, was closed in the late 1960's and in the 1980's a cattle market closed along with a tannery business, "the largest local employer"[1993:53]. This closure "made a large percentage of its workforce redundant, with the result that in the early 1980's there was a lot of property for sale in the town" (1993:53) Perhaps the collapse of Glastonbury's traditional economy left a void which was filled by the alternative shops encouraged by the growing tourism industry. Although alternative individuals described by my informants as "hippies" came to Glastonbury in the 1960's, it seemed that most "New Age" shops and businesses opened in the 1970's.

One side of the paved area of Market Cross was bordered by the Glastonbury Backpacker's hostel - an old inn which had been renovated to accommodate a steady flow of wandering youths. On summer evenings music blasted from the open windows and the building throbbed with activity. Next to the Backpackers was the George and Pilgrim's Pub - a wonderful old building had been constructed during the hey day of pilgrimage to the Abbey. On the opposite side of the road was the office and healing centre of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, the NFSH. According to a

promotional brochure, this organization is a registered charity “acknowledged to be the principal organization for spiritual healing in the United Kingdom”. Founded in 1955, it boasts a membership of more than seven thousand members who work either individually or in other healing centres. Further up the street I passed the Glastonbury Tourist Information Centre, located in one of Glastonbury's oldest and most historic buildings. On either side of the High Street an eclectic collection of shops displayed every conceivable item from candles to clothing - jewelry, books, musical instruments, specialty foods, and souvenirs.

I briefly explored the "Glastonbury Experience", a small courtyard reached from the High Street via a short alley. Several shops and alternative health related facilities were located in this area, including a colour healing⁴ and aromatherapy centre and the "Goddess and the Green Man" which sold an incredible diversity of jewelry, pottery, candles, and other distinctly "New Age" wares. The upper stories of these old buildings were divided into offices for the Isle of Avalon Foundation, a charitable organization which purported "to draw together the teachings and facilities offered in Glastonbury into a unified whole, make the unique energies and services of Glastonbury more readily available to the visitor, facilitate the processes of transformation individually and collectively" and to "project to a wide public a clear view of Glastonbury".⁵ Also located

⁴ A system of healing based on the use of colours related to regions of the body.

⁵ The Isle of Avalon Foundation grew out of the Library of Avalon established in 1988 by a group of Glastonbury residents who, according to a promotional leaflet for the Library, “decided to recreate, in a modern sense, the great Library which existed in medieval times at Glastonbury Abbey”. In 1991, the Library of Avalon became known as the University of Avalon, a spiritual college believed by some to be a successor to the Druidic college which supposedly existed in pre-Christian times on the grounds of the present-day Chalice Well gardens.

above the courtyard of the Glastonbury Experience were three rooms which could be hired at the Isle of Avalon Foundation for a multitude of purposes such as seminars, workshops, and healing sessions.

To the right of the entrance to the Glastonbury Experience was the Bridget Healing Centre, an alternative health centre "dedicated to the healing, regenerative power and wisdom of Bridget, the Ancient Fire Goddess of the British Isles" (Promotional brochure). This centre offered "a wide range of therapies, guidance, healing and information from qualified and experienced practitioners in a safe and confidential setting". A large bulletin board next to the centre was covered with posters and brochures advertising seminars and workshops in Glastonbury, many to do with healing. Weekly meditation and healing groups, Tai Chi classes, and religious groups met regularly in the rooms of the Glastonbury Experience.

Further up the road the church of St. John the Baptist stood separated from the other shops by a wrought iron gate and a patchy lawn peppered with tombstones. I passed a grocery store and an organic vegetable shop, a laundromat, numerous gift shops, pubs, two take-out restaurants, a United Reform church, a hair studio, a Woolworth's department store and a discount bargain shop. By the time I reached The Grail Quest B&B the sun had reemerged but despite its warmth I felt a chill of apprehension as I became suddenly and painfully aware that I was standing at the threshold of the unknown. My fieldwork in Glastonbury had begun.

The New Age in Glastonbury

I visited Glastonbury as a tourist for the first time in 1991, then in 1994 and again in 1998. It was during these visits that I became fascinated by the eclectic nature of spirituality and healing in this picturesque, rural town described as “the epicentre of the New Age movement in Britain” (Reed 1990). The studies conducted by Marion Bowman (1993) and Ruth Prince and David Riches (1999) provide excellent overviews of the New Age Movement in Glastonbury. While Bowman acknowledges that the New Age Movement is “notoriously difficult to pin down” in terms of a definition, it is her conclusion that “many who live in or visit Glastonbury...feel themselves to be part of the New Age” (1993:37) and express views and beliefs characteristic of this movement, including a holistic view of the earth and healing⁶.

'Holism' is an important aspect of complementary and alternative health care and “very much part of the New Age rhetoric: against the mainstream, New Agers assert their identity by celebrating what they call the ‘holistic vision’, ‘holistic living’, ‘holistic health’” (Prince and Riches 1999:169). It is “a biological concept which assumes that living systems, as whole systems, take on a new dynamic that is more than and different

⁶ The New Age movement emerged as an identifiable religious and cultural movement in the Western World during the 1980's, although its roots can be traced to the 1960's as a “striking outgrowth of the widespread social change” of this era (MacDonald 1995:31). It is a combination of the continuation or “revival” of ancient occult-metaphysical beliefs (Melton 1990) and “invented tradition” (MacDonald 1995:31) and is perhaps better described as a network which incorporates rituals and beliefs from a wide variety of different spiritual traditions ranging from Christianity to Wicca, Tibetan Buddhism to Native American Shamanism (MacDonald 1995:34). Such “doctrinal tolerance” (Prince and Riches 1999:171) is characteristic of the New Age. It is largely an individualistic movement and lacks a central organization or institution. New Age beliefs centre around an intense experience of personal transformation (Melton 1990), a powerful spiritual reawakening which guides life from that point on. The idea of transformation is central to the movement – transformation of the Earth and of the Self, brought about by a ‘universal energy’ which supposedly sustains all of existence.

from its parts"(Melton 1994:xix). The human being is viewed instead as "a total system of body, mind and spirit"(1994:xix). A holistic perspective was common in the discourse of several proprietors-healers with whom I stayed, and will be discussed in chapter two .

Healing and concern for physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being is an integral part of New Age philosophy. In defining "New Age medicine", we may say that it is "a holistic approach to health that believes wellness is regulated by some form of spiritual and mystical energy" (Kyle 1995:155) Both holistic health care and the New Age movement endorse a natural, non-medicinal approach to treating the body, and a recognition that the mind and the body are intimately connected. To treat one, you must treat the other. Illness occurs when the individual falls out of harmony with their spirituality and the environment – for this reason, New Age health care stresses a 'balance' between all aspects of the person.

A holistic perspective is also part of my alternative informants' worldview, in that they view Glastonbury to be part of a network of energy lines, "ley lines" which connect it with many other places. The earth is understood to be a living thing with veins of energy criss crossing its body. Such a view is concurrent with what is known as the Gaia Hypothesis, a scientific hypothesis first put forth by James Lovelock who said:

"...The entire range of living matter on earth, from whales to viruses, and from oaks to algae, could be regarded as constituting a single living entity, capable of manipulating the Earth's atmosphere to suit its overall needs and endowed with faculties and powers far beyond those of its constituent parts."
(Lovelock 1991:166)

Lovelock named his hypothesis after the Greek Earth goddess. His hypothesis that the whole is more than a sum of its parts implies that the earth is an “independent living organism” (Prince and Riches 1999:178); an idea which appeals to the holistic New Age vision and belief that all things are connected. Prince and Riches write:

“New Age cosmology is strikingly holistic. Thus most New Agers uphold the notion of Gaia, or spiritually ordered universe, whose transcendent power subsumes all things, organic and inorganic. Correspondingly, at the level of the human person, the New Age movement...upholds the physical, the spiritual, the mental and the emotional in the human being as indissolubly one”. (1999:167).

In chapter three, I will discuss the implications of this belief in Glastonbury.

As a centre of the New Age movement in Britain, Glastonbury has become host to a remarkable number and diversity of alternative health care practitioners and centres. In 1999, one internet web page, the Glastonbury Circle Information Service (<http://www.isleofavalon.co.uk/avalon/a3-guide.html>) listed sixteen healing centres or establishments offering healing therapies, and forty-six practitioners of a variety of alternative healing techniques. In an information package sent to me by the Glastonbury Tourist Information Centre, there were leaflets advertising “Healing Development” courses given by the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (The NFSH), a one-year “Shamanic Practitioner’s Training Certification Course”, a two-year “diploma course” in “Inner Brilliance Crystal and Colour Healing”, and a two-year course for a certificate of “Esoteric Soul Healing”. Several other workshops and lecture series pertaining to healing were also advertised. In addition, there are many stores which sell therapeutic products and books about healing in the town.

I journeyed to Glastonbury with the intention of studying the manifestation of alternative spiritual beliefs and the provision of alternative healing in the context of Bed and Breakfast accommodations which offer therapies or spiritual healing to guests. Alternative B&B's were my entry-point into life in Glastonbury and my experiences in these accommodations were important windows through which I viewed the lives of Glastonbury's residents and transient visitors. These establishments are but one part of a much larger alternative health care movement in the town, and the following thesis presents but one face of the town of Glastonbury. It is a study of four main issues: firstly, the spiritual beliefs and healing practices of proprietor-healers; secondly, the sacred landscape of Glastonbury; thirdly, "alternative" pilgrimage to Glastonbury; and fourthly, the relationship between the New Age movement and tourism in the town.

The first issue concerns the ways in which a concept of "healing" is embedded in a larger set of spiritual belief systems held by proprietors of alternative bed and breakfasts who offer healing. Healing is an integral part of these belief systems, but alternative healing as practiced in B&B's is about more than therapeutic techniques. Beliefs concerning healing are intimately linked to the beliefs of proprietor-healers concerning the landscape of Glastonbury, rich in spiritual symbolism and imbued with sacredness. Healing is but one aspect of their spiritual philosophies which include beliefs about this unique, sacred landscape and the nature of their accommodations as "sanctuaries" from the secular world. Proprietors desire to attract 'pilgrims' with spiritual motivations for visiting Glastonbury to these sanctuaries, and often view themselves as resident pilgrims. I also probe issues relating to the co-existence of alternative and secular societies in

Glastonbury. Tensions often arise between alternative and secular institutions in the town, particularly the Tourist Board and the alternative B&B's, and this tension is reflected in the attitudes of proprietors towards commercialism and tourism.

Methodology

The Bed and Breakfast is something of an institution in England - as distinctly "English" as tea and crumpets. Accommodations promoted by the Tourism Board belong to the English Tourist Board, the Automobile Association (AA) or the Royal Automobile Club (RAC), which inspects the facilities and grades them with, for example, three stars out of a maximum of five. B&B owners who do not pass inspection or who decline to join the Board are not prohibited from running their establishments, however, they cannot be included in the Accommodation Guide published by the Tourist Information Centre (TIC), or in promotional material for the Tourist Board. It should be noted here that I arrived during an interesting time for B&B owners. The English Tourist Board was in the process of making it compulsory for all such establishments to pass an inspection before they could be advertised in these guides and promotional material. I will discuss the implications of this new regulation in greater detail in chapter five.

Four months prior to my arrival in Glastonbury I had contacted the local Tourist Information Centre and requested the most recent publication of their Accommodation Guide in order to identify, in advance, accommodations which seemed suitable for my research. I was sent both the 1998 and 1999 guides. These guides included brief descriptions of each Bed and Breakfast facility and its "rating", the number and type of rooms available (for example single or double occupancy), various amenities such as the

type of breakfast offered (self-service to full service, vegetarian or otherwise) and the contact for each establishment.

In addition to a scattering of hotels, inns, hostels, and caravan or camping parks, twenty nine B&B's located directly in Glastonbury were listed in the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide. This Guide was my main source for identifying Bed and Breakfast establishments which offered therapies or healing. Of these twenty nine B&B's, six advertised some form of healing, therapies, spiritual practices or health facilities, and were therefore distinctive from the other twenty three establishments. Using the Guide, I contacted these six facilities and booked accommodation in five (for financial reasons the sixth was unsuitable). A sixth accommodation was suggested to me by an employee of the Tourist Information Centre after learning of my interests in healing, and I selected a seventh accommodation based on its name in the 1998 Accommodation Guide and internet advertisement. An eighth alternative B&B was recommended to me by a proprietor-healer and was operated by a homoeopathist who did not advertise in the Accommodation Guide but received guests by referral from several other B&B proprietors. I also arranged to stay at a conventional B&B establishment selected as a contrast to the alternative accommodations.

I contacted proprietors of these B&B's by phone and mail to communicate the intentions of my stay: research into the practice of alternative and complementary health care in Glastonbury, as practiced in the context of Bed and Breakfast accommodations. The reaction to my research of all proprietors with whom I spoke was very positive – all seemed interested and willing to help. Of the eight alternative B&B's, I will focus on

seven in this thesis. Where permission was explicitly granted, I have used the real names of proprietors and B&B's. Permission was granted by remaining proprietors to use pseudonyms for themselves and their establishments.

In addition to studying alternative B&B's, during the three months of my research, I also interviewed two conventional doctors at Glastonbury's two medical centres, and twelve practitioners of alternative or complementary therapies who worked at large health centres, including the directors of two such centres. I attended a "Complementary Health Day" in a nearby town which provided practical information for nurses, doctors, and therapists who worked in conventional medical settings and who practiced alternative or complementary forms of health care. I also interviewed many other healers who worked autonomously. I talked with religious leaders of the Anglican Church in Glastonbury, conventional citizens of the town, and with the homeless and "travelers"⁷ who came to Glastonbury in large numbers during the summer. I participated in two large, "official", pilgrimages to Glastonbury organized by the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church which provided the opportunity to speak with other participants, pilgrims, and church leaders. I attended a healing ministry group formed by members of St. John the Baptist Anglican church. I spoke with employees of cafes, shops, and with five employees of the Tourist Information Centre, including the manager. I participated in weekly healing and meditation workshops and spoke with other participants about their beliefs pertaining to healing and their views of Glastonbury. I attended a meeting of the Creative Health Network which brought together members from Glastonbury's diverse

⁷ Men, women and children who move from one place to another in caravans and cars.

healing community. I also had the opportunity to interview many clients and guests whose visits coincided with my own. I returned from Glastonbury with forty-three ninety minute audio cassette tapes of interviews, totaling three thousand eight hundred and seventy hours. In addition, I conducted many interviews without the use of a recorder. These, and other observations, are contained in twelve field note books.

Chapter Outline

In chapter one of the following thesis, I introduce the B&B's at which I stayed during my fieldwork in Glastonbury. I discuss how the identity of seven of these establishments as being "alternative" is manifested through their name and decor, the promotion and location of the accommodation, and the role of the proprietor.

In the second chapter I explore in detail one of the most important manifestations of alternative identity - the provision of alternative and spiritual healing. I examine the spiritual philosophies of proprietors which indicate that certain beliefs about health and illness are shared by these men and women as part of an overarching "New Age" philosophy. I then discuss payment for healing and the tensions that result when proprietors attempt to justify the exchange of healing for money. I also explore the limitations of healing: healing was not practiced in B&B's as often as I had expected from the advertisements and promotional material available.

In chapter three, I explore the symbolic and spiritual landscape of Glastonbury as understood and interpreted by my informants. Glastonbury Tor, in particular, figures prominently in the spiritual beliefs and activities of many informants. It is believed to mark the crossing of a number of lines of energy called "ley lines". These lines explain

their perception of the landscape as being sacred. In the final sections of chapter three, I also explore the differing, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations of this sacred landscape.

Often because of the sacred landscape of Glastonbury, imbued with energy, the town is believed by many of my informants to draw ‘pilgrims’- those in search of spiritual growth, renewal, or healing. In chapter four, I discuss “alternative” pilgrimage in the context of Glastonbury with reference to the work of Turner (1974), Turner and Turner (1978), Dubisch (1995), Bowman (1993), and Eade and Sallnow (1991).

In chapter five, I explore the tensions which exist between the Tourist Board and proprietors of alternative B&B’s. Such tensions arise as a result of differing understandings of Glastonbury’s identity. The Tourist Board promotes Glastonbury for the secular purposes of commercialism and consumption, a motivation differing from that of the proprietors who wish to accommodate ‘pilgrims’ who share their beliefs, and not simply “tourists”. They view their B&B’s as more than commercial lodgings, but as sacred places – places of learning, healing, counseling and reflection. An experience of “communitas” as espoused by Turner (1974) cannot be fully realized because of the co-existence of alternative facilities with a secular world represented by the Tourist Board.

Chapter One: Alternative Identity of the Bed and Breakfasts

One of the most important manifestations of alternative identity in alternative Bed and Breakfasts is the provision of “therapies”, “healing” or spiritual practices such as meditation, “channeling”⁸, or clairvoyant “readings”⁹ to guests in addition to bed and breakfast. Alternative identity is also revealed through specific names, styles of décor, and methods of promotion chosen by proprietor-healers in order to establish their B&B’s as a particular type of ‘space’ for a particular type of clientele, in keeping with their alternative spiritual belief systems and world view. Proprietors often promote the location of their B&B within the sacred landscape of Glastonbury as a means of creating an alternative identity. Their perception of their role as a proprietor is also an indication of this identity. I conclude this chapter with a description of Moore View B&B, a conventional establishment operated by Roger and his wife Marie, which serves as an interesting contrast to the alternative accommodations and which demonstrates the special nature or identity of alternative Bed and Breakfasts more clearly.

Name

The names of alternative B&B’s are not arbitrarily chosen, but are symbolic to the owner. Often, the spiritual beliefs of a proprietor are implicit in the name chosen for their establishment. Further, the spiritual overtones of these names publicly announce the identity of that facility as being something other than simply a “Bed and Breakfast”.

⁸ Channelling refers to the passage of a supernatural entity, spirit, or ethereal being through a medium, who acts as a “channel”.

⁹ A reading involves relaying information obtained through supernatural means (such as channelling) to a client.

Names were used by myself and guests who I met during my research as an important criteria for selecting accommodation in Glastonbury. While names are an important manifestation of alternative identity for all B&B's at which I stayed, I have selected four as examples.

Catherine and The Grail Quest

Catherine was an attractive and enthusiastic woman in her late forties. She had lived in Glastonbury with her son, David, for ten years, and had been providing B&B accommodations for most of this period. Soon after their move to The Grail Quest, the adjoining property, Evergreen Cottage, became available. It was Evergreen Cottage which housed her guests in a double room and a single room with two small beds. The Grail Quest B&B was one of the least expensive accommodations at which I stayed: I was charged £15¹⁰ a night for my twin room. Evergreen Cottage was advertised as a "self-catering" facility, meaning that guests were required to purchase their own breakfast supplies which could be stored in the kitchen of the cottage. Should guests request breakfast instead of "self-catering", the fee per night increased.

Catherine was a self-described Christian who attended a local Roman Catholic Church and the name of her house, The Grail Quest, had been chosen for its Christian meaning. The Holy Grail (the cup used by Jesus during the Last Supper) was a powerful symbol for Catherine as a Christian. It was her vision of the Holy Grail which led her to choose Glastonbury as her place of residence. Before her move to the town, Catherine stayed at

¹⁰ Pounds sterling may be converted to Canadian currency by multiplying the sum by 2.5 (rough estimation).

the Sai Baba¹¹ centre in Glastonbury. During the night, she was awakened by a greenish glow in her bedroom, and she beheld a vision of a rock with the Holy Grail gleaming within it. This vision led her to believe that the Holy Grail was indeed in Glastonbury, as the legends tell. Later during my research, a chat with her son revealed that shortly after moving into the house, she had been given spiritual "guidance" that the Holy Grail itself lay buried beneath her cottage. An enthusiastic excavation ensued which ended when Catherine realized her search was for a "symbolic Grail" that was inside her. As Bowman writes: "Whatever the Grail was or is, it has become a potent symbol of the quest for spiritual enlightenment, a quest which is actively and diversely pursued in Glastonbury"(1993:32), as exemplified by Catherine's actions and beliefs.

Evergreen Cottage received its name during the Christmas season of 1992. During a visionary experience, Catherine traveled back in time and saw an arrangement of round huts built upon the place where her house now stood. These huts formed a sanctuary surrounded by dense groves of yew trees and evergreens and Catherine believed that they had housed Jesus while he was in Glastonbury, as related in the legend. She had called the cottage Evergreen Cottage to remind her of this vision. Clearly, both The Grail Quest and Evergreen Cottage were names selected to reflect Catherine's spiritual beliefs.

Flora and the Heart Focus B&B

In the 1999 Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide, Flora advertised her identity as an "NFSH healer" who offered "morning meditation in caring environment"

¹¹ An Indian guru believed by devotees to be "the one and only true God come to Earth in human form" to teach "the unity of all religions".

with the availability of "spiritual healing and guidance". Flora came to Glastonbury in 1998, and had been running a B&B for nearly a year. She was a gregarious woman in her early fifties; slight, with short grey hair, bright eyes, and a ready smile. She welcomed me warmly into her modern, bright, and impeccably clean house, where she could accommodate a maximum of four guests in two single rooms and one room with two single beds. I paid £17 for my bedroom.

Just as the Grail had been chosen by Catherine for its symbolic meaning, the "heart" was an important symbol for Flora. She called her B&B the Heart Focus B&B after realizing that the "heart had to be in it". She perceived herself to have a "tender heart" and she wished her accommodations to reflect this. Of all B&B's at which I stayed, Flora made the greatest effort to establish warm and friendly relationships with her guests, as part of her perceived role in Glastonbury as "mother to all". She spoke of her guests as "children" to whom she would "speak from" her "heart". "People want to be loved", she said. "We want people to love us for who are." She often called her guests "darling" and "sweetheart".

The name chosen by Flora for her B&B is in keeping with her promotion of the facility as being a "caring environment" and during my interviews with Flora's guests, I learned that often it was the name which attracted them to her B&B. One of Flora's guests, "Margaret", had wanted to stay somewhere "more spiritual" and had chosen Flora's B&B because of its "spiritual name" and the "morning meditation" advertised.

Marlene and the Radiance Wheel B&B

Marlene had lived in Glastonbury for eighteen years. She could accommodate a maximum of six guests in three rooms, if she rented her own bedroom for guests. There was a larger double room towards the front of the house, and a smaller room which could be used as a double or single. I paid £15 a night for this smaller room.

Like the Grail and the heart, the wheel was an important symbol for Marlene and like Catherine and Flora, she had received the name through spiritual guidance. Marlene liked the symbol of the wheel because it didn't mean "any one thing", unlike Catherine's choice of the Grail as a symbol which, according to Marlene, had "very definite Christian" connotations. The wheel figured in many spiritual traditions: "medicine wheels" were important among Native Americans, and Marlene told me that she was an "honorary member" of several Native American women's organizations. Eventually she hoped to have a sign made for her establishment in the fashion of a "North American Shield". This sign would draw together several symbols which had important meaning to her, such as animal totems and crystals, and which were also important tools in her spiritual practices. For the moment, her B&B was marked simply by a small sign protruding from the wall of her house which read "Bed and Breakfast". Marlene liked being fairly hard to find and eschewed excessive advertisement in keeping with her belief that the "right" people were guided to her B&B, and therefore it was not necessary to spend time, money, and effort advertising.

John, Meredith and the Divine Light Centre

The name of the fourth alternative B&B at which I stayed indicated that it was not simply a "Bed and Breakfast", but a "centre" of spirituality. John, originally from Ireland, was a fit looking man in his late thirties with short grey hair. Both he and his attractive American wife of several months, Meredith, welcomed me into their beautiful, bright, modern home - an attached property where they rented one "double" bedroom at a cost of £16 per person and shared their bathroom and kitchen with guests. Breakfast was "self-service", as it had been at Marlene's B&B.

The Divine Light Centre bore no outside sign that it was a B&B, let alone a "centre" of spiritual teaching or healing. Like Marlene, John eschewed excessive advertisement. Nevertheless, the name had not been chosen arbitrarily but was related to John's spiritual beliefs which centred very much around an inner search for the "truth". He explained during an interview that he had received "guidance" to set it up as a "centre for the teaching of truth" and a B&B so that other spiritual seekers could come and receive guidance. John and Meredith were planning to expand their centre or establish a new spiritual centre of the same name as their B&B, which would still offer B&B but would also offer massage and counseling, which Meredith expressed interest in studying. Again, name was an important, and public, indication of the proprietor's spiritual beliefs.

Location

Often, the names selected by proprietors of alternative B&B's had been chosen because of their relation to the landscape of Glastonbury; a landscape which these men and women invest with spiritual significance and meaning. As I will discuss further in chapter

four, alternative B&B owners draw connections between the location of their B&B and features of the landscape, and they interpret these features in the context of their spiritual beliefs. Location is therefore another way in which the alternative identity of these establishments is manifested.

In advertisements and promotional material, several proprietors made special mention of the location of their establishments within the town of Glastonbury. Several guests with whom I spoke often noted that location had been an important criteria in their selection of a B&B. In particular, location with respect to the Tor, the Abbey, and Chalice Well was noted by guests and visitors as being an important criteria for selection of accommodations, as was proximity to the amenities of town.

Jan and Berachah Colour Healing Centre

Jan had been running Berachah Colour Healing Centre for five years. It was one of the most expensive facilities in Glastonbury, and one which promoted healing extensively. There were three rooms available, ranging in price from £45 for an ensuite double room to £25 for a twin room which I occupied singly for twelve days.

Berachah Colour Healing Centre's name is a very public indication of its alternative identity as a place where a particular type of healing can be solicited. The name also links the facility to its location, which the proprietor, Jan, perceived to be a sacred, or blessed, place. An excerpt from a promotional brochure available at the B&B reads:

The House was built and designed by a Welsh architect, who named it 'Berachah'. In Welsh, the name means 'Place of special blessing' – the Sufi word 'Beraka', is similar to the Yiddish word, meaning 'Point of blessing'.

Location is an important part of Berachah Colour Healing Centre's character and is heavily promoted. In the 1999 Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide, it is promoted as having a "unique, beautiful Glastonbury Tor location, overlooking Chalice Well gardens". A promotional brochure available to guests in the lounge describes the B&B as follows:

Berachah is a beautiful, unique, architect designed property situated on the slopes of Glastonbury Tor, and is probably one of the most attractive positions in Glastonbury. The site was part of Chalice Orchard, which in the late 1920's was the site of the first known Ashram¹² in Britain. The site was then owned by Violet Firth - known as Dion Fortune, who was one of the most influential occultists of the twentieth century. Where Berachah House is built, stood Dion Fortune's Temple...The House is situated between the footpath to the Tor, and the 'White Spring', and overlooks the Red Waters of the Chalice Well and Gardens.

The proximity of Berachah House to the Chalice Well also situates it within the legendary landscape. The brochure describes a well-known legend of Chalice Well:

"The legend goes, that Jesus' uncle - Joseph of Arimathea, brought the blood of Jesus from the last Supper to Glastonbury, in a chalice known as the Holy Grail. This Chalice is believed to be buried in Chalice Hill - where the waters run red into the Spring."

The location of Berachah Colour Healing Centre is also linked to its identity as a healing facility. Another brochure describes Chalice Well as "a natural healing spring"

¹² The Encarta World English Dictionary describes an ashram as a "spiritual community": "a commune or communal house whose members share spiritual goals and practices" (Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2000 [http:// encarta.msn.com](http://encarta.msn.com) © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation).

and notes that "Berachah overlooks the red, iron based healing waters of the Chalice Well and Gardens, and is next to the calcium based healing waters of the White Spring". During my stay, a pitcher of this "healing" water was available to guests in the kitchen of Berachah House.

The spiritual significance of Berachah's location, in relation to important features of the landscape, is embodied in a name chosen by the proprietor to manifest its identity as an alternative accommodation.

Michael, Cheryl, and Tor Down

Like Berachah Colour Healing Centre, promotional literature for Tor Down (owned by Cheryl and her husband Michael) emphasizes its location relative to Glastonbury Tor: "We are literally on the slopes of Glastonbury Tor and three of our rooms have magnificent views over the Vale of Avalon...". Cheryl and Michael promoted this location in the TIC Accommodation Guide because they understood that guests wanted to "stay on the Tor". Location from the centre of town was also recognized by proprietors to be important for guests and was promoted in the Guide. Cheryl noted that their location on the edge of town could be something of a disadvantage. In the winter, guests usually started their search for accommodations in the town, working outwards towards the B&B's further from High Street. Cheryl said: "everyone wants to stay in town because it's near all the amenities". By using the Tor in the name of their establishment, Cheryl hoped to attract guests who might otherwise choose to be closer to town. Flora, proprietor of the Heart Focus B&B, also advertised in the 1999 Accommodation Guide her B&B's close proximity to the town centre, in addition to attractions such as the Tor,

Chalice Well, and “fabulous walks”.

Cheryl and Michael drew upon the potent historical and legendary qualities of Glastonbury for the promotion of their B&B. Promotional literature sent to me reads:

Glastonbury has always been a spiritual centre since before Joseph of Arimathea planted his staff from which a holy thorn tree sprouted on Wearyall Hill and he built the first Christian wattle church on the grounds of what is now the ruins of the Abbey. These days, Glastonbury is still renowned for its spirituality which in addition to the Abbey etc. has gathered a “New Age” influence offering healings and different religions, etc.

I interpret this material to be an attempt by the proprietors to draw connections between their establishment and the spiritual and legendary landscape of the town, in a way similar to Jan’s promotion of Berachah House. Tor Down is made explicitly part of the same landscape which has been host to Joseph of Arimathea and, as the legendary “Isle of Avalon”, King Arthur. Such connections clearly indicate its identity as an alternative establishment.

Marlene and the Radiance Wheel B&B

As with Jan and the proprietors of Tor Down, the location of Marlene’s house is one of the most important ways in which its identity as an alternative establishment is manifested.

Marlene advertised her B&B in the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide as “an ancient sacred space” located “On Tor by Chalice Well”. Although she told me that the house itself was hundreds of years old, she perceived the actual location upon which it had been built to be “sacred” and therefore “ancient”. It was the location of her B&B on the lower

slopes of the Tor which made this place "sacred". As will be discussed in chapter three, Marlene believed that clients didn't choose their B&B because of the house itself or the "healer" who ran it; rather, their decision was based on the "earth energies" of that particular spot in Glastonbury. She believed that people stayed in her B&B because they "needed" to be on that particular area of what she called "the island [of Avalon]". Further, she believed that each place in Glastonbury had its own different energy. Flora, too, spoke of her area as possessing an energy or atmosphere which was more "Glastonbury" than other locations. As I will discuss in chapter three, the actual location of the B&B in Glastonbury is often perceived to contribute to the atmosphere of the house.

Ann and the Abbey Garth B&B

I spent the last five nights of my research at the Abbey Garth B&B owned by a middle aged woman, Ann, who lived there by herself and who had been offering B&B "on and off for seven years". During my stay, she had two bedrooms for guests, both spacious, bright single rooms for which she charged £16 per night.

The name of Ann's B&B, the Abbey Garth, gave little indication of alternative identity. It did indicate, however, that Ann wished to associate her property with Glastonbury Abbey, the ruins of which were a ten minute walk from her accommodation. In the same way that Cheryl and Michael used well-known local sites of historic and legendary interest, including the Abbey, to promote their B&B, Ann advertised the proximity of Abbey Garth to the "Abbey Park and grounds", Wearyall Hill, the Tor, and Chalice Well. The location of her B&B to these sites was important in that she perceived that her guests

interacted with the landscape of Glastonbury in important ways. She said: "somehow I think the Abbey has a great influence, because we're on the edge of the Abbey that's always been a place of quietness and reflection, and somehow they pick up that sort of energy". She directed guests in search of peace and quiet to Wearyall Hill or Chalice Well. For those in need of energizing or revitalizing, Ann recommended a walk up the Tor. She said: "I find the Tor is great if I'm feeling really depressed, I go up there and I get very energized and very positive, everywhere in Glastonbury has a different positive element, I think".

Ann believed that guests benefited from interactions with the landscape, especially the Abbey, and the name chosen for her B&B reflected her beliefs. Such a name also attracted those interested in other aspects of the Abbey, including its history and architecture.

Catherine and The Grail Quest B&B

Catherine believed that her B&B was located on an ancient pilgrimage route through Glastonbury. This location contributed to her perception of The Grail Quest as a "pilgrim's refuge". Her belief that The Grail Quest was built on the spot where Jesus himself stayed while in Glastonbury also contributed to its "sacred" character, as did her belief that it was built over the possible resting place of the Holy Grail. The bank dividing the road from her cottage was lined with huge flat stones like the flagstones from an old building and I was later informed by Catherine that these stones had once laid the floor of the great Glastonbury Abbey or were the remnants of ancient standing stone circles. In the former theory, Catherine was clearly establishing continuity with a

Christian past in an attempt to bestow upon her cottage a spiritual and historical significance rooted in the rich historical landscape of Glastonbury itself.

Catherine had also invested Evergreen Cottage with spiritual significance, and both its location and history contribute to this significance. She gave me a brief tour of the cottage, which she assured me was 300 years old, rather young compared to hers - possibly 600 years. She pointed out ammonite-like fossils in the mortar of the connecting wall, interspersed amongst pinkish stones which she believed originated from the Abbey after its dissolution by King Henry VIII in 1539. According to Catherine, these fossils were six million years old, and huge chunks of quartz crystal glistened like teeth against the dullness of rock. On her side of the connecting wall there was, she said, a massive Elizabethan fireplace constructed from Abbey stones. The Grail Quest's venerable history was important to Catherine. I interpret her emphasis of this as an attempt to establish continuity with the past, and to grant authenticity to the accommodation she is providing, in light of her perception of her B&B as a "pilgrim's refuge". Catherine perceived the location of her B&B and home to be divinely ordained, as confirmed by her visions, and as such, location is a powerful manifestation of its alternative identity and her own spiritual beliefs.

John, Meredith, and the Divine Light Centre

John said that he couldn't have chosen a "better house in Glastonbury" for the purpose of establishing a spiritual Centre. Like Catherine, he had experienced a vision of Glastonbury's past which led him to believe that the sacred character of his house was divinely ordained. His vision was of somebody meditating upon the spot where his living

room now existed. This vision indicated to him that his house was built on a sacred place: "they were sitting there in meditation so I knew that the place was blessed". Because of this blessing, John and Meredith believed the atmosphere of the Divine Light Centre to be conducive to spiritual growth and healing. Location, combined with their intention to create a supportive and nurturing environment for guests, is an important part of the manifestation of alternative identity.

It is certainly true that "conventional" bed and breakfasts such as Moore View advertise their proximity to features of the landscape such as the Tor and Chalice Well, so by itself "location" is not a clear indication of the alternative identity. Proprietors of alternative establishments perceive the landscape of Glastonbury to be imbued with historical, legendary, and spiritual meaning - it is a sacred landscape and features of it, such as the Tor, are powerful and sacred sites. Therefore, proximity to these sites endow their establishments with a sacredness or spiritual significance, a more clear indication of distinctive alternative character. The relationships between these B&B's, healing, and the landscape of Glastonbury will be discussed in chapter three.

Role

In keeping with their spiritual beliefs, most proprietors of alternative B&B's perceive themselves as having a special role in Glastonbury. Often that role is one of a healer or spiritual counselor, as exemplified by Flora (who owned the Heart Focus B&B) and John and Meredith (proprietors of the Divine Light Centre). Meredith described her husband as a "counselor" and urged me to consult him if I felt I needed some support during my

fieldwork. Such roles distinguish them from more "conventional" B&B's in the town and establish their identity as being alternative.

In keeping with her Christian spiritual beliefs, Catherine perceived her role to be that of a modern day "abbess", providing a "space for healing" at The Grail Quest B&B. She was not, however, actively involved in the provision of therapies to her clients. Selecting guests (an action consistent with the anti-commercial ideology of several alternative B&B proprietors which will be discussed further in chapters two and five) was not a random act for Catherine but was a reflection of her religious beliefs. She believed that the choice of guests "affirmed the Kingdom and Queendom of Heaven"; harmony in the cottage was symbolic of the harmony in Heaven. Her role in this affirmation was to "synchronize" the energies of her guests; to ensure that personalities didn't clash and that relationships ran smoothly. She stressed how important it was for her to be present when guests were in the cottage, to "synchronize the energies". It was, she said, always "risky" having two different groups staying there in case of incompatibility, and it was difficult for her to "oil the wheels" when she was not in her house. She seemed to feel that she needed to be home -when she went away, things got a bit "rough". She told me that sometimes guests didn't feel that they were "being looked after" so she tried to "mother" them when they arrived, checking on them once a day. In addition to this maternal role, Catherine described herself as a "minister" and a "clairvoyant" who had performed an exorcism or "clearing" for a woman who had stayed in the cottage and suffered a spiritual "crisis".

As mentioned, Flora had adopted a maternal role in Glastonbury, referring to her

guests at the Heart Focus B&B as "children" and herself as "mother to all". She believed that guests often came to Glastonbury to "clear things, to clear the past" and that she could guide them through this process. Flora said: "I feel I can give them the answers which they are seeking in a very non-judgmental way...and I try to help them see the best in what they're going through...".

Flora believed that people "intuitively" came to her B&B and told her their stories because they knew she'd listen. They felt "safe" with her and cared for. The type of space which Flora strove to create for her guests, a "safe" space, is linked to her maternal role. Her role was also that of a teacher and spiritual counselor, as indicated by the following excerpt from a promotional brochure available in her B&B:

Do you need help with making sense of your life? Flora is a sensitive and caring spiritual counselor and works by harmonizing with you during the course of a healing session, supplying you with spiritual answers and guidance.

As a further indication of this role of teacher, during my stay she offered to teach another guest a healing "technique".

Marlene perceived her "role" in Glastonbury to be about more than providing accommodation and clairvoyant readings at The Radiance Wheel B&B. She said: "I'm here to teach mainly, rather than to do healing." She was, however, reluctant to call herself a "teacher" because she didn't perceive the programs she offered at her B&B to be "courses" in the sense of having a "syllabus" which could be repeated. "They're about consciousness raising and expansion" she told me, unique experiences which could not be repeated. The lessons learned by the participants might not come from Marlene's words

or actions but "through something they perceive" during the session or through "something that happens to them in the situation". Like Catherine, she saw her role as simply that of "offering sacred space" on the lower slopes of the Tor and if guests inquired about her healing or readings, she would discuss them.

Like other B&B owners and healers, Michael and Cheryl perceived their establishment, Tor Down, as fulfilling a role. In a way similar to John and Meredith, they were trying to create a space which would provide guests with beneficial "energy"; a space which would "bring energy that every person needs; love and light and God's presence and angelic presence". Their role was to provide a "safe, sacred space" for all guests, and to "help and "guide" these guests. Michael explained their role in the following way:

"We're here for people who need to be in Glastonbury and who need helping in whatever way they need helping. The number of people who come here and say that 'I don't know why I just felt I just had to come to Glastonbury' and as far as we're concerned our perspective is their own spirit has guided them here to help re-awaken them...so we try not to shove anything down anybody's throat. As soon as somebody starts asking questions we'll open up and help them as much as possible".

Like Flora and John, Michael understood that part of his role in Glastonbury was that of a teacher. According to him, "spiritual teaching" was one of three "main categories of work" that humans were incarnated on earth to perform. Another was "healing work" and the third was what Michael called "earth energy work" which also involved healing.

As was the case with Flora, Michael seemed to perceive that providing guests with

spiritual guidance was an important part of his role in Glastonbury. He also believed that it was "important not to impose your expectations about what guests need. Sometimes people will arrive and you have the feeling they could benefit from a treatment but you can lead a horse to water [but you can't make it drink]." This differed from Flora's view. She told me that if her guests hadn't asked for healing but she could "see that they need it", she would be assertive and "sit them down for a session". This difference in approach to provision of healing led me to perceive that Cheryl and her husband kept a more professional distance from their guests, unless guests expressed interest in a therapy. Their role as healers was more passive, as Cheryl said, they could "hold the energies" for their guests.

As I will discuss in chapter three, several proprietors seemed to perceive an important part of their role in Glastonbury to simply be the provision of a space where guests could rest, relax, and interact with other guests. Their B&B's are sanctuaries or retreats from the hectic lives led by guests, sacred places within the sacred landscape of Glastonbury itself.

Décor

The alternative identity of Bed and Breakfasts was also clearly manifested through their décor. Proprietors often chose to decorate their homes and the rooms of their guests with objects which had personal meaning and were of spiritual significance to them.

The Grail Quest Bed and Breakfast cottage was a charming, if rather rustic, accommodation and I perceived the décor and basic facilities to be in keeping with Catherine's perception of her B&B as a "pilgrim's refuge". My bedroom, located up a

narrow flight of stairs, was very simply furnished and every aspect of the house hung heavily with age. In the living room the connecting wall was composed of huge pieces of stone into which had been dug three little alcoves set with candles. There was an old coal stove against the other wall, and a wooden table, bench and chairs by the window adjacent to the door. The thick growth of vegetation beyond made the room dim. The flagstone floor of the kitchen was uneven and cracked, but the appliances were modern. I instantly fell in love with its rustic country character.

It became obvious from our chats and the changes that Catherine made to the cottage over the duration of my research that she was consciously "shaping" her space. She removed a table from outside the lavatory because it was plastic, and she said that plastic has an undesirable "resonance" compared to wood, a natural product.

I spent a great deal of time documenting Evergreen Cottage. The living room area was filled with interesting books, most with a religious or spiritual slant, though others dealt with nutrition, health, and environmental issues. There was also a good selection of pamphlets and brochures which might appeal to her guests: including "Did our Lord visit Britain as they say in Cornwall and Somerset?" by the Rev. C.C. Dobson, M.A. and "Joseph of Arimathea" by Isabel Hill Elder. There was incense, candles and cassette tapes with interesting names like "How to recognize and trust inner guidance" by Suami Kriyananda, "The Bible and the Gita (part 1), and "Songs of my Heart: Chants and Poems by Paramahansa Yoganada". Catherine had spent twenty five years of her life involved in a spiritual organization run by an Islamic sage, and was very involved in environmental issues, and as such her choice of décor at Evergreen Cottage was a

reflection of her own beliefs and values, presented publicly to her guests.

Flora's choice of décor was also connected to her spiritual beliefs. She believed that she was a "channel" for a Native American Indian "guide", a spiritual entity who would speak through her during her writing, meditation, and healing. She explained that she had been this Native man's "pupil" for fifteen years. She, in turn, taught others and gave "light and love to all" she met, as part of her role as a teacher. Native American art and culture was prominent in her B&B - my bedroom door bore several pictures of Native Americans, and there was a large and elaborate "dream catcher" on the wall of the stairwell. The dining area, in the living room, was decorated with pictures of Sai Baba and Mother Meera¹³, "angel cards"¹⁴ and what she described as a "prayer totem pole". Candles and incense contributed to the ambiance. She perceived her décor to be a reflection of herself, although she tried to think "of what other people would like", such as books, music, and incense. Her "guideline" for furnishings and decorations was that "it has to be something I love...and I think then the love comes into the home even more", in keeping with the "heart focused" nature of her B&B.

Compared with Flora's B&B, there was less in the way of décor to indicate the identity of Marlene's B&B as an alternative establishment. She lived with her cats in a bright spacious house with a living room which opened onto a back garden through a large glass patio-style door. In front of this door there was a mattress favored by her cats who

¹³ A devotional figure who resides in Germany and is the focus for spiritual pilgrimages. Several such pilgrimages were organized by local residents during my stay in Glastonbury.

¹⁴ "Angel cards" were playing card sized pieces of paper with inspiring messages, advice, or verses printed on one side. At Flora's B&B, guests were encouraged to draw a single card daily to encourage or enlighten them.

enjoyed the view of birds by day and badgers and foxes foraging for scraps by night. A selection of her brochures advertising "readings" and "star journeys" was displayed on a small table by the sofa, and a bulletin board by the entrance of the kitchen also advertised her activities and interests. As a reflection of her beliefs concerning Native American spirituality, Marlene's bedroom was decorated with several dream catchers. The room in which readings were conducted was decorated with numerous crystals and candles; tools for her spiritual readings and healing sessions.

Marlene's minimalist approach, like Catherine's, was an expression of her perception of her B&B as a refuge for "pilgrims" or "questors" and her own rejection of materialism and consumerism.

Like Catherine, Flora, and Marlene, John and Meredith had "created" a certain type of "space" for themselves and for their guests at the Divine Light Centre, in keeping with their spiritual beliefs. Their house was decorated with inspirational quotes, teachings, and images from a wide diversity of spiritual backgrounds. John explained that he placed these writings and pictures all over the house to inspire and "stimulate" his guests wherever they might be sitting. Their living room contained a small 9" television set which was relegated to storage when not in use. Although they had decided they would be a T.V.- free house, they later changed their minds, while explaining that television "changes the vibration in the room", also noted by Marlene and Catherine. The guest bedroom was very comfortable, with a big double bed, a large television set and VCR, a loveseat under the big window, a dresser and wardrobe, and a table for coffee and tea making facilities. The décor included New Age paraphernalia, and since John attended

the Sai Baba meetings this included a box of Sai Baba's sayings and teachings.

Berachah Colour Healing Centre was very definitely a "centre" of alternative therapy. The establishment was brightly painted and furnished. The lounge was decorated in deep blue colours and with an impressive library of "New Age" type books and video tapes available for use by guests. The coffee table boasted several books pertaining to colour healing, including two booklets on the subject written by Jan. A spiral staircase led to the second floor. The three guest rooms were located down a hallway and past the kitchen and dining area which afforded a breath taking panoramic view of picturesque English countryside - rolling green hills and trees not yet browned with the heat of high summer.

I had been given the "blue room", aptly named with soft pastel lilac walls and carpet, blue bed-spreads and sheets, and there were two interesting silk-screen paintings for sale hanging above each bed, done by Jan herself. There were also postcards rendered from Jan's original and distinctive artwork for sale in the living room. Folders available in each bedroom provided information about therapies available at Berachah Colour Healing Centre and various tourism brochures. During my stay I had the chance to briefly observe the other guest rooms. The largest and most expensive of these, the "Green Room" was ensuite and decorated predominantly with shades of green. The "Pink Room" was slightly larger than mine and housed a double bed.

The colourful objects which decorated Jan's house and which were for sale were not simply decorative items; they had therapeutic value. Scarves, candles, gemstone jewelry, bottles, silk screen paintings, and massage oil and water emulsions in every combination of colour were healing tools according to Jan's practice of colour therapy. Décor is

therefore an important manifestation of the identity of Berachah as an “alternative” B&B and a centre of healing.

Of all the B&B's at which I stayed Tor Down was the most reminiscent of a hotel. It was a large and stately home with a manicured garden, fountain and garden pool where goldfish swam among the lily pads. Upon arrival, a professionally printed registration form bearing the "British Hospitality Association" name and address was given to all guests. There were seven bedrooms ranging from single, double, or triple to a "flat" which provided guests with a cooker, fridge, and microwave. To accommodate potentially large numbers of guests, the dining area was spacious and furnished with separate tables set with the bedroom numbers so that guests would know where to sit for breakfast. There was a small library in the dining area containing "a wide range of books on spiritual, healing, and New Age subjects plus gardening, fiction, and children's books" for use by guests. A "variety of crystals" were on sale in the dining room with the warning: "Remember crystals will not work for you if they do not become your property in an appropriate manner".

The proprietors of Tor Down hired several housekeepers to vacuum, clean the bathrooms, kitchen and dining area after breakfast, and tidy guests' rooms. As a result, the house was immaculately clean. Each bedroom was decorated according to a theme of colour and crystals. These themes were not arbitrarily chosen, but the result of "dowsing"¹⁵ in each room. The "Emerald room" was, Cheryl noted, one of the

¹⁵ Commonly associated with the location of water, dowsing was practiced by several of my informants, including Marlene, to locate lines of earth energy using metallic rods held loosely in each hand. Dowsing was also used to foretell the future and to seek guidance from supernatural forces or spirits.

"favorites" among her guests. All the rooms were different. Two guests agreed that they liked the "energies" of their "amethyst" room. The "rose quartz" room had a chunk of rose quartz crystal in it, and was, Cheryl told me, the "quietest" room in the house. The downstairs room had a large piece of clear quartz in it and was a good "channeling crystal" favored by guests who were interested in this spiritual practice. I was booked into the "lapis room" located at the very top floor of the house. It was tiny but well furnished, and tastefully decorated in many shades of blue. Although bedrooms were booked on a first come first serve basis, Cheryl did not rule out the possibility that guests ended up staying in rooms which would have a spiritually beneficial effect on them.

Alternative B&B's exhibited a tremendous diversity in their décor. This diversity is a reflection of the diversity of spiritual and religious beliefs held by the proprietors. It also reflects the different perceptions of what a B&B should be, from Marlene's and Catherine's minimalist approach to the more elaborate décor chosen by Jan and the proprietors of Tor Down. During an interview with Cheryl, she noted that the type of accommodation differed depending on the type of person who ran it:

"we push our facilities, Marlene just sticks to her sacred space and her basic accommodation...You've got to make yourself different, and I suppose...it depends what kind of person you are"

Cheryl said "we like a little bit of luxury and money and no, I'm not ashamed of it. Marlene is more of a pilgrim type, down to earth and just wants [to provide] basic accommodation". The choice of décor is not random but reveals much about the spiritual beliefs of each proprietor.

Promotion

Proprietors of alternative B&B's advertised and promoted their establishments through other sources in addition to the Accommodation Guide published by the Tourist Information Centre. These sources include the internet, "Retreat Guides", and New Age magazines perceived to reach a suitable clientele. In this section I will discuss the promotional literature for each establishment as a manifestation of its alternative identity.

The Grail Quest's brief caption in the TIC Accommodation Guide advertised it as a "mediaeval" centre of "spirituality" with a "secluded annexe" and a "Therapies meeting room". Catherine perceived herself to be rather discriminating in her acceptance of guests and she worded her advertisements in order to attract only those visitors who were "on the path", or "spiritually waking up". She did not want to accommodate "tourists", those motivated to come to Glastonbury for secular instead of spiritual reasons. In addition to advertisement in the TIC Accommodation Guide, Catherine advertised her cottage as a "pilgrim's hostel" in places which reached the appropriate clientele, such as "New Age" type magazines and guides read by "pilgrims", Christians, and people who were interested in healing and spirituality. The "mediaeval" character of The Grail Quest and Evergreen Cottage was important to Catherine, in keeping with her perception of her accommodation as being a "retreat" from the modern world.

Catherine also promoted her establishment by word of mouth and by networking with local businesses such as cafes and other Bed and Breakfasts. She was on good terms with the proprietors of Tor Down and a young homoeopathist who lived quite close to The

Grail Quest. She told me that she often sent people to their B&Bs when she was full, and they had returned the favor in the past.

Like Catherine, Flora was interested in accommodating a certain type of guest. She believed that her B&B only attracted people who came for healing or spiritual reasons, and she admitted that her promotion was geared towards these people. Although she advertised her B&B in the TIC Accommodation Guide, she said that she "turned away nine out of ten" of the people the TIC sent her because she found them to be 'unsuitable', a concept which will be discussed in chapter five. Flora also took bookings from the Isle of Avalon Foundation when it was taking bookings for workshops and courses. She promoted her B&B in two alternative or "New Age" magazines which had nation-wide circulation, and told me that she received more guests from these sources than the TIC.

The proprietor of the Radiance Wheel B&B, Marlene, advertised her accommodation in the 1999 Accommodation Guide as an "ancient sacred space" located "on the Tor by Chalice Well" with "Readings, Healing, and Spiritual Insights" as well as other amenities such as "comfortable beds, cotton sheets, self-service breakfast" and "use of the kitchen". She also promoted her B&B and spiritual activities through alternative magazines published locally and a local newsletter called "The Oracle" distributed to Tourist Information Centres, Bed and Breakfasts, hotels, and shops. A locally published alternative magazine read:

"Marlene offers Life-Path and Soul Purpose Readings, path working skills, Star Journey Series. B&B and Accommodation, sacred Space for Questors and Pilgrims. Daily and Weekly Rates".

Marlene established the identity of her B&B as being an alternative facility through such promotional brochures and leaflets distributed in Glastonbury, but it was primarily manifested through her involvement with "healing" and spiritual "readings", the name of the establishment, and, most importantly, its location in Glastonbury. Initially, Marlene hadn't advertised her B&B at all, leaving its promotion to word of mouth and "networking".

John advertised the Divine Light Centre in the TIC Accommodation Guide, the internet, and in New Age magazines. Besides the name, the advertisement for the Divine Light Centre in the 1998 Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide gave little indication that John and Meredith were involved in alternative healing. In 1999, an internet site did, however, advertise the availability of "spiritual healing" (http://www.glastonbury.co.uk/accommodation/bb_in_glaston/flanagan) .

John did not advertise his status as a member of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers (the NFSH) in the 1998 TIC Accommodation Guide. Although John's practice of healing will be discussed in chapter two, it should be noted that unlike Marlene and Flora, John did not directly promote the availability of healing at his B&B since such advertisement conflicted with his belief that illness did not, in fact, exist. He believed that promotion of healing had to be by "word of mouth" otherwise it could be tainted by "ego" and become "selfish." John's advertisements could state that healing was available at his B&B, but beyond that he felt it was up to the guest to inquire further.

I learned of Ann's involvement in healing from an employee of the Glastonbury Tourist Information Centre who knew I was interested in staying at B&B's operated by

healers. As far as I could ascertain, Ann limited her advertisement of the Abbey Garth B&B to the TIC Accommodation Guide and the internet. There was no mention of her status as a NFSH healer in her promotional literature and had it not been for my inquiry, I would not have known of Ann's interests. This is in keeping with her desire to keep her B&B and her healing separate.

As discussed, the alternative identity of Tor Down, operated by Michael and Cheryl, was emphasized by promotional literature which makes their interests in healing and spirituality explicit. They advertised "higher self"¹⁶ sessions" and the availability of "healing" and "hydrotherapy treatments" in the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide in addition to amenities such as photocopying, phone, and fax. It was also advertised in "Avalon" magazine (published by the Isle of Avalon Foundation) which described the facility as a "spiritually welcoming space" but, interestingly, made no mention of the many therapies available. Despite the abundance of healing and therapies available at Tor Down, it was only in 1998 that the proprietors had chosen to advertise the availability of these practices on their large sign by their driveway. Cheryl seemed concerned that their more "conventional" guests would be discouraged by this sign, and yet there was no doubt that healing was an important part of their accommodation. Cheryl said that they didn't run their B&B as a "spiritual guesthouse although it's available" should a guest inquire or express interest: "It's run as something an ordinary person could come to and not feel intimidated". They had been running Tor Down for five years, and they didn't

¹⁶ An individual's spiritual awareness which is perceived to be all-knowing and can provide guidance in matters of daily life.

want to "lose trade by changing to healing".

The promotion of the facility was linked to its location in Glastonbury, "on the slopes of Glastonbury Tor". It was also connected to Wearyall Hill and the legend of Joseph of Arimathea and the Abbey in promotional literature. As I have discussed, such connections clearly indicate its identity as an alternative establishment.

The advertisement in the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide for Berachah Colour Healing Centre described it as being "unique", on a "beautiful Glastonbury Tor location overlooking Chalice Well gardens" and the "red and white springs". It also promoted a "relaxing lounge", "New Age books, tapes, colour readings, massage, astrology" and "healing retreats". Finally, it assured the prospective guests that a stay at Berachah Colour Healing Centre would be an "unforgettable experience".

Berachah Colour Healing Centre had been crossed off the accommodations list of the Tourist Information Centre, and although I heard differing explanations, I understood that there had been some confusion regarding the self service nature of the accommodation and it had not met with Tourist Board approval. This seemed to be a source of frustration for Jan, although she said that she would continue to advertise in "New Age" type magazines which she alleged reached her "target clientele" anyway, those with an interest in colour therapy. As will be discussed in chapter four, like other B&B owners, Jan was consciously selecting a certain type of guest - those who were interested in her form of therapy; "pilgrims" who were at "cross roads" in their lives. Advertisements in New Age magazines allowed her to achieve this goal.

Proprietors of alternative Bed and Breakfasts consciously selected the source of

publicity and the aspects of their establishments to be promoted in an attempt to attract a certain type of clientele in keeping with their spiritual beliefs. The wording of these advertisements is therefore not arbitrary, but an important manifestation of identity.

The Conventional B&B: Moore View

I selected Moore View B&B as a contrast to “alternative” B&B's. It differed markedly in promotion, décor, and the proprietor's perceptions of the importance of location and role. Roger and Marie, both middle aged, advertised Moore View in the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide with the following words:

For over 25 years MOORE VIEW has been a Bed and Breakfast Guest House run by Roger and Marie. It boasts panoramic views over The Vale of Avalon and offers a comfortable and homely service. Recommended by many, including 'Which' B&B Guide, E.T.B. (English Tourist Board) Commended.

A promotional brochure available in the front porch of the establishment reads:

A warm welcome awaits you by Marie and Roger at Moore View in the historical town of Glastonbury. We are situated...on the lower slopes of the Tor, with panoramic views overlooking the Vale of Avalon, 12 minutes from town centre.

Interestingly, Glastonbury is referred to as a "historical" town, but no mention is made of it being a "spiritual" or "sacred" centre. Further, the location of the B&B on the "lower slopes of the Tor" is not associated with sacred energy or supernatural power, but simply with a "panoramic view". The secular meaning of this location differs from the spiritual and symbolic meanings which Marlene, Cheryl, and Michael attribute to the Tor. In

chapter three of this thesis, I discuss the ways in which the same features of the landscape are interpreted in different ways, religious or secular, depending on the beliefs and values of the informant.

A brochure distributed at Moore View B&B notes at length the furnishings of the house and amenities including television lounge and varied breakfast menu. It also describes Glastonbury in a manner which emphasizes the nature of the town as a centre of Christian heritage by noting the Abbey as “the birthplace of Christianity and links with King Arthur, Wearyall Hill and the Holy thorn” and the presence of “the remains of the church dedicated to St. Michael” at the summit of the Tor. Such emphasis is in keeping with Roger’s Christian orientation revealed through my interviews with him.

Moore View was a large facility with several guest rooms. My bedroom was completely devoid of New Age paraphernalia, or any material of a spiritual nature - a porcelain figurine stood atop a lace doily on the window sill and the wall displayed a framed postcard sized picture of the Tor and a painting of two girls standing by a lake populated with ducks.

Marie’s immediate reaction to my research on alternative healing indicated that she was aware of the large alternative healing scene in Glastonbury: “you must have a sore wrist from all the writing!” she exclaimed. I explained that I had chosen her B&B because she didn’t advertise healing services. To my surprise, she said that she had been told that she did, in fact, offer healing...through the medium of her blackberry jelly, which, a kind guest had suggested was both “uplifting” and “healing”. Marie chuckled while telling me this and I interpreted her response to be somewhat of a mocking “poke”

at the prevalence of alternative healing in the town. It was Marie's opinion that they accommodated more "traditional" guests, but Roger said later that they regularly housed people who had come to Glastonbury for alternative or spiritual type courses; "people come for almost every alternative thing going on", he said. Despite being a conventional accommodation, the proprietors of Moore View prided themselves on their ability to cater to a variety of tastes, including vegetarians.

By contrast to the roles of alternative B&B owners, Roger saw his role as being primarily about ensuring client satisfaction rather than teaching or healing. Because they had been in operation for so long, he considered their B&B to be something of an "information centre". He was considering starting such a service on a more professional level some day, within the confines of the B&B. "I know what people need", he told me, "it's all the same when everyone goes on holiday", and they "rely on the B&B owners" to provide for these needs. Provision of such services stemmed from a natural inclination to help people, "you're either that type of person or you're not", and "if you like to help people you do it naturally, it's not business motivation".

Unlike other alternative proprietors such as Flora, Roger seemed to want to maintain courteous but less personal relationships with their guests and he conveyed the message that himself and his wife Marie often wouldn't know why their guests had come to Glastonbury, unless they were told, but he felt it was important not to "get into that". "You can't take it all on board", he told me, "we've got a business to run" and their business was to supply accommodations. At the same time Roger wanted me to understand that he "always has time for people. That's what it's about".

Conclusion

All nine bed and breakfasts at which I stayed, for varying lengths of time, were as unique as their proprietors, with whom I achieved varying degrees of intimacy and rapport during my research. Their unique character is a reflection of the different world-views of the men and women who run them. Proprietors of alternative B&B's strive to create a distinct identity for their establishments which will reflect their own personal beliefs and values. It is through the names of these facilities, their promotion, location, decor, and the role of the proprietors that I, and other guests, identified them as being different from other, more conventional, Bed and Breakfasts such as Moore View.

Chapter 2: Healing in Alternative Bed and Breakfasts

In this chapter, I will discuss the promotion and advertisement of healing and therapies in B&B's as the most important and obvious manifestation of alternative identity and what such promotion reveals about the proprietors' understanding of healing, health, and illness in terms of their religious and spiritual philosophies. I will also attempt to show that a major characteristic of healing in Glastonbury is its plurality and diversity, but underneath these differences lie several common understandings of the nature of health and illness.

I will also discuss the degree to which the different perspectives of health and healing conflict in Glastonbury, especially with regard to centres and practitioners in Glastonbury viewed to be less "legitimate" than others. This legitimacy, or lack thereof, is often rooted in anti-commercial sentiments, and payment for healing services becomes a point of contention among several proprietors.

I will then examine how healing was practiced in each B&B during my stay. Although healing was often extensively advertised and formed a cornerstone of the proprietor's spiritual belief systems, therapies and healing sessions did not seem to be practiced as often as I had thought they would be. I discovered that "healing" was not synonymous with "therapies" and in the view of many proprietors, it was not necessary to engage in therapies promoted in order to achieve healing. Healing could be achieved through interaction with other guests and the landscape of Glastonbury itself, as discussed in chapter three.

Due in part to the private nature of the interactions between clients and healers, I could collect little data pertaining directly to the form which healing or therapy actually took in the B&B's. Occasionally, I was able to observe healing sessions, but my discussion of healing in B&B's is mainly limited to my own experiences and interviews with proprietors.

Promotion of Healing

It was the advertisement of a "therapies meeting room" in the 1999 Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide which drew me to The Grail Quest. The proprietor, Catherine, told me that it was no longer physical healing but the practice of spiritual healing which interested her. She practiced a form of healing which she called the "Holy Breath", a gift given to her by Christ. During a session, she "surrender(ed)" herself to God and sometimes the client received a "grace", "blessing" or "insight". This form of healing was not offered to guests on a formal or regular basis, and there were no advertisements in Evergreen Cottage to indicate her interests in healing. As mentioned in chapter one, Catherine perceived an important part of her role in Glastonbury to be the provision of a "space for healing" and she was not actively involved in therapeutic sessions with guests. At one time, she had held healing "seminars" and meditations in the living room of The Grail Quest, but during the period of my research she offered healing to her guests by request only, and in some cases, only if she felt inspired to do so.

Flora had created a B&B with a very definite identity as a healing centre through the direct promotion in the TIC Accommodation Guide of her identity as an "NFSH healer" and the availability of "spiritual healing" and "guidance" at her B&B. Alternative or

"New Age" magazines published in Glastonbury also promoted "healing/spiritual guidance available" at the Heart Focus B&B. Like Catherine, Flora did not "push" her spiritual healing practice, but a bulletin board inside the porch of her house advertised its availability and her status as a "fully qualified healer with the NFSH for twenty years". She also advertised the availability of "spiritual channeling" in a promotional brochure. Her National Federation of Spiritual Healers certificate and "Spiritual Healers' Professional Liability Insurance" were also displayed. Another promotional brochure pinned to the porch bulletin board listed other training and counseling experience. "Spiritual healing" was also available "on request", "time permitting".

Flora became a member of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers because of her ex-husband's involvement in the organization, but she told me that although she maintained friendly relations with the members of the NFSH in Glastonbury, and worked within the "rules" and "guidelines" of this organization, she did not attend the meditations and workshops because she was "too busy" and found that time to herself was "golden".

Unlike other proprietors of alternative B&B's who were involved in the practice of some form of healing, Flora had incorporated healing into the daily routine of her B&B through the provision of morning meditation, which, when I attended, had definite healing overtones. Flora led a meditation most mornings in the living room of her B&B before breakfast which seemed to be popular with her guests. During my stay, she began with a "prayer" for "love and healing" for all those "physically", "mentally", "emotionally", and "spiritually sick". The meditation involved visualization of the colour blue as the colour of "peace", "calm" and "healing"; a soothing "balm". She explained

that the blue light would heal all the cells of the body as the participants visualized it moving upwards through them. Flora concluded the first meditation I attended by noting that I had received "deep healing" which came through my "guides" and "spirits". Her technique provided "self-healing" available at anytime; "no need to pop pills", she said, "just take five minutes to relax and feel the peace".

The provision of healing for, and engagement in spirituality with, her guests seemed to be a vital part of Flora's lifestyle and role in Glastonbury; as much a part of the operation of her B&B as making breakfast or tidying bedrooms. The morning meditations allowed her a greater degree of interaction with guests, and in keeping with her beliefs regarding health and illness, she considered this contact to be an important part of healing, as will be discussed later. Flora had made healing an integral part of her B&B through the practice of morning meditation, and as opposed to Catherine's perception of simply providing a space for healing, Flora was actively involved in the process in her B&B.

When I telephoned her from Canada, Marlene stressed that her present involvement in "life path readings" and "energy work" had replaced her interest in "healing" to some extent yet her 1999 advertisement in the TIC Accommodation Guide promoted the availability of "healing" in addition to spiritual "Readings". Like Flora and Catherine, Marlene did not "push" her readings, waiting instead for guests to make inquiries. A promotional leaflet in Marlene's living room advertised the availability of these readings as well as "Energy Healing and Balancing" which involved "working with the subtle bodies to clear and balance them so that the life force (Chi) energies can flow through the Spiritual, Mental, Astral, and Physical bodies bringing balance, harmony and clear

movement". "Radiance Technique", "Geomancy", "Workshops" and "Retreats" were also advertised. Clearly, the Radiance Wheel offered more than simply "bed" and "breakfast".

The identity of the Divine Light Centre as an alternative establishment was manifested through John's involvement in spiritual healing. He had trained with the NFSH for "insurance purposes" but like Flora, he was not actively involved with the organization. I was made aware of his interest in healing not through the TIC Accommodation Guide, but through an internet site. Compared with many of the B&B's the availability of healing was downplayed because John's spiritual beliefs prohibited detailed promotion or advertisement of healing. A selection of brochures detailing other forms of healing available in Glastonbury was on hand for guests to peruse in their bedroom. Like Marlene, he felt that it was the responsibility of the guest to inquire should they be interested in healing.

In contrast to Marlene and John's minimalist approach to promotion of healing at their B&B's, both Tor Down and Berachah Colour Healing Centre heavily promoted the availability of healing and therapies at their accommodations which were clearly healing centres. It was the extensive promotion of healing and therapies which most clearly identified Berachah Colour Healing Centre, owned by Jan, as an alternative establishment. The wall surrounding the property advertised the establishment as a "Colour Healing Centre" with the availability of "Colour Healing", "Aura Soma readings", and "Aura Soma Massage". Jan was a practitioner of "Aura Soma" colour therapy, which she described in an information folder available in my bedroom as a

"subtle" and "non-intrusive" "holistic healing therapy encompassing body, mind and spirit". Colour was used to restore "balance" or harmony in the client and therapy involved "regenerating, revitalizing and rebalancing the human aura" through the use of "appropriate colours, selected by the client". The role of the therapist was to "interpret" these "colour choices" and to help the client understand what each choice indicated about their "state of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual being".

Jan promoted "colour readings", "massage", astrological "readings" and "healing retreats" in her 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide advertisement and included several brochures pertaining to these services in an information package mailed to me. One brochure also advertised the availability of a plethora of items for sale, including massage oils, hand painted silk scarves and shawls, wall mandalas, ceremonial robes, hand painted glasses, gemstones, candles and a "series of basic books on Colour" written by Jan.

A desk in the lounge provided leaflets about the healing therapies, prices, and other information, as well as a "registration form" for guests to fill out should they require a treatment. A promotional brochure informed prospective clients of the variety of the "services and therapies available" during their stay at Berachah Colour Healing Centre. These included an "in-depth Colour Reading" lasting one hour for £25, a "Reading and Massage" (one and a half hours) for £35, and a "Reading, Massage, and Colour Healing" (two hours) for £50.

It seemed that therapies and healing were kept separate from the task of operating Berachah Colour Healing Centre, unlike Flora's way of bringing healing into the daily running of her establishment through provision of morning meditation and interaction

with guests. Jan lived in separate apartments from her guests, neither myself nor the other guests whom I met during my stay saw much of her.

Like Berachah Colour Healing Centre, many forms of healing were available at Tor Down, owned by Cheryl and Michael, and the provision of healing seemed to be a vital part of this establishment. In the 1999 TIC Accommodation Guide, Cheryl and Michael advertised the availability of "healing", "higher self sessions" and "hydrotherapy treatments". A promotional brochure read: "Healing and guidance counseling is always available if you feel drawn to it". Both Cheryl and her husband Michael were "Reiki¹⁷ Masters giving hands on healing" who taught Reiki and "other courses" and provided "course space" at their B&B for "up to 12 people". Another brochure advertised the availability of "hands on healing", "guidance", and "psychic surgery".

Upon my arrival at Tor Down, I discovered that my bedroom was equipped with a large and well-organized folder which contained information on healing and "therapies" available at Tor Down and in Glastonbury and included the encouragement: "Do Try Some". Also included were brochures for "Reiki, rebirthing and Massage", "Regression therapy, Metamorphic Technique, Reiki Healing, and Tarot Reading ", and "Colon Hydrotherapy: A Healthy Move" which proclaimed The United Kingdom to be the "most constipated nation in the world". Also included were brochures for aromatherapy offered at the large complementary medicine centre in Glastonbury, and "body massage treatments" by another local practitioner.

¹⁷ An "alternative medical treatment...in which healing energy is channelled from the practitioner to the patient to enhance energy and reduce stress, pain, and fatigue". (Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2000 [http:// encarta.msn.com](http://encarta.msn.com) © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation).

Michael and Cheryl described their own healing skills in the "Healing" section of their folder which included "ear candling"; "an ancient healing system used in Egyptian times and before...for physical and spiritual healing". Another therapy offered involved the use of "light and sound technology" and "eye glasses" which "stimulated different brainwave frequencies synchronized with audio sound and pulsations" and "coloured lights" to bring about "gentle releasing and relaxation" and feelings of calm and centredness.

Michael also offered "Higher Self" sessions which were designed to encourage beneficial changes in the client's life and answer questions through the "guidance" of their "higher self", "that aspect of you that can see the bigger picture and knows which way to go", channeled through Michael via the spiritual guide of the client's choice, such as Jesus or other "ascended master".

Michael and Cheryl advised in the bedroom folders that they were willing and able to "arrange special healing breaks" for their guests, "tailor made to suit" their "personal requirements". A brochure reads:

We are able to offer all treatments we perform plus many other treatments available locally which we can arrange for you here in Tor Down. A selection of what is available is: past life reading; massage of varying types; aromatherapy; tarot card readings; reflexology, Jin-Shin-Do acupuncture, vibrational homeopathy, biomagnetics, etc.

Also advertised were "spiritual seekers breaks" arranged by Cheryl and Michael. These breaks lasted for a period of four to seven days and involved healings, trips to sacred sites, fellowship with "like minded people", and "individual treatments at an additional charge".

Not only did Michael and Cheryl promote their own forms of healing at Tor Down, but they also advertised other courses and workshops on-going in Glastonbury. Throughout my stay at Tor Down I collected promotional literature for a variety of courses and workshops including "DNA restranding and restructuring", "The Atlantean Initiation Mastery Program" and various Reiki healing courses. Tor Down also boasted a large collection of New Age type books and audio tapes, many of which dealt with health and healing.

Also available to peruse over breakfast were several brochures advertising herbal preparations which were sold at Tor Down, such as "herbal energizers and super fat burners", "natural antibiotic alternatives", "super antioxidants", enzymes, and "arthritis supports". As mentioned, crystals (a popular healing tool) were also on sale in the dining room. The sale of merchandise by the proprietors of Tor Down and Berachah Colour Healing Centre also distinguished them from other B&B's at which I stayed and contributed to their identity as healing centres.

Clearly, the provision of healing and various therapies was an important part of Michael and Cheryl's establishment, and yet it was not offered as part of the daily routine as it had been in Flora's. I later learned that this had to do with the proprietor's desire not to force healing on guests who might be deterred by more aggressive advertisement. As Cheryl noted:

"we've always felt like the most important side of our life is running the bed and breakfast, it's having safe, sacred space that *anybody* can walk into, and we're here to help, guide, or just be so people can use our facilities...and we can hold the energies."

Like Catherine, the proprietors of Tor Down perceived their primary role in Glastonbury to be the provision of a supportive, welcoming space for guests.

Tor Down and Berachah Colour Healing Centre promoted healing more directly than any other B&B's at which I had stayed. At the other end of the spectrum was Ann, who operated the Abbey Garth B&B. Like Catherine and Marlene, Ann viewed her home as a sanctuary and although she was a qualified member of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, she kept her role as a B&B owner and her role as a healer strictly separate to preserve the privacy and sanctity of her B&B. Neither her internet web site nor the Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide made mention of her involvement with spiritual healing, and it was through a TIC employee that I learned of her interests. When she first opened her house as a B&B, five years ago, she offered massage and healing to clients who asked for these services, but now she accepted clients for treatments only if they had been referred to her through friends or other people who knew she did "healing". She did not advertise these services and she said "It didn't really work for me to combine the two...I decided that there were other ways of doing healing and I actually feel more comfortable doing it in a clinic or a centre rather than in my home." Like Catherine, Ann felt that she needed "private space" and time for herself. Providing Bed and Breakfast and healing had been physically and spiritually draining.

I have tried to show through the above discussion that healing was promoted to varying extents by proprietors who were involved in the provision of healing to varying degrees, ranging from Ann's discontinuation of healing in her B&B to Cheryl and Michael and Jan's extensive promotion and provision of healing services. The provision of healing is,

however, a cornerstone of the foundation of these alternative B&B's. Only Ann completely separated her practice of healing from the day to day operation of her B&B, although as a practicing healer at the local NFSH office, healing did remain a vital part of her belief system.

Despite the plurality of healing techniques offered by proprietors of alternative B&B's and their varying degrees of involvement, there are basic understandings of health and healing common to most of my informants. My questions pertaining to their practices of healing or therapies invariably led to a discussion of their understanding of the nature of health and illness. In the following section I will discuss the spiritual philosophies of my informants in relation to these beliefs.

Health and the Spiritual Philosophies of Proprietor-Healers

Healing is an essential and inextricable part of the alternative spiritual beliefs of proprietor-healers, and an essential part of their identity. The type of healing available at these B&B's differs according to the spiritual and religious beliefs of the proprietors and their alternative world view. It is these beliefs which endow each alternative B&B with its individual alternative character. As a result, Bed and Breakfasts are more than constructions of wood and concrete to proprietor-healers. Catherine, Flora, Cheryl and Michael, John and Meredith, Marlene and Jan have imbued their homes with spiritual significance.

A unifying belief centres around the holistic perspective common to both the New Age movement and alternative healing. Prince and Riches write: "The New Age 'person' very basically includes four inseparable and mutually affecting elements: the physical, the

emotional, the mental and the spiritual” (1999:180). In keeping with this “holistic” perspective, an understanding of the individual as more than a physical body was pervasive among my alternative informants. Prince and Riches write:

“The multi-dimensional nature of the human person has a central bearing on New Age ideas about health and illness. Wellness, in New Age thinking, implies a proper balance among the various elements (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual) which constitute the human being, and illness that such a balance is lacking...It follows that healing, and the maintenance of well-being, consisted of restoring or sustaining the correct balance.” (1999:181).

That healing is not limited to the physical body but is instead linked to achieving "balance" and "harmony" between the different "bodies" of the individual is indicated by my informants. In a promotional brochure available in my bedroom at Berachah Colour Healing Centre, Jan describes Aura Soma colour therapy as a "subtle form of holistic healing therapy encompassing body, mind, and spirit". Her practice of Aura Soma massage works "on all levels with all the complexities and disharmonies that create disease" and involves "rebalancing the human aura". With regards to "health care", Michael said: "you need to deal with four levels, you need to deal with physical, emotional, mental, spiritual bodies in order to heal." He defined "healing" broadly as "evolving to a state of perfect balance and harmony", a realization of identity and purpose. His "Higher Self Communication" was a "healing or balancing process" which could involve "significant emotional release", an indication again that care of the emotional "body" and achieving "balance" is important in the overall health of the individual. Catherine, too, believed that illness stemmed from a lack of "harmony and balance". In Marlene's case,

the result of her "energy healing" was "balance" and "harmony".

It was often acknowledged by my informants that physical illness could be the result of an unresolved spiritual or emotional issue and physical healing could occur through spiritual or emotional healing. Therefore, the forms of healing practiced by alternative B&B proprietors seemed to be largely spiritually based. According to Marlene, lack of self-love, denial of spirituality, restrictive "mental patterns", suppression of emotions, "fears", "anxieties", "distresses" and "past traumas" could lead to sickness.

For Marlene, healing was "about the relationship of the conscious and the unconscious" and becoming "more conscious" through dealing with "emotional problems" which caused distress and ultimately prevented people from moving forward and growing spiritually. Marlene described her work with energy healing and clearing in the following way:

"you're working through all the subtle bodies to clear the energies, and that doesn't mean that the person if they've been physically ill or mentally ill is...immediately healed, but it means that there's energetic space for that to happen".

Energy healing could be used for both physical and emotional problems which made people "ill". Cancer resulted, in "about seventy percent of cases", from a "lack of love". These "energies" could be "cleared" and although the tumor may still be present, the client would be "more receptive to other forms of healing." Clearly, Marlene's approach to healing and understanding the nature of illness and health was holistic; taking into account the emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical aspects of a client.

As with other informants, Catherine believed healing to be about more than the

physical body, and for her, "emotional healing" was of prime importance. Such healing could come from peace with God, others and with the past, and physical healing would often follow. Most people, in fact, needed emotional healing and she could see their inner child with "hurts which hadn't healed". All "tyrants" had a damaged "inner child". Prisons, too, were filled with "emotionally damaged people". Hope for healing lay in contacting this inner child and addressing suppressed emotions, as was the case in Marlene's beliefs. Like Flora, who perceived "disease" to be "dis-ease" resulting from unhappiness, Catherine believed that negative thoughts could lead to disease.

Proprietor-healers offer more than therapies at their establishments. They are inviting their clients to subscribe to a new belief system or spiritual philosophy, and to share similar experiences or deepen existing beliefs. It is this characteristic of alternative B&B's which also identifies them as something other than simply "Bed and Breakfasts".

An integral part of this "conversion" to an alternative belief system revolves around taking responsibility for one's health or illness, and in making big and often difficult life changes. Such changes are viewed as a central part of healing. Marlene related a story of a "very nice woman" with a "classic middle class nice person syndrome" who attended a group healing session in which a friend of Marlene's, also a healer, strongly recommended that she change her diet for a while to avoid meat and dairy products. The woman "looked horrified" and said "my family won't eat it". Despite the encouragement and advice of the group, she remained unconvinced: "she could only see reasons why she wasn't going to do it, it would be too expensive, it would be too difficult, etc. etc.". Later Marlene heard from one of the other members of the group that she had developed very

bad cancers. "She'd made a choice", said Marlene, "she wasn't going to change" and she therefore suffered the consequences. Marlene's healing was directed at initiating changes in a client's life; empowering them to find their own path and to embark on a process of spiritual growth.

The basis of Michael's "Higher Self sessions" also seemed to be change. A promotional leaflet for this practice reads:

Do you feel there need to be some changes in your life - but you are not sure what they are - Do you feel your intuition, your guidance just isn't getting through clearly - that maybe you need to hear from your higher self - that aspect of you that can see the bigger picture and knows which way to go.

Like Marlene, he perceived a life change to be an important part of growth or healing. This could mean moving to the right location, as he and his family had done by moving to Glastonbury. He said: "It can be crucial that we're in the right place...and I feel we're guided to be here, doing what we're doing". Being in the "right place" and "doing the right thing" allowed themselves and others who had made similar moves to meet and interact with "lots of people", and to be "more of themselves so that they can help heal others and the planet by using these energetics of being who they are".

Jan also considered change to be essential to healing, as expressed in a promotional brochure which explains Aura Soma colour therapy:

"clients take away their chosen liquid colours to use over a period of time and many have reported subtle but recognizable healing that has taken place in their lives. They may find themselves moving forward in some way, becoming "unstuck" and clarifying issues. Changes are likely to occur in accordance with their own readiness to receive healing."

Like Flora and Marlene, John believed that sickness could result from emotional issues. "Warnings" were experienced on the emotional and mental level by the individual before disease manifested itself in the physical body and the individual knew that changes had to be made. Physical manifestations of imbalance could be disease, or unpleasant sensations such as "dizziness", and "very emotional feelings" of "death", "darkness", or "isolation" which increased in strength as their "soul" put "pressure" on the individual to "change". Like Marlene, John perceived big and often difficult life changes to be an important part of healing and he acknowledged that many prospective clients were either unready or unwilling to make these decisions. He said:

"healing means change...and most people don't want to change, they want to get rid of an error, they want to get rid of a husband or they want to get rid of a cancer, they want to get rid of a tumor, they want to get rid of a cold, they want to get rid of some emotional problem, but they don't want...to find the cause, and the cause is always what I would work on, finding the cause within somebody"

Taking responsibility for one's health through making life-changing decisions is a related theme. The belief that individuals are directly responsible for their own health was clearly revealed in my interviews with informants and proprietors of B&B's. Much literature (See for example McGuire and Kantor 1987:241) on alternative healing emphasizes the responsibility of the individual in controlling and maintaining their health by making certain lifestyle changes, such as changes in diet and work habits. McGuire and Kantor state:

"for most adherents of alternative healing, their beliefs and practices are

thoroughly interwoven into everyday life, not so much as a response to illness per se but as a gradual but comprehensive change in their entire approach to well-being". (1987:244)

Goldstein, Sutherland, Jaffe, and Wilson emphasize this "concern with the individual's responsibility for his/her own health" and "emphasis on health education, *self-care*, and *self-healing*" as commonly cited characteristics of alternative, holistic medicine (1988:853, italics added). As is exemplified by my discussions with Catherine, Flora, Marlene, and other informants, New Age healing, which endorses this holistic approach, places the responsibility for wellness on the individual. The place of the New Age healer is therefore to aid personal changes in the client's life (Heelas 1996:82-83). As discussed in chapter one, many proprietor-healers viewed themselves as having a special role in Glastonbury which was often that of a counselor, teacher, or guide in a "relatively open, equal, and reciprocal" relationship (Goldstein et al 1988:853).

Many alternative healers and several proprietors of alternative B&B's in Glastonbury perceived alternative or complementary therapies to be as effective or more effective than conventional biomedical treatments, and some spoke against "traditional allopathic medicine", especially its perceived failure to treat the "whole" person (body, mind, and spirit) instead of symptoms of illness. Marlene discussed this idea of patient responsibility and she spoke against the "trust me I'm a doctor" attitude which was prevalent in England, then explained that "healers don't tell you what's best; the person knows best". Good practitioners of alternative healing recommended changes in diet and lifestyle to prevent a recurrence of the problem. She compared this approach to that of

"allopathic" or conventional doctors who suppressed symptoms without helping the patient to "stay healthy" by making such changes. Marlene perceived her work as empowering people to find their own "path" and her clairvoyant "readings" were conducted with this goal in mind. For Marlene, healing was a process of spiritual growth, self-discovery, and "development and evolution", which she facilitated. Finding direction in life, and finding one's "soul purpose" or *raison d'être*, was an essential part of achieving health. With regard to these readings, she explained "I look at a deep enough level to help people, not many readers do that in Glastonbury. All traditions see the body as the temple of the soul...we carry a divine spark, and I help it shine." For Marlene, health and spiritual growth were very much the responsibility of the individual. She was only a facilitator for this process, as indicated by the following quote: "I remind them that they're a divine being and...it's up to them what expression they have for that and how they can incorporate it into their daily lives, and what their potential may be".

Flora, too, expressed agreement about taking responsibility for health. She wished to help people who "genuinely want[ed] to help themselves", not those who needed "props". In her life, she had chosen "partners who needed to be needed", and had spent her life "propping people up", but, she said, "we must take responsibility".

Catherine perceived that people came to Glastonbury to "heal their lives", but it was "useless" to give them healing unless they learned what had made them ill. Part of this process of healing involved living a wholesome life with regards to diet and environment. Catherine was a vegetarian and a staunch opponent of genetically modified foods. Her choices of food reflected her belief that it was up to the individual consumer to make

healthy decisions.

In general, healing was provided in a non-authoritarian way by proprietors – it was necessary for clients to take responsibility for their own health and to engage in healing sessions voluntarily. Neither Marlene, who spoke against patients who went to a healer for a “fix”, nor Flora, nor Catherine wanted their clients or guests to become dependent on them; rather that they should embark on a process of growth and healing themselves.

Payment for Healing

An elaborate and extensive “service industry” has arisen in Glastonbury to cater to the large numbers of visitors who flood the town during the tourist season. Alternative Bed and Breakfasts are part of this industry yet proprietors attempt to distance themselves from commercialism. One of the most interesting aspects of healing in Glastonbury and in the alternative Bed and Breakfasts involves payment for therapies and healing, and the moral dilemma which this poses. As noted by other researchers who have studied Glastonbury (see Bowman 1993 and Prince and Riches 1999), there is a strong “anti-commercial” sentiment expressed by many of the town’s New Age residents. In several cases my informants struggled to reconcile the need to make ends meet financially with this sentiment. Healing was perceived by many of my informants to be a “gift” of sorts, and the notion of charging money for healing was therefore incompatible with their spiritual beliefs. Often, the provision of healing services was not cheap. A therapeutic massage given by Jan, proprietor of Berachah Colour Healing Centre, cost up to £50, and Marlene (proprietor of the Radiance Wheel B&B) charged up to £30 for her readings,

although she noted that reduced fees were available to those unable to pay the full cost. Flora, who operated the Heart Focus B&B, stressed that she didn't charge money for her spiritual healing unless the session ran for over an hour. By charging a reasonable fee for long sessions, she felt that she would encourage people to "value" her "time" and she suggested a "donation" of £10. For many proprietors, healing did not seem to provide a main source of income but Catherine charged £5 per person for spiritual talks at The Grail Quest and was thinking about starting meditations and workshops in her home again to help ease her financial strain. Therapies weren't cheap at Tor Down, but payment for the "Higher Self Sessions" offered by Michael, which lasted from one to three hours, was by "donation with a suggested figure of £20" and the advertisement stressed that "nobody is ever turned away on monetary grounds". I noticed throughout my research that payment for many workshops and lectures was referred to as a "donation", or "investment". This is an attempt to de-emphasize the nature of the transaction as being commercial.

It was the opinion of a woman who owned one of the very few alternative type shops in Wells, a nearby Cathedral town, that Glastonbury was "too commercial". She said: "if Jesus walked down the High Street, he'd turn tables because of the money angle and the commercialism". Prince and Riches found during their research in Glastonbury that the shops on Glastonbury High Street desired to distance themselves from accusations of commercialism. They write that such shops

“were not standard capitalist enterprises. Their rationale would appear to revolve more around making a living than making a profit, for they commonly incorporate strongly informal and even overtly spiritual dimensions which seem

to nullify capitalistic ideology and logic” (1999:174).

Like these shops, many proprietor-healers with whom I stayed wanted to disassociate themselves from a commercial image through offering healing in exchange for another service, or for a reduced price or “concessions”. Prince and Riches note that “barter – the swapping of goods and services in a strategic way according to need – occurred frequently”(1999:174) and included exchanges for healing. I did several hours of gardening work in exchange for a “reading” with one practitioner.

Several of my informants perceived there to be a difference between "healers" and "therapists" based on payment or monetary grounds. According to Marlene, a division exists in Glastonbury between alternative people and "therapists" in Glastonbury. The alternative people referred to therapists as “bread heads”; people who were interested only in making money, not in promoting social change. “Bread heads” did not offer lower prices for their therapies to those who could not afford to pay, and they preferred to work with the middle class. For Marlene, this approach made healing "exclusive", but she conceded that training to become a therapist could cost a lot of money, so many therapists felt that they should be paid properly. Marlene knew a woman who did "healing work in a cancer clinic or for cancer patients" and while Marlene admitted that she was "very good at what she does", she would "only work with middle class people". “Her excuse”, Marlene told me, “is that it cost her a lot of money in training and supervision to get where she is, so she deserves to be paid properly”. “Bread heads” worked to support their lifestyle, in a way similar to any middle class job.

Marlene was not exclusive in her approach to healing. As mentioned, she offered

reduced prices or 'exchanges' for low wage earners after discussing how much they could afford and she had worked with those suffering serious mental illness, ex-offenders and criminals.

Divisions based on anti-commercial sentiments also exist between alternative B&B proprietors and healers in Glastonbury. Catherine had been heavily involved in the practice of colour healing some years ago, but her position regarding such therapy had changed after several incidents involving other practitioners of this form of healing in Glastonbury. Heavy competition and unfair business practices had caused a loss of custom for her and another practitioner. Her experiences led her to realize that colour therapy was not "ethical", that it was not "pure enough, high enough, good enough" - it was instead a commercial, "money making" enterprise.

Both Catherine and Flora seemed concerned about the commercial aspect of conducting healing sessions for money. Flora expressed criticism of courses in Glastonbury which she perceived to be commercial enterprises led by practitioners who were into "money making". In July, she had an upsetting experience involving a guest who had come to Glastonbury to participate in a workshop which she called a "get rich quick scheme" (participants were charged £180 each). Flora told me that there were "good courses" and "bad courses", just like there were "good healers" and "bad healers" in Glastonbury. Apparently the course participant, a young woman, had been hospitalized following her involvement in this course which triggered a serious mental breakdown. Flora was critical of the legitimacy of the course, its morality, and of the high cost. She felt that people came to Glastonbury to find "spiritual answers" and while people like herself

"generally want to share their spiritual knowledge" freely, unfortunately there were also those who did so as "a way of earning a lot of cash". She said "it's a shame that it's so expensive and only available to those that can afford it, and that's why I share...everything I can without charging."

Linked with the issue of payment for healing is the notion of "ego". Healers often spoke of the dangers of allowing "ego" to distort the intentions of the healer and interfere with the accuracy and purpose of the reading. Flora stressed that using a "gift" of clairvoyance for "popularity", "ego", "money", or "fame" was wrong, and it was necessary to question the "motives" of the reader. For Flora, the most important thing in healing was a "pure" intention, and that the act was unmotivated by desire for money and fame. "Ego" was to be excluded from the act of healing, through the realization that the healer was "simply a channel" for healing. Healers, she told me, must recognize that they are "just God's tools" and the healing came from God through a "hierarchy" of "intermediary" figures such as Jesus or Buddha, then through the personal guides of the healer. Impure thoughts or motivations could block that healing energy. The purer the heart of the healer and his or her intention, the better the healing. This partially explained why there were "good healers and not so good healers". Flora said that she liked to think of herself as "a very pure channel" because her heart was pure and her "only motive" was to "help that person" she was healing, not for "fame and glory".

Meredith spoke very highly of her husband John's counseling and healing abilities, saying that he was a "genuine healer". His "power" came "from the divine", and was "pure of thought and intention". As noted by Flora, the spiritual constitution and integrity

of character, a lack of "ego", was important in the act of healing - money, "fame", or "fortune" were not acceptable motivations for healing.

Tied in with a strong anti-commercial sentiment were concerns about legitimacy of various forms of healing and spirituality available in Glastonbury. The cost of healing workshops was sometimes used as a judge of legitimacy and when informants suspected that healing was occurring for purely commercial reasons, they often expressed suspicion and distrust.

While several proprietors of alternative B&B's conceded that there were some individual healers, healing centres, or organizations in Glastonbury that were less legitimate than others, they expressed the opinion that even these establishments had a place in the town. With regards to the legitimacy of healing and spiritual practices in Glastonbury, Michael felt that there was a "very wide rang of therapies, healings, (and) counselings available" and "from personal experience" he perceived that most of the practitioners were "very genuine" and "very helpful". "Negative" experiences could, however, also be valuable. He said: "Even the few that wouldn't fall into that category I would still say one would get benefit from it because you're obviously being guided to interact with a person who's going to give you an interesting experience" and "wonderful lessons". Michael perceived the term "dangerous" as applied to some of the healing or spiritual practices in Glastonbury as being judgmental.

Often proprietors were reluctant to pass judgment on the different forms of healing as illustrated by Cheryl who said that "good" and "bad" weren't part of their "reality" in Glastonbury – the world they had created for themselves and their guests at Tor Down.

Nevertheless, Michael mentioned "certain organizations" in Glastonbury which appeared to be "good", "helpful", "healing" or "nurturing" but the people responsible for running them "appear(ed) to be rather money oriented". Once again, the motivations of an organization, financial or spiritual, were being called into question.

Neither John nor Meredith felt comfortable with, or supported, all the forms of alternative healing in Glastonbury. John was quite critical, saying that in his view "ninety five percent" of what went on with respect to the New Age and its "glamour" was "crap", and Meredith agreed that plenty of it was "over the top" and "ridiculous". The following excerpt from an interview clearly illustrates his concerns about the financial, or materialistic, motivations of some members of Glastonbury's New Age or alternative community:

"...we've come in here to prove that there is another world and another life and we're no different than the materialists, at least the materialists would be honest and say the most important thing in life is money, then he goes out to attain it, but when you get half of Glastonbury saying that the most important thing in their life is working with healing and truth and yet cheat the system, I mean, it's ridiculous, and a lot of them do. They sign on and get dole money, they will be doing numerous healing works here, and they're cheating the whole system".

This practice of conducting healing work while collecting government support was noted by Prince and Riches:

"as occurs in many areas of Britain where low-income populations are concentrated, people in the New Age community would stretch out their incomes by taking on and combining, concealed from the surveillance of mainstream fiscal institutions, different forms of work and economic support"

(1999:173).

With regards to choosing a healing or spiritual centre, John's advice was to "listen to your heart" and use "intuition" as a means of discrimination. It was good, and healthy, to be skeptical. Like Michael, and Cheryl, he tempered his criticisms with the comment that some people "need" difficult experiences, so even dubious centres did serve a purpose and had a place in Glastonbury. "There's things that are necessary for some people at that time in their life", he said.

Catherine spoke of the large numbers of people going to see "channels" or "mediums" in Glastonbury- people who were "bored" with the teachings of Christianity. There were, she said, very few "true" channels in Glastonbury; most charged £20 and told their clients what they wanted to hear. Catherine's beliefs concerning channeling echoed those held by one of her guests, "Jessie" who practiced channeling on an informal basis. It was her opinion that "true spirit channels" didn't charge fees. When she received a spiritual "message" for someone, she would simply give it to them.

Like Catherine, Marlene was also critical of clairvoyants in Glastonbury who specialized in superficial issues of money, relationships, family, and health. While these readers might have had "spiritualist training", she said

"they're just telling a lot of information, and they're not telling you from...a growth point of view or a spiritual point of view...and on one level that bores me...it's not what I want to be doing...I'm looking for where that person is, what their potential is spiritually, what's their growth potential for this life and how they can get to it."

I perceive her criticism to be directed towards the use of alternative spirituality for

secular purposes instead of spiritual growth, in the same way that accepting or charging money for spiritual services relegates practitioners from the realm of the spiritual to the secular, commercial world.

Like Michael and John, Marlene thought even negative experiences could be beneficial. "you always learn something from it", she said. Even less than genuine practitioners could change their ways and Marlene understood the existence of centres and practitioners of doubtful legitimacy as "part of the process" of change and growth; "a huge teaching" which she would not interfere with or attempt to regulate.

Regarding legitimacy, the conclusion seems to be among alternative informants that while there are forms of healing and centres in Glastonbury of doubtful repute, sometimes as a result of commercialism, all are valid in that they provide experiences for visitors and clients which are necessary and beneficial: important, though difficult, lessons can be learned from these experiences. Jan spoke of the "Glastonbury Experience": an experience which can be both positive and negative, and which is very much determined by the choices of each guest.

Like my alternative informants, Roger (proprietor of the conventional Moore View B&B), felt that New Age shops and healing centres fulfilled a need in Glastonbury, and he, too, was reluctant to pass judgment upon them. When I asked if he thought all these businesses were "legitimate", Roger answered that "to some extent it's a sham", but he said "if people get help from it, it's got to be positive". Also like alternative informants, he perceived the need to be discriminating in the choice of healing centre or practitioner: "you've got to be an adult about it." He advised: "be careful - you can be overexposed

emotionally, or pay a lot of money". I believe that Roger's observations indicate that concerns about legitimacy and commercialism transcend boundaries between the conventional and the alternative sides of Glastonbury.

In this section, I have attempted to demonstrate that payment for healing raises issues of the commercialization of spirituality and is therefore perceived negatively by proprietors of alternative establishments, who often go to great lengths to justify their need for financial compensation or to provide alternatives to monetary payments. The issue of how payment for healing can occur in terms of their spiritual philosophies is contentious, and the exchange of money is often legitimized by referring to the cost of healing as a "donation", or "investment", instead of a "fee". The exchange of money for spiritual services embeds the act of healing in the secular world – the very world which proprietors are attempting to escape through their lives in Glastonbury and their involvement in alternative religion.

Limitations of Healing

The degree to which healing was promoted in most alternative Bed and Breakfasts at which I stayed led me to assume that healing sessions would be conducted much more regularly than, in fact, they were during my fieldwork. Proprietors often discussed previous experiences with healing clients, and several noted that they had treated seriously ill people. Flora had performed spiritual healing on patients suffering cancer and chronic functional problems. Marlene had worked with a seriously disturbed schizophrenic woman and victims of abuse, and Catherine had attempted to help a man suffering from syphilis. Bed and Breakfasts did not, however, seem to me to be hospices,

and I did not meet clients who were seriously ill staying for prolonged periods of time. I was given the impression that B&B proprietors were not looking to accommodate terminally ill patients, but a certain type of client whom they could aid spiritually over a relatively short time. With regard to the B&B owners with whom I had chosen to stay, Marlene said: "most people you're dealing with aren't looking for disabled people. Healing is for growth, not in a medical sense". She perceived it as being about "growth and expansion". She said:

"for me a lot of the healing isn't about going because you've got gangrene in your left leg...the healing that works really well here is the healing that is things in you whether they're physical or emotional, mental or spiritual that are blocking your growth or waking up. And that's a lot of the healing that happens here."

Healing, for Marlene, was not simply about therapies. Her view was reflected by Jan, who told me that most of her clients and guests wanted spiritual readings instead of colour massage. She thought that guests who came to her B&B shared the characteristic of being at a "crossroads" in their lives, so they were looking for spiritual help rather than relief from a physical ailment.

Flora and Cheryl both noted that they placed a limit of two weeks on any period of accommodation. In the case of Cheryl, this was done in order to keep the proprietor - client relationship on professional terms. Michael had been "very keen" to accept guests for longer periods of time in the winter when business was slow but Cheryl found that complications arose with long-term guests. She expressed great concern for her privacy and maintenance of personal boundaries for not only herself but her family. One young

man had stayed at Tor Down for six weeks and engaged in a therapy of releasing pent-up emotions in the form of a barrage of obscenities while in the bath tub. Another incident involved the "diabolical" stay of a thoroughly "domineering lady". Cheryl said: "it was just like having an extra child around the house and our children got very antagonistic towards her, and it all became very difficult and you've got someone in your space all the time". The fact that they had become "friends" over her lengthy stay complicated the matter and made Cheryl reluctant to develop personal attachments to guests.

Flora, too, found that intense personal relationships interfered with her goal to provide spiritual counseling and aid to as many people as possible. Her interest in, and involvement with, her guests had led her to put a limit on the length of time for an individual booking. She explained that she'd had "some of the most beautiful people" she'd "ever met" at her B&B and they got along so well that they'd go off on "excursions" together requiring her to close down her B&B and lose other customers. She felt that this wasn't right - "I have to open myself and offer my teachings to everyone". Flora expressed concern about her financial status several times and I inferred that closure of her B&B for any length of time would also be undesirable from a financial point of view.

In addition to limiting the length of individual bookings, proprietors were sometimes limited in their ability, or desire, to heal guests. Catherine experienced clients beyond her ability to help, including a man suffering from syphilis whom she directed to a medical clinic and a man who came to her for "emotional healing". It seemed that he had his own idea about the therapy - he wanted what she described as a "re-enactment of

weird sexual experiences which he had had in public school". Such therapy would involve him donning women's garments and subjecting himself to a bombardment of insults and orders from Catherine. She promptly refused.

Involvement in healing is dynamic and waxes or wanes depending on the other interests and commitments of the proprietors. This fluctuation seems to be a characteristic of healing in alternative B&B's at which I stayed. Catherine did not "push" her own healing due to a busy schedule involving her other interests such as creative writing and recording music. She was, however, considering becoming more involved with her practice of what she called the Holy Breath since it was probably what she was "meant" to be doing and therefore an important part of her role in Glastonbury.

Like Catherine, Ann no longer offered healing at her B&B after finding the task of running both successfully too draining. John, too, had become less involved with offering healing "retreats" while he concentrated on his own spiritual growth. Clients continued to come to him for healing sessions, but compared to the summer of 1998, when he had been very busy with healing and running "retreats" in his house, he had done "very little" in 1999.

Michael wanted to become more involved with healing and less involved with accountancy, and his wife, Cheryl, had increased her involvement with healing and spirituality since their move to Glastonbury. She felt that they might perhaps provide more healing at Tor Down in the future. As mentioned, she and Michael felt that their main role was the provision of bed and breakfast and a "safe, sacred space that anybody can walk into" and previously "healing" and "courses" had been of a "secondary nature".

Recently, she had been given a "reading" from a psychic which suggested that they should be doing "more healing and teaching". Michael, too, received spiritual guidance through meditation during my stay which suggested that he should increase his involvement in healing and counseling guests at Tor Down.

Marlene, too, had changed her approach to healing. She no longer dealt with what she called "healing emergencies" or "crisis work" which she found "terribly stressful" leading to "burnout". She no longer did "counseling" work, saying that she found it "too slow" or boring. Proprietors of alternative B&B's were not confined to the practice of a specific form of healing or a specific schedule, and as their interests changed, so too did their practice of healing in the B&B's.

Comparisons between proprietors reveal that in addition to the diversity of their beliefs concerning healing and the range of their therapies and interests, B&B's also differed in the degree of interaction between proprietors and guests. A range of involvement with guests was exhibited by alternative proprietors, and owners either perceived themselves as having a very definite role in their relationships with guests, as illustrated by Flora, or they were more distant in their interactions.

For Flora, such interactions were an essential part of the healing experience. Part of her method of healing was expressed through the simple act of talking with her guests - "All disease is dis-ease of the mind," she told me during an interview, treated through putting "the mind at ease" by talking to a "healer who they really trust" and who would not apportion guilt or blame. Good healers had often been through similar experiences and had lived "checkered lives" and could therefore understand their clients.

Like Flora, John and Meredith strove for more intimate relationships with their guests. Other proprietors, like Cheryl, Michael, Marlene, Jan, Catherine, and Ann seemed to maintain a professional distance. As with the provision of healing, there seemed to be a "practical limit" to the duration and intensity of relationships between guests and proprietors.

There also seemed to be something of a conflict between the ideal situation and the reality of life as a B&B proprietor involving the relationships they tried to establish with their guests. Cheryl said:

"it took us three years to get used to the idea that our main thing was a bed and breakfast, because you want to be out there, helping spirituality, and helping everybody and...waving the banner...and running courses and being inspiring to people...but it took us three years to accept that all we were to do was to have our house here available to people and be happy with that"

Like Cheryl, Ann also guarded her personal space and turned guests away if she didn't "feel comfortable about them" or she felt "stressed out" and needed rest. She said:

"you have to do that in a town like Glastonbury because it's a tourist town all year round and if you're not careful you end up just not being yourself, just being so totally not with it that you can't cope, so I have to have my boundaries, and I've learned that the hard way, I mean you think you can be there for everybody all the time, but you can't."

Flora believed that she had been "told" very strongly by the voice of Sai Baba that her house was an "ashram", or spiritual community, and it was her job to provide the space, the B&B, and she was not responsible for sorting out all the problems of her guests. Like Cheryl and Ann, she came to a realization that she couldn't "be there for people all night

and all day as well"; she had to have "boundaries". "I love my guests dearly", she said, "but I need my own space sometimes". This indicates that Flora, too, found it necessary to place practical limitations on healing and personal relationships for her own sake.

Cheryl, Ann, and Flora began operating B&B's with an ideal vision of their role in Glastonbury. Experiences with guests demonstrated the limitations of these roles, and the necessity of establishing boundaries in their relationships with guests.

Conclusion

I have discussed the limitations proprietors of alternative B&B's placed on their practice of healing. Considering that I have also discussed at length the importance of healing as a cornerstone of their spiritual beliefs and as an important part of the identity of their B&B's, this seems to introduce a paradox: if healing is such an important part of the philosophy of alternative proprietors, why is it not practiced on a more regular basis?

This problem may be resolved by considering that "healing" is more than "therapies" to these proprietors. Although several alternative B&B's at which I stayed promoted various healing "therapies" in their advertisements, including Tor Down and Berachah Colour Healing Centre, healing was noted by several of my informants as being distinct from "therapies". Marlene said that "healing" was the "use of energies" and a process of spiritual growth over time. "Therapies", by comparison, were "techniques" like reflexology, Reiki, and homeopathy which involved the possibility of "physical cures" and "treatments" but not "healing", which she perceived to be more intuitive than learned. According to Flora, Marlene, Ann, Catherine, John, and Michael, healing could be much more subtle than scheduling a hands-on session of therapy, and could instead be realized

through the simple act of being in that particular location of the B&B and interacting with the landscape or with other people at the B&B. This was clearly illustrated by Flora. Despite her promotion of healing at the Heart Focus B&B, it was Flora's impression that although many guests thought that they would have healing sessions with her, when they arrived they usually found that the experience of talking with and being "amongst good people", and feeling the "love" in her B&B was healing in itself. Flora said: "they come to me and say 'I haven't had any healing but I feel so good'." It was not necessarily a scheduled healing session with Flora that resulted in healing. Often she would "guide" guests to heal *themselves* through simple things such as teaching them to play. "To heal is to make happy", she explained, by "listening, caring, healing, and understanding". Healing was very much about the cultivation of positive relationships between herself and guests.

In a similar way, Ann believed that an important part of her role was providing a space where significant interactions could occur between guests who were fated to meet. She found that, like Flora, she could help her guests by talking with them:

"something I would say off the cuff would be helping them find the answer to their situation...and it wouldn't be anything extraordinary, but somehow it would just give them what they needed to go onto their next step or I might be able to direct them to a place or to somebody else that they wanted to talk to..."

For Ann, this experience was very "rewarding". She said: "you feel like you're part of a system, a spiritual system, that's working it all out for you".

The landscape of Glastonbury was strongly linked by several informants to healing. They believed it contained an "energy" which could be used for healing. Therefore,

failure to render a therapeutic service to guests in no way thwarted the healing that guests might receive nor did it undermine the role of proprietors in Glastonbury as healers, or the identity of their B&B's as centres of healing. One could obtain healing simply by virtue of being in Glastonbury, a sacred place which had "always" drawn healers, and those wishing to be healed. Flora, John, Ann, Marlene, and Catherine also perceived their B&B's to be places of healing by merit of their location within this magical, sacred landscape. The relationship between the landscape of Glastonbury, healing, and the spiritual belief systems of my informants will be the subject of chapter three.

Chapter 3: Healing and The Landscape of Glastonbury

In this chapter, I will discuss in detail an important part of my alternative informants' spiritual beliefs – the existence of a network of invisible lines of energy which criss cross the globe and converge in Glastonbury called “ley lines”. These lines are used by alternative informants to explain Glastonbury's nature as a spiritual centre of great power, their own presence in Glastonbury, and its attraction to visitors whom informants perceive as being “drawn” to the town for spiritual renewal and healing.

I will also discuss important features of the landscape which figure prominently in the beliefs of many informants, both alternative and conventional, such as the Tor, Chalice Well, and the Abbey ruins. These features, believed by alternative informants to be located on ley lines, are viewed as important links between Glastonbury's legendary past and the present. They also possess healing qualities because of their location in relation to ley lines. Proprietor-healers view their Bed and Breakfast establishments as being sacred spaces within the larger sacred space of Glastonbury. This sanctity is often granted by their location with respect to features such as the Tor, the Abbey, or Chalice Well. Healing and spiritual renewal can be achieved simply by being in that space and interacting with the proprietor, other guests, or the landscape. I will discuss this point with reference to Marlene, Flora, Ann, and Catherine.

Ley lines are also interpreted in Christian terms by several informants. In the last sections of this chapter I discuss the heterogeneity of religious beliefs in Glastonbury and conflicting interpretations of features of its landscape such as the Abbey and Chalice

Well. Such diversity of beliefs is often explained by alternative informants in terms of ley lines, which draw representatives of all spiritual beliefs to the town.

Ley lines

Many alternative or spiritual healers believe that the power to heal is “transcendent”, meaning it can be drawn from the earth and from a landscape invested with healing energy, and channeled through the healer into the patient (McGuire 1993:150). Much promotional literature concerning Glastonbury dwells upon a “spiritual energy” residing in the features of the landscape. For example, a pamphlet published by Berachah Colour Healing Centre reads:

“Glastonbury ‘Avalon of the Heart’ – the ‘English Jerusalem’... is a holy place known as the Isle of Avalon, abundant in folklore, legend, and *spiritual energy*...”(italics added).

A promotional brochure for the seminar rooms for hire in the Glastonbury Experience courtyard describes Glastonbury as “a town renowned for its deep transformative energies” to which “people come from all over the world” to “experience this truly extraordinary place and sacred land.” Further, a brochure for the Isle of Avalon Foundation promotes Glastonbury as

“A place which has long been recognized as a sacred site of intense *transformative energy*...From the earliest days this energy has drawn people to it to find healing, an awareness of the sacred and a place to work and serve.”
(Italics added)

Glastonbury’s nature as a healing centre and a “sacred” place of spiritual power is

explained by alternative informants in term of ley lines. Many of my alternative informants, such as Michael and Marlene, perceived Glastonbury to be a centre of energies and a unique and powerful place because of the convergence of several major energy lines. Stonehenge, Avebury, Iona, and the pyramids of Egypt were noted by informants as other examples of sites made sacred by the convergence of these lines.

The holistic approach to viewing the human body discussed in chapter two is extended by my alternative informants to encompass a holistic perspective of the earth and the environment. In a way analogous to the veins of the human body, these ley lines are seen as being veins of earth energy which connect Glastonbury with other geographical locations and features believed to be ‘sacred’ and of spiritual importance.

The earth – human body analogy is also made explicit by many proprietor-healers and alternative informants who perceive the landscape of Glastonbury to mirror the body. Glastonbury is perceived to be the “heart centre” or “heart chakra” of Britain or even the world, and people are drawn to it to heal “heart issues” such as relationship problems, emotional problems, or even physical problems relating to the heart. Before I left for England, I had been diagnosed with a slightly loose heart valve and an informant and therapist thought the connection was obvious – I had come to Glastonbury to draw attention to, and heal, that part of me. John, proprietor of the Divine Light Centre said: “this place works in the depth of your heart”.

Glastonbury Tor is, without a doubt, the most prominent feature of the Glastonbury landscape, rising from the flat surrounds to a height of five hundred and twenty five feet. It is said to be “the central meeting-point or crossroads” of ley lines, a “vortex or meeting

point of energies in their purest and wildest form" (Howard-Gordon 1982:9). Marlene referred to the two major lines which crossed on the Tor as "geomantic corridors"; lines of energy "traveling for a considerable distance" which connect many sacred sites. She said:

"A lot of these major lines, they go right round the globe, or they go through huge areas, they're not just on one continent or one island or in one area, they go right across...the energy would travel all the way round the globe, and connect in with all the little junction points"

According to her one such line travels through Cornwall to St. Michael's Mount, continues under the ocean, and emerges "somewhere in South America".

Today, the Tor is the site for rituals both individual and collective and for pagan celebrations. Modern day druids celebrate all four major events of their religious calendar on this site to varying degrees of pomp and ceremony. The Tor is the site for an international gathering and elaborate ceremony of Druids on the Summer Solstice. I also witnessed an initiation ceremony which involved members of a pagan group. Other events held on the site of the Tor include a "Solar cycle festival" which promoted "meditation, celebration" and "love" and a "summer ritual on the Tor" described in a leaflet as a

"ritual for men, women, and children to come together in this sacred place. Working with ritual and myth we seek to heal and rebalance the relationships between men and women, and that between the Goddess and the God." (unpublished leaflet, 1999).

A "day workshop" held during the annual "Goddess Conference" in Glastonbury promoted "painting with earth pigments" made from "soil from the slopes of Glastonbury Tor". These descriptions illustrate that alternative healers make an explicit connection between the Tor and healing. It is the sacredness of the Tor, resulting from its position on ley lines, which makes this site conducive to such ceremonies.

Ley lines and Healing

Alternative healers believe that they can avail of the energy in features of Glastonbury's landscape, such as the Tor, as a source of healing power. Some perceive that they have been drawn to Glastonbury for this reason. In this section I will discuss the importance of these ley lines and how healers in Glastonbury make use of this source of "energy".

Marlene's understanding of "energy healing" was intimately connected to the symbolic significance of the landscape of Glastonbury. "Earth energies" were important in Marlene's beliefs concerning healing. She believed that the energy present in the landscape helped people to become more spiritually aware, and as such the type of healing which they might experience was more spiritual than physical. When I asked Marlene if the healers could use the "earth energies" in Glastonbury for the purpose of healing, she answered "of course". In fact, it was her opinion that all healers were healing with this energy, even if they weren't aware of it.

"Ley lines" were a prominent feature of the discourse of proprietor-healers. They were a symbolic explanation for the power, or "energy" of Glastonbury, and they were also used as an explanation for why proprietor-healers had arrived in Glastonbury. Michael's story is instructive, and it once again demonstrates a holistic view of the earth and the

individual's connection to it, as part of the discourse of proprietor-healers.

Glastonbury's location on a crossing of ley lines was important to Michael's practice of healing. For him, the healing of the individual was connected to the healing of the earth. A desire to help the earth heal was the reason why people who were "aware of its (Glastonbury's) energetic importance" came to the town to engage in "energy healing". Such healing was especially effective by merit of Glastonbury's location on a cross roads of major earth energy lines. Michael described Glastonbury as a point on a much larger "grid" or "network" which encompassed the earth. Because it was a point of convergence of earth energy lines, an "energy pathway", and an "energetically more active place", the effects of healing work would be more rapidly distributed throughout the earth, in a way similar to the conventional doctor who delivers drugs into a patient's bloodstream for distribution through the body. Glastonbury's identity as "an energy vortex for the planet", linked by ley lines to "many other places on the planet", made such healing work successful.

According to Michael, healing involved the use of energies, and therefore Glastonbury (an "energetically more active place") was a good place to be for healers. Reiki healers, such as himself and his wife Cheryl, were "attuned to certain wavelengths of energy" which they could draw into their clients by acting as channels for this energy. The theory that Glastonbury is a centre of energies because of its many intersecting ley lines justified Michael's residence in the town as a healer, and added legitimacy to his involvement in healing.

Time and time again Glastonbury Tor arose as an important symbol in my interviews,

as a force which had drawn healers and B&B owners to Glastonbury and as a source of energy and healing. For some informants, it was a place of "divine revelation", a place which enlightened and inspired them. Both Flora and Cheryl had received spiritual messages pertaining to the direction their lives should take while standing on this landmark.

The Tor was described by several alternative citizens as a place where they could obtain a form of healing commonly referred to as "recharging" their "batteries". A man in his thirties who I met at a Reiki healing circle said that he spent a night on the Tor and felt "recharged" the next day. I also met an aging hippie decorator from Wales who said that Glastonbury itself had this power of "recharging batteries", and two guests who stayed at Evergreen Cottage noted that the first thing they did upon arriving in the town was to climb the Tor in order to revive themselves after a five hour drive to Glastonbury.

Flora, too, spoke of the revitalizing or recharging effects of the Tor. On one occasion, she recommended a "ley line walk" to myself and another guest. This walk wound along the lower slope of the Tor and would take us to a cluster of stones which marked the crossing of two ley lines. By standing on the spot, we could do a "ley line clearing" by breathing up "energy from the earth" three times, then breathing the energy back into the earth and repeating personal "affirmations" such as "I am beauty", "I am love". She said that we would come away feeling "totally recharged" and "filled with strength".

As previously mentioned, Ann, too, found that a walk up the Tor could be beneficial. She said: "I find the Tor is great if I'm feeling really depressed. I go up there and I get very energized and very positive". For these proprietors of alternative B&B's, the ley

lines were a source of powerful, life giving energy.

There are several other features of Glastonbury's landscape perceived by my informants to be "sacred" and to possess healing qualities, one being Chalice Well. The owner of a New Age shop which sold crystals believed that the "water in the landscape" was "naturally healing". A young man from Arizona with whom I became friends used the water in a ceremonial manner on his knees which had been badly damaged hiking across the English Downs, and testified to its healing ability. At an annual event held in the Chalice Well gardens, a "Guardian of the Well", a man in his forties, described it as a place of "healing and transformation". He discussed the healing role of Chalice Well, saying that the "vision of the well is one of healing", healing of the "physical body". The "aura of the Well", he said, "has a healing force which makes this centre of healing a place which nourishes all of us". Like the Tor, he described the Well as a place where healers could come to "recharge" their "batteries" and be "nurtured". The waters of the Well were also believed by many informants to possess healing properties - the receptionist at a complementary health centre believed that the iron-rich waters gave a boost of energy and balanced the energies of the body. Several informants believed the water from Chalice Well or the White Spring to be healing because of its purity. Many of my informants would drink nothing but the well water. Like the Tor, Chalice Well also provided a venue for individual ceremonies and large organized gatherings, such as a group meditation at the time of the summer solstice.

Location of Alternative B&B's in the Sacred Landscape of Glastonbury

A discussion of the manifestation of alternative identity in Glastonbury's Bed and Breakfasts would be far from complete without an analysis of the importance of the location of these facilities in relation to the landscape of this Somerset town. As I have already mentioned in chapters one and two, proprietors of alternative B&B's believed the location of their establishments to be important, within the larger context of Glastonbury itself, and that the location imbued their houses with healing qualities. Proprietor-healers spoke of their establishments as having characteristics of sanctuaries. Flora viewed her B&B as a "safe harbor", Marlene perceived her B&B as being a "sacred space", and Catherine, too, promoted Evergreen Cottage as a "retreat". According to my informants, simply being in a certain place in Glastonbury could be therapeutic and as such, provision of a "quiet space" or "retreat" was in itself essential to healing. Catherine, Marlene, Flora, Ann, John, and Meredith all perceived part of their role to be the provision of this space for healing – a quiet place where guests could relax and experience the healing energies of Glastonbury through their interactions with the proprietors, other guests, and the landscape.

The Radiance Wheel B&B, for example, was located on possibly the busiest road in Glastonbury - a traffic-choked access road along which huge transport trucks rumbled at alarming speeds. Marlene said that she didn't notice the noise; it didn't intrude into the "sacred space" of her B&B. It was the location of Marlene's B&B on the lower slopes of the Tor which made the space "sacred". She used the energy from the Tor for her own spiritual "growth" and she presumed that others staying in her B&B could as well.

Providing a space where people could come and have "powerful experiences" seemed to be an important part of Marlene's role:

"part of the thing when I did the B&B was I knew I had to open the door here, that was my understanding, I had to open the door to people...that space had to be available for people who wanted to come into it"

It was not necessary for guests to engage in Marlene's spiritual practices in order to receive healing or spiritual growth.

Flora, too, seemed to feel that she was providing a sacred space for guests. She related a story of a person suffering from cancer who came to her for a healing session, and said that her house was a "nice healing home" with "healing vibes", which was the kind of space she was trying to create in her B&B. As mentioned, few of Flora's guests actually requested a "formal" healing session. It was the relationships which developed between guests, an atmosphere of "love", Flora's encouragement to "play" and take long walks as a process of "self healing", which resulted in health benefits.

Like Flora and Marlene, John and Meredith believed that their B&B possessed qualities which made it beneficial to guests and for healing, a "clear energy" which facilitated the "changes" they were experiencing. As discussed in chapter one, Ann, too, perceived the location of her B&B near the ruins of the Abbey, which had "always been a place of quietness and reflection", to be beneficial to guests who could "pick up that sort of energy". The proximity of the Abbey made her B&B a space where guests could retreat, relax, reflect, and find answers through interaction with the landscape and sometimes with her. She said "they just want to retreat...they just want to have a quiet space, find

their hermit cell..."

The promotion of "healing" at B&B's is an integral part of the spiritual beliefs and identity of proprietors. Part of this spiritual belief system involves the innate healing power of the landscape of Glastonbury itself, a power available to all who visit the town, and which often renders "therapies" redundant.

The energy of ley lines was perceived by several alternative informants to be neutral, but depending on its use and relationship to people, it could enhance spiritual activities, be healing, or detrimental. For Marlene, Glastonbury Tor was a sacred and powerful place. While she often went to Chalice Well she would only go "further up the Tor" when she was "guided to go and do a work" or perform a ritual. At the time of my visit, it had been several months since she had received spiritual guidance to climb the Tor. It was not a place for a "leisure walk".

The lines of energy coming from the Tor directly affected the space of Marlene's B&B in dramatic ways. She said:

"...the Tor can be very raw and sometimes absolutely huge energies come down the lines here and I can feel them coming towards me...and the energy can be so strong sometimes that all the electrical appliances are clanging and banging because there's so much magnetic stuff or statics in it..."

The location of Marlene's B&B "a third of the way up" the Tor was very important. In her words: "all the energy is here...this is my part of it, so I can work well in this energy which is why it's such a gift." The energy had "a profound effect" on her with "very positive aspects" pertaining to healing. She said:

"because those lines are so active...I can ask for help for myself or for situations

and immediately (there's) a lot of energy there, I mean I've had some profound healings that no other physical person has had anything to do with..."

For Marlene, as for other alternative healers in Glastonbury, the energy of ley lines could enhance her spiritual work.

Although Marlene's interpretation and discussion of the importance of landscape and features of it for her work was by far the most in-depth, other B&B owners also recognized the significance of the physical, spiritual, and legendary landscape of Glastonbury, and, like Marlene, several perceived these lines of energy to be significant for the purposes of healing.

Cheryl and Michael perceived the location of Tor Down on ley lines to be significant and they utilized a "gadget" to "clear" their house of the effects of these lines, some of which could be detrimental. Cheryl also used her Reiki skills to "psychically" clean the rooms of Tor Down.

The prevalence of energy lines in Glastonbury could affect everyone in the town. According to Marlene, a walk "down the street" entailed crossing the "energy fields" of other people, houses, animals, and the earth. Crossing "difficult" energy lines could result in a negative feeling or a rapid change of mood. She said:

"some energy lines are very difficult for humans, not because they're bad but because that's what they are...sometimes you get energies coming up along earth energy lines that are very difficult or very chaotic or very big or very destructive, not again because they mean to be destructive to humans, it's not negative in that it's aiming at you, but if you're in its way it will run you over just like a steam roller will..."

"Negative earth energy lines" could affect the atmosphere of a house or result in what Marlene called "cancer streets" where there was a preponderance of the disease. She stressed that "negative" did not mean "bad": "it's like electricity, you have to have positive and negative for the whole energetic field to work...cows can live in negatives very easily, cats can live in negatives, but humans don't do well in negatives, it just doesn't suit our energy system." Michael, Cheryl, and Marlene's understanding of ley lines indicate a belief that the energy, although neutral, could have negative, or detrimental, effects of people.

Healing centres in Glastonbury were also affected by their location. According to Catherine, one alternative centre used to be much more "powerful" at its previous location across the road from the Abbey ruins and on a "ley-line". Since its move to a more obscure location, "people say nothing happens".

The belief in ley lines commonly held by many of my informants is part of what I interpret to be a *belief system* which explains why Glastonbury is unique. According to Marlene, Glastonbury has more "earth energy lines...going through it than anywhere else in Europe". The power and the sanctity of the landscape of Glastonbury is a direct result of the prevalence of ley lines. Glastonbury is sacred *because* of the nature of the land and its identity as centre of ley line convergence and earth energies.

"Drawn" to Glastonbury

As discussed by Marion Bowman (1993:29-30), my informants commonly expressed the belief that they had been "drawn to Glastonbury". In her study of Glastonbury, Bowman presents a summary of the features which "attract and affect those drawn to Glastonbury"(1993:31). She writes: "The convergence of history, topography, legend, and popular belief maintains Glastonbury's status as a compelling destination" (1993:30). The legends of Glastonbury concerning Joseph of Arimathea and King Arthur are two such examples. Prince and Riches also found that the feeling of being "drawn" to Glastonbury "because of the town's famous mystical associations" was a unifying feature amongst an otherwise "dispersed, unorganized and culturally quite heterogeneous body of people"(1999:171).

Marlene believed that it was the energy of the land which drew people to Glastonbury. Even people who weren't aware of, or had no understanding of, earth energies were unconsciously drawn towards certain places in Glastonbury. Therefore, all of the people who came to her B&B did so for a certain reason; it was right for them to be there in some way, even if they didn't know why that was. This idea was also espoused by John and Meredith who believed that the right guests arrived at the right time and for a certain purpose.

Flora thought of Glastonbury as the "spiritual centre of England". In her opinion, it drew people with an interest in healing because of its reputation and because of the prolific number of courses, seminars, and workshops. She also felt that Glastonbury attained its status as a spiritual centre because of the legends of King Arthur, the "magical

qualities" of the Tor and the "energy" of "expectations" and "good intentions" left by visitors who had come to Glastonbury and found healing or inspiration over the "centuries" which contributed to its "atmosphere". She said:

“of course the ley lines cross here a lot, the Mary line and the Michael line and so a lot of people come...there is the whole ley line thing, but...I think for some unknown reason that Tor has got a magic and also the Chalice Well and the fact that the Abbey's here, the three in one, really sort of clinch it...”

According to many informants, both proprietors and visitors alike, it was the convergence of ley lines in Glastonbury which drew people from all over the world and imbued the area with almost magical qualities, aiding personal growth, inspiring personal and often monumental life changes, and causing visitors and residents alike to reflect upon themselves and their lives. Marlene believed that the "earth energies" of Glastonbury and the Tor magnified and amplified mental or emotional issues which a visitor might bring to Glastonbury with them. She said: “The Tor augments any energy and amplifies it so the negative is amplified as well as the positive”. “There's lots of positive amplified” she told me, which explained why “lots of people can do lots of growing here”. These energies could also repulse people from the town. Marlene believed that some people couldn't deal with these energies amplified by Glastonbury, and if they were not “in charge” of themselves, they were forced to “retreat” from the town. Glastonbury offered an opportunity as a "test to deal with both positive things to grow towards and negative things to work out". Marlene suggested that my choice of research location was no coincidence - it was a "test". "It is," she said, "a place of personal initiation" and spiritual growth. It was her view that people were drawn to

Glastonbury, alone or as couples, to experience this initiation.

Meredith also thought of time in Glastonbury as a "test"; a place where one could find out what they were made of. John perceived that I had been drawn to Glastonbury not for research, but to learn something and to grow; I had embarked on a journey of personal discovery for which the "research" provided an excuse. Meredith believed that Glastonbury had this ability to inspire self reflection, change, and growth because of its location on a major crossing of ley lines beneath the Tor.

John believed that Glastonbury had drawn such an eclectic collection of healers and followers of diverse spiritual beliefs "because it's a powerful place, it has an energy here, a blessing." He also acknowledged the influence and importance of ley lines:

"I wouldn't dismiss it, there [are] ley lines, I believe in ley lines, I believe there's other places on the planet that are blessed, this is just one of many many places...".

Informants believe that it is the energy of Glastonbury's landscape, conveyed along a network of ley lines, which draws people to the town but which can also push them away. Bowman writes: "Whatever its source, this energy can be used positively for healing or to enhance creative talent, but...many people can't handle it physically and have to live at a remove from it" (1993:41). As I have discussed in chapter two, what is being offered at alternative B&B's is more than bed and breakfast, but an invitation to subscribe to a new belief system or philosophy; to deepen one's existing spiritual beliefs, or to share experiences. Healing can be achieved through such conversion to alternative spiritual beliefs which stress balance, life change, and responsibility for health. The "Glastonbury

experience” as several proprietors termed it, is about conversion or “initiation” – it is a time of testing and personal growth, which, if denied and resisted, will result in expulsion from the town. Glastonbury draws people to it, but only those willing to make changes in their lives, to convert to a new understanding of spirituality, can remain within Glastonbury and achieve healing. Such is the power of the place granted by the convergence of ley lines.

Alternative informants commonly expressed the belief that Glastonbury had "always" been a place of spiritual power, a "sacred" place which had always drawn people on spiritual quests for knowledge and healing. Druids had gathered near Chalice Well long before Christianity arrived, brought by Joseph of Arimathea who established the first Church in England. An excerpt from the local Isle of Avalon Foundation's web site (<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/isleofavalon/>) reads:

“People were here when the ancient Egyptians built pyramids 4,500 years ago. It was a Druidic Mecca 2,000 years ago. Reputedly visited by Jesus and Joseph of Arimathea, the oldest purpose-built Christian church in the world was built here. Later, 700 years ago, its mediaeval abbey was one of Europe's main pilgrimage places.”

A brochure available at Berachah Colour Healing Centre also illustrates this belief by emphasizing Glastonbury's past “history” as a “centre for Ancient Celtic and Pagan Religions, prior to the first Christian Church in Europe being built on the site of the Abbey”, and as a center which continues to draw “leaders of Church and other Religions...together with one common understanding of the nature of Spirit.” The owner of a New Age shop which sold a dazzling array of crystals strongly believed that

Glastonbury had "always been a place of healing since ancient times" due to the presence of a "natural source of healing energy...to do with the sacredness of the landscape".

The belief that Glastonbury has "always" been a place of healing was recurrent among healers and owners of alternative shops or healing centres. The ex-historian for Chalice Well, a very knowledgeable man, said, however, that "not a lot" distinguished Glastonbury before 1750, "except that it had a wealthy Abbey". It was between 1750 and 1800 that Chalice Well became renowned as a place of healing.¹⁸ Before that, there was little mention of Glastonbury, the Well, or healing in historical records.

Nevertheless, proprietor-healers relied on the belief that Glastonbury had been a place of healing "since time immemorial" in order to justify their presence in the town. John, proprietor of the Divine Light Centre, drew upon the legends of Glastonbury to explain its present identity as a sacred center and his own presence in the town as a healer and a questor for the "Truth", the realization of which imbued the landscape with energy and power:

"Where truth is realized, that is the greatest place you can be in, wherever Jesus walked and wherever you realize that God-presence, that truth is there, and be assured that if you walked into the streets of Jerusalem around the Wailing Wall, you can feel a presence that was quite awesome, if you're sensitive and receptive because that's there for eternity...it's been realized, it's there now, it's there

¹⁸ Chalice Well was an important destination for pilgrims who came in the thousands to bathe in and drink the waters, renowned for their healing qualities, in the 18th century after a well-publicized account of a man's cure from asthma by drinking the water on seven successive Sundays. A promotional pamphlet published by the Chalice Well Trust details the miraculous cures achieved at the Well and concludes that although "the fashion (or the faith) gradually declined...all down the years, healings have continued even to this present day." The "Pilgrim's Bath" still exists and visitors drink the water and purchase bottles to bring home with them.

forever, so there's places where truth has been realized and Glastonbury is one of those places, whether Jesus came here or a mystic died sitting in the monastery, or wherever, he realized his God Self , for a moment, it may only be for a moment, he became one with God, and that is a place that is blessed”

My alternative informants perceived that different religious traditions, and legendary or spiritual figures such as King Arthur, Joseph of Arimathea, and Jesus had adhered themselves to Glastonbury in the past because they had been "drawn" by the energy of ley lines. Present day healers and spiritual leaders who have made the town their home, like John, are following in the footsteps of these figures in what they perceive to be the continuance of an unbroken tradition. Alternative healers with whom I spoke see themselves as the modern-day counterparts of these legendary figures, pilgrims of the present drawn by the power of the land for healing and spiritual growth. For these men and women, it is no accident that Glastonbury was, and still is, a spiritual centre – its identity as such is a direct result of the energy in the land.

The Tor has become a symbol of Glastonbury's timeless sanctity and spiritual character. It is a physically imposing structure, visible from many angles of the town, permanent and dramatic. It is, however, more than an archaeologically or geologically interesting feature for the residents of, and visitors to, Glastonbury: it is a physical testament to the existence of ley lines, believed by many to cross just beneath its surface. These lines connect Glastonbury in a great network of sacred sites worldwide, and as such, the Tor is a constant reminder of the sanctity of this English town.

Conflicting Interpretations of the Landscape

A prominent feature of Glastonbury's society is its heterogeneity of spiritual beliefs. Christians, pagans, neo-druids, Hare Krishnas, Buddhists, and members of less recognizable spiritual traditions, co-exist in the town. My research revealed that these people interpret Glastonbury's landscape in very different ways, based on their spiritual beliefs. As I will discuss in this section, sometimes these interpretations conflict and lead to tensions between groups.

Catherine perceived the landscape of Glastonbury to be impregnated with Christian symbolism and potent with legends of King Arthur. As I have mentioned, she believed that Glastonbury was the resting place of the Holy Grail, and it was this belief which had led her to the town. Glastonbury was "Avalon" in Catherine's mind - the "spiritual centre" of England and the Garden of Eden itself. A promotional brochure available in the lounge of Berachah Colour Healing Centre also described Glastonbury in Christian terms as the "English Jerusalem"; a "holy place known as the Isle of Avalon" and the legendary resting place of the Holy Grail, brought by Joseph of Arimathea after the Crucifixion: "This Chalice is believed to be buried in Chalice Hill - where the waters run red into the spring."

Ley lines were interpreted in Christian or pagan terms depending on the beliefs of the informant, as illustrated by the names commonly used to refer to these lines. The two major lines which cross on the Tor are called the "Michael line" (in reference to the Archangel Michael and because of the number of churches dedicated to St. Michael found along it) and the "Mary line", considered to be "a complimentary line of female

energy”(Bowman 1993:33). The Michael line was also called the "dragon path" by pagans informants; a name which refers to the tendency of Christians to build churches dedicated to St. Michael, the dragon slayer, on pagan sites “which may have been considered intrinsically special or holy” (1993:33).

Glastonbury’s heterogeneity of beliefs, its past as a centre of spirituality, and its present attraction to those interested in spirituality and healing can be explained by ley lines. These lines were believed by my alternative informants to be permanent features of the land. They imbed it with a spiritual energy and sacredness which drew the druids and the early Christians, and which continues to draw followers of all faiths. For some, Glastonbury was a Christian centre, the "English Jerusalem", for others it was the "Heart Chakra of the universe", and for others it was both. For many of my informants, it was this sanctity, created by the convergence of ley lines, which imbued the landscape with the power to change and to heal. According to Cheryl, it was directly because of the energies present in the landscape of Glastonbury that so many people came to the town, and like other informants, she perceived this attraction to be historical, motivating different groups through the ages to practice their spiritual beliefs in the town. She said:

"it can only be the energies, we've had this Christian church here for years...and the druids and Chalice Well, it all goes back so long, there must be a reason, and they knew why they built things on special sites, and therefore those energies are still around and they just draw people here..."

Perceptions of Glastonbury’s landscape and features of it are often conflicting and involve the Abbey, Chalice Well, and the Tor. The ruins of Glastonbury Abbey are simultaneously "claimed" by Christians, pagans, historians and secular tourists. For

many tourists, the ruins are a historical artifact. For Christians, they represent the long history of Christianity which, legend has it, actually began in Glastonbury with the building of a wattle church which was later replaced by the prosperous Abbey. For Catherine, the original "wattle" church believed to be built by Joseph of Arimathea on the Abbey grounds was the "original focus" of pilgrimage to Glastonbury and the reason behind the growth of the town.

These places in Glastonbury are sometimes the scene of tensions and disputes because of conflicting interpretations. John, proprietor of the Divine Light Centre, recounted a story about a confrontation which occurred between the vicar of a local church and a pagan group which had wanted to perform their ceremony in the Abbey crypt. The vicar had allowed this group entrance to the Abbey grounds, but drew the line at pagan ceremonies in the crypt, perceived by him to be sacred Christian ground.

Marlene found the policies of the "very uptight" trustees of the Abbey to be "restrictive". According to her, they frowned upon alternative spiritual activities like "dowsing" in the Abbey. Roger, the proprietor of Moore View B&B, was one of these trustees. He believed that the Abbey was "a big part of what Glastonbury is about", it was a "focal point" of much activity, such as the Anglo-Catholic and Catholic pilgrimages. "The Abbey really pulls people", he said. His job in the Abbey was to "keep an eye on non-Christian practices". He described a situation which involved a group of people who were sitting in meditation around a "green goddess" which they had placed on the altar of a chapel in the Abbey ruins, "one of the two most sacred sites" of the Abbey. Roger had taken one of the women aside and asked her to remove it, which she did, and they left the

chapel without incident. It was his opinion that the woman had "appreciated" knowing the rules of the Abbey. "Alternative people realize it's a Christian sanctuary" he said. Another incident involved a girl who was placing crystals in the shape of a cross on the Abbey grounds. Roger had approached her to examine what she was doing, but when he saw the Christian symbol, he left without disturbing her.

Roger emphasized that he wasn't "against" the "alternative side" in Glastonbury, and he discussed the idea of striking a "balance" in the town between alternative groups and conventional groups, especially with regard to the Abbey, which he stressed was "a Christian sanctuary" which must be protected. Such protection included closing the doors to the Abbey after a certain time, and prohibiting "pagan ceremonies" on the premises.

In addition to being a Christian sanctuary, the Abbey grounds were deemed by some to be spiritually significant in other ways. According to some of my informants, the site upon which it had been constructed had been "sacred" to pagans who occupied the area before the arrival of Christianity. In her book "Glastonbury: Maker of Myths", Frances Howard-Gordon writes that "experienced dowsers" believe the Abbey to be "situated at an important centre or intersection of streams of terrestrial current" and connected to Stonehenge and the Tor by a ley-line (1982:24-25). Glastonbury Abbey is noted by both alternative and conventional informants as being a sacred place.

Chalice Well is also a place of conflicting meanings and interpretation. Catherine's idea of "pilgrimage" in relation to Glastonbury was intricately linked to Christian legends of the Well which implicated it as the resting place of the Holy Grail. The Isle of Avalon

Foundation, with headquarters in the Glastonbury Experience, claimed to "take the torch" from there, but Catherine said with disapproval they had switched from a Christian mythical focus to "reviving pagan roots" instead.

Despite their differing religious persuasions, informants perceived the landscape of Glastonbury to be a powerful draw for visitors. For several Christian informants, the land was imbued with Christian symbolism and meaning which served as a powerful attraction. For many of my alternative informants, the ley lines and "energy" of the landscape were responsible for its lure. A crystal healer who worked at a crystal shop in the Glastonbury Experience courtyard was adamant: "It's the land, it's the lay of the land, it's a magical part of the world...People are drawn here because of the land".

Conclusion

The landscape of Glastonbury, and prominent features of it such as the Tor, are interpreted in differing ways depending on the spiritual beliefs of my informants. Many of my alternative informants perceive the landscape of Glastonbury to be saturated with a spiritual power resulting from the presence of "ley lines". Proprietor-healers and guests can achieve healing and spiritual renewal by drawing on this source of energy, therefore, the location of alternative B&B's in this sacred landscape is important to proprietors.

It is also believed by several alternative informants that the energy of ley lines can draw people to Glastonbury. People come to Glastonbury as tourists with secular intentions, and as "questors", or "pilgrims" with spiritual motivations, and as a combination of these identities. In the following chapter, I will discuss the concept of pilgrimage in the context of Glastonbury and its relationship to tourism.

Chapter 4: Alternative Pilgrimage to Glastonbury

Glastonbury is understood by alternative and conventional residents, proprietors, and guests as being a "pilgrimage centre" of many religions. It is also promoted by the local Tourist Board and local information organizations as such. In this chapter, I will introduce Glastonbury as a centre of pilgrimage both historically and in contemporary times, for Christians and non-Christians alike. More specifically, I will discuss pilgrimage to Glastonbury from an anthropological perspective, drawing upon the work of Victor Turner (1974), and Marion Bowman (1993) to elucidate the nature and characteristics of one particular form of pilgrimage in Glastonbury; namely, "alternative pilgrimage" (Bowman 1993).

Alternative pilgrims with whom I spoke came to Glastonbury in search of experiences of spiritual transformation and renewal. These experiences may be understood to represent what Victor Turner called "communitas": "a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes" (1974:202). It is "a state of unmediated and equalitarian association between individuals who are temporarily freed of the hierarchical secular roles and statuses which they bear in everyday life" (Eade and Sallnow 1991:4).

Interviews with proprietor-healers and other permanent members of Glastonbury's New Age community led me to understand that the type of ritual experience Turner called "communitas" was an important motivation for their move to Glastonbury. These men and women expressed the belief that Glastonbury was an ideal place, "a world apart"; a place of acceptance, and egalitarian relationships between all. It was, according to one

alternative informant who lived and worked in the town, "a place where you could step out of the mundane world", and "a place which shows you what a humane, ideal world could be like". Another man, a member of a large spiritual healing organization, described Glastonbury as a place where there was no racism, ageism, or sexism. Flora spoke highly of Glastonbury's residents, saying that the local youths called her "Grandmother Angel" and she had a good relationship with them. "There's no ageism in Glastonbury" she told me. A nurse and complementary therapist who worked in the town described it as a place where there was "complete acceptance of everyone" and "no judgement".

People who journey to Glastonbury as alternative pilgrims experience *communitas* to various degrees, and in different ways. This is illustrated in the second section of this chapter, where I present a set of narratives from itinerant pilgrims; those visiting Glastonbury for a short period of time. In the third section, I examine a second set of narratives obtained from "resident pilgrims"; men and women who live in the town and who provide alternative Bed and Breakfast accommodations for other "pilgrims".

Pilgrimage to Glastonbury

There is a long tradition of Christian pilgrimage to Glastonbury, stemming from the hey-day of the Benedictine Abbey during the Middle Ages when thousands of pilgrims journeyed to the town to attend mass and stayed at places such as the George and Pilgrims Hotel, a 14th century inn which still offers accommodation to pilgrims and tourists. In recent times, the annual "official" pilgrimages organized by both the Anglican

Church and the Roman Catholic Church further the image of Glastonbury as a place of pilgrimage. Both are heavily promoted in tourism literature, and the Christian tradition of pilgrimage to Glastonbury remains a popular event of religious significance to members of Glastonbury's Christian community and hundreds who travel to the town to participate or observe.

It is not, however, this official and organized pilgrimage which concerns me here. Instead, I am interested in what Marion Bowman terms "alternative pilgrimage" in her study of contemporary pilgrimage outside of official religious settings in Glastonbury (1993:47). Glastonbury is promoted in tourism literature as a pilgrimage centre of alternative religion and a destination for those of all spiritual backgrounds who come, or are "drawn", to Glastonbury (Bowman 1993). For example, the web site, (<http://www.glastonbury.co.uk/welcome/pilgrimage-body.html>), indicates that pilgrimage is a multi-denominational, inter-faith activity:

"Glastonbury is a world wide recognized site of pilgrimage. This means not only Christian Pilgrims visiting the Christian sacred sites but Pilgrims of every denomination and belief...In every age there have been Pilgrims traveling to the sacred sites and places of the world as an act of spiritual devotion to a particular creed."

There is no single shrine¹⁹ which seems to attract these pilgrims "of every denomination and belief" to Glastonbury. Its historical and symbolic landscape seems to

¹⁹ In the model of pilgrimage proposed by Victor Turner, the making of a vow, a self-imposed obligation or promise, between the afflicted (or one who acts on behalf of the afflicted) and the divine power, is the method by which healing is achieved. It is the vow that is all-important, as indicated by the definition of pilgrimage to which he refers: "a journey which is made to a shrine or sacred place in performance of a vow or for the sake of obtaining some form of divine blessing" (1974:173).

be adaptive to many faiths. Bowman (1993:40) writes: "Glastonbury...contains a variety of pilgrimage sites and a variety of pilgrims...It has a multiple choice attraction", from the Tor to Chalice Well, the Thorn planted by Joseph of Arimathea, to the Abbey ruins and King Arthur's grave. Often, the very same locations accommodate members of widely different beliefs, such as the grounds of the Abbey, perceived by Christians to be the site of the first Christian Church in England, and by the pagans, who recognize the pre-Christian sanctity of the site.

As I have discussed in chapter three, Glastonbury is believed to be a place of great spiritual energy because of the crossing of ley lines. Proprietor-healers believe that this energy can be used for healing. In contrast to Christian forms of pilgrimage, landscape, and particular features of it, such as the Tor and Chalice Well, replace a central shrine or divine icon as the focal point for pilgrimage to Glastonbury. In terms of alternative pilgrimage, the sanctity of Glastonbury's landscape is not a result of "the manifestation of the divine to human beings" (Eade and Sallnow 1991:6), but a result of the energies perceived by informants to flow within it. It is the landscape which endows the town with sacred character, and, for alternative pilgrims, makes it a "locus of pilgrimage". In this model, features of Glastonbury's landscape such as the Tor, Chalice Well, Wearyall Hill and the grounds of the Abbey are imbued with sacredness in and of themselves. Both Christian pilgrimage and alternative pilgrimage invest particular spaces with sacredness, and in both cases the goal of the pilgrimage is to enter that space. The difference lies in the particular focus of the pilgrimage, whether icon or energies of the land.

Healing is an important goal of this alternative form of pilgrimage to Glastonbury, as in the Christian model. Several proprietors of alternative B&B's and their guests made a connection between healing and pilgrimage to Glastonbury. Michael perceived that people came to Glastonbury specifically for healing in a broad sense of the word, as "evolving to a state of perfect balance and harmony" and the "energies" they experienced while in Glastonbury aided in this process. Catherine, Ann and Marlene also perceived that people came to Glastonbury for healing although Marlene felt that they might not consciously make that connection. She said: "people don't call it healing - they come to recharge their batteries, but people who've come here over the years would say that it had been a healing experience." She said that people did experience physical healing at certain places in Glastonbury, and others experienced emotional healing, but it was through their association with the land that such healing could be achieved. "True pilgrims relate to the landscape" she told me. These people "may not connect with any specific person who is a healer; the land is the healer".

The importance of the landscape as a draw for alternative pilgrims, the quest for healing, and the experience of *communitas* are characteristics of alternative pilgrimage expressed by itinerant, alternative pilgrims in the following five narratives.

Itinerant Pilgrim Narratives

Charlotte and Michelle

I met Charlotte and her daughter, Michelle, while staying at Tor Down. They had come to Glastonbury from Australia and Charlotte expressed discontent and disillusionment

with the mainstream church in Australia which she described as "narrow minded, traditional and conservative". Before they left, they had attended a "mother daughter evening" at their church which elucidated the "dangers" of the New Age movement. The mother felt that the people in attendance had been "full of fear and paranoia" and that the speaker and others had not been particularly "educated" about the New Age. Her breakthrough had come after reading Marion Bradley's book The Mists of Avalon (1982) which portrays the early Christian church in a harsh light and the ancient Druid beliefs as a much more wholesome and female oriented spiritual system. Glastonbury, therefore, became for these women a temporary refuge from the restraints of their conventional lives. The wide diversity of spiritual traditions encompassed in the town provided an 'alternative' to the organized religion which both mother and daughter found stifling back home. In Glastonbury, they were anonymous and therefore free from the criticisms or disapproval of their church and conventional social circle: they felt free to explore new beliefs, experiment with new ideas, and interact with a variety of people who shared their views of alternative spirituality. Charlotte actively sought books about female empowerment while in Glastonbury. For her, an experience of "communitas" was sought among those who shared and could nurture these new beliefs.

Stefan and Felix

While Charlotte and Michelle were beginning to explore New Age beliefs, two German men who booked the double room in Evergreen Cottage for a week or so were very clearly full converts to alternative spirituality. Their arrival purposely coincided with Beltane at the beginning of May, one of four major pagan celebrations that take place in

Glastonbury. Stefan was 41 years old and towered above me like a giant in his business suit. Felix sported a shaven head and multiple piercings and was less conservatively dressed in copious amounts of denim. They described themselves as pagans who had come to Glastonbury to celebrate Beltane with other pagans and our discussions made it clear that they were seeking fellowship with others who shared their interest in alternative religion.

I shared my room at Evergreen Cottage for two nights with a young woman named Corsara. The new arrangement delighted my German housemates, who seemed to find something deeply symbolic about the two men, two women situation which had fortuitously arisen. Stefan developed an attachment to Corsara over the course of their stay in Evergreen Cottage and he referred to her as his "Priestess", a joke which the two men perpetuated through their notes left attached to various "offerings". I had been designated "the Novice". For the duration of her stay, Corsara and I were treated to unexpected gifts; a plate of fresh strawberries arranged in two interlocking circles used as a symbol of the Chalice Well and interspersed with blossoms, fresh pineapple, bunches of carefully arranged wildflowers and cream filled chocolate cake. Each day there was a new gift, usually with a barely legible note impregnated with innuendo. Myself and Corsara were both outraged and flattered by their actions, and it was Corsara who finally suggested why they were acting in such a manner. Beltane, she explained, is the great celebration of fertility and of the Earth Goddess. Fruit and flowers are symbols of ripening and growth, and by offering these gifts Stefan and Felix were symbolically worshipping the Goddess through us. We were, she suggested, the embodiments of the

Goddess during this time. For Stefan, Beltane was the "highest celebration of the Great Goddess". Catherine, who was not too impressed with the two men, told me that many men used Beltane as an excuse for performing what they called "The Great Rite"; sexual intercourse with any or every consenting partner available, or as she put it, having a "bonk". This blunt version of their devotion was a little less charming.

Glastonbury was the legendary, historical, and spiritual setting - a living stage - for the expression of Stefan and Felix's beliefs. An important component of this "stage" was the landscape of Glastonbury, to which these two men admitted feeling "drawn". They conducted several Beltane rituals upon the Tor itself, which included the use of fireworks illegally smuggled from Germany. Stefan told me of several magical experiences he had had on the Tor. Chalice Well, too, was the setting for their rituals, one of which I engaged in with Stefan, which involved offerings to the Goddess, worshipped symbolically through me, and ritualistic use of the Chalice Well water.

For Stefan, Glastonbury was the legendary Avalon, a place where the veils which separate our time from the chivalrous past of King Arthur and his knights were drawn very thin, and at any moment he believed these worlds would meet. Avalon, he told me, was returning from the mists in which it was hidden from the "Romans and Christians". Further, he believed that he himself was a Knight of Avalon. After reading The Mists of Avalon (1982) by Marion Bradley, he had yearned to be a "druid priest". Soon after, he had a dream in which he was brought before the Goddess, seated amid a circle of beautiful women, and she told him that he did not have wisdom enough to be a druid, but she could see the "constitution of his heart" and so she knighted him.

Clearly, Glastonbury was, for Stefan, a place where legends concerning the druids, King Arthur and the Goddess cult, came to life. It was a place where fantasies became realities and his spiritual beliefs could be played out. The landscape of Glastonbury was his shrine.

Just as Charlotte sought refuge in Glastonbury from her conventional life, the town was a refuge from the reality of Stefan's secular, mundane life in Germany. However, their experiences of what Turner called "communitas" differed markedly. For Charlotte, it was found among those who nurtured her views of female empowerment, whereas for Stefan, it was found among the revelers on the Tor at Beltane.

Jessie

Glastonbury's identity as a refuge or sanctuary where people could practice their spiritual beliefs free from persecution, public sanctions and criticisms was also demonstrated by a woman in her late forties, "Jessie", who stayed at Evergreen Cottage. Jessie viewed Glastonbury as a place of pilgrimage - the eclectic mixture of people came, she said, for "healing" and out of "curiosity". Jessie had visited Glastonbury last summer, and was returning to "confirm" her life-changing experiences of the previous visit and to "recharge" her "energies". Once again, it was the landscape of Glastonbury, invested with spiritual energy, which evoked healing and spiritual renewal. Jessie expressed belief in the existence of "energies" in Glastonbury and their ability to heal people or to awaken their own "innate" healing abilities.

For Jessie, Glastonbury was a "gateway", through which the "spirit world" could easily communicate with those willing to act as channels for it. Jessie herself practiced healing

using crystals, and during a healing session she would channel her own "spirit guide". Her spiritual beliefs gave her a sense of peace and belonging - her "spirit guides" were her family. Many of her friends who were "born again Christians" wouldn't have anything to do with her because of her new spiritual beliefs which they viewed as being "evil". She had been a Christian herself, but never experienced the feelings shared by her "born again" friends - she obtained similar feelings through her new spiritual beliefs. For Jessie, Glastonbury was a "spiritual crossroads" inhabited by "people of every belief" where she could practice her own spiritual beliefs free from the persecution she had experienced back home. In this sense, she had come to Glastonbury to experience what I understand to be "communitas" (Turner 1974) based on acceptance by, and support from, others who shared her beliefs.

Kyrah

Glastonbury was also a refuge from the hardships of everyday life for a woman from Crete whom I met the day before I left Berachah Colour Healing Centre . Kyrah was an attractive and petite woman, fifty years old, but with few signs that she was half that age. She was originally from Luxembourg but married an Englishman. Now divorced, she had lived in Crete for the past two years, desperate to escape the cold, damp English winters. She had come to Glastonbury to do a Reiki course with a local instructor and to solicit spiritual guidance from a local reader.

Like Charlotte, Kyrah sought a sense of female empowerment in Glastonbury. She believed it to be "a very special place for women" in that it gave them a special power to be strong and confident, to rely on themselves and not on men. She revealed that she had

spent many years being compliant to the wishes of her family and her husband; now, years later, she was fiercely independent. I felt that she, too, had come to Glastonbury as a sort of sanctuary from her life in Crete, where she was greatly disturbed by what she described as the cruel and inhumane treatment of animals, many of which she had rescued. Although she had started an organization for animal welfare among English-speakers, she felt discouraged, and hoped that some of her friends from Glastonbury would join her more permanently in Crete for moral support. Kyras also spoke of the landscape of Glastonbury as possessing a healing energy which had also inspired her visit. Originally she had been drawn to Crete by the "energies" of the land, which she felt were very good and useful for "healing". The benefits of this energy were outweighed by the immoral constitution of the locals, whom she described as "cruel and hard". As had been the case with Jessie, I perceived Kyras's desire for fellowship with, and support from, like-minded individuals to be an expression of what Turner describes as 'communitas'. For Kyras, such an experience was one of renewal, empowerment, and spiritual connection with animals.

Corsara

Corsara was an alternative 'pilgrim' seeking sanctuary, the experience of "communitas" and spiritual healing in Glastonbury. She was a slight, fair skinned woman who looked much younger than her admitted age of twenty-eight years whom I met during a Reiki healing meeting. She was staying at Tor Down and she told me that she had chosen this establishment because she saw it advertised and felt a sense of "safety and protection" being with Reiki healers. Corsara herself had completed the first and second levels of

Reiki. She had been an accountant for several years, but felt that the corporate business world was morally wrong, so she quit her job to "live off the land". Like other informants, Corsara had made many changes in her life after academic success, a high-profile job, popularity, drugs and alcohol left her unfulfilled. She had come to Glastonbury after a domestic dispute between herself and her partner turned violent, and she had fled her home and infant twins. While in Glastonbury, she actively sought healing from, and interaction with, others of like mind who shared her alternative views. She attended meditations at the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, a Reiki healing circle, spiritual healing at a local centre, and with Michael at Tor Down. She obtained employment at a local alternative café, and attended Egyptian dance classes. Corsara availed of every opportunity to discuss spiritual matters with various practitioners of alternative and spiritual healing and to engage in what she described as spiritual growth. Clearly, she was seeking a sense of fellowship with others of like mind and beliefs.

Corsara's peace in Glastonbury was short-lived. A phone call home revealed that her partner had taken her children somewhere, and he refused to disclose their location. After a night spent anxiously waiting for further word, he turned up in Glastonbury with them, two beautiful babies fast asleep in their car-seats and oblivious to the tumultuous events surrounding them. He turned them over to her care and the four of us returned to Evergreen Cottage where Corsara bathed and fed her children, and was made aware of their severe diaper rash and diarrhea. As further evidence of a belief shared by many informants that the landscape of Glastonbury is innately healing, Corsara later brought her twins to the Tor and Chalice Well, in the hope that the "energies" would do them

some unspecified healing good.

Through my interactions with Corsara, I realized that my informants achieved an experience of “communitas” to varying degrees. Corsara fled her troubled relationship to find peace and spiritual renewal in Glastonbury, and she threw herself wholeheartedly into a variety of healing workshops, classes, and activities in the hope of finding relief and a sense of fellowship and support. She could not, however, escape her problems, which came looking for her in Glastonbury. When her boyfriend and children arrived in town, she was forced to confront him and once again take on a maternal role. Her experience of communitas had been short lived and only partially realized.

There were similarities in the motivations of itinerant guests for coming to Glastonbury. For Stefan, Felix, Jessie, Kyras, Charlotte, and Corsara Glastonbury was a refuge from the restrictions of their everyday lives. It was a place where they could express their spiritual beliefs without fear of persecution by their more conventional peers back home. Despite similarities, there was no one, single characteristic experience of communitas. It was instead multiple experiences. While in Glastonbury, itinerant guests interacted with different people and with the landscape in different ways. Stefan and Felix climbed the Tor late at night to stage an elaborate celebration of Beltane complete with illegal fireworks. For them, the experience of communitas was encapsulated by the convergence of hundreds of men and women who shared their pagan beliefs concerning, for example, fertility. For Corsara the Tor was a place of healing where she brought her children in search of healing energy and sought renewal herself when we climbed to the top to watch the sun rise early in May. Although never fully realized, her experience of communitas

was defined by interaction with a multitude of healers, healing groups, and members of Glastonbury's New Age community who gave her support and encouragement. For Charlotte and Kyrah, Glastonbury was a place of special significance for women; a place where they could achieve independence and empowerment and perhaps resolve personal problems. What I interpret as an experience of *communitas* was sought through interaction with others who shared these beliefs.

Proprietors of Alternative B&B's: Resident Pilgrim Narratives

Alternative Bed and Breakfasts in Glastonbury are intimately connected to the concept of pilgrimage. Proprietors of these establishments made it clear during our discussions and interviews that they wished to accommodate "pilgrims" or guests who exhibited pilgrim-like characteristics ("questors" or "seekers") rather than tourists who came to Glastonbury for secular instead of spiritual reasons. Catherine believed that if guests weren't in Glastonbury on a "pilgrimage" or a "healing retreat" then they weren't right for The Grail Quest. Flora, too, noted that she tried not to have people who were "just on a holiday". Proprietor-healers viewed themselves as running a type of establishment distinct from a normal B&B accommodation – they were instead modern-day pilgrim's hostels for Glastonbury's itinerant guests - healing centres, places of spiritual instruction and renewal, and sanctuaries from the confusion and stress of modern life, wherein guests could find peace, share their experiences with others of like mind, and achieve what Turner would view as "*communitas*" (1974).

Proprietors of alternative B&B's often indicated that they viewed their establishments

as being like the traditional "pilgrim's refuges" in that guests were equals and everyone in the B&B got along, sharing space, breakfast and facilities. Marlene envisioned her B&B as a place where guests lived communally, sharing the bathroom and kitchen, and she seemed to take great pride in this distinctive communal character. Flora spoke of her B&B as being an "ashram"; a "communal house whose members shared spiritual goals and practices". Flora obviously enjoyed those mornings when guests gathered in her living room before breakfast to chat, share experiences, confide in one another, and discuss spiritual matters. She also engaged guests in rituals, of which meditation was one example, to foster a strong sense of "community" and fellowship.

The concept of providing an experience of *communitas* within the walls of their B&B's to those who journey to Glastonbury for spiritual reasons as "pilgrims" was an important part of the role of proprietors such as Marlene, Catherine, and Flora. It is this characteristic of alternative Bed and Breakfasts which most clearly fits with Turner's model of pilgrimage (1974).

Like the itinerant guests previously discussed, all proprietors of alternative B&B's with whom I stayed were "incomers" to Glastonbury. Catherine, Flora, Cheryl, Michael, John, Meredith, and Jan had journeyed to Glastonbury for spiritual reasons, or as the result of spiritual guidance. They are therefore pilgrims themselves. They differ from their itinerant guests in that they are seeking a permanent sanctuary in the manner of the "full time resident pilgrims" discussed by McKevitt in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo (1991). By contrast to Turner's notion of *communitas* as a temporary, liminal state (Turner 1974:166), proprietors of alternative B&B's are attempting to live in a *permanent*

state of *communitas*. Bowman writes: "The Turners (1978:30) claim that pilgrimage provides a route to a 'liminal world' where the ideal is felt to be real" and "there are those who feel that by being in Glastonbury they inhabit such a world *permanently*. They are perpetual pilgrims." (1993:57).

Like their itinerant guests, proprietors of alternative B&B's were seeking what I perceive to be an experience of *communitas* in Glastonbury.²⁰ Part of this lay in establishing a life in Glastonbury separate from the secular "outside" world. As the following narratives demonstrate, proprietors of alternative B&B's had often made difficult breaks from their conventional lives before a move to Glastonbury which allowed them to practice their spiritual beliefs and interact with those of similar beliefs in the quest for '*communitas*'.

Flora and the Heart Focus B&B

Flora's involvement with healing, development as a healer, and eventual move to Glastonbury began with a dramatic life-change. In 1993 she was "happily married" to a famous spiritual healer, doing healing herself while working at a bank. She had her "aura" painted by a man who told her that "everything would change". At the time she disregarded the message, thinking that the man was a "crank". She had for years "honored" the "journey" of her husband by respecting his decisions and by nurturing and

²⁰ Meredith noted that there was a "sense of unity" between healers in Glastonbury. Organized events such as Companions Day at Chalice Well created a sense of "community". She added that if people chose to, there were lots of "community meetings" in Glastonbury, such as the Glastonbury Sanctuary group which met to discuss their vision of an elaborate temple for members of all spiritual beliefs built on the Abbey grounds. According to her, there was "a great sense of community bubbling under the surface of a lot of separate people".

promoting him. When her children left home, her job as a bank clerk "packed up", and her husband retired she found that she no longer had a "role". A year after her "aura painting" she made the difficult decision to leave him. She traveled to Hong Kong in search of her son and it was there that her "journey as a healer and a person started". Reflecting on her marriage, she said that she had "always been a shadow of someone else"; she'd been a "bank clerk, a typist, a cashier, a mother, a wife, a daughter, but never Flora". "Now," she said with eyes shining, "I'm recreating my life as though I am born again". Operating a B&B gave Flora the independence and identity that she felt she lacked in her former life and came to crave: "I'm in my power now", she said.

In Hong Kong, Flora took a job teaching English. She also became heavily involved in healing during this period after a "synchronous" (fateful) meeting with a fellow healer and spiritualist who worked in a New Age shop in Hong Kong. People heard of Flora's healing and channeling abilities and came to her apartment from all over Hong Kong and China.

I asked Flora why she had chosen to come to Glastonbury, and she told me that she "just asked God: Where would you like me now?" As a "synchronous"²¹ answer to this question, her friend from England came to visit her later in Hong Kong and told her that she "looked like a Glastonbury person"; she had "Glastonbury written across her forehead". Up until that moment, Flora had no knowledge of Glastonbury; she had "only

²¹ Proprietors spoke of their decisions to move to Glastonbury in terms of a common discourse, which involved the belief in a force outside themselves which was responsible for their choices - an invisible hand of fate guiding them to Glastonbury and to the lives they now led. These fateful events were commonly termed "synchronicities", described by one believer as "two or more events coming together at a significant time...answering an unspoken question that you have about something; or...providing you with validation that you're on the right track" (Adrienne 1999:45)

vaguely heard of it", but she "knew nothing" of the Abbey, the Tor, King Arthur, and the Chalice Well.

After her work in Hong Kong, Flora traveled extensively and did healing work in India. When she returned to England, she drove to Glastonbury in her camper van and the sight of the Tor made a deep impression on her. Synchronicity played an important role in Flora's perception of her life after this move. Soon after her arrival, she found her present home. It had been on the market for £57 000, but Flora said she'd take it for £56 000, because five added to six was eleven, which she explained was "the spiritual number" and confirmation that she was on the right path. After moving in, she approached the National Federation of Spiritual Healers centre and was welcomed by the members. Flora perceived her warm reception to be yet another indication that she had made the right decisions.

Flora believed that her life had been "guided" in many ways. She told me that "when you take the right step, the universe works with you and makes things happen". When she climbed the Tor for the very first time, she said: "Well universe I'm here now, do with me what you will", and this seemed to form a basis for her philosophy for life. Before I left, she gave me the following encouragement: "everything will be wonderful for you now that you're in Glastonbury, because you've taken this first step and the universe will treat you royally".

As with itinerant pilgrims, Flora perceived Glastonbury to be a place where she could freely express her spiritual beliefs. Like Kyrah and Charlotte, it was also a place where she could be free from dependencies on others. She also perceived the landscape of

Glastonbury to be healing, as mentioned in chapter two. It was therefore conducive to her own healing work. Flora engaged with the landscape of Glastonbury in a very obvious way through her long early-morning walks along the country lanes, walks which she often recommended to her guests as part of "healing". As mentioned, she had recommended a "ley line walk" along the Tor to myself and another guest. By standing on a specific spot where two ley lines crossed, we could tap into "energy from the earth" and come away feeling "totally recharged" and "filled with strength".

John, Meredith and the Divine Light Centre

Like Flora, John's life had undergone major change. He had moved to Glastonbury in 1991 after receiving spiritual "guidance" through meditation that he should "get ready to go to Glastonbury". At this time he had a "very secure job" in London and had been involved in a long term relationship. Three months after receiving the message, he had lost his relationship, his house and his job. "It was the best thing that ever happened to me", he said. For several years he rented a house in Glastonbury and then a room in the Sai Baba Centre, then, eighteen months before my arrival, he bought the house in which he and Meredith now lived. Prior to his permanent move to Glastonbury, John had been visiting the town off and on since 1978.

Meredith was born in New York but lived in Los Angeles for many years where she worked in a high-profile promotional job at an international music agency. She noted that there had been a "very trendy" healing scene in Los Angeles, but she had felt "isolated" and spoke against the American "gun culture".

Like the itinerant pilgrims, Meredith had felt drawn to Glastonbury by the landscape and

her first interaction with this landscape had occurred on the Tor where she witnessed a friend's marriage. As had been the case with Flora, this friend told Meredith that she "belonged" in Glastonbury, and Meredith confessed that she had felt such a strong attachment to the land that she became overwhelmed with emotion and wept every time she visited it.

She met John at the Ramala Centre two years ago, but he was involved in a relationship at that time. She met him later at this centre when he was no longer attached and they "connected". She spoke of their meeting as yet another "synchronicity". As my relationship with Meredith deepened during my stay, I became aware of how great the changes she had experienced in her life had been. She confided that despite all the glitz and glamour of her previous life, she had never been happy - she had always been "searching" for something on a deeper spiritual level which she had now found in Glastonbury with John.

Meredith had been searching for a sense of acceptance and understanding which she had not found in Los Angeles. Among her friends in Glastonbury and with her husband, Meredith had achieved what I understand to be an experience of *communitas*. Glastonbury "feels like home" she told me, and it was common for my alternative informants to speak of the town as their "spiritual home".

Michael and Cheryl - Tor Down

Like Flora, John, and Meredith, Michael and Cheryl perceived their move to Glastonbury to be a synchronous event which occurred for a reason. Neither Cheryl nor her husband had been to Glastonbury until months before their move to the town, and

during this time they had "readings" with Catherine, and both had enrolled in various "courses" or workshops in Glastonbury. Up until this point in time, Cheryl, Michael, and their two children had been living in an organized spiritual community for eighteen years but recent conflicts of belief had motivated them to move.

While in Glastonbury on a spiritual course, Cheryl stayed at Tor Down, and soon after her arrival she climbed the Tor and received spiritual guidance during a meditation: "I sat there and meditated and suddenly this, I don't know where from, who from, I just got the words through that 'Glastonbury was my home, own it and love it'". The next morning in Glastonbury, Cheryl stayed at Tor Down and learned that the B&B was "on the market". After returning home, Cheryl said that Michael received spiritual "guidance" that it was "alright" to make the move to Glastonbury, although he perceived the move to be more for Cheryl's sake. They put their house on the market and within a week they received and accepted an offer. Problems with mortgages and financial arrangements were resolved in what Cheryl perceived as being synchronous ways, cementing her feeling that their move to Glastonbury had been the right decision. "It all came together in the end and so...that was how we got the house, so it was truly just given to us."

One of Cheryl's most persuasive indications that it was right to move to Glastonbury revolved around the opportunities which presented themselves to her two children. Soon after they arrived in Glastonbury, government assisted placements were advertised for an exclusive and expensive public school nearby. Local people were advised to send their children to interviews. Cheryl said:

"we went along and he (her son) had his interview...and we were absolutely

bowled over by this school and they offered him this place, he didn't have to have an exam, he didn't have to have anything, any requirements, he was just there at the right place at the right time...and so it's like that was another thing on the road that was given to us...but it was like it was just meant to be...it was just handed to us...".

One of the changes which they had experienced between their past life and their new life in Glastonbury involved their careers. As previously mentioned both Cheryl and Michael had worked as accountants, but Cheryl felt a "great pull" between accountancy and spirituality, and her interests in the latter had pulled her away from the former. While she was no longer actively involved in it she told me that Michael's job was necessary for the extra income: "we couldn't survive on just this (the B&B)" she said, "there's not a lot of money in it". She understood that her husband wanted to "give it (accountancy) up" and was gradually decreasing his involvement in this work. Like his wife, Michael felt that there was some conflict between his involvement with spirituality and healing and his job as an accountant, and he confided before I left Tor Down that he found himself doing less and less accountancy work and was becoming more and more involved with B&B healing work. During a meditation that morning, he had received spiritual guidance that he should be spending more time talking to guests and learning from them, helping them, and giving them guidance. Michael could not reconcile his life of accountancy with the spiritual motivation for residing in Glastonbury and he needed to sever attachments to that former, business oriented life in order to experience 'communitas' in the full sense of the word.

Catherine – The Grail Quest B&B

Like many of my informants, Catherine, too, had experienced huge life changes which culminated in her move to Glastonbury; the greatest of which was spiritual.

Catherine had felt attracted to the teachings of Christianity from a very young age. Later in life, she spent twenty-five years studying the teachings of an "Islamic Sage" whom she believed to be a prophet. During this time she was encouraged to have a "God-centred faith", and to "find Jesus". After her divorce and move to Glastonbury in 1991, she had a mystical experience in which she "ascended into Heaven" and was given tools to help her accomplish the things she believed she must do by will of God. Singing was one of these things - it was through songs incorporating teachings that she could convey the "message" given to her by Jesus.

The mystical experience of ascension heralded many changes in Catherine's life. She changed her name to reflect her spiritual changes and became a "Bride of Christ", meaning that she had to refrain from relationships with men. She told me later that her personal life had ended after the experience of ascension - she perceived herself to be a "tool for God" and instead of leading a "people-centred" life, she lived a "God-centred" life. Catherine explained that she must "keep focused" at all times to maintain a "channel to Jesus". The need to remain focused also governed, to some extent, Catherine's mobility - she told me that she couldn't stand going to certain places on Glastonbury High Street because the location had the effect of changing her "energies" and was particularly detrimental to her writing.

For Catherine, Glastonbury was a special place which nurtured her spiritual beliefs. Of

all my alternative informants, it was Catherine who seemed to identify most with the concept of pilgrimage. A wall of her house was covered with pilgrimage poems and depictions of St. James, the Patron Saint of a famous pilgrimage route through Spain. As mentioned in chapter one, the location of her home on an ancient pilgrimage route from the town of Wells to the Abbey, was important as Catherine saw herself and others who came to Glastonbury as modern day pilgrims and she advertised her cottage as a "pilgrim's hostel".

Catherine was also one of the most reclusive of my proprietor-informants. Others noted that she kept to herself, and one informant mentioned that it was very rare to even see her walking up the High Street. Despite this, Catherine was also seeking what might be understood as an experience of *communitas* in Glastonbury. As one of my most "Christian" informants, she found it within small prayer circles which she led most Thursday evenings in Evergreen Cottage. She promoted her B&B in a "Retreat Guide" in order to attract Christians to her establishment. She said: "There are so many wonderful Christians who are ready to break out". Clearly, Catherine was seeking to accommodate a certain type of client with whom she could share her beliefs and experiences, and create a spirit of fellowship or *communitas*.

These women and men had made dramatic, and often difficult, breaks from their former lives outside of Glastonbury. Their new lives allowed them to pursue their own interests and to interact with others of similar beliefs. They can be thought of as resident pilgrims in that they have journeyed to Glastonbury in order to immerse themselves in its sacred atmosphere, to engage with the landscape and to experience spiritual growth and healing

in the same way as itinerant pilgrims do during their visits to the town, but on a permanent basis. The search for acceptance, or what I have viewed as *communitas*, with other permanent residents was also a driving force for their move. Many felt unsatisfied with their former lives. “Synchronous”, fateful events which led them to Glastonbury gave them a sense of belonging – at long last, they had found their spiritual home.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed characteristics of alternative pilgrimage in which features of the landscape such as the Tor and Chalice Well, invested by informants with spiritual and healing energy, replace a single shrine or divine icon as the motivation for undertaking alternative pilgrimage. As in Victor Turner’s model, the experience of “*communitas*” is an essential feature of alternative pilgrimage, although this experience differs among itinerant guests.

The importance of *communitas* and healing is also expressed through the narratives of proprietors of alternative B&B’s who may be thought of as “resident pilgrims” (McKevitt 1991). These men and women are “perpetual pilgrims” (Bowman 1993:57) who come to Glastonbury to escape the secular world and immerse themselves in Glastonbury’s sacred atmosphere. Within the walls of their “sanctuaries”, proprietors and guests can experience what Turner calls “*communitas*” (1974), and in many cases the attainment of an egalitarian, communal arrangement seems to be a main motivation for operating their B&B’s. However, complete *communitas* cannot be achieved because of the division which exists in Glastonbury between the alternative religious scene which proprietor-healers represent, and the secular, commercial world represented by the Tourist Board.

Nor can it be fully realized because of the nature of Glastonbury itself; a heterogeneous society where different types of pilgrims, tourists, conventional residents, homeless and travelers, co-exist - sometimes uneasily. This becomes the topic of the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Tourism and B&B's

Glastonbury's predominant economic activities revolve around agriculture and tourism. The tourism industry is represented in Glastonbury by the English Tourist Board, a division of the English tourism industry which consists of government departments, trade associations, and other agencies. Regional Tourist Boards, such as the West Country Tourist Board, (now Southwest Tourism), are commercial membership organizations which promote their regions locally.

In 1998 the Glastonbury Tourist Information Centre recorded sixty five thousand visitors to a town of under ten thousand residents. According to the manager of the Glastonbury TIC the tourism season begins at Easter and continues until October, but other events and activities draw visitors year round. There can be little doubt that Glastonbury's tourism industry is vital to the financial viability and survival of its many alternative and complementary healing centres, New Age shops, and Bed and Breakfasts. In this chapter I will explore tourism in relation to alternative Bed and Breakfasts.

Alternative B&B's and Tourist Board Regulations

As previously mentioned, I had arrived during an interesting time for B&B owners. The English Tourist Board was in the process of making it compulsory for all such establishments to pass an inspection before they could be advertised in Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guides. The first page of the 1999 Guide produced by the Glastonbury TIC read in bold letters:

"This year for the first time our Accommodation Guide, in common with all other guides produced by local Tourist Information Centres, includes only those establishments who have achieved, (or have applied for), graded classification with either the English Tourist Board, AA (Automobile Association) or RAC (Royal Automobile Club)."

A memo obtained from the Glastonbury TIC addressed to "All Accommodation Providers" regarding the 1999 Glastonbury, Street and District Accommodation Guide" described this decision as a "positive move to improve the quality of accommodation in the area". Further, it emphasized that "*Only* those establishments advertising in the guide" would "be considered when information is given to enquirers, or accommodation is booked by either the Glastonbury TIC, the Visitor Information Centre, or through the TIC network within the UK." The process of achieving "graded classification" involved an inspection by a member of the Tourist Board, AA, or RAC.

Inspection and certification by the Tourist Board had a direct impact on alternative B&B's at which I stayed and it seemed that the Tourist Board policies were both advantageous and disadvantageous for them. According to Catherine, the new regulations functioned to protect people who were running legitimate B&B establishments and who depended on this business for their livelihood from other people who might simply rent a bedroom at a very low price to supplement another income. The more stringent regulations had forced a number of these cheaper accommodations out of business, thus protecting those doing it as their only source of income. It was Catherine's impression that tourism had improved in Glastonbury since the board had pushed for grading B&B's.

Catherine and several other proprietors also felt that it was advantageous to advertise with the Tourist Board because the Accommodation Guide, published by the local Tourist Information Centre, had an international distribution and therefore reached a wider audience than did other sources such as alternative magazines and “retreat” guides. During the last month of my research, Marlene approached Catherine with the idea of forming an alternative B&B organization for “pilgrims” and “seekers” only. While Catherine expressed interest in the proposal, which would allow her to bypass the inspection and associated costs, she worried that it would be difficult to book enough guests without the aid of the TIC’s Accommodation Guide.

It was difficult for Flora to afford the new fees for inspection and certification, but like Catherine, she felt it was necessary to be in the TIC’s Accommodation Guide. She also advertised her B&B in New Age magazines, as did most proprietors of alternative B&B’s, but, she said, they “don’t bring in money. The Tourist Board is well known, and people phone and ask for the TIC book (Accommodation Guide)”. Other sources of promotion didn’t “reach a wide enough audience”.

While the Tourist Board’s quest for higher standards seems reasonable, and are in some cases advantageous to proprietors, they are neither neutral nor entirely innocent. I learned from workers at the Tourist Information Centre in Glastonbury and from B&B proprietors with whom I stayed that these new regulations had resulted in the closure of several accommodations. There were thirty-five B&B’s listed in the 1998 Accommodation Guide in Glastonbury, six more than were published in 1999. According to a TIC employee, some B&B’s were no longer in the guide because they

"didn't want to be inspected" but according to some of the B&B owners with whom I stayed, this was not the only reason. Many could not afford the cost of the inspection, insurance, and grading. There was also a fee for appearing in the Accommodation Guide, ranging from £40 for a "classified" ad only, to £230 for a full page ad. These fees had forced several proprietors to raise the cost of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. Flora was forced to raise the cost of her B&B from £15 to £18 to balance the increased cost of inspection and related Tourist Board fees, which, according to her, could total £500, "a small fortune". As time progressed, she became increasingly anxious about her financial situation, and took every opportunity to justify her increase in fees. She said "£18 isn't a lot when you consider how much we have to pay" (with respect to inspection fees, insurance, and other related fees), and "guests don't often realize that". She also stressed that other facilities, such as John's B&B, had also increased their fees. In an attempt to prove that the Heart Focus B&B was a good deal, she often compared her B&B to other accommodations, such as a local youth hostel. According to her, guests were charged between £40 and £60 a night for dirty, noisy shared rooms populated by drug users. Flora made it clear throughout my research that she did not want to raise her prices, but she felt that she was justified in doing so and endeavored to ensure that myself and other guests understood her motivations.

It was interesting to observe how B&B's operated within the confines of the Tourist Board restrictions and regulations, and the consequences of failing to meet the imposed standards. Catherine told me that if the Tourist Information Centre received three complaints about a B&B, it would be struck off the Accommodation Guide list, resulting

in some amount of pressure for proprietors. Flora also complained about the stress of functioning within Tourist Board parameters. Marlene, Flora, and Catherine had not yet been inspected and therefore their grading or rating was advertised in the 1999 Guide as being "Applied For". These women were awaiting their inspection with anxiety. Flora expressed concern during my visit that an inspector would appear the very day she failed to have the breakfast dishes washed and rooms cleaned in the mornings. Apparently, an inspector had harshly criticized the accommodation of a friend and "terrified all the B&B's". "Until then", she said, "we (the B&B's) were all happy".

The recent rejection of Berachah Colour Healing Centre from the TIC Accommodation Guide was something of a "sensation" among B&B owners with whom I stayed. Most mentioned the failure of this establishment to conform to standards as an example of what could happen to them if they weren't vigilant. An employee of the TIC in Glastonbury said that Berachah Colour Healing Centre had been taken off the reference list because it hadn't passed the inspection. Two other B&B owners told me that this was due to their failure to provide the advertised "full English Breakfast". Regulations required that the owners must provide what they advertised. Flora herself advertised "car park space" and was reminded by the woman at the TIC that she had to be able to provide this, meaning that if a guest arrived looking for a place to park, Flora would have to move her own car from her driveway and allow the guest to use it.

Unsuitable Guests

The Tourist Information Centre directly affects alternative Bed and Breakfasts by acting as a referral agency. Guests who inquire about accommodation are referred to accommodations deemed suitable by TIC employees. These accommodations have to be inspected and they have to meet Tourist Board standards. While this system provides B&B's with an important supply of guests, such referrals often cause problems for the proprietors of alternative Bed and Breakfasts and result in tension or even conflict between the TIC and these establishments. One such problem involves the suitability of guests referred to alternative B&B's by the TIC.

A tension exists between the desire of the alternative B&B proprietors to provide a sanctuary to spiritually motivated guests and the need to pay their bills. Proprietors consider their B&B's to be sacred places but they are also businesses which exist in a secular, commercial world of financial responsibility and the realities of making ends meet. Several proprietors often spoke to me about their financial concerns, including Catherine, Flora, and Cheryl. These proprietors cannot completely fulfill their goals of running alternative "sanctuaries" or "refuges" for a specific type of clients because their guests might not be spiritual "pilgrims" or "seekers", but "tourists" or other unsuitable types who do not fit with the alternative character of the establishment. Catherine, Flora, Ann, Cheryl, and Michael had all turned away 'unsuitable' guests. Guests can be considered unsuitable for several reasons: if they are "unspiritual" (for example, "tourists" instead of "pilgrims"), potentially dangerous, disrespectful of the home and the proprietors' privacy, or dishonest (refusing to pay, or writing bad cheques). I will discuss

the problem of accommodating "unspiritual" guests, or "tourists" in the following section.

Owners of alternative type B&B's often sought to attract guests who shared their spiritual philosophies, or who were interested in healing and other esoteric pursuits. They selected appropriate guests either directly, by turning away or discouraging undesirables, or indirectly through their promotion of features and services of the B&B in not only the Tourist Information Centre Accommodation Guide but also other guides, such as "Retreat" guides and other New Age magazines.

Several alternative B&B owners also believed that the "right" type of guests were attracted or guided to their establishments through more spiritual means. Flora and Marlene both expressed the belief that they could attract suitable guests by emitting spiritual messages or vibrations. Flora said: "that is the message I send out, that I actually want people that I can help".

Flora spoke of her B&B as a sanctuary in which she wished to accommodate spiritual guests. She expressed a desire to provide a "quiet" "sacred space" where people could "get answers" to spiritual questions. "Nine out of ten" guests accommodated at the Heart Focus B&B were "on the spiritual pathway", having taken a "quantum leap into faith" and "into learning more about themselves". These seekers were the type of guest Flora wished to accommodate at the her B&B. She felt that I was a good candidate for accommodation because I was "writing a book" about healing and about Glastonbury, and in some ways I felt that she regarded me as a messenger.

Flora was very specific about the types of guests she wished to accommodate: younger,

single women or "girls" with an interest in healing or spirituality were deemed suitable and she consciously geared the promotion of her B&B towards obtaining guests who fit this criteria. She perceived that her B&B attracted "girls" and when she did get men they had a "very soft energy". Most of the guests whom I met at the Heart Focus B&B seemed to fit Flora's criteria for a suitable guest. Three were women who had come to Glastonbury to participate in various spiritual or healing courses and workshops, and one was a timid young male student.

Flora was also very specific about the kind of guests who were not suitable. Some were undesirable because they were not spiritual, others were a nuisance, such as those who disrupted the peace of her accommodation, and some were perceived to be dangerous. With respect to nuisances, the Heart Focus B&B was "smoke free" and was not, Flora insisted, a "married people's B&B". Married couples couldn't make love because the sounds went "right through" the house. She perceived that people came to her B&B for a "quiet space" so any noise, such as chatting through the thin walls, concerned her. Her desire for single women guests might have stemmed from a traumatic experience involving two guests who had appeared "sensible". Flora had spent the weekend away from her house, and returned to find it in a "shambles". Her guests had used all the beds for sexual intercourse while the woman had been menstruating, resulting in badly soiled sheets, quilts, and blankets. "That's why I won't take lovers" she said. Her discriminating attitude was clearly based on her belief that her home was a sacred place of healing and spiritual growth, "not", as she said, "the place for a dirty weekend".

Catherine's desire for a certain type of guest was made obvious through promotional

material which described The Grail Quest as a "pilgrim's retreat". Catherine spoke of her B&B as a "refuge" for people looking for "creative ways to express their faith" and advertised it as such in "New Age" type magazines and retreat guides read by people who were interested in healing and related subjects. As mentioned, ideally she wished to accommodate Christians and those who were in Glastonbury on pilgrimages or healing retreats. Others, including tourists, weren't right for The Grail Quest. Suitable guests also included what she called "Goddess groups" from North America and "Mystical England Tour" participants to whom Catherine often gave lectures concerning crop circles, healing, Glastonbury, or anything they particularly desired, for a small fee.

Catherine had applied for classification with a local Tourist Board but needed to improve her cottage accommodation according to the set standard. This would require, among other things, the rewiring of Evergreen Cottage, a massive and expensive job. She was considering replacing electricity with oil lamps in the cottage, then advertising it as a "retreat" from the modern world. Catherine wanted to accommodate guests who appreciated the type of B&B accommodation she was trying to create - a rustic, "mediaeval" hostel reminiscent of a bygone age; a "retreat" from the modern world. Four fastidious German guests who did not approve of this character and who complained about cobwebs and a stain or two had been asked to leave.

As indicated by her advertisement, Marlene was very specific about the types of guests she wished to accommodate at the Radiance Wheel B&B - "pilgrims", seekers, or "questors", but not "tourists". Like Flora, Marlene seemed to consciously select her guests, and like Catherine and Flora, she told me that she could sometimes "tell" by the

voice of prospective guests who telephoned her what "type" they were. She apparently associated the term "pilgrimage" with Christianity, saying that for Christians, the draw was the Abbey, St. Michael's tower on the Tor, and Chalice Well. She added that her interests lay in "personal inner search" and "questing": a form of pilgrimage practiced by non-Christians. "Questors" were people who came to Glastonbury to "connect with the land" and visits to the Tor and Chalice Well were spiritually motivated. Christian pilgrims were drawn to "particular shrines" or icons to "connect with a vision of Mary" specified by the Church. "Pagans", by contrast, came and searched "in the landscape", and the "messages" they received came through the land, animals, trees, birds, and other people.

Bowman writes: "The New Age emphasis on individual responsibility for spiritual matters means that private pilgrimage and retreat" are "common" in Glastonbury (1993:47). For Marlene, individualism was an important part of "questing" which was not an "organized activity" like pilgrimage; it was "personal". She said "Some may not talk with other people; they may meditate and be by themselves. They may come to Glastonbury many times to get the message they're looking for". Unlike Catherine, Marlene was not attempting to create a Christian space and she used the words "sacred space" in her advert to "discourage Christians with closed minded views".

Like Flora, Marlene accommodated more women than men, a situation she felt "happy with". She tended to attract women by the way she worded her advertisements, the "vibes" she emitted, and her involvement in women's organizations. "I don't want any patriarchal people here" she said.

Unlike Marlene, John did not seem to draw a sharp line between those who came to Glastonbury "seeking" or "questing" and those who came as "tourists". Instead, he perceived there to be some amount of overlap between these activities. He did not believe that people came to Glastonbury "specifically" for healing. "They come for a holiday", he told me, but during the course of this holiday they "may find healing". He noted that "a percent do come for courses", and tourists may have "healings" or "readings" in Glastonbury, and they may also "look for guidance", "but", he said, "it's a tourist place which has its tourist attractions".

While he was less specific about the types of clients they accommodated, John clearly believed that some people "needed" to stay at the Divine Light Centre, myself included. He and Meredith desired to accommodate guests whom they perceived would benefit from the "energies" of their home.

Marlene had housed her share of interesting characters including a man she described as being "demented" and another who had sounded "completely manic" on the telephone, but she, too, explained their presence by suggesting that they had "needed" to stay at her B&B for spiritual reasons. In the same way, Michael and Cheryl seemed to feel that some guests were right for Tor Down and were drawn by its "energies". "Some people have to be here," said Cheryl. Cheryl noted that unlike Marlene who was interested in accommodating a certain kind of guest -- "spiritual travelers" - they didn't get a "certain type" of guest at Tor Down. They accepted all comers except "business people", who, by experience, they found to be the "least respectful" of their house, smoking in the bedrooms and returning to the house drunk. To justify unsuitable guests, Catherine

admitted that while she sometimes had no idea why certain people came to her, she suspected that there was some, almost divine, reason and that these guests had been guided there to be helped by the energies of her cottage. For example, when four city-dwelling Australians on a "Sacred Sites Tour" who did not seem to appreciate Evergreen Cottage's rustic charm arrived, Catherine was rather disappointed with them, saying that they "weren't at all spiritual". Five days later, she told me that they had "got better and better" as The Grail Quest, Glastonbury itself, and Catherine's prayers had an effect. Two German men who arrived shortly after me were also the beneficiaries of The Grail Quest's transforming energies. Catherine was not overly impressed with these guests, largely due to their carnivorous diet but as with the Mystical England tour group, she felt that "they got better and better" as the "energies of Glastonbury and The Grail Quest cleared them".

Like Cheryl and Flora, Ann and Catherine also stressed that it was important for guests to respect the sanctity of their homes. Catherine had refused to accommodate three girls for a second time after they left Evergreen Cottage strewn with broken tableware and "fag ends" (cigarette butts). Smoking, drinking, and in some cases, consumption of meat on the premises were activities perceived to be antithetical to the spiritual atmosphere of the alternative B&B's and proprietors frowned on them as acts of disrespect.

Unsuitable guests might be deemed as such not because they are unspiritual, but because they exhibit dangerous or threatening behavior. Complaints directed towards the Tourist Information Centre often revolved around these types of guests. Catherine, Marlene, and Flora noted that when the TIC sent them guests, they had no idea what sort

of person would turn up on their doorstep, and whether or not that person would be desirable.

Both Flora and Catherine had reservations about taking single men into their homes, for reasons of personal safety. Flora expressed frustration over TIC policies more than once, and often concerning their lack of discrimination when sending guests to her accommodation. She seemed to be extremely conscientious about her guests, and said that she was "very aware" of the appropriateness of her bookings. She turned out a particularly unsavory man who she described as a "gypsy" type with "long greasy black hair", a black leather jacket and a pungent odor who looked like he'd come straight off a "wanted poster". She then confronted the employees at the TIC to vent her frustration and asked them to "use a little sensitivity" when sending her guests. She felt responsible for the safety and comfort of her other guests, two "young girls" booked in the B&B during the same time.

I visited Catherine shortly after the departure of a particularly obnoxious guest who had obviously upset her. Like Flora, she was angry that the TIC had sent her a "raving mad man" and she planned on telling them not to send those sorts of people. It was only "common sense", she said, not to send a single man (particularly one with questionable sanity) to the residence of a single woman. I arrived as she was spraying the cottage with a lemony smelling "rescue remedy" made from the essential oils of five or six different flowers mixed into Chalice Well water. She believed that this concoction possessed special properties suitable for dispersing the "bad aura" left by her unstable guest. This particular guest, an Irish Catholic, had been "raving" with a badly imitated "Brooklyn

gangster" accent about Ireland, his hatred of the Catholic Church, and his desperation to leave "the God-damned country". Even Christian guests could be unsuitable.

A similar situation occurred several years ago when Catherine started offering B&B. She gave accommodations to a man whose wife had left him and though he seemed "pleasant" on the surface, Catherine could "sense" a "deep, suppressed rage" "underneath", like a "lion ready to tear into" her. He was doing some work on her cottage at the time, but she told me that she'd rather be "broke" than have someone like that around. The passage of time, strange guests, and the experience granted by both led her to "protect" herself, which I understood to mean that she was discriminating. It was her experience that single male guests often viewed single women such as herself as a "mother figure", with the result that "unresolved problems" and issues were brought out.

Flora, Catherine, Marlene, Ann, Cheryl and Michael had all accommodated guests who did not fit their criteria. Despite this, the vast majority of guests with whom I spoke during my research were men and women interested in spiritual growth and healing and who were often enrolled in courses or workshops pertaining to these subjects. This indicated that proprietors were mostly successful in attracting the types of guests deemed suitable in keeping with their spiritual beliefs, their perception of their role in Glastonbury, and the identity of their establishments as being something more than simply "Bed and Breakfasts".

As I have attempted to show, the Tourist Information Centre in Glastonbury has a great deal of power as a referral agency. There can be little doubt that without advertisement in the Accommodation Guide, the business of alternative B&B's would suffer, forcing

proprietors to search for other, often expensive, means of promotion. The TIC regulations are both advantageous and disadvantageous. On one hand they provide proprietors with international promotion and with some amount of protection from cheaper facilities. On the other hand, they force proprietors to accept guests deemed unsuitable – tourists instead of “pilgrims” and other spiritual guests.

The Tourist Board and Control of Alternative B&B's

Another main issue for proprietors of alternative B&B's involves *control* - the new, stringent regulations imposed by the Tourist Board were perceived by several alternative B&B proprietors as threats to their individuality and identity as facilities for pilgrims and other such suitable guests. Flora, Catherine, and Marlene all wanted more control over the selection of guests. The TIC's hands seemed tied, however. As noted by an employee, if B&B's wanted to be in the guide, they had to be willing to take anyone. TIC employees were not permitted to "recommend" B&B's and (within reason) they could not refuse the request of a tourist for a certain accommodation. With regards to "protection" for B&B owners, one employee said that the TIC employees tried not to be judgmental of appearances when odd looking tourists inquired about accommodations. On the other hand, they did, she said, "try to screen people" to a degree. "Some women (who run B&B's) don't want men" and in these cases, the TIC employees would usually surreptitiously avoid mentioning that accommodation to the tourist.

Despite these measures, I was given the impression from some proprietors that B&B's lacked protection against dangerous, destructive or unscrupulous guests. They had

formed something of an informal network to warn each other about guests who didn't pay, who wrote bad checks, or who exhibited destructive tendencies. It was Meredith's opinion that B&B's "look[ed] out for each other". John warned Flora about "bad guests" and "bad payers". Apparently, one male guest was "smearing" the walls with feces and another man was running up a bill of over £100, an amount not "guaranteed" by his cheques. It can be seen through Flora's concerns that "bad guests" are not necessarily unspiritual types – they are people who refuse to pay or who are unsafe and disrespectful of the house. These guests would be a concern for any B&B owner, alternative or not.

In setting standards and regulations for the B&B accommodations, I perceive the Tourist Board to be attempting to take more control over these independent establishments, dictating and enforcing acceptable standards in an attempt to boost tourism. Marlene, Ann and Flora were adamant that B&B's should maintain their individuality and character as centres of healing and spirituality, qualities lost in secular hotels. The imposition of a secular standard on an alternative facility threatened the distinctive, alternative religious character and identity of their accommodations.

Flora was critical of the new rules and regulations imposed by the Tourist Board which threatened this identity. One of these new regulations required proprietors to provide a new bar of soap and a six foot bath towel for each guest. Flora was outraged by this suggestion. While this might be an acceptable arrangement for hotels, most small scale B&B's did not have the facilities to wash and dry large numbers of six foot towels in addition to their regular bed sheets. "They'd take forever to dry", she said, "and they'd fill the washers". Flora spoke of a regulation which prohibited (or discouraged) the use of

"personal" decorations around the house - she pointed to her "Angel cards", incense, pictures of spiritual leaders, and candles as examples of such decorations. These things were what made her house a home and part of the image she wished to present to guests.

Marlene, too, was upset by an inspector's criticisms of her B&B - her cotton sheets were rumpled and she didn't have enough decorative items in the rooms. Her "basic" accommodation, as Cheryl described it, was a little too "basic" for the Tourist Board standards. The distinctive, alternative character of these B&B's was incompatible with the "traditional" B&B promoted by the English Tourist Board, and alternative proprietors did not want to conform. They rejected Board regulations which they felt threatened their identity.

Tourist Board regulations interfered with the individuality of the B&B's. "The Tourist Board wants all B&B's to be the same", Marlene complained, and it "makes them afraid...that they won't get enough clients" (if they don't advertise with the board). It was Marlene's view that guests expected a hotel to be "impersonal", but "that's not what a B&B's about. People who want separation don't tend to book into B&B's." She recognized that "it's fine to have a choice (but) people who want to be here for spiritual reasons and can't afford a hotel are better off in a B&B".

As Marlene noted, there could be some confusion regarding the identity of the Bed and Breakfast. Ann said: "Sometimes when people walk through the door you sense when they're going to treat it like a hotel and when they're going to treat it like a B&B, and it's not a hotel". She gave the example of two "delightful" American ladies who simply didn't understand the rules of a B&B:

"they somehow felt like they could just use the whole place as their own...I don't think they'd stayed in an English B&B before, so they didn't quite know what the rules were...I started to feel uncomfortable about the way they were using the phone and TV and not asking and most people do..."

Like Marlene, Ann blamed the Tourist Board policies for the confusion. She said:

"I think it's partly the fault of the Tourist Board, too, because they're laying down all these rules and regulations about B&B's which are similar rules and regulations to guest houses and hotels, so maybe people coming in are seeing that we're clumped together with a different grade of accommodation..."

Tourist Information Centre policies were also perceived to be threats to the independence of proprietors. As noted by Prince and Riches, a concern with retaining independence and freedom is characteristic of the New Age movement in Glastonbury where "conventional job roles were often distrusted because they suppressed the individually innate and creative spirit. For this reason, a flexible attitude to work – an attitude careful not to inhibit the human spirit – was favored, and prevailed" (1999:173). Cheryl, Flora, Catherine, and John noted that independence was an advantage of running a B&B and a reason for coming to Glastonbury in the first place. In Glastonbury, Flora had achieved independence from her husband and Cheryl and Michael had escaped a controlling spiritual organization. Flora discussed the benefits and drawbacks to owning a B&B, saying that while privacy could be a problem, she had the freedom to choose how busy she wanted to be. If she wished, she could turn guests away and she didn't have to work for anyone else, an advantage noted by Catherine as well. She related an incident when the freedom of owning her B&B allowed her a spontaneous excursion to Chalice

Well with her guests. She said:

“we didn't get back here until about twelve, and nobody had had breakfast...I hadn't changed a sheet, I hadn't done anything, but it was okay, it was perfect, and when I was working on a Sunday afternoon, which I wouldn't normally do, I'd had such a beautiful...spiritually high morning that it was my joy to quietly be going around doing sheets in the afternoon...so sometimes it's good, sometimes it's bad, sometimes it's wonderful, sometimes it's terrible, but that's life, and I feel alive. And if I'm going to be alive I'd rather be here in this beautiful place where I'm meeting souls of like mind.”

Although Cheryl was concerned about raising her family in the B&B environment, she told me that the B&B gave herself and her husband freedom to interact with their family on a more regular basis. Operating a B&B allowed John the freedom to travel for three to four months during the winter. Such freedom to pursue other interests was an important part of choosing to run a Bed and Breakfast and it was jealously guarded by proprietor-healers.

The Promotion of Glastonbury

One of the most contentious issues between the Tourist Board and the alternative B&B's revolves around the promotion of Glastonbury to visitors. Marlene wanted more control over the promotion of Glastonbury to national and international audiences and had been involved in various committees to this end. She had met with the regional Tourist Board to "help them have a greater understanding of Glastonbury", not just as a place of "antiquities" and an "ancient Somerset town" but as a "place of spirituality" and a "place of pilgrimage".

Marlene had strong opinions regarding the Tourist Board and its policies. The Board's vision was not in keeping with her perception of what a B&B should be, and what, indeed, Glastonbury itself should be. She felt that the new regulations restricted the identity of Glastonbury as a place of pilgrimage. Apparently, the Tourist Information Centre had given her a lot of "flack" for advertising her B&B as a place for "pilgrims" and she had been given the impression that they wanted her to downplay this function as other B&B's had. It was Marlene's opinion that other B&B's hid their spirituality from the Tourist Board, preferring instead to promote healing or spiritual practices in other sources, such as New Age magazines. Marlene didn't want that sort of division between acceptable advertising in different sources and she had "stood up to" the demands of the Tourist Board, insisting on the right to call her B&B "a facility for pilgrims". Marlene felt very strongly that it was important that the "town accepts spiritual guests". "Lots are not tourists" she said, but as a result of the Tourist Board's reluctance to promote pilgrimage, Marlene believed that visitors hid their spiritual motivations from the Tourist Board. She said: "Most people don't say they're questing or on a pilgrimage, they say they're just 'visiting' because they don't feel that they can express it at the TIC or [conventional] B&B..."

Marlene felt that the policies of the Tourist Board restricted the identity of Glastonbury. Clearly, the type of space she had created for herself and for guests was linked to her perception of what Glastonbury is and should be. Tourist Board regulations interfered with her ideal image of her B&B as a pilgrim's refuge where people lived communally by, for example, suggesting that "people (guests) should eat at separate tables". She told

me that her guests enjoyed sitting around the same table and sharing the bathroom.

"Separation isn't what Glastonbury is about", she said.

While Marlene told me that she had "convinced" the "tourism people" to agree that they must speak of Glastonbury as more than an "ancient Somerset town" but as "a place of pilgrimage", my interview with the manager of the Glastonbury Tourist Information Centre office led me to perceive that the Tourist Board did recognize that aspects of healing and spirituality were important to the overall flavor of Glastonbury. I collected two 1999 Mendip District Council tourism publications from the Glastonbury TIC which introduce Glastonbury as both a spiritually, and historically, significant place. This tourism magazine does provide more detailed coverage of Glastonbury's spiritual identity than Marlene's criticisms would lead one to believe. Two pages of this publication are dedicated to describing Glastonbury as both "a Mecca for pilgrims of many faiths" and as a town "rich in heritage". In keeping with the manager's statements, it seems that the Tourist Board is attempting to present a balanced view of Glastonbury with something to appeal to all types of visitors, as is the goal of tourist centres worldwide. It reads: "As well as being rich in legends and historical remains, the present Glastonbury is a magnet for pilgrims of many faiths and beliefs, drawn from all over the world by what are felt to be the special spiritual energies of the place." All angles are explored briefly in this article, from its Christian heritage to its legendary identity as the resting place of King Arthur. Glastonbury is portrayed as "a unique sacred site recognized as such for millennia", the "mythical Isle of Avalon", and the "revered site of the first Christian church built in the British Isles by Joseph of Arimathea". It is also the "resting place of

Arthur and home of the quest for the Grail”, a “special earth-sacred site where many ley lines...meet, entwine, and diverge” and a setting for the popular “Glastonbury Festival of Music and Performing Arts”. The literature promotes Glastonbury’s “active alternative spiritual community of people from diverse backgrounds”. The way in which these diverse groups are portrayed as interacting is evocative of Victor Turner’s “communitas”:

“this community is very varied and virtually every spiritual path has its followers from Christians to Buddhists, pagans to Sufis, magicians to Priestesses all learning to co-operate together for the good of the whole and finding that beneath all religions there are shared spiritual realities.”

In addition to a secular promotion of the Tor as one of several "Picnic spots and viewpoints", the spiritual significance of the landscape is also elaborated:

“For the pilgrim the landscape of Avalon is a treasure trove where sacred sites abound. The most obvious is Glastonbury Tor...There are many myths and legends associated with the Tor - it is the home of Gwyn ap Nudd, the Lord of the Underworld, and a place where the fairy folk live...the softer rounded Chalice Hill beside the Tor is held by many to be the burial site for the Holy Grail, that ancient mysterious vessel sought by the knights of the Round Table, signifying the human quest for spiritual understanding”

While it appears from this excerpt that the Tourist Board is attempting to present Glastonbury as a spiritual centre and a place of pilgrimage, certainly more than just an "ancient Somerset town" or a "place of antiquities", it is important to note that the motivation of the Tourist Board for presenting this side of Glastonbury differs from the motivation of alternative B&B owners and healers who operate in the town. In the case of the former, there can be little doubt that the motivation for attracting "pilgrims",

"tourists", or whoever, lies in the financial benefit to the economy of the town. In the case of proprietor-healers who have established their homes as healing centres for a specific type of guest, the motivation is more than commercial - they are, it seems, genuinely interested in the spiritual development of their guests and in providing their guests with healing of a spiritual, emotional, or physical sort. Conflict and tension result when these two very different images and perspectives of Glastonbury collide. The perception of Glastonbury held by alternative B&B proprietors is based not on the presentation of the town as a collection of the weird and wonderful but as a sacred centre. The Tourist Board has appropriated alternative religious beliefs to represent Glastonbury as an exotic place in order to sell it to a curious public. It does not oppose alternative religion, but the tourism industry has embraced it for a different reason than alternative religion for the sake of alternative religion. The conflict involves two images of the same place, and the utilization of the same images such as the Tor and the Abbey for very different purposes.

Conclusion

Proprietors of alternative Bed and Breakfasts use décor, location, name, and provision of healing to establish the identity of their B&B's as healing or spiritual centres. These men and women try very hard to preserve the distinctive alternative character of their B&B's in the face of new, more stringent Tourist Board regulations which are seen as threats to their individuality and independence. Such regulations are also perceived to be restrictive, controlling, and contrary to the identity of Glastonbury as a sacred centre.

Many proprietors desire to accommodate guests with spiritual, not commercial,

motivations for visiting the town. "Tourists" are deemed to be unsuitable, but financial viability requires the acceptance of guests who do not share their interests in healing or spirituality. While alternative B&B owners do not want to conform to the secular standards and guidelines of the Tourist Board, they understand that this organization holds the most power in the promotion of Glastonbury, and to a greater or lesser extent they are dependent upon it for advertisement of their facilities. The best way to reach a wide audience is admitted to be through the Tourist Board, but such advertisement also makes necessary the acceptance of less than suitable guests. Proprietors of alternative B&B's struggle to reconcile their need to make ends meet financially with their desire to distance themselves from the secular, commercial world which the Tourist Board represents. "Communitas" as espoused by Victor Turner (1974) founders on the conflict between the Tourist Board and the proprietors who struggle to establish an alternative identity for their B&B's.

Certainly the "alternative society" of the town, of which alternative B&B's are a part, has communitas-like qualities in that proprietors discriminate against secular tourists and exhibit anti-commercial and anti-technological sentiments. I interpret the concern of B&B proprietors about developments in Glastonbury both commercial and technological to be rooted in the irreconcilable nature of these advances with their views of Glastonbury's identity as a sanctuary, a sacred place, a place of pilgrimage, or a refuge. Most B&B owners with whom I spoke had made many changes in their lives since their move to Glastonbury, or the move itself was the culmination of many changes. Glastonbury is a place where they are free to practice their beliefs, a space apart from the

harsh realities of what some called the "outside world".

Tensions exist between different segments of Glastonbury's society, such as the conventional or "straight" residents and the "alternatives". I have also explored tensions between proprietors of alternative B&B's and other healers or healing organizations deemed to be less legitimate or commercially driven. Turner himself recognizes that such tension between the normal structure of daily life and the attempt to create *communitas* may be inevitable. He writes:

"...I see a continuous tension between structure and *communitas*, at all levels of scale and complexity. Structure, or all that which holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their actions, is one pole in a charged field, for which the opposite pole is *communitas*, or anti-structure, the egalitarian "sentiment for humanity"...representing the desire for a total, unmediated relationship between person and person..." (Turner 1974:274)

While social scientists who have studied pilgrimage have often found evidence of *communitas*, Turner's theory has been criticized: "many anthropologists...have found more in the way of conflicts than they have found evidence of a sense of *communitas* existing between different groups and parties of pilgrims at pilgrimage sites" (Reader 1993:12). Eade and Sallnow, for example, came to see pilgrimages as realms of "competing discourses" (1991: 1-29). Both McKevitt (1991) in his study of the shrine of Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo and Pfaffenberger (1979) in his study of Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims to Kataragama in Sri Lanka note the existence of tensions between groups at pilgrimage sites.

Proprietors of alternative Bed and Breakfasts and the Tourist Board clearly hold very

different perceptions of Glastonbury and its meaning. Both promote it as a place of spirituality, legend, and heritage, but for different reasons. Marlene's comments indicate that proprietors of alternative establishments are not comfortable with the Tourist Board's promotion of Glastonbury as an eclectic collection of exotic festivals, organizations, and beliefs for secular reasons of consumption and tourism. Tourist Board employees are utilizing Glastonbury's sacred character and appropriating the spiritual beliefs concerning healing and pilgrimage, legends, and myths for commercial purposes of attracting tourist dollars to the economy. In contrast, proprietors of alternative B&B's want to attract spiritual "pilgrims" or "seekers" to Glastonbury who can share their spiritual beliefs and experiences: "souls of like mind" whom they can guide, heal, and convert. For these men and women, Glastonbury is not simply an exotic place but a sacred place of healing, spiritual growth, change and renewal. They have created spiritual centres which they perceive to be sacred because of their existence within the sacred landscape of Glastonbury; a landscape which draws people from all over the world. To the Tourist Board, the landscape is a secular one of heritage and antiquities, the stage upon which myriad interesting activities are acted out by the colourful locals.

Conclusion

Glastonbury is a small town encompassing a tremendous diversity of spiritual traditions and belief systems. This thesis presents but one slice of life in Glastonbury; the manifestation of New Age views, beliefs, and practices in seven alternative Bed and Breakfasts operated by practitioners of healing. My research reveals the existence of many other potential areas for further research, such as the many divisions which exist between conventional residents of Glastonbury and alternative residents, homeless, and "travelers" also noted by Marion Bowman in her study of Glastonbury (1993:56).

Also of interest to me is the interface between alternative or complementary health care and conventional health care. I was somewhat surprised to find that a good deal of co-operation exists between these two usually distinct practices, and that conventional health centres and doctors are actively involved in the provision of complementary forms of healing. Healing and health care is a concern which crosses the boundaries between spiritual organizations and socioeconomic groups, and in many cases is a unifying feature in a town divided on many issues to do with "alternativeness" and identity.

While the seven alternative Bed and Breakfasts at which I stayed differ in many respects, such as their décor and healing practices, all proprietor-healers agree that healing is a central part of their personal identity, their role in Glastonbury, and the identity of their establishments. Healing is one of the most emblematic manifestations of alternative identity.

The tremendous diversity of approaches to healing which I witnessed in alternative B&B's is an important characteristic of the New Age movement, as is a strong sense of

individualism. According to Prince and Riches, “Individualistic values predominate with regard to ongoing matters of daily living (education, health, work, religious observation, forging relationships)” (1999:166). They discuss at length the ways in which New Age individualism differs from mainstream individualism which is seen by adherents as being “both a sham and inhumane” and “delineated by the requirements of capitalism” (1999:171). Drawing upon their research in Glastonbury, they found that a holistic perspective

“clearly functions as context to individualism, both abutting it as a separate domain and also containing it (the holistic individual). Moreover, in the New Age representation of things the holistic is clearly seen as controlling and informing the individualistic: the holistic is what gives the individual agent his or her distinctive (non-mainstream) cultural qualities” (1999:184).

Individualism and the freedom to practice one’s own spiritual beliefs, or to follow one’s own “path”, is paramount amongst proprietor-healers with whom I spoke. This, again, is supported by Prince and Riches who found that “New Agers in Glastonbury have arrived (from widely scattered parts) in the town mostly separately as individuals having made the decision that the constraining mainstream was not for them” (1999:184). Such concern for individuality explains why I found such a large degree of variation in healing practices and approaches to healing. Following the tendency of the New Age movement to combine beliefs from vastly different spiritual sources, proprietor-healers draw on different healing traditions in the formulation of their own techniques and etiologies of health and illness.

Despite the differences in healing techniques, all proprietor-healers agree that being in

the sacred landscape of Glastonbury can be a healing experience. As discussed in chapter three, they view their accommodations as sacred centres within the larger sacred landscape of Glastonbury. Their sanctity is conferred by the presence of numerous major lines of earth energy, "ley lines", which converge in the town and which can be used for rejuvenation and healing.

Ellen Badone's (1991) in depth exploration of the connections between 'menhirs', (megalithic monuments), and healing in Brittany provides an excellent interpretative framework for my research in Glastonbury. Her work allows insight into the ways in which the past and features of the landscape are manipulated and interpreted by two practitioners of 'radiesthesie', a method of diagnosing illness and discovering underground features related to dowsing. One practitioner of radiesthesie sees his "job" as healer as one in which he manipulates invisible forces, acting as an "intermediary between the patient and the healing energies of the stone (menhir)" (1991:531). Making use of the energies of features of the landscape for healing was often discussed by proprietor-healers in Glastonbury, such as Flora and Marlene.

The menhirs used by the practitioners of radiesthesie are features of the landscape which link sites of significance in both the past and contemporary times. Like Glastonbury, Breton folklore links Christ to Brittany (1991:532). Legend has it that Christ and his grandmother, Saint Anne, a Breton woman, made voyages together. Badone explains such legends as a "craving for connections with a centre of spiritual power", such as Jerusalem. This "craving" is also illustrated by the Breton belief in "telluric" lines; underground lines of force which, like ley lines, connect sites or "nodes"

of energy around the world. Brittany is therefore joined by these lines to places of perceived power such as Karnak in Egypt and Stonehenge. Badone notes that such connections construct “an image of Breton identity and give meaning to individual lives” – a coherent cosmology (1991:532). Like the menhirs, Glastonbury Tor is an enduring physical reminder of the power of the landscape granted by ley lines.

The views about ley lines and earth energies expressed by my proprietor-healer informants including Marlene, Michael, and John illustrate the ways in which “diverse elements from multiple external sources” (Badone 1991:529) such as legends, folklore, and historical material, can be combined to form a discourse which helps them understand healing in terms of holism and the interconnectedness of all things. Such a discourse also explains their own presence in Glastonbury, having been drawn to it by these energies, which can be utilized for healing.

Ley lines are also used by my alternative informants to explain the heterogeneity of spiritual backgrounds and beliefs in Glastonbury. Proprietor-healers such as Jan, Cheryl, and John believe that the energy of the landscape in Glastonbury has ‘always’ attracted those seeking truth, enlightenment, renewal, and healing. Ley lines explain the presence of representatives of a wide variety of spiritual traditions, both Christian and pagan; all have been drawn to Glastonbury by these veins of energy. Some informants, such as Catherine, interpret the landscape in Christian terms as the site of the first Christian Church in England and, as legend tells, a place where Jesus came as a child. Simon Coleman discusses one such Christian interpretation of the landscape of rural England in terms of the town of Walsingham (1997 personal communication). Walsingham has

become the site of an enormously popular Christian pilgrimage and has been referred to as “England’s Nazareth”, a name which links the national with the Biblical. For visitors to Walsingham, the “sacred and historically charged landscape” allows integration of “personal history, shrine history, national identity and biblical truth” (1997:3). Like Walsingham, Glastonbury has become (and is promoted as) a “sacred and historically charged landscape” in Christian terms. It, too, is linked with the Biblical. Labeled by some as “England’s Jerusalem”, informants often related the famous legend that Joseph of Arimathea had brought his young nephew, Jesus, to the town, and after the crucifixion, returned with the Holy Grail. Journeying to Glastonbury, as to Walsingham, provides visitors (whether pilgrims or tourists) with “complex and varying forms of engagement with the physical environment provided by the village and its landscape” (Coleman 1997:2). For Christian pilgrims, opportunities for engagement revolve around Wearyall Hill, where Joseph of Arimathea supposedly planted his staff, the Abbey ruins, and Chalice Well where the Holy Grail is said to be buried.

Other informants, such as Marlene, interpret the lines of energy and the landscape in pagan terms. For these visitors and residents, the landscape provides opportunities to engage with transformational energies conducted along ley lines and for pagan rituals celebrating the earth and the elements.

Whatever the interpretation, ley lines are believed to have drawn Christians and non-Christians in a continuous stream over time. They are used to explain what informants saw as the continuity between past and present, and their own presence in the town, as healers following a long line of others who had come for the same reason over the

centuries.

A common theme revealed in the biographical narratives of many informants involves the experience of being “drawn to Glastonbury”, as discussed by Marion Bowman in her study of “alternative” pilgrimage to the town (1993). She writes: “People continue to be drawn to Glastonbury, as they have been for centuries. There is continuity in what many people find there: *communitas*, healing, spiritual uplift, a link with the past, a new way of looking at the world, hope for the future”(1993:60). The desire to experience *communitas* is, in Victor Turner’s view, the driving force for pilgrimage (1974). In this thesis, I have shown that the quest for an experience of *communitas* is a powerful motivation for the establishment of alternative Bed and Breakfasts. Several proprietor-healers mentioned this as a reason why they had been drawn to the town where they felt a sense of acceptance and understanding. For many proprietors, Glastonbury is a place where they are free to practice their spiritual beliefs and healing separate from the stresses of the outside world. Proprietors such as Flora, Catherine, and Marlene perceive their B&B’s to be sanctuaries and places of communal living, where experiences can be shared. Flora, Ann, and Marlene believe that guests are guided to their B&B’s partly for this experience of sharing and interaction. These proprietors are seeking to accommodate a certain type of guest - “pilgrims”, “seekers”, or “questors” with whom they can share their experiences and spiritual beliefs. For New Age pilgrims, it is not the presence of Christian icons, but the sacredness and energy of the landscape which draws them to the town. In Glastonbury, a single shrine is replaced by the landscape made sacred by the existence of ley lines.

Proprietor-healers with whom I stayed are attempting to create a perpetual state of *communitas*, by Turner's definition (1974), a liminal, or transient state, within their Bed and Breakfasts. My research reveals that Glastonbury is a place of conflicting beliefs. A state of permanent *communitas* cannot be fully realized because of the simultaneous co-existence of the New Age community with a society of tourism, consumerism, and commercial gain. This secular society is viewed by proprietor-healers such as Marlene as the antithesis of Glastonbury's identity as more than a place of "antiquities" and an "ancient Somerset town" but as a "place of spirituality" and a "place of pilgrimage". Tensions are expressed in the attempts by proprietor-healers to justify payment for healing sessions and spiritual services in the face of strong anti-commercial sentiment. Monetary payments are often referred to as "donations" or "investments", and exchanges of healing for other services, such as garden work, are common.

Alternative Bed and Breakfasts in Glastonbury rest upon a boundary between the New Age movement and conventional society, simultaneously intersecting with both the spiritual world and the secular world represented by the Tourist Board. While proprietor-healers grudgingly admit that they need to advertise in the Tourist Board's Accommodation Guide in order to make ends meet, they do not always approve of guests referred to them by the Tourist Information Centre in town. "Unsuitable" guests are those regarded as being unspiritual, dangerous, or destructive. Many proprietors express animosity towards the new Tourist Board regulations which they see as attempts to control their establishments and restrict the individual character and identity of their B&B's.

Proprietors express disapproval of the Tourist Board's motivations for promoting New Age religion in Glastonbury. They perceive that Tourism officials have appropriated alternative healing and spirituality in order to attract tourists to Glastonbury, in other words, for the purposes of consumption and economic gain. By comparison, several proprietors of alternative B&B's express purely spiritual motivations for attracting guests who they can convert, counsel, or heal. Paradoxically, proprietor-healers of the seven alternative bed and breakfasts at which I stayed cannot completely separate themselves from the secular world from which they had fled. Glastonbury is, for these men and women, a haven from consumerism and commercialism, yet they struggle daily to balance spiritual and practical or financial concerns. Realization of a "New Age" in Glastonbury characterized by permanent *communitas* is as elusive as the Holy Grail itself, symbolic of the quest for spiritual enlightenment, and believed by many to be buried somewhere beneath the sacred soil of this Somerset town.

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Internet Site of the Divine Light Centre B&B

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Well Withins' "Earth Mysteries and Sacred Site Tours" at

<http://www.nccn.net/~wwwithin/eng2.htm>

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<http://encarta.msn.com>

Glossary of Terms

Ashram: A "spiritual community": "a commune or communal house whose members share spiritual goals and practices". (Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2000 [http:// encarta.msn.com](http://encarta.msn.com) © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation)

Chakra: (in yoga) any of the points located along the body, usu. seven in number, considered as energy centres (Random House Webster's college dictionary) "A centre of spiritual power in the body. Each chakra is associated with a different god in Hinduism" and corresponds to a colour, a region of the body, and a quality such as "intuition", "creativity", and "vitality". For health, energy must flow unobstructed through this system of chakras. There are seven centres: the crown, brow, throat, heart, solar plexus, sacral, and base chakras (Microsoft® Encarta® Online Dictionary 2000 [http:// encarta.msn.com](http://encarta.msn.com) © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation)

Channel: The course through which anything moves or passes: in this case it refers to the passage of a supernatural entity, spirit, or ethereal being through a medium, who acts as a "channel". Channeling refers to the act of being a channel for the passage of this entity or spirit.

Clairvoyance: According to the Random House Webster's college dictionary: 1. the paranormal power of seeing objects or actions beyond the range of natural vision. 2. quick, intuitive knowledge of things and people; sagacity.

Colour Healing: Related to the chakra system. A promotional brochure for Jan's colour healing practice at Berachah Colour Healing Centre reads: "the colours (of the chakras) range from red and the base chakra through to violet at the crown. Everyone has an individual colour frequency and by tuning into that frequency you can be helped to access your own healing ability. Furthermore, if you surround yourself in the appropriate colour it will enable you to function at a reduced level of stress, thus bringing you into harmony and balance".

Dowse: Commonly associated with the location of water, dowsing was practiced by several of my informants, including Marlene, to locate lines of earth energy using metallic rods held loosely in each hand. Dowsing was also used to foretell the future and to seek guidance from supernatural forces or spirits.

Druid: One of an order of priests or teachers of an ancient Celtic religion (Funk and Wagnall's Standard Desk Dictionary: Revised edition 1976)

Geomancy: A belief held by several informants that certain geographical areas were conducive to an individuals' spiritual development. This term is related to the belief that "the earth has a nervous system made up of underground rivers, veins of ore and streams of terrestrial (and magnetic) current" (Howard-Gordon 1982:24) and that places such as Glastonbury are sites of numerous crossings of these lines of current.

Higher Self: An individual's spiritual awareness which is perceived to be all-knowing and can provide guidance in matters of daily life.

Holism (Holistic): An important aspect of complementary of alternative health care. The New Age Encyclopedia (Melton 1994:xix) defines holism as "a biological concept which assumes that living systems, as whole systems, take on a new dynamic that is more than and different from its parts". A human being is viewed as "a total system of body, mind and spirit". The "holistic health platform" stresses the importance of treating patients as "persons, not merely an impersonal collection of symptoms" (Melton, 1994:xix).

Joseph of Arimathea: Biblical figure (Matthew 27:57) believed to be Christ's uncle who founded the first Christian Community in Glastonbury in AD 63.

Ley lines: invisible lines of "energy" which form a grid around the earth and connect sacred and ancient sites. Glastonbury is believed to be the site of the crossing of two major lines of energy, the "Michael line" and the "Mary line". The Michael line runs across Southern Britain, from Cornwall to Norfolk, and has been so called because of the number of churches dedicated to St. Michael found along it, as is the case with the Mary line, Mary being "the Christianized Earth Goddess of pagan times" (Miller and Broadhurst 1989:23) The line has also been called the "dragon path", and refers to the tendency of Christians to built churches dedicated to St. Michael, the dragon slayer, on pagan sites to represent the triumph of Christianity over paganism.

Mother Meera: A devotional figure who resides in Germany and is the focus for spiritual pilgrimages. Several such pilgrimages were organized by local residents during my stay in Glastonbury.

Reading: Information obtained through occult means or channeling given to a client by the reader, for example, a tarot card reading, a palm reading, a rune reading, etc.

Reiki: Pronounced "ray - kee". "alternative medical treatment: a treatment in alternative medicine in which healing energy is channeled from the practitioner to the patient to enhance energy and reduce stress, pain, and fatigue. Late 20th century. From Japanese, "universal life force energy." (Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2000 <http://encarta.msn.com> © 1997-2000 Microsoft Corporation)

A form of spiritual healing in which practitioners lay hands directly on the patient, or hold them just above, and allow healing energy to flow through them into the patient.

Sai Baba: An Indian guru believed by devotees to be "the one and only true God come to Earth in human form" to teach "the unity of all religions".

Appendix 1

Names of alternative B&B's and their proprietors

Including the duration of my accommodation with them

Name of Bed and Breakfast	Name of Proprietor(s)	Duration of Accommodation
The Grail Quest	Catherine	April 26 – May 5
Berachah Colour Healing Centre	Jan	May 6 – May 17
The Radiance Wheel	Marlene	May 18 – May 30
The Divine Light Centre	John and Meredith	May 31 – June 6
The Heart Focus B&B	Flora	June 7 – June 13 July 7 – July 10
Tor Down	Cheryl and Michael	July 2 – July 6 July 11 – July 15
Moore View	Roger and Marie	July 16 – July 19
The Abbey Garth B&B	Ann	July 20 – July 25



