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MANNING THE HIGH SEAT: SEIÐR AS SELF-MAKING IN CONTEMPORARY NORSE NEOPAGANISMS

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Enn þic síþa koþo
Sámseyio í
oc draptv a vétt sem va/lor;
vitca líci
fórtv verþioþ yfir,
oc hvgða ec þat args aðal

But you once practiced *seiðr* on Samsey
And you beat on the drum as witches do
In the likeness of a wizard
you journeyed among mankind
And I thought that showed an *arg* [unmanly] nature

—*Lokasenna* 24

This passage illustrates the Norse god of mischief taunting Óðinn All-Father in the medieval Icelandic poem *Lokasenna*, “The Flyting of Loki.”¹ *Flytings*, or insult battles, were a common literary device in medieval Norse poetic literature; the harshest and crassest of these insults were *nið*, slurs of a grossly sexual nature.² *Nið*-sayers meant to enrage their opponents and scandalize an audience, both goals manifesting a social hierarchy that prized hypermasculine virility. In the stanza above, Loki literally accuses Óðinn of having acted in an unmanly (*argr*)³ manner by engaging in magical practices, or *seiðr*.⁴ In short, Loki just called Óðinn a spell-casting faggot.⁵

As this epigraph shows, *seið*craft (Norse magical practice) has a complex historical relationship to gender. Traditionally, *seið* practitioners were women; the medieval Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson recounted that the goddess Freyja brought *seiðr* to the Norse sky gods.⁶ But the practice was never exclu-

sively female; Snorri likewise chronicled Oðinn All-Father's using this magic both to foresee the future and to shape it. Despite the example of the All-Father, however, the literary and archaeological evidence for *seiðr* suggests not only that most *seið*workers were women but that *seiðr* was an inherently unmanly pursuit.⁷ Contemporary Norse Neopagan and Heathens who reclaim or recreate *seiðr* must negotiate this tension between magical practice and gender identity. This chapter explores the ways in which trans* and cisgender men reconcile ambiguous textual evidence and contemporary gender norms through magical practice.⁸

Despite the historical unmanliness of oracular divination, Norse Neopagan men today are increasingly engaging in *seiðr*. Today's *seið*workers have reconstructed or reimagined the practice within *seiðr*'s gendered genealogy. Although conservative Heathenries discourage or forbid men from practicing oracular divination because of its historically unmanly connotations, more moderate Norse Neopaganisms accept *seiðr* as common practice while discarding or reinterpreting the historical taint of unmanliness. Northern Tradition Paganism, a northern European Neopagan tradition founded by female-to-male (FTM) transman Raven Kaldera, encourages *seiðr* and celebrates unmanliness as sacred service to a liminal religious community and to lesser-known gods. Contemporary Norse Neopagan men invested in establishing themselves as legitimate and authorized practitioners of *seiðr* must negotiate their identification *as men* through a historical precedent that identifies the practice as inherently unmanly.

Norse Neopagans glean information about their deities and notions of honorable behavior from “clues found in the Icelandic Sagas; the Poetic and Prose Eddas; Anglo-Saxon historical, legal, and medical texts; as well as modern archaeological, linguistic, and anthropological research.”⁹ Heathens (the designation many Norse Neopagans use to distinguish themselves from other Neopagans, particularly Wiccans, who they feel rely too heavily on individual gnosis) commonly refer to these clues simply as “the lore.” Because Norse Neopagans place weighty emphasis on the historical and literary precedents for their contemporary beliefs and practices, and because the lore codes *seiðr* as a practice most (if not exclusively) appropriate for women, Norse Neopagan communities often challenge the legitimacy and propriety of male *seið*workers. For this reason, *seið*work requires male practitioners to negotiate—to defend or even discard—their masculine identities. Thus I argue that the high seat, the chair upon which the seeress sits and allows gods, ancestors, and spirits to speak through her, is for male *seið*workers a site of self-fashioning. Men who practice *seiðr* defend the legitimacy of their practice through negotiations of their own masculinity. If knowledge and full comprehension of the self is the

ultimate goal of modernity, then *seiðr* emerges (despite its medieval roots) as a thoroughly modern practice: Norse magic serves as a vehicle through which *seiðmen* explore and expand their knowledge of themselves and their craft.

In what follows, I first briefly review the medieval literary sources that portray pre-Christian *seiðr* as an unmanly practice. I then explore contemporary examples of men as *seiðworkers*. Drawing on the ethnographic fieldwork of scholar and *seiðwoman* Jenny Blain, I show that many modern *seiðmen* reinterpret or reject the practice's unmanly connotations while maintaining a deep investment in identifying *as men*. For these men, legitimate *seiðr* need not be an unmanly undertaking, nor is the practice authoritative only when practiced by women and effeminate or queer men. By contrast, though, Northern Tradition shaman and transman Raven Kaldera embraces unmanliness not only as a condition of magic practice but also as an essential element of his religio-magical identity. For Kaldera, *seiðr* is part of a larger magical project of deconstructing and ultimately discarding traditional masculinity as a stable or desirable identity. Instead, unmanliness, for Kaldera, is a position of power and a liberating expansion of religious and gendered possibility. I conclude that *seiðr* is best understood as thoroughly modern magic, in that contemporary practitioners both expand authorized access to the practice and deeply engage their own gendered identities.

Gender and Pre-Christian *Seiðr*

Seiðcraft has long fascinated historians, scholars of Scandinavian literature, and enthusiasts of Viking culture. But the Sagas and Eddas—poetic and prosaic recounting of the deeds of Norse gods and heroes—provide only glimpses into how and why pre-Christian *seiðworkers* might have engaged in this kind of magic.¹⁰ Most tales of *seið*-magic follow a similar formula: the *querent* (often a hero or a god/dess) asks for the insight of a *völva* (seeress), who reveals occult knowledge. The initial question is the protagonist's, but thereafter the *seiðworker* drives the exchange. She tells of past, present, and future events, always challenging, almost taunting her audience: would you know more?

As noted above, medieval accounts of pre-Christian *seiðr* usually relate stories of female practitioners. Three sections of Snorri's *Poetic Edda* chronicle the practices of *seiðwomen*.¹¹ In *Völuspá*, or "The Speaking of the Seeress," Óðinn asks a *seiðwoman* "born of giants" for "the ancient histories of men and gods, those which [she] remember[s] from the first."¹² *Baldrsdraumr* narrates Óðinn's journey to a grave mound on the borders of Hel, upon which he raises a *völva*,

or seeress, from the dead. And in *Hyndlujöð*, the seeress Hyndla foretells the doom of the gods and the destruction and renewal of the world (*Ragnarök*).

However, there is demonstrable literary evidence of pre-Christian *seiðmen*, though the accounts are unclear as to the social standing of men who practiced *seiðr*.¹³ The poem *Hyndlujöð*, for instance, refers to male *seið*workers not as *seiðmaðr* (*seiðmen*) but as *seiðberendur*. Queer theorist Brit Solli translates *berendur* here as “a very coarse word for female genitalia.”¹⁴ Blain argues for a more ambiguous reading of *seiðberendur*: citing the historian Gunnora Hallakarva, Blain notes that *berendi* (from the verb *bera*, to give birth) refers specifically to “the sexual parts of a female animal, particularly a cow.” While Blain acknowledges that *berendi* might be “an extreme insult,” she also suggests that the term might imply a male practitioner’s “actively giving birth to the *seiðr*,” allowing the magic passage through the *seið*man’s body.¹⁵ Men’s role in pre-Christian *seiðr*, then, was at best ambiguous and at worst grossly denigrated.

Given the warrior culture’s social organization around a hypervirile masculine ideal, it follows that Vikings would have regarded magic (or any other weakness or anxiety not pursuant to feats of physical potency) with marked suspicion.¹⁶ The Sagas nevertheless tell of *seiðmen*, male practitioners of magical workings.¹⁷ *Lokasenna* and other tales suggest that Viking men of the Saga age—even the All-Father himself—practiced oracular divination despite the culturally transgressive implications of the practice.¹⁸

Snorri explained the bias against men working *seiðr* in his commentary on *Ynglinga Saga*, which provides the only detailed account of a *seið*man: that of Óðinn himself.

Óðinn understood also the art in which the greatest power is lodged, and which he himself practised; namely, what is called magic [*seiðr*]. By means of this he could know beforehand the predestined fate of men, or their not yet completed lot; and also bring on the death, ill-luck, or bad health of people, and take the strength or wit from one person and give it to another. But after such witchcraft followed such weakness and anxiety [*ergi*], that it was not thought respectable for men to practise it; and therefore the priestesses were brought up in this art.¹⁹

Here, Snorri directly connected magic (*seiðr*) and unmanliness (*ergi*). This link is not surprising: a warrior culture might well be suspicious of nonphysical practices that left one weak or anxious. Snorri’s commentary on the *Ynglinga Saga* thus underscores pre-Christian Viking anxiety about masculinity while illustrating the gendered nature of *seið*work.

In addition to the discussion in the *Ynglinga Saga*, *Lokasenna* also narrates a link between gender anxieties and magical practices. In response to Óðinn's accusation that Loki bore children, showing an "argr nature," Loki suggests that Óðinn behaved in an *argr* manner for having "practiced *seiðr* on [the island of] Samsey."²⁰ Medieval Norse literature clearly demonstrates prevailing attitudes about the unmanliness of magic.

The work of Däg Strömbäck, Peter Buchholz, Folke Ström, and Preben Meulengracht Sørensen has directly influenced present-day Norse Neopagan thinking on the presumed unmanliness of *seiðr*. In his 1935 dissertation "Sejd: Textstudier i nordisk religionshistoria" (*Seiðr: Textual Studies in Norse Religious History*), Strömbäck argues that pre-Christian *seiðr* "was originally a masculine technique, tied to the god Óðinn which only in later stages transferred to women and thus became subject to contempt."²¹ For Strömbäck, then, the unmanliness of *seiðr* was a degradation of an originally masculine ritual practice. By contrast, Buchholz suggested not only that *seiðr* was an unmanly practice but also that unmanliness was an asset to *seiðr*workers: in his 1968 *Schamanistische Ziige in der altisldndischen Uberlieferung* (Shamanic Features in the Old Icelandic Tradition), Buchholz "assumes that 'sexual perverts' (*sexuell Abartige*) are more receptive to a state of [religious] ecstasy, since they unite the characteristics of man and woman."²²

In his 1974 *Nid, Ergi, and Old Norse Moral Attitudes*, Folke Ström designated *seiðr* "the element in the *ergi* complex related to sorcery and magic." For Ström, then, *seiðr* was a subset of unmanly behaviors. Ström suggested that the "sexually obscene" connotations of *ergi* were specifically related to "the female role in a homosexual act" (that of being sexually penetrated), and therefore that *seiðr*, as a form of spiritual penetration by gods or ancestors, was likewise "a role that was regarded as specifically female." Ström thus concluded that "the performance by an individual man of a role normally belonging to the female sex which constitutes perversity in his action and causes it to be branded as *ergi*" applies equally to "a sexual relationship" or "the carrying out of a magical function."²³ In short, Ström argued that pre-Christian Viking society drew no meaningful distinction between the shame of a man being sexually penetrated and the shame of a man working *seiðr*.

Finally, Sørensen's *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society* cites Snorri to suggest that "the practice of heathen witchcraft, sorcery, included . . . sexual activities and taboo-breaking . . . men appeared as women." Understanding *seiðr* as unmanly, Sørensen explained, linked this sort of magic to effeminacy, cross-dressing, and passive homosexuality.²⁴ While their readings of the practice's social function vary broadly,

Sørensen, Ström, and Buchholz all suggested that *seiðr* either required or was equivalent to sexual passivity, gender transgression, or effeminacy.

More recent scholarship has attempted to add nuance to the language of previous studies, shying away from anachronistic notions of Viking homosexuality²⁵ and offering alternative readings of the unmanliness of *seiðr*.²⁶ Jenny Blain, herself a scholar of Viking lore and a *seið*worker, offers a nuanced reading of these materials. Blain emphasizes that translating *ergi* in terms of sexual receptivity or passivity relies on a heteronormative understanding of “active male / passive female” gender norms, an understanding strongly critiqued by scholars of gender and sexuality. Blain suggests that “it may be more useful to regard *ergi* primarily as an insult, that can be used to convey the meaning (pejoratively) . . . of ‘acted upon sexually,’ or simply ‘coward,’” without necessarily indicating sexual penetration.²⁷ Indeed, as both Sørensen and Ström note, accusations of sexual passivity or “perversion” are secondary characteristics of gendered insults—even suggesting that a “tendency or inclination” toward being used sexually by a man still falls under the category of *ergi*, which can also imply cowardice or poverty.²⁸ Blain’s glossing of *ergi* as simply “insult,” then, gestures toward the inherent gender ambiguity of the term.

Ergi is, however, a very specific and severe form of insult: many scholars categorize *ergi* as *nið*, “the most spectacular . . . form of sexual defamation” in Viking society.²⁹ The complexities of *nið* exceed the scope of this chapter, but it should be noted that the severity of the insult lies not so much in implications of sodomy or sexual passivity but rather in culturally specific understandings of gender.³⁰ The ambiguities of *ergi* included sexual transgression; as Ström suggested, sodomy might have served as a “symbolic presentation” of the larger concern, unmanliness.³¹

If Viking masculinity required the constant performance of masculinity, and *seiðr* was considered unmanly, pre-Christian *seiðr* would have served as a form of negative masculinity. *Seið*men had knowingly to behave in a manner otherwise antithetical to their cultural conditioning. The Sagas and Eddas shed little insight into the motivation behind so transgressive a gender performance.³² *Seið*men might have invoked the power of transgression to authorize deliberate performances of negative masculinity. They might have read their own “unmanly” bodies as a sign of other forms of power or spiritual authority or responsibility. Pre-Christian *seið*men might have desired occult knowledge and risked scorn to access that knowledge, or they might have felt called by gods, or spirits, or ancestors to speak to their communities, simply accepting unmanliness as a consequence of that duty. The literary evidence demonstrates only that Viking culture placed great weight upon performances of a mascu-

line ideal and that some Viking men acted in ways that contradicted that masculine ideal by performing *seiðr*.

Norse Neopagan *Seiðr* and Rethinking Masculinity

Contemporary North American and British *seið*workers face the not inconsiderable task of re-creating practices from fourteenth-century post-Christian descriptions of eleventh- and twelfth-century pre-Christian practices translated into English by nineteenth- and twentieth-century British and American scholars. It is no wonder, then, that present-day *seiðr* is a contested practice, particularly given the weight that contemporary Heathenry places on written sources.

Contemporary practitioners negotiate tensions between a historically masculine religiosity and a historically unmanly magical practice. These men often seek to divorce unmanliness from *seiðr*, insisting that this magic is not the sole province of women and effeminate or queer men. Notably, these *seið*men maintain a deep investment in identifying as male while insisting on their legitimacy as practitioners; masculinity remains for these men a stable (if elastic) and desirable identity.

Ethnographic inquiries into contemporary *seiðr* suggest that many Norse Neopagan *seið*men are consciously negotiating the gendered genealogy of the practice. Jenny Blain's fieldwork suggests that many contemporary *seið*men are rethinking the discursive construction of *seiðr* as inherently unmanly, preferring to reconstruct or reimagine the practice as "a means of resistance to today's dominant gender paradigms."³³

Contemporary Norse Neopaganisms emerged in the early 1970s as an adamantly polytheistic and demonstrably masculine new religious movement.³⁴ Heathens also tend to be more politically and socially conservative than other Neopagans.³⁵ Scholars have noted a tendency among Heathens to distance themselves from Wiccans and other less textually informed paganisms, for reasons of perceived legitimacy and connection with spiritual ancestors.³⁶

This concern for adherence to textual evidence, legitimacy, and spiritual heritage directly contributes to the heavy emphasis Heathens place on historical precedents for their beliefs and practices—"the lore." Religious studies scholar and "free range tribal Heathen" Galina Krasskova suggests that Heathens depend so heavily on the lore "to ensure that our practices are as logically consistent with the practices of our ancestors as possible."³⁷ Heathens sometimes make changes and additions to their beliefs and practices, but Krasskova

argues that these alterations are made “within a coherent historical and lore-based framework,” so that “our modern religion remains attuned to the spirit of the original practice.”³⁸ Again, a sense of historical and spiritual continuity with pre-Christian Viking religiosity is vital to contemporary Heathenry.

What might be termed “orthodox Heathenries” (Theodism and Odinism) attempt a strict interpretation of the ethics, rituals, and theology contained in the lore.³⁹ In contrast, more moderate Heathenries claim inspiration from and creatively interpret the lore to create new religiosities. *Ásatrú* is by far the largest sect of Norse Neopagan Heathenry. *Ásatrú* literally means “true to the *Æsir*,” Norse sky gods like Óðinn, Frigga, Thor, and Baldr, though many practitioners of Norse Neopaganisms often also revere the Vanir, the Norse earth gods like Frey and Freya. Norse Neopagans demonstrate varying degrees of focus on, but a broadly marked interest in, the history and culture of medieval Scandinavian and Germanic areas, particularly the activities of the Vikings.

Heathenry is a votive religion, which is to say that it places far greater emphasis on honoring the gods than on any form of magical practice.⁴⁰ While “many Heathens do not attempt magic,” Blain suggests that those “in need . . . will go to those who do, including *seið*workers.” For some, *seiðr* provides a connection with the gods and spirits of their ancestors for the purposes of individual and community protection, healing, and divination.⁴¹

Since 1990, *seiðr* has been an increasingly common Heathen practice. Norse Neopagans broadly credit Diana Paxson and her group *Hrafnar* with popularizing contemporary *seiðr* in the United States, though the Swedish group *Yggdrasil* has engaged in the practice since 1982.⁴² Blain notes that while *seið*workers remain “somewhat marginalized,” *seiðr* has become “an expected part of Heathen gatherings.”⁴³

Despite growing acceptance, *seiðr* remains a contested practice. There is widespread disagreement regarding precisely what practices *seiðr* encompasses and whether it can be considered benevolent, for “in the Sagas [*seiðr*] is usually described as performed against the hero of the story.”⁴⁴ Given the relative paucity of medieval descriptions of the practice, many *seið*workers draw on scholarship about comparable circumpolar shamanic and shamanistic practices.⁴⁵ Others rely on fellow *seið*workers, personally intuit deeper knowledge about *seiðr*, or understand themselves to be spirit taught. As Blain suggests, “the learning [of *seiðr*] is not only from human *seið*workers. The teachers are ‘the spirits,’ especially ancestors and Landwights, and including the deities who themselves perform *seiðr*, Freyja and Óðinn.”⁴⁶

Knowledge gained from personal relationships with the gods or spirits is commonly referred to among Heathens as UPG (“unverified personal gnosis”).

UPG refers to “those experiences and spiritual epiphanies that, while very powerful on an individual level, are completely unverifiable in surviving Heathen lore.”⁴⁷ Given the emphasis Norse Neopagans place upon textual primacy, it is perhaps not surprising that more conservative Heathenries regard UPG (and thus *seiðr*) with marked suspicion.⁴⁸

The medieval literary precedent for the gender and sexual ambiguity implicit in *seiðr* has further contributed to conservative resistance to the practice. As with Snorri’s account of pre-Christian *seiðr*, contemporary *seiðr* also began, at least in the United States, as women’s magic. Blain notes that American oracular *seiðr* emerged “when Diana Paxson went looking for ‘something for the women to do’ while men were involved in performing ‘viking games’ and drinking beer, playing out the gendered, non-*ergi* stereotype of the macho warrior.”⁴⁹ Heathen *seið*workers are still primarily women; male *seið*workers remain anomalous.⁵⁰ Some in the Norse Neopagan community still feel that “*seiðr* is for women and gay men,” owing in large part to the continued connotations of *seið*craft as unmanly.⁵¹

More stringently textual Heathenries recall the references in the lore to the unmanliness of *seiðr* and thus disparage men who engage in spell work. As Blain reminds us, “heathenism is not immune to the homophobia of the wider society”; some conservative Norse Neopagans have suggested that *seið*men must necessarily be gay.⁵² Here, as in the discussion above of the insulting nature of *ergi*, we see gendered ambiguity elided with sexual nonconformity.⁵³ Blain and her collaborator and co-practitioner Robert J. Wallis suggest that “those people who are most uncomfortable with *seiðr* and ‘*ergi*’ also tend often to be those who are most ‘folkish’ or right-wing and farthest politically from the mainstream.”⁵⁴ Despite the *seiðr*’s “unmanly” genealogy and fraught status among Heathenry writ large, increasing numbers of Heathens, “women and men, straight and gay,” are performing oracular divination.⁵⁵

Blain, often in conversation with Wallis, has interpreted the male practice of *seið*work in several ways, usually offering a liberatory reading of the practice. She acknowledges that *ergi* is still used as an insult, particularly to impugn the *seið*man’s sexuality, yet she observes that “some *seið*men are now reclaiming it to describe their construction of self.”⁵⁶ Wallis and Blain categorize *seiðr* as gendered practice as a “means of resistance” to contemporary gender paradigms, as “empowering and life-transforming” for “individuals and communities,” and as “facilitat[ing] the alteration of normative Western gender stereotypes.”⁵⁷ Blain thus locates *seiðr* as a site of performative potentiality for embodied religious practice: unmanly *seiðr* creates space for variable instantiations of Norse Neopagan masculinity: “These *seið*men perform their variant masculinities

through the ‘*active accomplishment of meaning*’ by mediating among people and spirits to create both community and knowledge.”⁵⁸ According to Blain’s fieldwork, *seiðmen* instantiate their masculinities in several ways. Some deny that the practice of *seiðr* is unmanly, while others deliberately adopt and reinterpret unmanliness. Some *seiðmen* align their unmanliness with their gay identities, though Blain insists that “gay male *seiðworkers* . . . do not define the field.” Blain’s interlocutor Malcolm interprets *ergi* as beyond the sexual implications of the term; for Malcolm, the unmanliness of *seiðr* should be understood “in terms of rejection of conventional masculine ideology, including, today, rejection of violence as a first line approach to dealing with interpersonal problems.”⁵⁹ Others among Blain’s interlocutors understand *ergi* as a loss of ego or an “abnegation of self” or of personal privilege, which these *seiðmen* feel is necessary in service to their communities.⁶⁰ In short, “practitioners use the terms of the past within today’s narrative constructions, to recreate or subvert hegemonic practice and to shape new meanings for themselves and directions for their communities.”⁶¹ Blain’s accounts of her interlocutors’ experiences, then, indicate a transformative and liberating potential in the unmanliness of *seiðr*.

In theorizing the multiple masculinities of contemporary *seiðmen*, Blain makes an important contribution to the scholarship of gender and magic. Her consideration of gendered magic is nevertheless incomplete. Blain never moves beyond binary understandings of sex/gender and sexuality: she speaks in terms of “male and female, gay and straight.” Her dichotomization of terms both elides sex/gender and sexuality and occludes the rich and varied multiplicity of queer identities. I discuss the challenge of transgender identity to Blain’s theorization of *argr seiðr* below, but transgender issues are not the only lacuna in her work. Perhaps Blain’s largest omission is the exclusion of women from conversations of unmanliness. Blain privileges the perspective and subjectivity of queer men, leaving little space for lesbian or masculine female subjectivity in her thinking about unmanliness and magic.⁶²

These criticisms notwithstanding, Blain correctly notes the emergence of multiple masculinities among Norse Neopagan *seiðmen*. But while Blain’s ethnographies show contemporary *seiðmen* willing to reinterpret, challenge, or embrace unmanliness in order to serve their communities (which include ancestors, spirits, and gods), Blain’s interlocutors do not cite unmanliness as a reason for engaging in magical practice. It is not clear from the ethnographic evidence she presents that gender is as central a concern to her interlocutors as it is to Blain’s analysis. Indeed, her interlocutors demonstrate a deep and persistent investment in retaining the category of masculinity, even as they struggle to authorize themselves as legitimate male practitioners of *seiðr*.

“Power/Blessing/Curse/Wiring/Energy/Sacredness”:
Kaldera’s Rejection of Masculinity

By contrast, Northern Tradition shaman and transman Raven Kaldera understands unmanliness not only as a condition or consequence of *seiðr* but as one key reason for performing *seiðr*. Kaldera’s understanding of his role as shaman requires a constant performance of unmanliness, in which the performing of *seiðr* forms a key element.

Unmanliness informs not only Kaldera’s practice of *seiðr* but also his identity and responsibilities as a shaman. For Kaldera, unmanliness is not a condition for or consequence of accessing occult knowledge but rather a crucial element of Kaldera’s shamanic identity and authority, a religious vocation. More so than with previous examples, Kaldera uses *seiðr* to rethink and redo gender. For Kaldera, the high seat is a site for dismantling traditional gender roles, and traditional masculinity in particular.

Raven Kaldera, a female-to-male transperson, transgender and intersex activist, and founder of Northern Tradition Paganism, notes that transgender individuals do not have the luxury of taking gender for granted.⁶³ Many trans*folk do not experience gender transgression as voluntary, and Kaldera emphatically refutes the notion of choice in transgenderism throughout his writings and interviews: “Those of us who ‘do’ gender . . . twist it and play with it and transform it into something quite different from what society intends,” he writes. “*We don’t get the privilege of living an unquestioned life*” (emphasis added).⁶⁴ In another work, Kaldera asserts, “Some of us are living in that sacred space [between genders] right now. . . . *We did not choose to be what we are, and we cannot unchoose it.* But being what we are has given us choices, choices the likes of which you can only hope to imagine” (emphasis added).⁶⁵ The marginality of trans* existence is, as Kaldera demonstrates, not based solely on choice. It is a fact of trans* life—a matter of knowing and living in one’s body.

Kaldera also suggests that a calling by the spirits to serve as shaman further complicates the notion of voluntarism in gender identity.⁶⁶ While mundane trans*folk can hide or refuse to acknowledge being differently gendered, the third-sex shaman’s first duty is to resolve his own gender confusions.⁶⁷ Transgender spirit workers, those “called by the Gods and/or spirits to destroy [their lives] and be reborn to serve others, to be ridden by spirits, to lose everything and gain this knowledge,” do not have the option of concealing a gender-ambiguous identity, Kaldera explains. “We [transgender spirit workers] must deal fully and completely with our gender issues, as quickly and as honestly as possible. . . . If you are not dealing with—and fully living—your sacred gender, then everything that the Gods and spirits will do to you will be about forcing

you to come to terms with this [identity.]”⁶⁸ Kaldera describes his religious identity as shaman and his bodily identity as transgender as inextricably entwined. He is not alone in this belief: of the roughly thirty members of what Kaldera calls his “tribe,” approximately 80 percent are transgender. According to one such member, if we expand the definition of unmanliness to include “atypical gender presentation . . . third gender, androgyne, or any degree of gender dysphoria, or simple gender transgression . . . that percentage rises to 99%.”⁶⁹

Kaldera’s “third-sex shamanism” combines spirit-taught knowledge with medieval literary evidence of *seiðr* and scholarship regarding subarctic circumpolar shamanisms.⁷⁰ In his essay “Ergi: The Way of the Third,” Kaldera indicates that he did not initially connect his transgender identity with shamanism. Rather, he says, Hela, the Norse goddess of death who “owns [him] body and soul,” ordered him to change his gender. Only during his postsurgery research on historical shamanisms did Kaldera connect this transformation with shamanism. “When I began to read up on shamanism, the transgender issue hit me like a shock wave. These things weren’t separate, they were part and parcel of the same system.”⁷¹

Here, Kaldera is referring to the prevalence of gender-ambiguous or gender-fluid shamans among the Sáami, Inuit, Chukchi, and similar circumpolar tribes. Kaldera suggests that many such shamans historically transgressed gender roles and engaged in unusual sexual practices. “If an ordinary person of the tribe decided to change their gender, they might be shunned,” Kaldera explains, “but if a shaman did it, it was a sacred thing done by the spirits to give them extra power.” Kaldera cites archaeological findings, anthropological accounts, and historical documents to present a broad narrative history for what he labels his third-sex shamanism.

Kaldera explains that the third-sex shaman today must transgress gender and sexual norms as an inherent part of the shaman’s identity. What is more, the shaman must be public about both gender-queering behaviors and transgressive sexual activities. The shaman’s gender queering can range from cross-dressing in ritual context or deliberately transgressive sexual acts and object choices to a full surgical gender change, according to what the gods demand. Kaldera further clarifies that transgressive sex need not necessarily be homosexual. Rather, Kaldera places primary emphasis on the need for public performance of these transgressive behaviors. “It isn’t enough to be third-gendered internally. You have to be visibly different in that way as well, whether it’s only that your ceremonial costume has strong elements of clothing that is socially acceptable only for a sex different from the one that you most appear, or that you must act in a way that is deliberately gender-inappropriate. Your gender

transgressing has to be evident to everyone who comes to see you in your professional capacity, and you may never deny it when asked.”

Publicly breaking gender and sexual norms sets the third-sex spirit worker apart and allows hir gods and honored dead to speak through hir, specifically through oracular divination. Kaldera retains the term *ergi*, or unmanliness, in his third-sex spirit work because, he says, “we need a word for this thing that we are and do (for it’s both something we are and something we do), and we see the echo of this same power/blessing/curse/wiring/energy/sacredness in those brief glimpses of the ones called *ergi*.” Thus, for Kaldera, unmanliness is not limited to *seiðr* but is a necessary element of shamanic identity. In Kaldera’s Northern Tradition, shamans derive their authority and magical power from deliberate performances of unmanliness.

Kaldera directs his own *seið*work toward serving his tribe, including spirits and ancestors—the honored dead of the transgender community, those killed for doing and speaking gender wrong: “Our Dead are angry, and they demand this of us: that as much as we are able, we will do what has to be done to make sure that there are no more fallen in this war. In order to save each other, we must band together and take care of each other, because alone we go down.”⁷² Kaldera’s *seið*work relays the pain and fury of the transgender dead, their pleas for community building, their calls to action. For Kaldera, the doing of gender and the doing of magic cannot be divided.

More so than with Blain’s interlocutors, Kaldera’s *seiðr* works deliberately with and on cultural constructions (and deconstructions) of masculinity. Kaldera’s intention is clear: third-sex shamanism attempts a radical restructuring of broader understandings of sex/gender within Norse Neopaganisms and beyond. For Kaldera, unmanliness is a sacred duty. Ultimately, he suggests, the unmanly *seið*worker turns “the world upside down. We are living, walking catalysts, and this is the first mystery of our existence. We turn everything that people think they know about gender—that supposedly safe ground beneath their feet—upside down. We change worlds.”⁷³ For Kaldera and his tribe, then, sitting in the high seat creates space not only for contact between the mundane and divine but also for deploying a historically unmanly magical practice to dismantle traditional masculinity.

Modern Unmanliness

I have shown that the high seat upon which *seið*men work their magic can serve as a site of self-fashioning: the unmanly genealogy of *seiðr* facilitates—indeed, requires—male practitioners to negotiate their own masculinities as they defend

the legitimacy of their magical practice. Medieval Icelandic literature provides historical and cultural evidence for pre-Christian *seiðr* as unmanly practice in a society invested in and demonstrably anxious about constant performances of manliness. The Sagas and Eddas testify to the existence of early *seið*men and to cultural tensions surrounding their practices. Blain's interlocutors detailed the ways in which contemporary *seið*rmen negotiate the unmanly genealogy of *seiðr* while relying on the Sagas and Eddas to reconstruct or reimagine the practice. Some disregard the connotations of unmanliness, while others conceptualize unmanliness in terms of a refusal of violence or male privilege. Blain thus identifies *seiðr* as a site for the emergence of "multiple masculinities" within Norse Neopagan traditions; at the same time, her interlocutors demonstrate an abiding investment in continuing to identify as male. Finally, Raven Kaldera deliberately performs and embodies unmanliness not merely as a consequence or condition of magical practice but as an integral part of his shamanic role. For Kaldera and his community, *seið*work does not merely redefine traditional masculinity, but rather speeds its demolition.

Norse Neopagan *seiðr* is a vivid example of magic as an exercise in making and understanding the self through contact with the divine and supernormal.⁷⁴ In her 2004 *Place of Enchantment*, Alex Owen suggests that the "elaboration and full comprehension of the self" is the quintessential modern pursuit, and that modern magicians negotiate gender as part of their "broader quest of self-knowledge."⁷⁵ Inasmuch as *seiðr* is a vehicle for the negotiation, reformation, and understanding of the self, it must then be understood as a thoroughly modern magical practice. The unmanly genealogy of the practice requires contemporary *seið*men to interrogate their own gendered identities even as they insist on the legitimacy of their magical work.

NOTES

1. Given Jenny Blain's attention to the ambivalence of unmanliness in this passage, I rely here on her translation. Jenny Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic: Ecstasy and Neo-Shamanism in North European Paganism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 123.

2. On *flytings*, particularly the sexual/gendered nature thereof, see Carol J. Clover, "Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe," *Speculum* 68, no. 2 (1993): 373; and Stefanie V. Schnurbein, "Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition: A Theory Between Ideological Camps," *History of Religions* 43, no. 2 (2003): 124.

3. *Argr* is the adjectival form of *ergi*. Thus, in this chapter, *argr* should be understood as "unmanly," whereas *ergi* should be read as "unmanliness." According to Blain, *ergi* extended well beyond *seið*workers and was applicable to both women and men. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 111.

4. With regard to *seiðr*, while most Neopagan *seið*workers restrict themselves to oracular divination, medieval accounts of the pre-Christian practice also encompassed manipulation of present and future events. *Ibid.*, 16. As Blain and Wallis note, "There have been considerable

arguments within Heathenry about *seiðr*, on what the term covers, and notably on whether it is ‘good’ magic: in the Sagas it is usually described as performed against the hero of the story.” Jenny Blain and Robert J. Wallis, “Heathenry,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James R. Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 427.

5. That is, Loki can be understood as calling Odin a “faggot” if we understand “faggot” here in terms of sexual behavior (i.e., sodomy) rather than sexual identity. As Blain notes and as I discuss later in this chapter, notions of sexual identity would not have been operant in pre-Christian Viking societies. The point here is to recognize that in Old Norse literature even the masculinity of the pantheon’s high god is not sacrosanct. See Clover, “Regardless of Sex,” 387.

6. Snorri recounted that Freyja, goddess of love, fertility, and death, first brought *seiðr* to the Æsir, chief gods of the Norse pantheon. “The Ynglinga Saga, or The Story of the Yngling Family from Odin to Halfdan the Black,” Online Medieval and Classical Library, accessed November 22, 2014, <http://omacl.org/Heimskringla/yinglinga.html>.

7. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 17, 100.

8. Social justice advocate Sam Killerman uses the term trans* as “an umbrella term that refers to all of the identities within the identity gender spectrum,” including transgender, genderqueer, and genderless persons. See Sam Killerman, “What Does the Asterisk in Trans* Stand For?,” accessed November 22, 2014, <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2012/05/what-does-the-asterisk-in-trans-stand-for/>. It is worth noting, however, that trans* activists have criticized Killerman for allegedly appropriating and commodifying trans*-created resources. See “The Genderbread Plagiarist,” accessed June 13, 2016, <https://storify.com/cisnormativity/the-gender-bread-plagiarist>.

9. Galina Krasskova, *Exploring the Northern Tradition: A Guide to the Gods, Lore, Rites, and Celebrations from the Norse, German, and Anglo-Saxon Traditions* (Pompton Plains, N.J.: Career Press, 2005), 12.

10. Written by the thirteenth-century Icelandic historian Snorri Sturluson, the Poetic and Prose Eddas were mythological guides for young poets. The Eddas serve as the principal source for the pre-Christian mythology and cosmology of northern Europe. The Sagas of the Icelanders (*Íslendingasögur*) are histories, primarily family histories, written in the post-Christian thirteenth and fourteenth centuries about events of the (pre-Christian) tenth and eleventh centuries. Although, as Blain notes, these sources are “set within a *euhemerized*-Christianized framework,” northern European Neopaganisms rely heavily on the Sagas and the Eddas to reimagine and reconstruct Viking religiosity. See Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 18.

11. *Ibid.*, 34.

12. Carolyne Larrington, trans., *The Poetic Edda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 147. Blain notes that the Larrington translation is “currently the most accessible translation to practitioners,” which is to say that contemporary practitioners are most familiar with this translation and thus this articulation of unmanliness. For this reason, I rely on Larrington’s translations unless otherwise noted. See Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 161.

13. Regarding male *seið*workers in the Sagas, see also *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, Icelandic Saga Database, http://sagadb.org/gisla_saga_surssonar; *The Story of the Laxdalers*, trans. Robert Proctor from the original *Laxdæla saga*, *ibid.*, http://sagadb.org/laxdaela_saga.en2; and *The Saga of Cormac the Skald*, trans. W. G. Collingwood and J. Stefansson from the original *Kormáks saga*, *ibid.*, http://sagadb.org/kormaks_saga.en, all accessed November 22, 2014. See also Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 114.

14. Brit Solli, “Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings: A Queer Analysis of the Cult of Odin and ‘Holy White Stones,’” *Journal of Homosexuality* 54, no. 1 (2008): 197. From this line in the *Shorter Völuspá*, Solli extrapolates the existence of a third-gendered category in pre-Christian Norse societies. While Blain does not dismiss this possibility, she suggests that *seiðberendur* need not refer to a third-gendered magician but rather “potentially link[s] gender and magic with action, agency, performance.” *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 133. Nevertheless, Solli’s argument for *seiðberendur* as a discrete gender category owes more to a liberatory

queer reading of the text and an overreliance on a universalized (and decidedly Eliadean) category of shamanism than the evidence might allow, particularly given Carol Clover's compelling argument for a one-sex model operant in pre-Christian Viking societies. See Schnurbein, "Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition," 122.

15. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 132, 133.

16. See Clover, "Regardless of Sex," on masculinity as guarantor of meaning/worth in Viking society. Blain also suggests that Vikings might have considered *seiðr*/magic, if it did constitute an attempt to change worldly events, unmanly precisely because magic attempts to change things without the use of physical force. See Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 109.

17. Neil S. Price, *The Archaeology of Shamanism* (London: Routledge, 2001), 110. As the primary evidence for *seiðwork* is literary, I restrict myself here to discursive analysis of the practice. However, Price notes both that material evidence (grave goods, including staffs and masks) corroborates literary accounts of the practice and that the archaeological record demonstrates an "overwhelming predominance of [*seiðr*] objects from female graves" (119). Nevertheless, Price acknowledges that given "the numerous descriptions of men performing *seiðr*, the situation may not have been so simple," and he thus concludes that "both sexes were involved in sorcery, with evidence for different and precise social roles for men and women, together with the existence of complex sexual, social and gender constructions" (119, 121).

18. On Oðinn as unmanly *seiðworker*, see in particular Solli, "Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings."

19. *Ynglinga Saga*, part of the *Heimskringla* (or "Chronicle of the Kings of Norway"), is an account of medieval Scandinavian history written by Snorri Sturluson. As noted above, Snorri was an Icelandic historian and, in addition to the *Heimskringla*, author of the Poetic and Prose Eddas, mythological guides for young poets. On this magic as an inherently unmanly pursuit, see also Price, *Archaeology of Shamanism*, 115.

20. Blain's translation, in *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 123. Larrington's rendering is even more sexually explicit. She renders "oc hvgða ec þat args aðal" as "I thought that the hallmark of a pervert." Larrington, *Poetic Edda*, 88.

21. Quoted in Schnurbein, "Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition," 121.

22. Quoted in *ibid.*, 121–22; Schnurbein credits Buchholz as "the most comprehensive study on [the] shamanic elements [of *seiðr*] to date" (120). In a later article, Buchholz noted that "the direct meaning of the word *ergi* (*argr* adj.) is passive homosexuality, perhaps an effeminate behavior. The close connection between *ergi* and magic, which gives a quite negative denotation to the term, may entitle us to regard *ergi* as the negative aspect of sexual ecstasy in its totality. Heterosexuality was after all the only legitimate and accepted form of sexuality in Scandinavian culture." Peter Buchholz, "Shamanism in Medieval Scandinavian Literature," in *Communicating with the Spirits: Christian Demonology and Popular Mythology (Demons, Spirits, and Witches)*, ed. Eva Pocs and Gábor Klaniczay (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2005), 241.

23. Folke Ström, *Nid, Ergi, and Old Norse Moral Attitudes* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1974), 9–10. It should be noted that Ström did not necessarily insist that *seiðr* required sexual receptivity from its male practitioners or that those *seiðmen* accused of unmanliness were necessarily accused of being sodomites. Rather, suggestions of sexual penetration might serve as a "symbolic presentation" of a deeper and "more contemptible" character flaw, unmanliness.

24. Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Sexual Defamation in Early Northern Society* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), 19, 85. Like Strom, Sørensen suggests that while *ergi* could imply sodomy, the two terms are not interchangeable. Rather, "the idea of passive homosexuality was so closely linked with notions of immorality in general that the sexual sense could serve to express the moral sense." "Sexual perversion," then, is beside the point. The *argr* man's true failing lay not in having been used sexually by another man but rather in having failed to perform his masculinity appropriately (see also Clover on this point). Sørensen, *Unmanly Man*, 20. As I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter,

notions of pre-Christian Viking homosexuality are grossly anachronistic, as notions of sexual identity would not have been operant at this time.

25. This is to say that where allegations of *ergi* pertain to sexual impropriety or passivity, it should be read as sodomy (a sexual act) rather than homosexuality (a sexual identity). As Foucault demonstrated, sexual identity—and in particular the understanding of sexuality as the core of identity—emerged as a condition of possibility concurrently with psychoanalysis (that is, not until the nineteenth century). Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). See also Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 125. To refer to pre-Christian *seið*men as homosexual is grossly anachronistic and renders much scholarship on the “queer” potentialities of pre-Christian *seiðr* problematic from a sexuality studies perspective. See also Solli, “Queering the Cosmology of the Vikings,” 195.

26. Though beyond scope of this study, scholarly explanations of *seiðr*'s unmanliness are not limited to gender or sexuality. See, for example, Blain's suggestion that *seiðr* was considered *argr* because it was based on foreign (*Sáami*) practices. *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 137. See also Ronald Grambo, “Unmanliness and *Seiðr*: Problems Concerning the Change of Sex,” in *Shamanisms Past and Present*, ed. Mihály Hoppál and Otto J. von Sadovszky (Budapest: International Society for Oceanic Research, 1989), 103–14.

27. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 124.

28. Clover, “Regardless of Sex,” 381. Regarding *ergi* as a tendency or inclination, see Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 18.

29. Clover, “Regardless of Sex,” 381. Regarding the inclusion of *ergi* as *nið*, see the work of Ström, Clover, Solli, and Sørensen, among others.

30. As Clover notes, modern understandings of sex and gender are not directly applicable in pre-Christian Norse contexts: pre-Christian Norse society, she insists, “is a world in which gender, if we can even call it that, is neither coextensive with biological sex, despite its dependence on sexual imagery, nor a closed system, but a system based to an extraordinary extent on winnable and losable attributes.” If a binary were operant in pre-Christian Norse societies, Clover suggests that it would have been “between strong and weak, powerful and powerless or disempowered, swordworthy and unswordworthy, honored and unhonored or dishonored, winners and losers.” Clover, “Regardless of Sex,” 376. Nevertheless, for the sake of expediency, I use “gender” as shorthand for this analytical concept.

31. Ström, *Nid, Ergi, and Old Norse*, 9.

32. The categorization of *seiðr* within the context of Saami and/or circumpolar shamanic practices might lend some insight, though whether *seiðr* can be understood as shamanic or merely shamanistic has been cause for much debate among scholars and is well beyond the scope of this inquiry. See, in this regard, the work of Blain, Schnurbein, and Wallis.

33. Jenny Blain and Robert J. Wallis, “The ‘Ergi’ *Seið*man: Contestations of Gender, Shamanism, and Sexuality in Northern Religion Past and Present,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 15, no. 3 (2000): 396.

34. Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 298.

35. Helen A. Berger, Evan A. Leach, and Leigh S. Shaffer, *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 17. As I noted above, Norse Neopaganisms include a number of different approaches to re-creating or reimagining Viking religiosity. There is some contention about which Norse Neopaganisms do or do not constitute Heathenism or Heathenry. For the purposes of this chapter, I group Odinism, Theodism, and Asatru under the banner “Heathen.” While Raven Kaldera's Northern Tradition Paganism draws on many texts that Heathens use to reconstruct or reimagine Viking religious praxis, Kaldera takes some pains to distance himself from the title “Heathen” in order to emphasize the Northern Tradition's openness to personal experience.

36. *Ibid.* See also Krasskova, *Exploring the Northern Tradition*, 13.

37. Berger, Leach, and Shaffer, *Voices from the Pagan Census*. On Krasskova's religious affiliations, see "About Galina Krasskova," accessed November 22, 2014, <http://krasskova.weebly.com/about-galina-krasskova.html>.

38. Krasskova, *Exploring the Northern Tradition*, 13.

39. Although the particularities of ultraconservative (or "folkish/völkisch") Norse Neopaganisms exceed the scope of this chapter, these groups provide rich fodder for religious studies and scholars of sex, gender, and sexuality alike. Several such groups have gained notoriety among Neopagans and beyond for claims to racial purity and white supremacy. On this point, see Mattias Gardell, *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

40. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 298.

41. Jenny Blain, "Heathenry, the Past, and Sacred Sites in Today's Britain," in *Modern Paganism in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Michael Strmiska (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 191.

42. Schnurbein, "Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition," 133.

43. Blain, "Heathenry, the Past," 191; and Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 143.

44. Blain and Wallis, "Heathenry," 427; and Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 143.

45. See, for example, Robert J. Wallis, "Queer Shamans: Autoarchaeology and Neo-Shamanism," *World Archaeology* 32, no. 2 (2000): 252–62.

46. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 149.

47. Krasskova, *Exploring the Northern Tradition*, 13. Blain glosses UPG as "unusual personal gnosis." *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 14.

48. Krasskova, *Exploring the Northern Tradition*, 13.

49. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 143.

50. Blain and Wallis, "Ergi' Seiðman," 404.

51. *Ibid.*, and Blain and Wallis, "Heathenry," 427–28.

52. Blain and Wallis, "Ergi' Seiðman," 401; and Blain, "Heathenry, the Past," 204.

53. Blain, "Heathenry, the Past," 206.

54. Blain and Wallis, "Ergi' Seiðman," 407. See also Schnurbein, "Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition," 135.

55. Blain and Wallis, "Heathenry," 401.

56. Blain and Wallis, "Ergi' Seiðman," 395.

57. *Ibid.*, 407, 396.

58. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 26 (emphasis in original), 155.

59. *Ibid.*, 402.

60. Blain and Wallis, "Ergi' Seiðman," 404.

61. Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 6.

62. On this point, see Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998). Halberstam's work explores the embodied experiences of "women who feel themselves to be more masculine than feminine," while noting that American culture seems far more concerned with male femininity (xi).

63. I do not intend to place the burden of performativity upon trans*folk. However, Kaldera explicitly emphasizes the performativity of his role as unmanly shaman; he insists that "ergi is something we are and something we do."

64. Raven Brangwyn Kaldera, *Hermaphroditities: The Transgender Spirituality Workbook* (Bloomington, Ind.: Xlibris Corporation, 2002), 58.

65. Raven Kaldera, "Feminist on Testosterone: The View from an Intersexual FTM," accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.ravenkaldera.org/gender-archive/feminist-on-testosterone.html>.

66. Raven Kaldera, "For Transgendered Spirit-Workers," accessed October 18, 2016, <http://www.ravenkaldera.org/gender-archive/for-transgendered-spirit-workers.html>.

67. "Hir" in this instance is the possessive form of a gender-neutral pronoun.

68. Kaldera, "For Transgendered Spirit-Workers."

69. Quoted by Galina Krasskova, e-mail to author, October 29, 2008.

70. Much ink has been spilled over whether historical or contemporary *seiðr* constitutes shamanic or shamanistic practice (see the work of Blain, Schnurlbein, and others). I have no position on this argument; I use the term "shaman" to describe Kaldera because that is how Kaldera describes himself.

71. Raven Kaldera, "Ergi: The Way of the Third," accessed November 22, 2014, <http://www.northernshamanism.org/shamanic-techniques/gender-sexuality/ergi-the-way-of-the-third.html>. The quotations in the next three paragraphs are from this online source.

72. Kaldera, "For Transgendered Spirit-Workers."

73. Kaldera, "Ergi." Regarding *seið*workers "turning the world upside down" in *Vatnsdæla saga*, see also Blain, *Nine Worlds of Seið-Magic*, 98.

74. Following Kripal, I use "supernormal" to indicate phenomena experienced as unusual but not outside natural systems or processes. Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 67.

75. Alex Owen, *The Place of Enchantment: British Occultism and the Culture of the Modern* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13, 113.