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"History is Who We Are": Truth, Community, and Crafting the Past in York, United Kingdom and Northern California and Nevada

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“HISTORY IS WHO WE ARE”: TRUTH, COMMUNITY, AND CRAFTING THE
PAST IN YORK, UNITED KINGDOM AND NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AND
NEVADA

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Abstract

Justice, retribution, service - these were a few of the central values that historical organization members in York, United Kingdom and the "Gold Country" region of the American West (central to the late nineteenth-century Gold Rush) invoked in seeking and disseminating what they deemed to be the "truth" about local history. These locations both feature an unusually high density of historical organizations - including historical societies, museums, and an American Indian colony's Cultural Resources Program - being rich with historical sites, monuments, and tales of local history. However, they are also linked by the rise of "nationalist populist" movements in both locations, such as groups of Trump supporters in the U.S. and "Brexiters" in the U.K. In my dissertation, "'History is Who We Are': Truth, Community, and Crafting the Past in York, United Kingdom and Northern California and Nevada," I investigate the ways in which the neoliberal political climate spurred historical organization members to forge meaningful social bonds with one another in their pursuit of truth and disparagement of popular "false" narratives of history. I utilize a comparative analysis of historical organizations in the two locations to answer a series of questions: How does a finely-honed understanding of local history color the moral, social, and political worlds of organization members? How do these organizations assimilate and mobilize different forms of knowledge? And how do members' perceptions of truth mediate their moral positions on history and their social bonds? Through two years of ethnographic research I traced historical organization members' worlds, from their fierce disputes over human remains to their engagement with myth to their support for or objection to current political trends - such as Native American efforts to influence legislation in the U.S. and Brexit in the U.K. Through examining my interlocutors' use of historical evidence, along with their forging, reevaluation, and transmission of historical narratives, I probe their rationales for engaging with history. I ultimately trace this reasoning to their shared, deep-seated moralizing contentions about history and community, their sense of holding a public trust, and their need to achieve vindication for ancestors and historic figures.

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Introduction

“The past, like some immense, collective ghost, is here beyond all possibility of exorcism” – Richard Matheson

Late summer sunlight filtered through stained glass windows as I sat in a medieval church near York, United Kingdom where the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society had gathered in remembrance and appreciation of King Richard III's (1483-1485) life. Inside the church, which was commissioned by Richard III, Angela, the elderly chairperson of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, addressed her solemn audience of similarly aged branch members with a profound speech about debt, loyalty, and justice. “It is our duty and our privilege to make sure that these soldiers are never belittled or forgotten,” she said in an effort to pay homage to those who fought in the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. She returned to the true focus of the event – Richard III, who was killed in this last battle of the Wars of the Roses. Members of the Richard III Society have contended that Henry Tudor (Henry VII), Richard's successor, launched a campaign to smear his predecessor in hopes of winning citizens' allegiance and undermining their loyalty to Richard III. According to society members, Henry Tudor circulated rumors that Richard was a hunchback, that he had killed his two young nephews (the Princes in the Tower) in order to secure the crown for himself, and that he was generally murderous and power-hungry. In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, William Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, which depicted Richard as a scheming, Machiavellian ruler, became popular and convinced a new generation that Richard was truly evil. What happened next, according to Richard III Society members, was that this narrative became more accessible and popular than “the truth,” and Richard was



subsequently
represented as the
character that the
Tudors and
Shakespeare
asserted that he was.
When Richard III
Society members
said that they strove
for justice for
Richard, they meant
that they intended to

[1. White roses in the Church of St. Mary and St. Alkelda, Middleham, U.K.]

inform people of who Richard truly was and absolve him of crimes that he did not commit. The light had shifted and now pored through the society's offering of a basket of white roses – the type of rose that in the U.K. symbolizes both Yorkshire and Richard III – reinforcing the centuries-old bond between the king and his beloved native province. “Richard never forgot the men who died fighting for him,” Angela said. This comment was intended to frame the injustice of Richard's smeared reputation in British society today, especially given that he was such a true and just man. “We do this for justice,” Angela concluded.



[2. A board in Middleham's Church of St. Mary and St. Alkelda that reads: "In memory of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, King of England 1452 – 1485. Here in Middleham we remember

Richard the man, husband to Anne Neville and father of Edward of Middleham. May he rest in peace.”]

5,043 miles away in Carson City, Nevada on a sunny fall day, museum directors Chris and Bobbi led me on a tour of Stewart Indian School, a boarding school that, from 1890 to 1980, intended to promote Native American children’s assimilation into white society. The site was undergoing renovations to become a museum dedicated to local tribal history, and Chris and Bobbi explained to me how each space would be used in the future museum as decided by a council of alumni. Amid talk of students’ inside jokes, extracurricular activities, yearbooks, and scrapbooks, we passed the site where there was once a pool that the administration used to baptize students by force. We walked along the perimeter of the school grounds by a river where parents would camp, hoping to catch a glimpse of their children whom they had been prevented from seeing in years. Chris joked about how the school was laid out in a manner that lent itself to surveillance of students. The most surprising fact about Stewart Indian School, however, was that most people in Carson City and nearby Reno, Nevada knew absolutely nothing about it – not even that it existed. This story had been suppressed and systematically ignored since 1890 when the school’s first students were torn from their families, and Bobbi, Chris, and the rest of the Nevada Indian Commission were attempting to inform the public’s view of a tragic yet integral piece of local history.

[3. A drawing made by Steward Indian School students which was hidden for fear of it being discovered and the artists being punished.]





[4. Stewart Indian School's administration building, Carson City, Nevada.]

What does it mean to fight for justice, who deserves to be vindicated, and what is the “truth” about the past? Historical organization members in York, United Kingdom and the “Gold Country” of the American West (a region straddling Northern California and Nevada located in the center of the mid- 19th century Gold Rush) were certain of their answers to these questions. Through crafting and perpetuating historical narratives, members attempted to achieve justice as a form of vindication for people who they believed had suffered from wrongdoing. Whether it was salvaging the reputation of a king who was maligned by the successive dynasty’s propaganda, lending credibility to an underrepresented historical narrative, or utilizing local history to generate tourism and funds with which to help those deemed “less fortunate” in the community, people who participated in local historical organizations were acting in accordance with a strong moral stance. These positions, however, were not particular to the individual; they were shared among members of the organizations. Given the time and resources these

historical organization members dedicated to authorizing their senses of moralism, as well as the critical importance of the intersection of memory and history to these people, I aimed in my fieldwork to learn what the personal and political stakes were. I argue that, ultimately, shared moralities constituted the underpinnings of my interlocutors' historical engagement, providing the driving force behind their tireless efforts to perpetuate their historical organizations and narratives. I further argue that history, for my interlocutors, was an inherently political practice. Through a lens that bridges socially constructed memory and individual experience (Cole 2001), I explore the stakes of memory and history, such as the ability of certain of my interlocutors to assert cultural and legal sovereignty, their construction of truth claims that stood to be either valorized or discarded, and the way in which historical organization members interacted with power dynamics surrounding branches of the state.

Through two years of ethnographic fieldwork split between York, United Kingdom and Northern California and Nevada, I learned from the members of historical organizations about the stakes of local history for them and their production and perpetuation of moralized historical narratives. I chose these sites partly due to their unusually high densities of historical organizations, but primarily because they encompassed populations which featured linked histories, as well as a shared context of neoliberalism that had given rise to nationalist discourses. I wanted to learn how populations in the U.K. and the U.S. performed the tasks of interpreting and engaging with history, given their adherence to or eschewing of popular historical narratives and their careful work in crafting narratives that represented their communities and nations. In York I worked with the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society; Red Tower York,

an organization which sought to link community members to their local past and benefit those whom members deemed “less fortunate” residents; the Jorvik Group, York’s largest and most successful museum group; the York Oral History Society, which collected thousands of photographs and interviews of local people and had published several books; and The Sealed Knot, an English Civil War reenactment society. In Northern California and Nevada I worked with a handful of small historical societies in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, as well as the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony’s Cultural Resources Program, which managed the tribe’s resources and hosted an exhibition of Native American art; the State Historic Preservation Office, which handled all cases of repatriation in Nevada and restored historic buildings; the Nevada Indian Commission, which was involved in local tribal affairs of various sorts; and the nascent Stewart Indian School museum management. In addition to attending these organizations’ events, I met with my interlocutors informally, visiting them in their homes or meeting with them at restaurants and coffee shops.

My interlocutors’ practice of history, being based on the evaluation of evidence and truth claims surrounding local history in small groups, was fundamentally different from large-scale, ritualistic public acts of commemoration. While some authors (for example, Connerton 1989; Feuchtwang 2010; Geertz 1957) have focused primarily on memory and history in the context of such large-scale ritual, showing that ritual is the primary vehicle through which people establish memory and history, I argue that the solitary or small-group settings in which my interlocutors performed a significant amount of their work were equally as effective as ritual in constructing memory and history. Davis and Starn

note this distinction in their article entitled “Introduction.” They argue that “local memories are sources for writing the local histories ignored by historians of dynastic monarchy and the nation-state; the private sphere and the practices of everyday life define and conserve alternatives to the official memory of public historiography” (Davis and Starn 1989: 5). This demonstrates that, while ritualistic practices of history facilitate remembering on a national scale, the smaller, day-to-day acts surrounding local history are able to illustrate for us a more nuanced picture of both local history and the power dynamics surrounding it. With this power dynamic in mind, Audra Simpson has argued for what she terms “indigenous interruption” – the ways in which Native Americans disrupt the enactment of slanted historical knowledge, questioning the premise on which the hegemonic group is operating (Simpson 2014). This resonates significantly with James Scott’s notion of “infrapolitics;” Scott claims that “the great emancipatory gains for human freedom have not been the result of orderly, institutional procedures but of disorderly, unpredictable, spontaneous action cracking open the social order from below” (Scott 2012: 141). In minute acts such as “indigenous interruption” and “infrapolitics,” my interlocutors challenged dominant narratives, asserting instead their own traditions of knowledge in moments between rituals and formalized activity. Through tracing historical practices in these “in-between” moments, I demonstrate that, for my interlocutors, history was a *lived* experience, and collective memory was influenced just as much by ruminating on historical events and narratives alone or in small groups as it was by ritual activity.

An apt question, however, remains: how can two case studies with such different stakes be linked? In order to contextualize the power dynamics of history in the

particular cases explored above, it is necessary to recognize that people in both York and Northern California and Nevada were seeking justice as a form of vindication. This need for vindication points directly to a power differential between different groups of people in the ability to create history, as well as my interlocutors' urgent need to rectify this. They were not only striving to achieve justice for deceased members of their communities; they were seeking justice for *themselves* as well. By this I mean that they felt themselves – as proponents of relatively unpopular narratives – as being invalidated, disregarded, or ridiculed. For my interlocutors, the concept of justice thus transcended time, serving as a link between a maligned medieval king and modern-day members of a society dedicated to his memory, or between people whose belief systems were the victim of attempted erasure and continued to be systematically ignored in the present time. In this way, the highly moralized concept of justice reinforced my interlocutors' dedication to perpetuating local history in the interest of correcting History writ large.

My interlocutors' narratives about history were nearly always morally imbued, and they demonstrated significant passion for the histories that they propagated. Furthermore, their relationships with other historical organization members were deeply rooted in shared senses of moralism that simultaneously reinforced both the narratives promoted by their organizations and the social bonds among members. The idea that Richard III was maligned by the Tudor dynasty's propaganda led Richard III Society members to strive for justice and accuracy of historical information. In Nevada, the fact that archaeologists would have rather dug up deceased Native Americans to learn about their culture rather than addressing their queries to living members of this community

suggested that they did not believe or respect Native American oral histories; thus, members of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and other tribal organizations were forced to establish oral histories as legitimate forms of knowledge outside of their own communities. Each of these historical organization's narratives sought to rectify what my interlocutors perceived as a wrong that society had done to a select person or group of



[5. Scowen, a member of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, places a special stone on a statue of Richard III at Middleham Castle, Middleham, U.K.]

people, a wrong that they believed was a disservice to History writ large because it perpetuated falsities and masked them as truth, leading a great deal of the population to

champion a deleterious lie. In addition, my interlocutors perceived morality as being something that bound them to other people. Through sharing ethical positions with historical organization members as well as people from the past, they enjoyed caring relationships guided by common ethics. In this way, narrative, truth, morality, and social bonds were inextricably entangled. In this dissertation, I ask: *How does a finely-honed understanding of local history color the moral, social, and political worlds of organization members? How do these organizations assimilate and mobilize different forms of knowledge? And how do members' perceptions of truth mediate their ethics surrounding history?*

In tracing the significance of certain memories and histories in my interlocutors' lives – as well as the ways in which such memories were both influenced by and constitutive of social bonds – I follow Michael Lambek's position in his 1996 article "The Past Imperfect: Remembering As Moral Practice." He writes that memory "is more intersubjective and dialogical than exclusively individual, more act (remembering) than object, and more ongoing engagement than passive absorption and playback" (Lambek 1996: 238), meaning that "the value of articulating a particular version of the past would be explicitly connected to its moral ends and consequences for relations in the present" (Lambek 1996: 238). In arguing that memory is constituted by acts of narrative (retellings), Lambek refutes the notion of memory as camera-like recording (which he notes is rampant in the West) and engages it instead as a fluid process both constitutive of and determined by social relationships. Instead of asking "what happened?", Lambek asks what social commitments color a particular memory, rendering it relevant to

modern-day people's lives. In perceiving my interlocutors' practices of history through this framework, we may see how their narratives of history established for them means of living in a way that they regarded as "good" and "right," which linked them directly to the past but situated them unequivocally in the present.

But what is the nature of this phenomenon we call "memory"? In 1989 Pierre Nora wrote his seminal article "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," which became one of the most widely cited texts in studies of memory and history. In it, he argues that *milieux* of memory have been disintegrating, and *lieux de mémoire* – sites of memory, such as monuments and parades – are instances of people grasping for a shared cultural memory that is quickly dissipating. For Nora, this restorative action, in addition to the meta-awareness of history in the form of historiography, gives rise to a fundamental distinction between memory and history:

Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past (Nora 1989: 8).

History, according to Nora, is merely an effigy that can never truly approximate the living, breathing dynamics of memory. Not only do these concepts stand in opposition for him; in history's attempt to document everything, it inevitably aims to destroy

memory and empty “materials of memory” of the quality of “becoming” that makes them *lieux de mémoire*. This special quality is something that Nora contrasts with *lieux de histoire*; places that do not feature an intent to remember. Nora also argues that the byproducts of history – “museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders” (Nora 1989: 12) – are similarly holding places for processes that no longer exist and are no longer cultivated; “they mark the rituals of a society without ritual” (Nora 1989: 12). The logic of *lieux de mémoire* is that people must deliberately create these spaces and lend them meaning because such processes no longer occur naturally. Nora observes that *lieux de mémoire* stop time and eradicate forgetting, immortalizing death and materializing the immaterial, and they do so out of their capacity for metamorphosis – an “endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications” (Nora 1989: 19). It is their very process – which mirrors time itself – that allows for what Nora would deem an “authentic” experience of connection with the past. Within these *lieux de mémoire* “there is a differentiated network to which all of these separate identities belong, an unconscious organization of collective memory that it is our *responsibility* to bring to consciousness” (Nora 1989: 23, emphasis mine). If we do not bring collective memory to consciousness, it will wither in its encapsulation in archives, those forms of “prosthesis memory” whose production is totalizing and indiscriminate.

My interlocutors operated on this sense of responsibility, for fear that the memories they carefully cultivated and maintained would slip through the cracks of consciousness. However, they were not attentive to *lieux de mémoire* in exactly the sense that Nora conceives of them; rather than being interested solely in monuments and other

repositories of a particular breed of “official” memories, they tended to pay more attention to locations that had remained vibrant community spaces throughout the centuries. They simultaneously maintained individual and community practices of history in a way that rendered these methods mutually constitutive, inverting Nora’s notion of the effects of memory and history being limited to events that have already occurred. Historical organization members derived great satisfaction in drawing from the history of everyday places, which were not necessarily surrounded by ritual of any type; they were attentive to the ways in which events of the past bore on modern-day life, and they cultivated bodies of knowledge surrounding history through both independent and communal means. This practice of history, however, lends itself to Nora’s notion of the transformation of memory, which implies a shift from the social to the individual. He writes: “the total psychologization of contemporary memory entails a completely new economy of the identity of the self, the mechanics of memory, and the relevance of the past” (Nora 1989: 15). There is now a new focus on memory, and a new economy of memories. As an outgrowth of this situation, he suggests that the individualization of modern memory has rendered it almost a trap. It requires accountability and obligation; in this sense it is the “repayment of an impossible debt” (Nora 1989: 16). This looking backwards – the inheriting of responsibility – completes the loop. *Lieux de mémoire* are self-referential; they are memory for the sake of memory.

While historical organization members held an unshakable sense of responsibility towards the past, the intended ends of their activities were not relevant only to the individual; instead, they rendered this sense of historically imposed responsibility conducive to the maintenance of historical narratives in a way that reinforced their

conceptions of their communities and nations, as well as their conceptions of themselves. Davis and Starn note this phenomenon and argue compellingly for a collapsing of the categories of memory and history. They suggest that both memory and history appear as “heavily constructed narratives, with only institutionally regulated differences between them” (Davis and Starn 1989: 2). According to the authors, the way that Nora proposes the distinction leads to the contention that history, being comprised of mythologies and ideologies, becomes little more than fiction because there is no point in trying to remember what *actually* happened in the past. Davis and Starn further observe that, as a result,

Where Pierre Nora charts islands of memory in his opening essay, collective memory seems here to be itself afloat in a sea of false logic and expediency. One line of argument, countering a familiar lament these days, suggests that we have all too much sense of history, if only because we have no more direct relationship to the past than a “historical” one; the other implies that we have very little sense of real history, and not much need for it in any case (Davis and Starn 1989: 3).

The rigid distinction between memory and history, then, inevitably leads to a despairing question: what is the point?

Davis and Starn argue instead for the importance of local memories – what they call “counter-memories” – which play an important role in the social history written about marginalized people and have no place in Nora’s analysis. This leads the authors to argue that memory and history are not discrete and opposed but rather interdependent. Instead of producing conflict, the tension between memory and history is productive and even necessary. Finding the “fit” between the two of them is an ongoing process;

“sometimes this task is best performed by the unreflective, erratic operations of memory, sometimes by rules of recording and interpretation that, since the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, belong to historical discourse” (Davis and Starn 1989: 5). The solution that Davis and Starn posit is productive because it reflects a nuanced view of memory and history, rather than one that is totalizing. By investigating forms of knowledge which exist on a spectrum between memory and history – and contending that the two are necessary for each other’s adjustment and accuracy – we are able to better understand the dynamic between them.

This set of claims closely resembles historical organization members’ practices of history, which balance what they term “memory” – events that happened within their lifetimes – and history – largely events that happened before their lifetimes. Furthermore, for members of historical organizations, “memory” and “history” were shorthand terms but were not constitutive of a binary; instead, what scholars understand as memories and histories existed for my interlocutors in a continuum of truth, of “what really happened.” In this way, they had recourse to both what are commonly referred to as “memories” and “histories” and they evaluated these narratives in terms of their “truthfulness.” Thus, my interlocutors did not differentiate their knowledges on a basis of power or theoretical differences; they approached “memory” and “history” through a frame of perceived *objectivity*¹, rather than following the mainstream opinion that history is “objective” while memory is subjective. The fact that their distinction between

¹ Following from Daston and Galison (2007), I hold that the concept of objectivity is a discourse that has heavily influenced the global West and operates under the assumption that one perspective exists with the exclusive right to truth. When I use the term “objectivity,” I am referring to the way in which my interlocutors perceived there to be one true version of events, though “what really happened” was ultimately dependent upon context and whose perspective was being considered.

memory and history became muddled when they spoke about events of historical significance that happened in their lifetimes demonstrates the salience of their fluid use of the terms; for them, it was not a dichotomy of History/memory, but rather of Truth/fiction.

It bears mentioning, though, that the use of the terms “memory” and “history” is subject to power dynamics inherent in the production of these categories. There is a clear divide between which knowledges are backed by sufficient power to become known as “History.” “Memory,” then, often refers in literature to underrepresented narratives that have not been coopted by larger institutions and endorsed in order to become a part of a widely accepted History writ large. This categorization quickly becomes problematic; are indigenous oral histories, for example, not really “History?” Does relegating them to the category of “memory,” which is often perceived in the academic community as more emotive and less accurate than knowledges and events that are termed “history,” automatically perform a violence on them of the sort that dominant narratives have historically used against them? It seems that we would be playing to imprecise and inaccurate assumptions to make a hard and fast distinction between memory and history, for both of these terms – taken in the way they are described in scholarly literature – are shaped by the needs and desires of certain societies and are constantly being revised and re-crafted. Operating with a clear distinction between memory and history thus exerts undue force on certain knowledges and traditions and using the terms “memory” and “history” as they are used in a great deal of scholarly literature is equivalent to attempting to dismantle a problematic system with tools that are borne of that very system. In order to demonstrate the commonly perceived difference between memory and history, I utilize

the term “memory” to describe events that were within my interlocutors’ living memories, and I use the term “history” to discuss popular narratives of events of local or national significance. However, I remain attentive to the inherent privilege or disadvantage in these descriptions of the past; in order to temper the violence inherent in terming certain forms of history – such as Native American oral histories – “memory,” I refer to all versions that serve as “official” discourses of the distant past in some capacity as “history.” In so doing, I am able to retain the valuable notion of a particular type of distinction between the two. In addition, in utilizing a heuristic differentiation of memory and history that is inspired by a socially-conscious means of partitioning the two categories, I aim to divest dominant narratives of some of their privilege and elevate knowledges that would otherwise be classed as “memory” to a truth status equal to that of what is commonly called “History.”

This discussion up to this point seems to suggest, though, that history and memory act *upon* subjects and leave little room for subjects to act autonomously in relation to the past. Michel-Rolph Trouillot instead distinguishes between three capacities: agents (“occupants of structural positions”), actors (who are “in constant interface with a context”) and subjects (“voices aware of their vocality”) (Trouillot 1995: 23). He argues that

People are not always subjects constantly confronting history as some academics would wish, but the capacity upon which they act to become subjects is always part of their condition. This subjective capacity ensures confusion because it makes human beings doubly historical or, more properly, fully historical. It

engages them simultaneously in the sociohistorical process and in narrative constructions about that process (Trouillot 1995: 24).

History, for Trouillot, is inherent in the individual, and this insight is necessary for an understanding of how history works. It is not necessarily conscious action all of the time, and it follows that there is a one-sidedness in history because, as Trouillot argues, people do not consciously examine and address the *production* of narratives. Through investigating my interlocutors' methods of practicing history and evaluation of historical evidence, my dissertation examines these processes of narrative production about which Trouillot speaks, and, in so doing, it attempts to illuminate what he conceives of as "silences."

My interlocutors' practices of history, as well as the narratives they produced and perpetuated, all sought to establish their version of the "truth." Far from constituting what Nora viewed as "memory for the sake of memory," my interlocutors' endeavors were practices of history spurred by deep-seated beliefs about what was "true," "good," "just," and "right." With this in mind, how can we define the memory complex? British anthropologist Sharon MacDonald holds that "the memory complex can be seen, therefore, as an assemblage of practices, affects and physical things, which include such parts as memorial services, nostalgia and historical artefacts" (MacDonald 2013: 6). She argues that memory is not necessarily something we have – it could be better described as something we *do*. Lambek and Antze hope to "imagine memory as a practice, not as the pre-given object of our gaze but as the act of gazing and the objects it generates. Memories are produced out of experience and, in turn, reshape it" (Lambek and Antze 1996: xii). Seeing memory as a practice means that we must acknowledge its inherent

incompleteness, “so while memory should support the dominant view of our identity, the trouble is that it always threatens to undermine it, whether by obvious gaps, by uncertainties, or by the glimpses of a past that no longer seems to be ours” (Lambek and Antze 1996: xvi). Memory thus reinforces our identities while simultaneously having the ability to agitate and confuse them. Memory is, then, a constant process of “remembering and forgetting, assimilating and discarding” (Lambek and Antze 1996: xxix). While my research shows that historical organization members practiced history at an individual level, it also argues that memory and history were, for my interlocutors, certainly not confined to the individual. As Nadia Seremetakis asserts, “memory cannot be confined to a purely mentalist or subjective sphere. It is a culturally mediated material practice that is activated by embodied acts and semantically dense objects” (Seremetakis 1994: 9). Memory is thus theorized as a culturally mediated and culturally generated practice, a responsive reaction to a deeply rooted sense of responsibility which becomes manifest in narratives about the past and about objects which signify the past. This notion is in keeping with the fact that my interlocutors’ practice of history was not limited to a valuation of historical narratives; it was equally influenced by members’ social bonds with one another and their ability to harness history in order to provide benefit for their communities.

If memory can be described as a cultural phenomenon, it follows that there is a collective aspect to remembering. Following Halbwachs, Paul Ricoeur notes that

I am always within a certain community of language, but also a community of memories. I share memories with others. For example, many childhood memories are not lived memories. Some of them have been told to me by my

parents or grandparents. I have interiorized them. An important part of my personal memory is the result of appropriation. I make my own something which was partly foreign (Ricoeur and Homans 2008: 224).

This notion suggests that we would not be able to understand wider contexts of our history, our societies, and ourselves without the memories and vantage points of other people. “Collected” memories thus become *sui generis*, and communities are able to *perform* memory as a collective. The ability to do this is built into some of our most basic structures. Ricoeur writes that “language is public language. Even when we speak about the most personal memories, we speak of them in public language. This is one reason we cannot separate personal memory from collective memory” (Ricoeur and Homans 2008: 224). This draws on Halbwach’s argument that language is the most elementary form of collective memory (Halbwachs 1992: 45), but it closes the gap which presents a paradox in Halbwachs’ work. Halbwachs attempts to separate the adult individual memory from the collective through the examples of dreams and aphasia, but the very point of collective memory is that the individual conscious cannot be separated from societal symbols and remembrances. I contend that the ability to remember collectively comes from an adoption of other vantage points, but it is also inherent in our ways of communicating and being with one another. Memory is thus written into people’s shared modes of being.

As a testament to this contention, Paul Connerton writes in his book *How Societies Remember* that “it is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory” (Connerton 1989: 3). He further argues that our present depends very much upon our knowledge of the past, and that the past serves to legitimate

our present social order (Connerton 1989: 3). It is our reference to the past which makes our common situation in the present intelligible. For Connerton, the “acts of transfer” that make collective memory possible are explicitly embodied practices. This leads him to argue that knowledge of the past is sustained by ritual performance; in their repetition, these rites imply continuity with the past. Furthermore, Connerton believes that certain concepts can be expressed solely through ritual. These occasions of reenactment “produce and provide shape for a communal desire – a wish to repeat the past consciously, to find significance in celebrated recurrence” (Connerton 1989: 63). Rather than attempting to repeat and re-inscribe the past, historical organization members in York and Northern California and Nevada were primarily interested in mobilizing narratives of the past in order to affect the *present*. Although it is fitting to claim that a community remembers its identity through its representation in a master narrative, for my interlocutors it was rather the application of the past in the context of the present which solidified their “good,” “just,” and “right” claims about history and allowed them to champion goals of a social and moral nature.

As Halbwachs points out in his seminal work *On Collective Memory*,

We preserve memories of each epoch in our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continual relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated. But precisely because these memories are repetitions, because they are successively engaged in very different systems of notions, at different periods of our lives, they have lost the form and the appearance they once had (Halbwachs 1992: 47).

This perceived qualification notwithstanding, memories remain real and useful to community members, as evidenced by my interlocutors' tireless efforts to maintain their versions of historical narratives. People still operated on the collective framework and engaging with this framework allowed them to be fully a part of society. Moreover, following from Halbwachs' contribution to Durkheimian theory, it is memory that sustains the collective between moments of collective effervescence. Halbwachs concludes that "social thought is essentially a memory and its entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances" (Halbwachs 1992: 189) – memory is thus the most powerful adhesive which maintains a society. If this is true, the notion that memories have the potential to become distorted is beside the point. It is through the act of remembering itself that society is preserved.

It is essential to note, however, that much of the philosophical and theoretical literature focusing on memory and history is bereft of wider context. *Why* do people perform the actions they do to maintain and propagate history, and what specifically do they achieve through such endeavors? Does an interest in history accomplish little to no more than an interest in basketball? Furthermore, how do individuals with an interest in history interact with one another, with historical organizations, and with the state, and how do these interactions reflect and reinforce complex circles of membership to varying collectivities? It is here that I perform an anthropological intervention, posing the aforementioned questions and answering that, indeed, the roots of historical interest run far deeper than it may initially seem. The deeper reason for the moralism openly expressed by historical organization members was political ideology in an age in which there had been a dramatic shift towards responsibility – accomplishments and failures

alike – lying solely on the individual. In Brexit Britain, those who voted to remain valued a union with the EU and European citizens, while those who voted to leave sought to reinforce their relationships with other British citizens. Either way, their motives were not only moral – they were *social* in nature. Residents and employees of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony feared for their ability to express sovereignty and were thus preoccupied with their collective. Members of the Nevada County Historical Society worried that their heritage would be lost, endangering the community and robbing each of its members of a rich history to which they had a claim. My interlocutors were thus fighting for the collective, for meaningful social bonds in a neoliberal context that bridged the Atlantic. This neoliberal frame of reference linked the two sites, in which prominent and internationally famous history was harnessed and used as a vector for political, moral, and social aims.

This dissertation is organized into three parts of two chapters each. Part I is entitled “Truth and Power” and contains Chapter One, “Local History, the State, and the Community,” and Chapter Two, “Truth Claims, Myth, and the In-Between.” In this section I investigate the closely intertwined topics for which the section is named. First, I investigate modes of state power in an attempt to demonstrate how members of historical organizations navigated systems of power and deftly interacted with branches of the state through the means of legislation. Second, I suggest that these processes of the negotiation of power are rendered explicit in the venue of the historical organization, establishing it as an ideal site in which to discern the power dynamics inherent in the production of local history. In the next chapter I analyze historical organization

members' evaluation of evidence and means of contending what was truth about history and what was not. By examining historical organization members' methods of establishing and defending the "truth," I demonstrate that their views and practices depended upon the informal transmission of information and - ultimately - social bonds and shared moralities. Part II is entitled "Moralism and Modes of Being" and features the chapters "The Stakes of History: 'Alternative' Narratives and Self-Representation" and "'How is That Fair?' Brexit and Ideas of Justice in York, United Kingdom." In this section I analyze the moralism inherent in historical organizations with which I studied, exploring the stakes for my interlocutors in engaging with local history and the ways in which this came to bear on their practices of history. From issues of self-representation and respect for members of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony to positions on Brexit that reflected "fairness" in British society, "Moralism and Modes of Being" locates the nexus of moral thought and political action which spurred my interlocutors to interpret and practice history in the ways that they did. Part III is entitled "The Social Nature of Local History" and features the chapters "Funding and the Authorization of Narratives" and "Narratives, Social Bonds, and Methods of History." In this section I explore the moralizing notions that served as an impetus for historical organization members to accumulate money for their organizations, as well as the concept of how committing resources to a certain narrative authorized that history. I also investigate narratives which were central to the historical organizations with which I worked, parsing meaning out of these often-repeated phrases which belied inherent moral stances.

My conclusion returns to storytelling in the formation of historical narratives, exploring how the perpetuation of these two methods reinforced my interlocutors'

perceptions of the past, present, and future within their communities and their own lives.

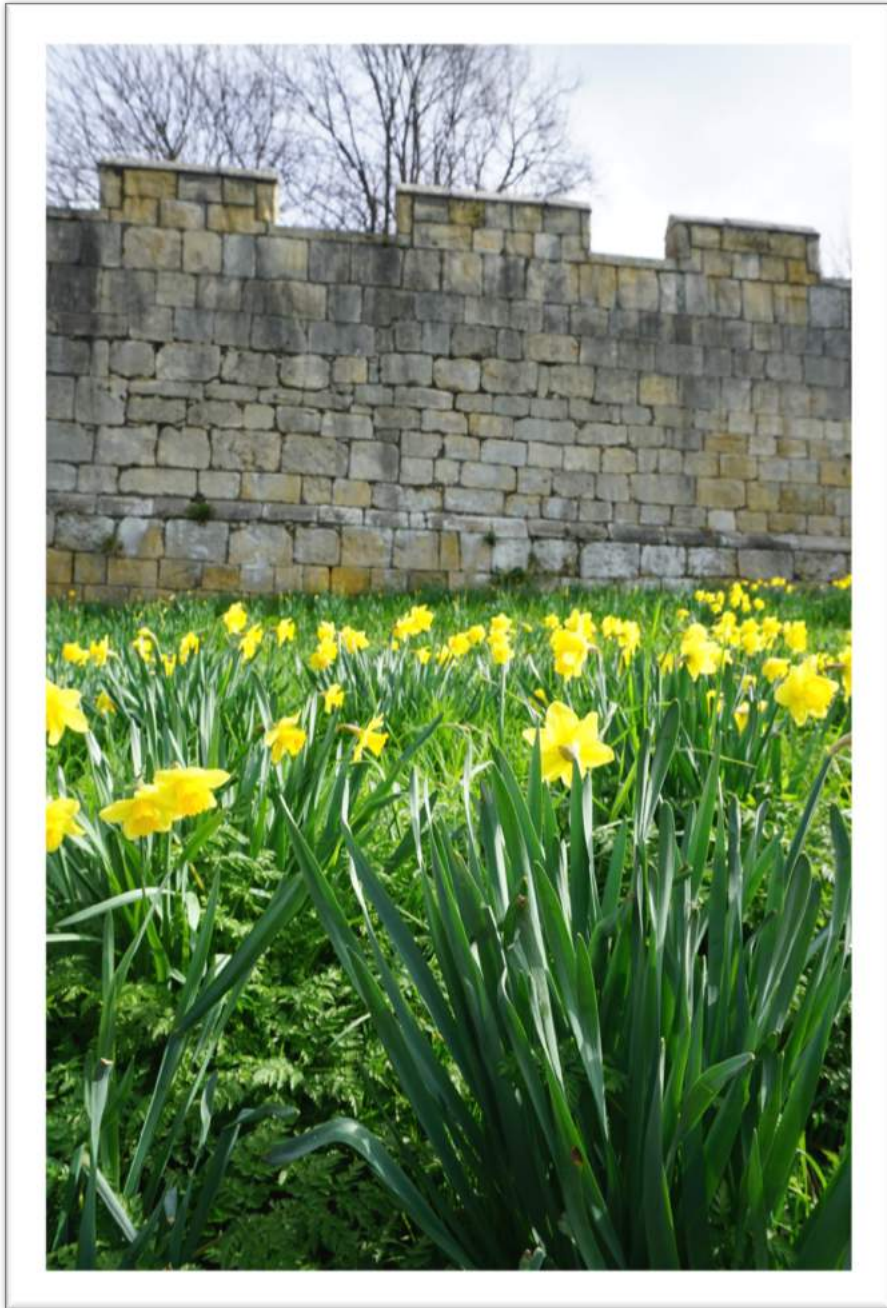
I demonstrate how historical organizations crafted “alternative” narratives in our “age of information,” showing how these narratives gained ground, albeit at a cost to the reputation of society members and sometimes to their peace of mind. Sometimes labelled fanatics and lunatics, my interlocutors strove for the best possible representation of history, regardless of how mainstream society perceived their endeavors. Finally, I revisit *why* historical organization members so adamantly perpetuated their favored narratives of history, and I contend that their motivations for doing so were grounded primarily in moral and ideological positions that were informed by their political contexts and a shared sense of responsibility towards the past.

Part I: Truth and Power

Alan, a member of Red Tower York who was ever present at the organization's events, told me that he had simply collapsed at work one day. He had ignored several warning signs of what he later learned was an illness called "pernicious anemia" – numbness, exhaustion, ringing in his ears – but only out of ignorance. In fact, he had never heard of this genetic condition before his diagnosis. After waking from having fallen unconscious on the floor of his workplace, he visited a doctor who told him that the effects of the condition could be mitigated, but they could also return full force at any given time. This was the reason he was able to become involved with the Red Tower; with a long stretch of time on leave from his job managing inventory at a grocery store, he was contending with two years of free time. So, he began to volunteer, and also to paint. Alan painted any image that caught his fancy, but most often he painted historic buildings that had been bombed or otherwise destroyed in the place where they would – or should – stand today. After painting in the absent building with the utmost care and precision, he would add in modern buildings and scenery, creating a haunting picture of the ghosts of York's cityscape. I read Alan's paintings as depictions of what should be but was no longer, of histories that had been wiped from the very face of the earth and seemed, strangely enough, as if they were returning to claim their rightful places in the ancient city that had almost entirely forgotten them. This unique hobby was particularly representative of Alan's acute attention to the passage of time and the peculiar beauty of loss. We once drove together through York as the city's annual explosion of daffodils was in full swing. York's daffodils were originally planted as a memorial to those who perished in the 1190 massacre, in which York's entire Jewish population was murdered. The bright flowers, having lain dormant in bulb form for most of the year, returned to carpet the city for about two weeks every March, simultaneously bearing a dark memory and harkening the spring. "I think I like daffodils the best because they don't last that long," Alan said to me. "They all pop up at the same time, and next thing you know, they're gone." Like the buildings he painted, the flowers were gone, but not forgotten. After the time of the flowers passes, York residents remember the yellow blankets that surround and seep through the city each March, anticipating the next year's living memorial and the return of spring.



[6. The annual blooming of daffodils in York in March. This page (6): daffodils in York's Museum Gardens. Next page (7): daffodils in front of a portion of York's medieval city walls. Following page: (8) daffodils begin to bloom in front of Clifford's Tower, the location of the 1190 Massacre. In a culmination of what had been a wave of anti-Semitic riots, York's Jewish population sought refuge inside Clifford's Tower on March 16th, 1190. Knowing that they would eventually be forced to face the rioters if they attempted to leave Clifford's Tower, the men killed their wives and children then set fire to the keep, ending their own lives. A specific type of daffodil with six points – resembling the Star of David – was chosen to commemorate the tragic event.]



[7]



[8]

Chapter One: Local History, the State, and the Community

An Ethos for the Community: “Addressing Needs”

Barry “Bazza” Beckwith, the director of Red Tower York, and I were seated in the corner of one of the two coffee shops within York’s medieval city walls. Barry almost always chose one of these two cafes as a meeting place, and each time we met in either of them he would exclaim, “you’re surrounded by history here!” During our hours-long talks, Barry would often describe to me ways in which he helped others in the community – “addressing needs,” as he called it. He once explained his volunteer work with refugees to me over his latte: “When the EU was distributing refugees, the people who had been interned, the refugee camps in Macedonia and the like, they’ve started to distribute those in Europe to different countries,” he said. He continued: “York took some in. This was when I worked at the Council on Foss Islands Road, an email came round and it said that the refugees were here and they needed people to go to the centers and be friendly and to help them, to help them learn English and to teach the kids, to just be friendly. And to me it went “bing!” yes, that is something that I can do!” In keeping with his usual style, he continued with a long-winded answer to my question:

And it was heartwarming to be able to sit down and listen to them and how they, themselves, had survived in pretty horrible situations, and yet they still wanted to make something of themselves. There’s one family that still lives in York now and they’ve got their children, and all their children have done so remarkably well. They were always A star at school, went to college, A star at college, went to university and got wonderful degrees. They weren’t like the politicians would

have you believe - benefit scroungers or whatever – they was just plunked into a war that left them with nowhere to go.

Not only was Barry sympathetic towards refugees, though – he knew full well that there were British citizens who had slipped through the cracks, as it were, having little infrastructure with which they could improve their lives. These were the people who he hoped would benefit foremost from the operation of Red Tower York. “But that’s the difficult part of it,” he told me. “If I was to say there’s a sad part to what I do, then that’s it. Because it’s alright providing for people that are reasonably well and live a reasonably good lifestyle, but it’s the people at the bottom level, the bottom tier, that survive from day to day or whatever, that I would like to get something out of it.” In Barry’s mind, the government had failed individuals belonging to this category he conceived of as being “less well-off” – several of whom inhabited the council housing just across the road from the Red Tower. Because Barry was able and willing, he took on several projects with the goal of helping those who he believed should have been provided for but had not been. A known figure throughout the city of York, Barry used his imposing frame and excellent communication skills in order to achieve whatever he could for the benefit of citizens who were struggling day to day, which often involved liaising with city council and other governing bodies in order to scrape together funds for Red Tower York. The organization would, in turn, provide various goods and services to people who were struggling financially, such as counseling, a community space for meetings, and garden-grown vegetables from the free community garden. This effort, which Barry called the “ethics” of the organization, was the central aim of Red Tower York. “My greatest wish,” Barry once said to me, “is that we create something together that is going to fulfill

all the dreams and ethics that we wanted to build into that building [the Red Tower]. If it fulfils those by the time it gets to the end of the 30-year lease [that the organization had attained for the Red Tower], then that's fine. When I'm polluting the atmosphere above the crematorium chimney, me dust will be looking down." What was most important for Barry was his ability to navigate systems of power – most often in the form of city council – in order to benefit community members who had less clout and knowledge than he did. Barry, who identified a “need” in many citizens’ lives, attempted to effect change in his immediate community through paying particular attention to those whom the state seemed to have forgotten. Rather than acting directly against the state, Barry recognized the flaws inherent in governing bodies’ narratives. Instead of accepting the community’s state of affairs as it was, he sought to exploit state sources of funding in order to rectify situations that he deemed to be “wrong.”

In their nuanced interactions with the state, historical organization members processed, incorporated, and, at times, disputed information that local bodies such as city council presented as the “correct” version of history or mode of operation. In this chapter I will explore the ways in which tribal organizations in Northern Nevada and two organizations in the U.K. – Red Tower York and Leicester Cathedral – contended with regulations and versions of history imposed by the state through acting in line with narratives informed by members’ experiences of local history. In addition, I will explore the concept of sovereignty, with which many of my interlocutors were concerned; sovereignty was intertwined with their understandings of their respective states, as well as their conceptions of justice and how history “should” be remembered. Concerns surrounding sovereignty were indicative of the fact that historical organization members

sought what was “just” and “right” for their communities; for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony in Northern Nevada, expressing sovereignty meant the ability to establish legislation that directly benefited Native Americans and honored their traditions and ways of life, and for Brexit supporters the establishment of sovereignty meant freeing themselves from the perceived yoke of European control. In both situations, people sought what they understood to be best for their respective communities. With this in mind, I show how historical organization members asserted their own views of history and ethical “correctness” while acting within the parameters of state regulations and, at times, through using state-established venues such as legislation. Through this chapter and the rest of the dissertation I will make the argument that, for my interlocutors, history was inextricably bound to the well-being of the community. Furthermore, invoking their historical and practical knowledge, my interlocutors navigated channels of state power in a way that was savvy and demonstrative of their mixed feelings surrounding government. They utilized their interactions with the state – often in the form of city council – foremost to maintain and strengthen their ethical sensibilities and engender benefit for their communities.

This discussion necessitates a working definition of the state. One aspect of the state which I would like to highlight is, as Lewellen notes,

an inexorable chain of cause and effect that leads to an entrepreneurial class—owners of the means of production and buyers and sellers of human labor. This, in turn, results in differential access to resources, and thus to vast discrepancies in individual wealth. In order to protect its interests against the masses of active producers, who understandably want to share in their own production, the elite

must erect a structure of permanent centralized force to protect its class interests (Lewellen 2003: 48).

For this reason, Lewellen claims that the State is predicated on the systematic maintenance of significant inequality between groups of citizens. I utilize the term “state” to refer to governing bodies that have such tendencies towards maintaining systematic inequality – a feature that further complicated the already ambivalent relationships my interlocutors had with governing bodies. A hard and fast definition of the state would be impossible, given that what constitutes the state is situationally dependent, and the state is not a monolith, but rather an entanglement of systems of power and influence. However, my analysis will illuminate certain facets of the state’s influence as it relates to historical organizations in York and Northern California and Nevada.

Although my interlocutors strove to uphold ethical narratives in each area of their individual lives – as evidenced by Barry’s extensive record of volunteer work – membership in historical organizations spurred them to act in accordance with certain moral precedents that were informed by participation in the collective. While many of my interlocutors claimed that they had had an avid interest in “justice” long before participating in historical organizations, the organization provided a forum in which this value could be both rendered explicit and fortified through ethical action as a part of the collective. Rather than constituting what Michael Lambek terms “ordinary ethics” - “an ethics that is relatively tacit, grounded in agreement rather than rule, in practice rather than knowledge or belief, and happening without calling undue attention to itself” (Lambek 2010: 2) – their moral framework was explicit, serving as a guide for their

engagement with narratives, groups, institutions, and other individuals. Webb Keane notes the foregrounding of the social with regards to ethics, but he argues that ethics cannot be reduced to a purely social construction. In “Minds, Surfaces, and Reasons in the Anthropology of Ethics,” he writes:

Yet, if communities are not totalizing, how do we understand the force and efficacy of the social facts they create? And, given the force and efficacy of those social facts, how do we also understand doubt, innovation, protest, and sheer indifference? To say that morality is inseparable from the very nature of people’s lives with one another—that it is not reducible to some context-free explanation in terms of innate drives, economic interests, rational first principles, or evolutionarily adaptive functions—should not lead to the conclusion that morality must be a pure social construction, continually reinvented from scratch and shared by a group of like-minded people (Keane 2010: 68).

I argue that the historical organization presented members with an ethical model to which they strove to adhere. In this way, their notions of justice, good, and right were not imposed on them; rather, they cultivated a sense of ethics both independently and in unison that aligned with those of their respective organizations. They thus maintained recourse to idiosyncratic modes of thought – the “doubt,” “innovation,” and “protest” to which Keane refers – while collaborating with one another under the umbrella of a shared ethics. This sense of shared morality rendered historical organizations venues in which members’ ethics were visible, and they were frequently broached as topics of discussion.

In addition, membership in historical organizations allowed members to shift from what Webb Keane terms the third person, “God’s eye” view of certain moral

systems to what he describes as the “second person stance,” which addresses personal matters in more general terms that are comprehensible on a collective level. The result, according to Keane, is the “collective recognition of an un-nameable force,” which allows for the possibility of new ways of being a person. For him, this transformation takes place in a re-description of everyday life – that is, the reconfiguration of inchoate, individual observations into an intelligible narrative which is reinforced by the use of shared language and ethics. He further argues that the resulting categories – in his example, the birth of the notion of “sexism” in the beginning of the movement for women’s equality – become part of people’s self-understanding (Webb Keane, “The Ethical Stance and the Possibility of Critique, 10 October 2019). This argument is closely aligned with my understanding of membership in historical organizations, which lent members an ethical narrative and a set of practices which allowed them to make the transition in self-perception to which Keane refers. They thus viewed themselves as inseparable from history and, by the same token, obligated to pursue their particular conceptions of justice.

Although the state did not necessarily set a moral precedent for historical organizations, the interface between the state and historical organizations exerted influence over members’ practices of history because the state valorized certain historical narratives. At times these narratives coincided with those of historical organizations, but at other times they were diametrically opposed to the values that my interlocutors held. This conflict gives rise to an opportunity to investigate this nexus of state power and local history. It is doubtless that historical organizations, as either charitable bodies or branches of state agencies, were caught in webs of power that extended beyond the local

to national and international levels. They were, however, able to autonomously amend legislation, spread awareness of their versions of past events, and establish alternative venues in which history could be practiced. How, then, did citizens' imaginaries of their respective sovereign bodies affect their day-to-day lives and activities? How did their visions of history coincide – or, as the case may be, clash – with what branches of the state sought to accomplish? Furthermore, how did members of historical organizations navigate this paradoxical nexus of responsibility, autonomous action, and governance while maintaining important historical narratives, and how did this behavior affect other members of their wider communities? I argue that, through engagement with local history, my interlocutors asserted their standing as stewards of crucial historical knowledge who were ambivalent with regards to the actions and impositions of state branches. Furthermore, they illustrated channels of state power that affected all citizens; however, these were explicit and visible in the venue of the historical organization. Instead of invariably complying with state regulations, members of historical organizations chose the parts of history with which they identified and utilized law and regulation as part of their stratagems to accomplish “justice.” In so doing, they were often actively critical of branches of the government, either taking issue with the versions of history they espoused or decrying the ways in which they placed limits on members of their communities. Ever conscious of the establishment and maintenance of sovereignty – which for tribal organizations would ensure the ability to instate laws that benefited their people and honored their ancestors, and for Brexit supporters would establish a “just” and “fair” system of governance for the U.K. – historical organization members

worked within the parameters of the state in order to establish more favorable conditions for themselves, their communities, and for posterity.

Battles for Sovereignty

I sat in State Historic Preservation Officer Rebecca's tidy and polished office looking at the 5th floor view over the relatively small capital of Carson City, Nevada's main road. At the time of my research, the State Historic Preservation Office of Nevada employed 12 people and operated a government mandated program that provided grant money for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. As Rebecca had told me, they were experts in the state of Nevada for historic preservation in general. Skipping the small talk and pleasantries, Rebecca immediately asked how she could help me. I wavered at first, having had several warnings from Michon, the Paiute Shoshone Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of Nevada, in the back of my mind. "She put a million-dollar fiscal note on our plan to revise the [Nevada Revised Statute 383 Protection of Indian Burial Sites]," Michon once told me. "That means that we would have had to pay a million dollars to pass the revision," she had said. This law could, with Michon's revisions, ensure what she and many other citizens of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony considered to be more ethical treatment of Native American ancestors and histories. According to Michon, this was yet another instance of the State Historic Preservation Office – Rebecca in particular - rendering it difficult to accomplish acts that would improve the lives of Native American citizens due to her training as an archaeologist and vocal loyalty to the archaeological field and methods, which many Nevada Indians forcefully opposed. Michon had great disdain for archaeologists; she believed that they showed incredible

disrespect for Native American peoples and traditions, and she feared what she interpreted to be their growing political influence and brazenness in digging on sacred land and absconding with objects made by her ancestors. As a result, she felt that the State Historic Preservation Office's procedures for repatriating sacred objects and human remains were stringent and lacking basic compassion and understanding.

A twenty-minute drive away from Rebecca's office in the center of Reno, Nevada lies the original 20-acre plot of land belonging to the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony which the government purchased for homeless Native Americans in 1917. The Colony differs from an Indian reservation only in that the government purchased the land for Reno's Indian population *after* the boundaries had been established for the state of Nevada, rather than before. Nevada chose the name "colony" for a piece of land dedicated to Native Americans post-state formation (1864), but other states have used different names, such as "rancheria," for the same concept. The sovereign colony was caught in a particularly complex situation with regards to governance; while the Tribal Historic Preservation Office was government-instated, employees of the office often took serious issue with other state-run agencies. Furthermore, those who paid particular attention to local history knew that the foundation of the Colony itself was singlehandedly accomplished by the government. In this intricate web of duty and obligation to the state, contrasted with their ethics and feelings of loyalty to their tribe and ancestors, those who worked or lived on the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony were enmeshed in a push and pull relationship with the state that was riddled with complex feelings surrounding governance and belonging. Reno-Sparks Indian Colony had historically been composed primarily of Paiute, Shoshone, and Washoe people, though changing federal laws had

shifted Indian populations considerably and for this reason there were also colony residents whose heritage could be traced back to other tribes. Although at the time of my research the colony boasted ownership of over 14,000 acres in the Reno-Sparks area and nearby Hungry Valley, its management was primarily situated in Hopi-made river rock buildings on the original plot of land near downtown Reno. One of these buildings was home to the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's Cultural Resources Program, headed by Michon, a proud and influential lifelong cultural advocate for Northern Nevada tribes.

Rebecca often attempted to revise laws to include room for archaeologists to practice their profession on Indian burial grounds and sacred locations, much to Michon's bitter disappointment. The battles that both parties engaged in were not, however, limited to the abstract realm of legislation; for Rebecca, crucial knowledge was at stake if archaeologists were banned from digging in certain areas, and for Michon and the rest of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, their sovereignty, as well as their ancestors' dignity and historic traditions, were threatened by such practices. As Rebecca and I began to speak about the State Historic Preservation Office's procedures surrounding unidentified remains, she told me that the state statute did not allow much destructive testing, but if the remains were Native (as determined by morphological analysis), they must be tested enough to determine who was the most likely descendent. Once the determination was made, the tribe to which the deceased was most closely related would be able to repatriate the remains. However, the tribe would only be given a window of ten days to repatriate the sacred object or remains. "That's sometimes not enough time to gather the tribal council and discuss it," Michon had explained to me. For reasons such as these, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Tribal Historic Preservation Office were constantly

butting heads. Each office was sovereign in its respective domain – the Tribal Historic Preservation Office on tribal land, and the State Historic Preservation Office on the rest of Nevada. However, when it came to the interface between the two, there was a struggle around which governing body asserted itself as more powerful and able to bend the decision-making process in its favor. It was often a tug-of-war in which Michon and the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony sometimes “won,” while other times Rebecca and the State Historic Preservation Office prevailed in their attempts to establish and carry out legislation that, as Michon saw it, favored archaeologists and white “settler” citizens.

Northern Nevada tribal organizations, however, were not opposed to using methods of legislation in the very same political bodies whose stances they sought to overturn, which demonstrates the complexity of their engagement with the state, as well as their impetus to establish what they perceived to be justice. In June of 2019 eight measures benefiting Nevada tribes were passed. Among them was bill AB152 – effective as of July 1, 2019 – which is:

AN ACT relating to historic preservation; revising and increasing the penalties for crimes related to certain actions which injure or destroy the cairn or grave of a native Indian or an historic or prehistoric site and crimes related to the trafficking of cultural property obtained from state land without a permit; and providing other matters properly relating thereto

(<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/6228/Overview>).

In the same sessions, another notable bill was passed surrounding Stewart Indian School – an Indian boarding school which operated from 1890 to 1980 and which, at the time of my research, was undergoing renovations in order to become a museum about local tribal

history. Although the museum was a controversial topic due to the fact that many alumni's experiences were traumatic, the Nevada Indian Commission which oversaw all Stewart operations determined that the knowledge surrounding it was worth spreading, and there was a sensitive and appropriate way to convey it. Dealing with issues such as the forcible separation of children from parents and the threat of punishment for speaking native languages, the Stewart Indian School Museum aimed to foster the exchange of experiences and the instruction of non-Native visitors regarding the school's history – both the pleasant and the painful. Bill AB44, which was unanimously passed, is:

AN ACT relating to state lands; creating the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum; providing provisions governing the Museum Director; requiring the Museum Director to engage in certain duties relating to the Museum; authorizing the Museum Director to establish a store for the sale of gifts and souvenirs; authorizing the Museum Director to establish certain accounts; granting the Executive Director of the Nevada Indian Commission the authority to appoint and supervise the Museum Director; revising provisions governing the Nevada Indian Commission's Gift Fund; and providing other matters properly relating thereto

(<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/80th2019/Bill/5944/Overview>).

Through countless hours of work that Michon admitted was frustrating at times – coupled with strong determination – tribal organizations were able to utilize the tools of the state in order to accomplish goals that benefited their people.² While past laws had been weakened by virtue of their slow speed of establishment and the counteraction of boards such as the State Historic Preservation Office, these new laws acknowledged the needs of

² Native American processes of contestation and assertion of sovereignty is further detailed in Chapter Three.

Native American citizens in an especially pointed way. Because the livelihood of their people was at stake, sovereignty and accurate representation were imperative issues for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.

Although the circumstances and stakes were vastly different, the accomplishment of sovereignty was similarly essential for Brexit supporters across the Atlantic in York. Two of my interlocutors – a very slight minority – voted to leave the European Union, while those who voted to remain griped about the decision throughout the time of my research. As will be further illustrated in Chapter Four, my interlocutors who voted to leave the E.U. were especially concerned with notions of British sovereignty, framing the political decision in moral terms and invoking the concepts of “fairness” and “justice.” Feeling that it was “unfair” for Europe to make political decisions for Britain, they suggested instead that the British had fought several wars in order to maintain their autonomy and, for this reason, they should retain it. Sovereignty for British members of historical organizations was thus a matter of national identity and pride, while for members of tribal organizations in Nevada it was a matter of establishing legislation that would attempt to mitigate a history that had rendered Native Americans an underrepresented and overtly racialized population. These vastly differing effects of participation in historical organizations demonstrate the variety of experiences with and purposes behind engagement with local history, which often took the form of contesting federal agencies and modes of operation.

“Capillaries” of the State

Similarly navigating State endorsement in York, United Kingdom, was Barry, the director of Red Tower York. During 2016 and 2017, he and his co-directors were struggling to incorporate their fledgling organization. Since its inception in 2015, Red Tower York hosted a “pop-up café,” providing tea, instant coffee, and baked goods for people walking along the city walls, which allowed them to earn donations which they used to benefit people living in social housing just across the road. Red Tower York had also taken on a number of ambitious projects, such as renovating the dilapidated building and re-integrating it into community life. In 2016 they began renovations on the tower in order to provide a community space for meetings, celebrations, and counseling that would benefit York residents whom the organization deemed to be “less fortunate.” Over the course of the three years between the founding of the organization and my research,



[9. Above: Members of The Sealed Knot, an English Civil War reenactment group, in front of the Red Tower.]

Red Tower York had made considerable progress towards its goals; members secured grants and donations that allowed them to build a new, safer staircase inside the tower, fit the attic for business meetings, and install a bathroom, running water, and electricity into what was previously a dark and frigid space regardless of the season. The organization also expanded its community vegetable garden to include herbs that anyone passing by could pick and take home.



[10. Above: The Red Tower's herb garden, built into the old staircase that was removed from the structure during renovations.]

Barry once explained to me at length why it had been necessary for Red Tower York to become a CIC (Community Interest Company – a social enterprise that utilizes profits for public good):

A charitable incorporated organization (CIO) would have meant that we would have been registered as a charity, anyone that gave us donations we could apply for money back from the tax man, you know what I mean? And that would have been good for us, but they created so many difficulties for us and so many hoops that we had to jump through. And every time we jumped through one hoop, they threw it back at us, another hoop! And each case you could see it was blatantly obvious, they didn't like the idea that, although we had a community interest and our ethos was primarily for the community, we couldn't guarantee that everything we were doing was for the community. When we provided for the pop-up café it wasn't just for the community, it was also for the [tourists] walking the [medieval city] walls. So, they made it so difficult for us that we said forget it, we'll just go down the CIC route. You see, we HAD to become a corporate body in one way or another way, whether it be a charitable institution or a Community Interest Company, to be able to get the lease from the council. Because they wouldn't just give the lease to a group of well-meaning volunteers. So, we had to go back to them and say "look, we're a company with a board of directors, we're responsible for the building and what goes on in it." So that's why we became a CIC. But if we'd wanted to wash our hands of the historic factors related to the Red Tower and just sort of ignored them, then it would have been 100% ethic, but it's not.

It's because of providing for the needs of the visitors and tourists and such like that, that prevented us from being a charity.

What Barry meant by “100% ethic” was the idea that Red Tower York would have – if not for governing bodies’ rules and regulations – operated solely to benefit those whom they deemed “less fortunate” in the community. However, because tourists benefited from the organization’s charitable deeds, they had been unable to focus solely on community members and instead decided to become a CIC, which would allow them to secure a lease on the Red Tower, as well as more access to funding. In this way they were able to accomplish their primary goal, but only insofar as it complied with the government’s regulations for CICs. Because the city council placed limits on what the Red Tower could accomplish and, consequently, what it could call itself, the state erected a wall for Red Tower York directors, who decided to give in to what the council provided as the clearest path ahead, rather than the path that they had hoped to take. Barry understood this as the city council rendering it difficult for Red Tower York to operate. Like Michael Taussig, who draws attention to the way in which the state wrests the power of representation from citizens, diminishing their capabilities for self-representation (Taussig 1997), Barry found that his intended project had become contorted from what he imagined it would have been. Self-representation in the way that he sought to achieve it seemed impossible, as the regulations that the city council imposed could be traced back to ever higher bodies of authority. Furthermore – and, again, like Taussig – Barry found it difficult to locate a “core” of state power. In his book *The Magic of the State*, Taussig describes moments in particular places “where the body becomes the stage of nothingness upon which the great drama of stately forms can

parade alongside rampant impulse and aborted signification, where disembodiment gives way to other embodiments secreting magical force, here is the scene of the ‘gateway,’ the *portal...*” (Taussig 1997: 39). He suggests that it is in this “portal” that the processes behind state power become *visible*. In seeking to establish the organization’s self-representation, Barry was faced with more and more “hoops” that were attributable to the state, but in actual practice they demonstrated the fact that there was no one, unified state, but rather a network of power channels that were able to be teased apart and moments of rupture in which the contours of the state became visible.

It follows that there are gaps in the state’s influence. Although the directors ultimately decided to choose the CIC route, Barry did so while taking small allowances, exploiting those gaps which he could identify and using recourse to his moral code. “I know you’re not supposed to volunteer on your visa,” he whispered to me more than once, “but it won’t be a problem. We’ll see what we can do.” In line with his ethical mission, Barry sought to include me in Red Tower York’s proceedings, for he was disdainful of what he believed to be an erroneous rule. Although in his efforts with regards to Red Tower York he was following the path set forth by governing bodies, he thus maintained recourse to smaller, subversive acts of what he perceived to be kindness that reinforced the community in which he located himself. Barry had gone on several trips to volunteer in Africa, he had hosted Albanian refugees for long periods of time, and he had an impressive record of community service within York as well. “I don’t fight injustice,” he once told me resolutely. “If there’s a need, I like to address the need. We’ve got politicians for doing that. We’ve got other people, very highly paid social workers, that address the need. What I do is I don’t right the wrongs, but I try to support

people where there is a need.” Barry acted, then, when he believed that the state had failed people and they were left with a great “need.” Hence Barry’s focus on the Red Tower, which he had originally intended to benefit primarily those who he deemed “less fortunate” residents of York, especially those who lived in the social housing project just across the road from the Red Tower. I attribute Barry’s repudiation of the notion of “fighting for justice” to his humility; he never bragged about the work he had done and did not seek to make a reputation for himself out of it. I hold that in “addressing the need,” Barry was striving for goals that were aligned with his ethics, and justice was one significant component of his ethics. In addition, it is notable that all of Barry’s volunteer work served to create and reinforce conscious and self-reflexive *communities*; it was through instantiating social bonds that Barry was able to place himself within such networks and align them with what he believed to be “good” and “right.” To Barry, community could be achieved by sharing a common space, food and drinks, conversation, and opinions. For him, community was asking neighbors for help and, in turn, helping them when they needed it. It was this sense of community that led Barry to staunchly oppose Brexit. To him, remaining in the European community was the best course of action for the U.K. He thus did not conceive of Brexit in terms of sovereignty/subjugation, as some of my other interlocutors did; he viewed the measure as a threat to the international community in which the U.K. was situated. Having known refugees and having enjoyed relationships with people from the European continent, he feared any kind of hindrance to British and European citizens sharing and living with one another. In his pursuit to maintain the integrity of each community in which he perceived himself to belong, Barry decried Brexit at any given opportunity.

Brexit lent Barry a stronger distrust of British government, the “capillaries” of which he dealt with on a regular basis. What Barry and others of my interlocutors struggled with was the fact that decisions made by governing bodies which were involved with the heritage sector were often predicated on remarkably subjective moral frameworks. This use of subjective methods to make important decisions was aptly illustrated by the case of Leicester’s St. Martin’s Cathedral – the cathedral in which King Richard III was reinterred in March of 2015. In January of 2019 Leicester Cathedral proposed to extend the historic structure, which was no longer adequate to accommodate the influx of tourists since Richard III’s reburial. The cathedral approved expansion plans at the cost of £11.3 million in February 2019, although Historic England, a large, predominantly government-funded trust which oversees the maintenance of numerous historic buildings, argued against the expansion on the premise that the plans did not “make a positive contribution to the local character of the area” (BBC News 2/20/2019). In this judgment of the value and worth of a renovated historic building, the funding organization imposed a highly subjective evaluation of the future structure’s contribution to local citizens’ lives. Furthermore, Historic England, which openly states that “Our Management Agreement with Government provides the context and framework for our work and sets out our key activities for the money we receive” (Historic England), was attempting to curtail activity in the heritage sector from its position of privilege with the government.

In a letter to Leicester City Council, Historic England’s Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas Janine Dykes wrote, “we consider that the proposals will cause harm to the significance of the Cathedral, and do not make a positive contribution to the local

character and distinctiveness of this area of Leicester. We advise your authority to consider whether the public benefits of the proposals outweigh the harm.” In evaluating the proposed works, which included the demolition of the cathedral’s Song School and the construction of a two-story building which would serve as a Heritage Learning Center, Historic England expressed concern over several proposed alterations to the historic building. “The current design seeks to use terracotta...We are particularly concerned about this as it would be an alien material in this area of Leicester and its use would detract from the character and appearance of the Greyfriar’s Conservation Area along with causing harm to the significance that St Martin’s derives from its setting. The supporting information shows that the terracotta would be a mottled blueish-green colour which would further intensify its incongruous appearance as blue and green are not in the pallet of materials in the immediate surrounding area.” Furthermore, they found that “the introduction of PV panels would have an unjustifiably harmful impact on the Cathedral and surrounding conservation area. Historic England has supported the installation of PV panels on Grade I and II listed churches in exceptional circumstances in the past, but only in cases where the panels would not be visible (including from upper floors of surrounding buildings) and where they would not be fixed into historic fabric.” Historic England reminds Leicester City Council that their “advice is provided in line with Government legislation, policy and guidance including the statutory requirement placed on local planning authorities by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting and the character and appearance of a conservation area under sections 66(1) and 72(1).” They further explain the government-backed decision-making process:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out clear guidance for decision makers, including chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 192c) requires local planning authorities when determining applications to take account of “the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.” Paragraph 193 outlines that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be).” Paragraph 194 details that “any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.” Paragraph 196 states that “where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.”

Making a significant effort to demonstrate how their decision was aligned with government policies, Historic England situated itself as an extension of certain governing bodies; they derived their legitimacy from such governmental agencies and applied it to their subjective determination of the fate of Leicester Cathedral. Nevertheless, the cathedral achieved its ability to carry out the renovations and even secured an additional £3.3 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the largest funding body for heritage-related endeavors in the U.K. (Martin 2019: 1). The dispersal of power, authority, and opinions surrounding this example demonstrate Philip Abram’s contention that “the state is at most a message of domination – an ideological artefact attributing unity, morality

and independence to the disunited, amoral and dependent workings of the practice of government” (Abrams 1988: 81). I argue that members and employees of organizations within the heritage sector recognized the “disunited, amoral and dependent” nature of the state and took allowances with regards to the gaps they identified in policy, which allowed them to benefit their communities.

Power and Authorization

This nexus of government, regulation, and ethics describes the paradoxical position in which my interlocutors found themselves; through their practice of history they were actively re-inscribing power onto themselves and those around them, though they attempted to subvert this same power in other ways, such as claiming to fight for those who were historically seen as underdogs or secretly (or blatantly) taking liberties with respect to government-imposed rules. This ambivalence surrounding their nation’s history was deeply morally rooted; my interlocutors in Northern Nevada, for example, reported feeling that the U.S. government should not have any say over what happened to tribal human remains and ceremonial objects, and that they should be able to carry out their ethically-inspired missions without the hindrance of state-imposed regulations.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot contends in his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* that Western society clearly privileges one side of history: that of the “winners.” “But what makes some narratives rather than others powerful enough to pass as accepted history if not historicity itself?” he asks. “If history is merely the story told by those who won, how did they win in the first place? And why don’t all winners tell the same story?” (Trouillot 1995: 6). Trouillot argues throughout the book that

instead of focusing on what history *is*, people would do better to look at how history *works* (Trouillot 1995: 25). He elaborates on the processes of history and historical narratives in stating that:

Silences are inherent in history because any single event enters history with some of its constituting parts missing. Something is always left out while something else is recorded. There is no perfect closure of any event, however one chooses to define the boundaries of that event. Thus whatever becomes fact does so with its own inborn absences, specific to its production. In other words, the very mechanisms that make any historical recording possible also ensure that historical facts are not created equal. They reflect differential control of the means of historical production at the very first engraving that transforms an event into a fact (Trouillot 1995: 49).

This means that narratives not endorsed by a structure of power become silences, gaps in historical narratives. This would explain why Nevada Indian Commission employees reported that most white Westerners in Northern Nevada had no idea that Stewart Indian School had even existed, or why, as Michon told me, Native American oral histories had consistently been widely disregarded within the scientific community.³ Their experience of history and the heritage sector, though, stands in stark contrast to that of historical organization members in York, who were all white, middle-class individuals, some of whom – such as members of Red Tower York – were perpetuating dominant narratives of history. Red Tower York was focused specifically on the history of the tower – a narrative that was neither subversive nor a challenge to widespread beliefs – and, so long

³ I explore Michon's relationship with the scientific community in Chapter Three.

as they cooperated with state-imposed regulations for charitable organizations, they had no trouble operating. While the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society was also composed entirely of white, middle class members, the historical narrative that they considered to be truth was diametrically opposed to the historical narrative that had made its way into history books and, consequently, which the majority of the British population considered to be truth. Perhaps as a result, Red Tower York was successful in attaining various grants while the Richard III Society's activities and endeavors were funded entirely by member donations. The juxtaposition of these historical organizations demonstrates that multiple types of power were operating on members; however, members of some organizations clashed more forcefully with state bodies than others due to either their honoring of their culture or their tenacious adherence to a historical narrative which was contrary to "official" narratives.

Although members of historical organizations spoke explicitly about various sources of power and had thought a great deal about them, it is essential to note that the power dynamics demonstrated above affected societies as a whole, shaping citizens' views of history, society, and one another. The risk of erasure of certain views and ways of life – in other terms, the creation of Trouillot's "silences" – prevented greater sections of the public from exposure to alternative viewpoints. This is perhaps why my interlocutors would expend so much effort in attempts to foster and protect their organization-centered communities, as well as the wider regional communities in which their organizations were situated. Members of historical organizations, though, predominantly shared the narratives and viewpoints of their fellow group members. While claiming that historical organizations were resistance movements would be

reductionist, suggesting a clear and simple power dynamic, there was an element of unity in several of the organizations with which I worked that suggested diametric opposition to governing bodies that would influence them to believe a different narrative. This was especially prominent in the tribal organizations in Northern Nevada because Native American people had been systematically oppressed for hundreds of years. The “resistance” quality was also especially apparent in the Richard III Society, but for different reasons. As we shall see, members of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society often felt a sense of autochthony concerning the land on which King Richard III lived, as well as a sense of loyalty towards the king, for whom they felt compelled to establish what they perceived to be justice.

Despite having what at times seemed to be an insular nature, it was clear that my interlocutors were very concerned with the communities that encompassed their organizations and their nations as a whole. Each of the organizations with which I worked strove to help people – both within and outside of their organizations – to apperceive what they considered to be the truth. In so doing, they were using recourse to history and culture in their efforts to resist political trends that they deemed reprehensible. This was their means of disputing narratives and lines of thought with which they disagreed, their way of counteracting what Trouillot refers to as “silences.” At times, this meant that they alienated members of their wider communities – Richard III Society members had a reputation in York for being unreasonable, overly emotive zealots – but their actions satisfied the need to act on a deep-seated moral stance, often a desire for some form of justice. This need for justice extended far beyond the purview of the historical organizations, though; many of my interlocutors’ views of justice were tied

to larger global political trends. Their practice of history was thus inherently *political*; governance and state power featured at the forefront of their imaginaries of their regions' historical landscapes. Furthermore, at risk of stating the obvious, my interlocutors' views and behavior surrounding regional and national politics was largely informed by their sense of moralism – the ethics that they shared with fellow organization members and strove to implement in society. Notions of justice and truth informed their actions both within and beyond their historical organizations, reinforcing the ethical positions that my interlocutors shared.

This nuanced mode of engagement with “the state,” however, was not coterminous with the bounds of the historical organizations; iterations of the same patterns played out in wider society as well. Historical organizations, though, served as visible examples of how power affected communities through rendering the aforementioned processes explicit. Through tracing political engagement and moral lines of reasoning within historical organizations, I have identified processes which are often obscured in wider society when citizens do not necessarily entertain and fight for an explicit notion of ethics. I also argue that the majority of my interlocutors had a heightened awareness of community – both within and beyond their historical organizations – which contextualized their historical knowledge of power and illustrated how it came to bear on the wider populace. In rendering channels of power and authority explicit, the historical organization provides a detailed account of how citizens evaluated evidence, made truth claims, and utilized local historical knowledge to inform their opinions of social and political events from the local to the global.

The “Should” and the Shared

Although my interlocutors often ascribed a certain morality to their actions, morals could perhaps be interpreted as a post hoc explanation for actions that were spurred by deeper political reasons. In Britain, through either supporting or acting against Brexit, my interlocutors were attempting to re-localize British power, and in Northern California and Nevada, they were attempting to dismantle and reassemble localized instantiations of power. That is to say, British citizens were attempting to locate and identify the place from which state power would now emanate, while members of tribal organizations in Northern Nevada were contesting where the power in the U.S. was held, hoping to re-ascribe this power to citizens who had historically been underrepresented. The *should* that was inherent in nearly all of their actions concerning their respective historical organizations was deeply rooted in dissatisfaction with the ways in which power was held in the places they called home and in the sovereign bodies to which they were subjected. For Michon and others at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, power had been wrested from their people and those who committed this egregious act still wielded significant power over them. For historical organization members in the U.K., the perceived “source” of state power was uncertain due to the onset of Brexit. In the midst of a storm of strong feelings surrounding Britain’s governance, my British interlocutors contended also with the minutia of state power in their daily lives, in the form of overseeing boards and the city council. Although the situations surrounding the two locations were entirely different, they shared a distinct sense of *urgency* – in the U.S. because of tribal organizations’ refutation and sense of injustice regarding the government’s policies and acts, and in the U.K. because, through Brexit, the entire

structure of the government was undergoing a fundamental shift that would reassemble the country in an entirely unforeseen and unexpected manner. It seems reasonable that the circumstances surrounding both groups of historical organization members incited feelings of discomfort and perhaps even strife. Either shifting legislation or the shifting of governing bodies meant that my interlocutors felt a need to act – and establish their own “brand” of history – as soon as possible. However, while politics were certainly at the forefront of many of my interlocutors’ minds, it would be oversimplifying to state that the morals they espoused were post hoc explanations for deeper political motivations. Rather, my interlocutors crafted lines of reasoning that were moral in nature in conjunction with – and, which were informed by – political trends.

The struggles surrounding sovereignty and government in both the U.S. and the U.K. demonstrate that, although citizens’ experiences have been different, there is an underlying connection between the two locations’ experiences of sovereignty and the state. In both locations, government pressure caused historical organization members to either mold their organizations to the contours of the state or take allowances with the state’s injunctions in mind. In addition, sovereignty for my interlocutors in both the U.S. and the U.K. was unstable, the pendulum of power being liable to swing at any given moment and cause my interlocutors to work harder for their respective causes. The uncertainty surrounding sovereignty and authority, however, plagued historical organization members and non-members alike; the political climates in both the Gold Country and York spurred anxiety among most citizens.

In looking at the ways in which my interlocutors strove for an accurate representation of the past, it becomes apparent that heritage sectors are systems in which

multidirectional lines of influence are in high relief. The historical organization thus proved to be a venue in which the processes of history were especially visible. Through demonstrating a striking similarity of historical methods, this hyper-visibility of the construction and propagation of historical narratives links the U.K. and the Western U.S. In addition, the significant public interest in historical organization members' endeavors – as evidenced by well-attended events – indicates the veritable community forged by shared narratives of the regions' and nations' pasts or, perhaps more aptly, shared opposition to regulations and narratives which historical organization members rejected.

“People increasingly are interested in local history,” Angela contended, perched on the edge of the couch in my tiny apartment. She had taken the day away from her ailing mother to explain her interest in local history to me. Angela was perhaps in her late 70’s (though I never gathered the courage to ask) and was remarkably active for her age, always traveling around Yorkshire and meeting with various friends and fellow Richard III Society members. The Richard III Society was a family affair for Angela, both figuratively and literally. Her daughter, Hannah, once told me that her mother had “roped her in” to participating in the branch’s events and serving as its treasurer – however, through the years she had come to appreciate these activities. Besides providing time in which to engage in activities of mutual interest with her daughter, the Yorkshire Branch allowed Angela to frequently convene with other members with whom she enjoyed close friendships. The practice of history was, for her, exceedingly social in nature, but it had roots in a deep need for an understanding and appreciation of the past. On this particular day, Angela spoke to me about the community that history had created for her, and why it mattered. She said:

It’s like creating your own little world with the family then expanding out, we’re all pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. I suppose we do feel an affinity with some ancestors. But for some people the past is not important, it’s over and done with, it doesn’t make us who we are. But people can carry facial resemblance, character traits. That’s your heritage as well. There is a sense of “we’re all in this together,” that we are all contributing to something.

Angela believed that history needed communities in which stories would be retold, adapted, and lived. “We are nothing – no country is anything – without its history,” she said.

Chapter Two: Truth Claims, Myth, and the In-Between

“Once there was a frail, impoverished old woman who hadn’t eaten or had water in days,” Mark began. “She knocked on several doors in the village and begged for a crust of bread and a bit of water, but everyone slammed their doors in her face.” He leaned back in his wooden chair in the dining room of Nevada City, California’s Holbrooke Hotel, which he claimed to be “the most haunted hotel in the world.” Mark had dedicated the previous few decades of his life to investigating paranormal activity from Northern California to the U.K., but no location gripped his fascination as much as Nevada City, particularly the Holbrooke Hotel, where he had led historic ghost tours for several years. He continued his story: “Then, the poor woman saw a handsome young man ride in on a stallion. He was dressed in luxurious clothing and, when he approached the same doors that had been slammed in her face, he was given goblets of wine and platters of food.” Mark and I were beginning to draw stares from others seated in the dining room who had clearly not seen a man wearing a black velvet cloak and top hat in the Holbrooke Hotel before. Mark was oblivious to their gratuitous attention. “Once he had received all of these gifts,” Mark said, “the woman approached the handsome youth and asked, ‘why did you receive so much from these people while I received nothing?’” Mark paused, building the tension just before the punchline. ““Well, I am Story,” the young man answered, “and you are Truth. Everyone here wants to see me, but no one wants to see you.’ But, seeing the state of the woman, Story said: ‘I will hide you under my cloak and we will go riding together, and whenever I receive something, you will also receive a part of it.’ Mark paused for a sip of water. “And that’s why there is a bit of Truth behind every Story,” he concluded, grinning.

Meaning-Making and Social Order

In York and Northern California and Nevada my interlocutors engaged in veritable battles over certain truth claims. At other times, they were suspended between judgements regarding the veracity of stories which they termed “myth” or “legend.” Although these truth claims differed vastly in terms of their content, they each featured two common qualities: 1) they consisted of narratives that were highly contested and divisive; and 2) they served some purpose for those who adhered to them. These interwoven historical narratives – as well as my interlocutors’ selection of stories which they regarded as truth – demonstrate the complexity of my interlocutors’ processes of evaluation of historical evidence, as well as the fact that choice played a significant role in crafting their versions of the past. Historical organization members did not solely engage with those narratives that they termed truth; in contending that other viewpoints were myths, they utilized opposing narratives to substantiate their own truth claims. The truth claim, then, was a factor that allowed my interlocutors to leverage their particular beliefs and moral codes, which would have been infinitely more difficult if they had not had other positions or “myths” against which to build their arguments; they were, in effect, buttressing their own stories – which were contested by many members of the public – through engaging in rivalries with *other* contested stories. In this way, truth claims were constitutive of each other; a story *needed* opposition in order become defined and strengthened. I chart in this chapter the formation of what many of my interlocutors described as “myth,” as well as the ways in which myth informed ambiguous notions of relatedness to local historic figures. Utilizing the terms “myth,” “legend,” and “ghost

story” as my interlocutors used them, I describe what they believed to be true or untrue while considering the rich contextual information which shaped these narratives. Being reticent to make claims of stories being “myth” or “legend” (and thus inadvertently suggesting which are “true” and which are not), I analyze the ways in which contested stories circulated in the locations where I studied, as well as how my interlocutors put these stories to use.

Many of the historical narratives which my interlocutors engaged – either in terms of belief or disbelief – involved instances of the uncanny and were thus often termed “myths.” In his 1997 book *The Cassowary’s Revenge: The Life and Death of Masculinity in a New Guinea Society*, Donald Tuzin argues that, among his interlocutors, myth “exhibits their sense of themselves as human beings, moral actors, residents of an illustrious village, and custodians of a shrine of universal importance; all in one, it projects their fondest wishes and fondest dreads” (Tuzin 1997: 71). He further states that “prophecies, because they articulate real but unformulated tensions in the sociocultural order, have a way of coming to pass” (Tuzin 1997: 78). For Tuzin, myth is an active agent in society. As Kevin Birth argues in his analysis of Tuzin’s work, instances of the uncanny – events that are of unknown origin and dubious veracity – disrupt Descartes’ dualism of body and mind, engendering what he terms “Verum,” or, the creation of truth. Birth writes that Tuzin’s “focus on apperception rather than perception indicates an active process in the creation of meaning rather than a passive process in the perception of meaning,” thus bridging Descartes’ discrete spheres of body and mind and confusing the perceived boundary between “reality” and experience. According to Birth,

Tuzin's Durkheimian twist on the combination of Langer's and Morris's approaches to symbols removes the interpretation of symbols from the strictly Freudian realm of the connection of the symbol to the individual unconscious and instead places the interpretation of symbols into the nexus of individual and collective experience and emotion (Birth 2011: 124).

Through placing emphasis on the collective's role in the interpretation of symbols, Tuzin refutes the Cartesian divide and instead focuses on the ways in which people actively perceive and engage with the uncanny. In this type of exegesis, the emphasis lies in the *interpretation* of an event (Birth 2011: 132). In this way, Tuzin is able to discern how "the uncanny can be created in order to stir the spirit and create truth (Birth 2011: 131)." In Tuzin's work, then, the uncanny is inherently productive and creative. The uncanny thus provokes the construction of meaning rather than existing as an object of passive perception.

My interlocutors termed a story a "myth" if it seemed fantastic or impossible in some way, or if they flat-out refuted its veracity. In this way, the words "myth" and "legend" were interchangeable for them. What was the difference, then, between legend, myth, ghost stories, metaphor, and what my interlocutors referred to as "history"? As Tuzin argues, "a myth is a projective fantasy susceptible of interpretation at all levels; fantastic ideas are cognitively admissible through individual psychodynamic processes, mythologic structures, and genre cues calling for the suspension of disbelief – each of which provides a context of meaning and precedence" (Tuzin 1997: 90). In line with Tuzin I suggest that, rather than a fixed category, myth is a *process* in which people have the space to alternatively engage with narratives in ways that are tongue-in-cheek,

suspending disbelief, or even disingenuous. One common observation among my interlocutors was that each myth had some “kernel of truth,” as it was often described. They realized that there was some kind of meaning and reason behind even those myths which they rejected. Perhaps part of the myth was false, but perhaps part of it was true. For this reason, the lacuna in the structure of myth and behavior surrounding it is of utmost importance. The ways in which my interlocutors engaged with what they termed myth were indicative of their multifaceted relationships with such stories, as well as with the communities in which they located themselves. Parsing the behavior around myths allowed me to learn how my interlocutors evaluated evidence and truth claims, as well as how they implemented myth in their own lives. It also established the fact that, whether or not they believed certain stories to be true, my interlocutors utilized legends to connect with community members who shared their truth claims, as well as to contextualize and posit claims about local history.

The Making of Myth

As I soon learned, myth sparked an interest in historical organization members and non-members alike, and, therefore, it had the potential to draw new members into historical organizations. I spoke with 40-year old history and theater enthusiast Paul about myth within the Richard III Society on several occasions. While he was not a member of the society, he interacted with Ricardians⁴ frequently in the Richard III Experience, a Jorvik Group museum and his place of work. In addition, his mother had been a member of the society for most of his life, as well as his aunt, who was so

⁴ Supporters of Richard III

dedicated to Richard III that she once was restrained for attempting to spit on Henry VII's grave (Richard III's successor who defeated him in battle). In a quiet side room of a pub near the Richard III Experience, Paul told me that the widespread interest in Richard was similar to the interest in King Arthur in the sense that "it's about myth." "There is also a detective element, and an element of siding with the underdog," he said. "It is about things that don't necessarily have to do with history, but cluster around a historical figure." I asked Paul why he had brought up King Arthur, given that the ancient legendary king and Richard III had lived about 500 years apart, and the mention of one did not, for many people, conjure up thoughts of the other. He said that he drew a similarity between the two because, like the image of King Arthur, the image of Richard III was "encrusted" with mythologies and extra-historical images. As he spoke, I thought of the Facebook page which was dedicated to returning Richard's body to York, on which there were images of Richard's facial reconstruction that had been edited to appear stylistically modern. Some of these featured logos or designs that had been superimposed on them. The attribution of modern "extras" to Richard's facial reconstruction was a prime example of the fulfillment of wishes that Paul spoke about, mapping modern people's desires onto images of a man who had been dead for over five centuries. "There is some kernel of truth to the story," Paul continued, "but so much extra has been added to it. This is evidenced by the fact that you can say the name of either king and it conjures up a particular image, even if there isn't much that is known about the person." He continued on the topic of myth, stating that "there is an element of myth even with less desirable histories, like coal mining. Maybe in some histories there is less

knowledge and more spaces to fill in,” he mused, “and that’s where myth comes from. This is because people can’t bear to have gaps in their stories.”

Paul also believed that, in order for a certain history to appeal to the masses, it needed an extra element of excitement. “There is history,” he said, “but there is also mythical, legendary, or political extra that one needs to spark the interest in history.” History, then, according to Paul, needed an appealing narrative in order to reach the scale at which Richard III’s story had been rehashed, reinterpreted, and celebrated. Paul contended that “this is ‘history plus,’ and the ‘plus’ lifts the history.” To Paul, the “plus” rendered history more relatable for modern-day people, who could engage more effectively with a fuller picture of a character rather than a dry, academic description of a historical figure. This led me to ask if, for Paul, the figures surrounded by myth were less valuable or useful than others. Paul replied that “it gives them a chameleon ability to reflect back current interests and anxieties. The myth is what keeps history’s head above water. If myth is strong enough,” said Paul, “people will find something of extra interest in it.” He also noted that myth was not fixed – quite on the contrary, he believed it to be extremely flexible and adaptable. A case in point for this came with Paul’s description of York’s infamous Dick Turpin, an 18th century Yorkshire highway robber. Although Paul described the “real” Dick Turpin as “a squalid thug,” he noted that highwaymen were a romanticized version of murderous, thieving thugs, like pirates, and elements had been concentrated into the mythic figure of Dick Turpin. “There are others who would fit this mythic image better than he does,” Paul suggested, pointing out the degree to which the highway robber had been mythologized.

Yet what, I asked Paul, is the value of using myth in this way? Paul believed that the cases of King Arthur, Richard III, and Dick Turpin were instances of “the underdog fighting for justice” – a sentiment surrounding these figures that was echoed by several of my interlocutors. “There is a collection of wishes and needs that have focused themselves on one figure,” Paul pointed out; he also noted that, in the U.K., myths had resurfaced in times of hardship. He referenced the fact that, in WWI and WWII, the notion of King Arthur defending the country came to the forefront again. He also cited the case of Arthur Machen’s “The Bowmen,” which tells the story of the Angels of Mons who reputedly came to the aid of British fighter pilots in the fierce 1914 Battle of Mons against the Germans. Machen heard the accounts of soldiers and penned a short story, which was featured in the London newspaper *The Evening News*. Machen wrote about the heat of this early WWI battle between the English and the Germans in which the English were quickly losing faith:

For as the Latin scholar [soldier] uttered his invocation he felt something between a shudder and an electric shock pass through his body. The roar of the battle died down in his ears to a gentle murmur; instead of it, he says, he heard a great voice and a shout louder than a thunder-peal crying, "Array, array, array!"

His heart grew hot as a burning coal, it grew cold as ice within him, as it seemed to him that a tumult of voices answered to his summons. He heard, or seemed to hear, thousands shouting: "St. George! St. George!"

"Ha! Messire, ha! sweet Saint, grant us good deliverance!"

"St. George for merry England!"

"Harow! Harow! Monseigneur St. George, succor us!"

"Ha! St. George! Ha! St. George! a long bow and a strong bow."

"Heaven's Knight, aid us!"

And as the soldier heard these voices he saw before him, beyond the trench, a long line of shapes, with a shining about them. They were like men who drew the bow, and with another shout, their cloud of arrows flew singing and tingling through the air towards the German hosts (Machen 1914: 3).

In this account, the author represented what soldiers who had been present at the battle reputedly swore to be truth. Published at a time when the British feared a fierce struggle in defeating the Germans, the soldiers who told this story drew upon a culturally recognized pattern of myth in order to inspire and comfort their countrymen. "When people need encouragement, they go back to the myths," Paul had said. This suggests that the soldiers who inspired Machen's "The Bowmen," framed their experience in a familiar trope. As David Clarke notes in his article about the Angels of Mons entitled "Rumours of Angels: A Legend of the First World War," the notion of St. George intervening to aid English armies was a tradition that stretched back to the middle ages. "The cult of St. George was nurtured at the court of Edward III," Clarke notes, "and the saint became a divine protector of English soldiers in battle. By the fifteenth century, St George intervened on the side of the English against the armies of other Christian nations, further cementing his identification as the totem protector of that army" (Clarke 2002: 167). Far from viewing the myth as irrelevant or false, the public entertained a notion of the miracle, despite the rampant evidence that such a phenomenon had never occurred. According to Clarke, the only accounts of the angels were offered by people who had not been present at the battle; he contends that there was a drastic paucity of

evidence for the legend from which so many people adopted and drew inspiration. However, this did not mean that the legend was useless. “In England,” Clarke writes, “where the public was receiving dreadful news of great losses from the Western Front every day, the clergy used the story in Sunday sermons as a method of boosting morale on the Home Front and to foster belief in the rightness of the British cause” (Clarke 2002: 160-161). He states that “the origins of the angels of Mons lie not so much in the events of the battle itself, but at a time when the war had entered a new, bleak phase of trench warfare and unrelenting suffering. It was within this context that claims of divine intervention on the side of the Allies were invented, circulated and widely believed despite a complete absence of evidence” (Clarke 2002: 171). For Clarke, the “deep well of belief and tradition” from which the myth had sprung was of utmost importance (Clarke 2002: 171). The symbols within the myth referred to larger culturally fostered systems of thought, such as national pride and religious belief, which were intelligible to the people who heard and contemplated the story.

It is essential to note that my interlocutors did not necessarily need to fully *believe* these stories in order to utilize them. In some cases, the myth took on something reminiscent of a life of its own, covering more and more ground throughout a society even though it was not something that people explicitly believed. Mick, a jovial 60-something York resident, tour guide, and part-time employee at several Jorvik Group museums, once discussed with me how the Jorvik Group museums contended with myth and legend. Mick believed that legend was what people “used to believe” before they encountered factual explanations for certain phenomena in their lives. As an example, he referenced the “devil’s door” in churches – the small door that often exists alongside the

main door. “People used to believe that during baptisms, if the baby cried after touching the holy water it meant that the devil was leaving the child,” Mick explained. “The devil would then need to leave through the small door – to which there was a clear path - because the main door would have been blocked by the good Christians watching the baptism.” Mick said that, in fact, the small door was intended for priests to enter and exit. However, the legend of the door being for the purpose of the devil leaving the church persisted. In this case, people did not understand why the small door existed, so they observed patterns of its use and found an explanation that was consistent with their belief system, returning to moral and ideological mores that colored their collectivities.

Mick also told me that many of the information boards in the museums began with the phrase “legend has it...” The purpose of this, according to Mick, was to allow the museums to “fill in gaps” where the necessary information was not available – an explanation that matches verbatim Paul’s theory about legend. Mick contended that this practice was for the purpose of business, much in the way that pub owners oftentimes declared their pubs to be haunted in order to attract visitors. “There is a certain allowance that people in the heritage industry take in order to draw business,” he said. Citing the way in which ghost stories operated in local pubs and inns, he suggested that many people came to believe in a myth, or at least participate in its production and perpetuation, when multiple accounts of a haunting were collected. When several people recounted similar stories, the conglomeration of these stories often seemed to be seen as truth, or at least something that could not be readily discounted. Mick explained to me a case surrounding the Golden Fleece pub, a place which I had visited countless times in order to speak with interlocutors. I knew that the pub relied heavily on its status as

“haunted” in order to draw tourists and locals alike. Mick told me that one of the most cited ghost stories to originate in the pub was established as false due to the fact that the man who first told the story later declared that it had not been true. However, even though they were aware of his repudiation of the story, *people continued to tell it and report similar firsthand paranormal accounts that corroborated the story*. Even when the story had been established as false, it was still useful in some way to enough people to continue to be propagated. This was aligned with another statement Mick made, which was that legend was very important to history; in the picture he painted, legend was simultaneously emanating from and constitutive of history itself. This suggests that the question of belief was not necessarily relevant in each case of myth. Furthermore, for my interlocutors, there was not necessarily a binary of belief and non-belief – it was possible for them to alternate their positions regarding myth or fall somewhere in the middle of credence and rejection of commonly disputed stories.

My interlocutors were thus able to slip in and out of modes of interpretation and use of stories that they deemed myths. I saw this when Mick once launched suddenly, as he was wont to do, into a story about local history: “do you know why the stockades in front of Holy Trinity Church on Micklegate [a central York road] have five holes?” he asked. I replied that I did not know. “When they made them,” he explained, “there was a man who lived here who was always in trouble and he had a wooden leg. This is all true. So, they would put three men together in the stockades, but they didn’t need a sixth hole for his wooden leg!” Almost as if he were in conversation solely with himself, he asked, “is this true or is it a legend?” He quickly answered his own query: “it doesn’t matter,” he said. “It’s not harming anyone. It’s a good story.” Did Mick believe this

legend, or did he believe that it was simply an invention that had lasted throughout the centuries? His engagement with the legend would suggest that he lent it some credence, but he was clearly not entirely convinced of its veracity. This suggests that my interlocutors played with myth, holding it in one hand as a verifiable explanation of a historic event, and in the other as a fantastic bit of culture.

A Double-Edged Sword

Others of my interlocutors similarly acknowledged what they perceived to be myths but had some cognitive dissonance about them. Vietnam veteran Robert in Centerville, California, who chaired both the Historic Honey Run Bridge Association and the Centerville Museum, expressed to me that he was able to see the value in what he



[11. Honey Run Bridge, Centerville, California.]



[12. Family history board in the Centerville Museum, Centerville, California.]

believed to be myths, but he remained “all about the facts.” I would meet Robert at a picnic table by the river that flowed under the historic bridge, built in 1886 and spanning over a section of Butte Creek, and discuss various topics from history to psychology to personal matters.⁵ Robert would park in the dirt lot beside Honey Run Bridge, and anyone who walked by could see his amusing bumper stickers. One featured an image of a gun with the text “I’d tap that...from a mile away”; another read: “voting is like driving: R is for going backward, and D is for going forward.” The third said “old guys rule.” A vocal liberal and a former sniper in the Vietnam War, Robert also spent years as

⁵ Honey Run Bridge, along with the majority of Centerville and neighboring Paradise, California, was destroyed in the November 2018 Camp Fire.

a marriage and family counselor and thoroughly enjoyed helping others with their problems. One day, in his usual baseball cap, sweatshirt, and jeans, Robert brought up the topic of myth. He told me that there had been a legend that three children had drowned in the river just next to the bridge shortly after it had been built, and, according to him, most people in the community believed this. In his thorough search of old newspaper articles, though, Robert had found that this was not true. Nonetheless, the legend lasted until about ten years before the time of my research. “People have their own agendas for what they want to believe,” he told me. According to Robert, this was why legends had persisted. He made sure to note, though, that they were not entirely pointless. “If you look at legend as a metaphor, you can learn some really interesting things,” he suggested. “The lessons that legends teach are still valuable, even if the legends themselves are not true.” As examples of this fact he cited biblical stories, as well as the fact that religions even before Christianity featured virgin births. “In biblical times, people were uneducated,” he told me, “and lessons had to be told in parables. This process can turn out to be similar to a game of telephone, but if we look at parables as lessons, we can see that someone was trying to make a point by telling them in this way.” Thus, for Robert, there was value and even some kernel of truth in legend. However, he made sure to inform me again that he was still “all about the facts.” The reason why he told me this seemed to stem from the fact that many people associated with the Honey Run Bridge Association and the Centerville Museum did not value historical facts, according to Robert. As an explanation he cited the case of the plaque by the bridge that featured its date of construction. Robert had painstakingly pored through old newspaper articles and found that the date on the plaque was incorrect. He arranged to have a new

plaque made, which was installed at the bridge's rededication in August of 2017. Some people, Robert said, were opposed to changing the plaque to reflect the accurate construction date because, as they put it, "it's always been that way." This was an instance in which Robert believed that people were attached to a certain legend and chose it over "facts" that were readily available to them. While Robert expressed frustration at their reluctance, he was sympathetic towards those who held what he considered to be myths. "The truth is somewhere between legend and fact," he said. "We don't know." The underlying assumption was that there was some element of *choice* regarding which story people believed; this notion of people choosing a belief was, for Robert, counterintuitive yet necessary in order for his organization to accomplish its goals of rectifying falsities and integrating the community through the venues of the two historical organizations in which he took part.

With a similar meta-stance on myth, Christine, a member of the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, Nevada, existed somewhere in the middle of earnest belief and staunch refutation of legends, paying more attention to the ways in which myth could mediate social relations between people who abided by different stories about history. In the northern Nevada context, such a situation was engendered by "Settler History" – the history of white settlers who arrived in the "Gold Country" region in the late 19th century. Predicated on the notion of whites having "discovered" the region, this history silenced Native American oral histories, asserting itself as absolute fact at the expense of other historical narratives. Although Native Americans asserted that they had been living on northern California and Nevada land for thousands of years, whenever I asked white Western members of historical organizations there to tell me about the earliest history of

the town in which they lived, they sometimes replied that, as Dan, the president of the Nevada County Historical Society once said, “history started here in 1849,” which was the year the Gold Rush began and white settlers began moving west. Regardless of whether or not this statement was true, it was accepted by all parties as being true that 1849 and the years immediately following it witnessed an influx of those (mostly white citizens) who were drawn by the discovery of gold in the region. However, white Westerners had begun to settle in the Reno, Nevada area prior to this date. In fact, a great deal of settlers arrived during the Civil War and, due to the fact that Nevada was founded in 1864, the state had often been referred to as “Battle Born” because its residents hailed from both the North and South of the eastern U.S. but ultimately became unified as Nevadans. In 1906 Southern Pacific Railroad established the town of Sparks – which is connected with and, at times, indistinguishable from Reno – after six years of building up the marshland in order to render it inhabitable. The reason why the railroad went to such great effort to establish the town was because Reno had increased its charge for trains to pass through. The railroad decided to found a new depot adjacent to Reno in order to reach the location while not paying what they considered to be an exorbitant amount of money. At the time of my research, the area still bore names that were drawn from local history. Legends Mall, a shopping mall in Sparks, earned its name due to the fact that it contained statues and plaques dedicated to men who had spent time in the local area and were considered to be great legends. Featuring information surrounding figures such as Mark Twain, who spent a great deal of time in the area, as well as Abraham Lincoln, who was president at the time Nevada was founded, the massive, fountain-lined Legends Mall drew attention to those who were instrumental to Settler History. Furthermore, it

presented their stories as foundational for the social order in which modern-day Nevadans found themselves, referencing the figures' qualities of fortitude and honesty which rendered them the building blocks of Settler History itself.

While Settler History was celebrated among white settler populations in northern Nevada, there were cases in which certain white settlers eschewed what they deemed to be false information about the past resulting from Settler History which led to the oppression of non-white citizens. Christine once told me the legend of how two nearby mountain peaks acquired their names, which were Lincoln Peak and Davis Peak. According to Christine, legend had it that during the Civil War, one man from the Confederacy and one man from the Union were together in a location where they could plainly see the two peaks. They discussed a need to name these peaks and, in order to ensure fairness, each man named one peak for his president. Centuries later, however, the names were determined to be problematic by many of those serving on the state's geographic board, which made decisions regarding naming features of the land (at the time of my research, Christine served on this board). Christine told me that many people came forward and suggested that Davis Peak should be renamed because, Davis having been the president of the Confederacy, his name "stood for slavery." Christine expressed her belief that "everyone has a perspective, and every perspective is valid;" yet, she found it odd that, in renaming and reinterpreting information from earlier centuries, the board was "creating history in a reverse way." "The solution lies in multi-party efforts to tell a single story," she said, yet she did seem to have reservations about such an approach. "Where is the line?" she asked. "Washington and Jefferson had slaves; will the next movement be to erase them from history because of this? We need to be open and learn

from the past.” In this case, as evidenced by the story of Davis and Lincoln Peaks, myth served to unify white settler fellow Nevadans who traced their lineages back to either the Union or the Confederacy. It also augmented regional pride and framed citizens’ identities as Nevadans. However, in Christine’s response we see doubt and trepidation surrounding myth and legend. Christine was willing to extend the benefit of the doubt to people with whom she did not agree, but this did not mean that she *believed* their stories. Instead of verging into complete disavowal of myths in her community, though, she existed in the murky area between one myth and another, caught between belief and disbelief, between belonging and taking a counter-stance.

Evidence and Meaning in the U.K.

This space between belief and disbelief also manifested in strong partisan opinions on either side of arguments surrounding truth claims – especially in instances in which the stakes were perceived as being relatively high. Before breaking ground in the place where her team discovered King Richard III’s skeleton, Philippa Langley, MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, a title awarded to outstanding British citizens)⁶ had a peculiar and uncanny experience in the private parking lot where the king was later found. Although she described this to me in person, she also wrote about it in detail in her book *The King’s Grave: The Discovery of Richard III’s Lost Burial Place and the Clues it Holds*:

I was going to move on but experienced an overwhelming urge to enter. I slid around the barrier and into the car park which, again, was pretty much deserted apart from a

⁶ Philippa asked me to introduce her in this way in order to demonstrate her expertise and refute claims that she was an “amateur.”

few scattered vehicles. It was a large open space for seventy or more vehicles, surrounded by Georgian buildings with a large red-brick Victorian wall running north to south straight ahead of me. I found myself drawn to this wall and, as I walked towards it, I was aware of a strange sensation. My heart was pounding and my mouth was dry – it was a feeling of raw excitement tinged with fear. As I got near the wall, I had to stop, I felt so odd. I had goose-bumps, so much so that even in the sunshine I felt cold to my bones. And I knew in my innermost being that Richard's body lay here. Moreover I was certain that I was standing right on top of his grave (Langley and Jones 2013: 5-6).

This moment – also described in a Channel 4 documentary about The Looking for Richard Project entitled *The King in the Car Park* and not altogether unlike the account of angels on the battlefield of Mons – was the first of several in which the public perceived Philippa to be unreasonable and speaking in overly emotive terms. However, when I asked Philippa about this experience, she swore that every word of it was true. She – along with many other members of the Richard III Society – believed that she had a certain connection with the king that allowed her to feel his presence.

Others in the Richard III Society shared this deep empathy for and connection with the deceased king; when it was revealed that Richard's skeleton was missing its feet and had its hands bound before a hasty burial in a grave that was too small, several members of the society told me that, upon seeing images of the skeleton, they had wept. Any mention of the nature of Richard's original burial among members of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society unfailingly sparked heated expressions of indignation regarding how the king's body had been treated. The discovery of Richard III's remains,

however, marked a pivotal point for the Richard III Society. Not only were they deeply divided on the issue of where Richard should have been reinterred; they had gained novel insight into the king's life through analysis of his bones such as changes in his diet, his level of alcohol intake, and, much to society members' chagrin, the fact that he had had ringworm when he died. The emphasis on this last piece of information was particularly irritating to Yorkshire Branch member Lynda, who once exclaimed, "everyone had worms then!"

Philippa's search for and discovery of Richard III's skeleton led to a public frenzy for the king. Richard was honored with an incredibly large and ostentatious reburial, several U.K. museums and historical societies had been dedicated to him⁷, the location of



⁷ At the time of my research I was aware of the following historical societies dedicated to Richard III: The Richard III Society, The Plantagenet Alliance, and Loyal Supporters of Richard III. The Plantagenet Alliance and Loyal Supporters of Richard III were rumored to be much more extreme than the Richard III Society in their ideologies and practices; both groups arranged protests when it was declared that Richard III's remains would be reburied in Leicester.

[13. (above): Facial Reconstruction of King Richard III, housed in the King Richard III Visitor Centre, Leicester, U.K.]

his burial was fiercely contested, and modern people were made familiar with his visage due to his celebrated facial reconstruction that, at the time of my research, was housed at the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester.

However, all of this was predicated on an assumption: that the skeleton truly was, without any trace of a doubt, Richard. All of my interlocutors who took part in the Richard III Society expressed to me that they firmly believed that it was him, citing the fact that scientists had run tests on his mitochondrial DNA, which traced the female line in his family and “proved” that the skeleton found in the parking lot was situated in the correct position vis-à-vis Richard III’s family members. They also cited the fact that the skeleton had scoliosis, which Richard reputedly had. However, doubts surfaced in quick succession, both from within the world of academia and outside of it. Professor Michael Hicks of Winchester University stated to the popular British news source *The Independent* that

If mitochondrial DNA doesn’t change over time, descendants in the female line from Richard’s maternal grandmother, great-grandmother, great-grandmother, great-great-grandmother can share the same characteristics. There is potentially a considerable pool of people who could meet the scientific criteria without being Richard III. We are going way beyond the available evidence if we say this is definitely Richard III. It could be – but it is not proven and we should not confuse possibilities or probabilities with certainties

(<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/archaeology/richard-iii-expert-the->

skeleton-in-the-car-park-may-not-be-the-missing-monarch-after-all-9219513.html).

He added that many men were brutally killed during the Wars of the Roses and would have suffered injuries that were much the same as those which the skeleton bore; the skeleton had a particularly horrifying hole in the back of the skull that scientists determined had been made by a halberd. In addition, he mentioned that there had been no proof whatsoever that Richard III had suffered from scoliosis during his lifetime – only rumor. They believed that researchers could not check their hypotheses through the use of a narrative that may not have been true. Researchers at the University of Leicester – the local university where the tests were carried out – responded to Hicks’ doubt by stating that, in this case, “The strength of the identification is that different types of evidence all point to the same result” (Milmo 2014).

There were also those among my interlocutors who doubted the University of Leicester’s identification of the skeleton as Richard III. Sealed Knot member Tristan firmly believed that the skeleton was *not* Richard, and he echoed Michael Hicks’ claims in asserting his disagreement with what he believed was a hasty and tenuous conclusion on the part of University of Leicester researchers. “The only evidence they have is that the skeleton had scoliosis and Richard supposedly had scoliosis,” he said. He also cited the fact that the majority of English citizens were related to some degree, and it was entirely possible that this skeleton could have been any number of people living during the high medieval period who, along with Richard, existed in an extremely small gene pool. Others of my interlocutors, however, were convinced with equal fervor that the skeleton could be none other than Richard. Paul once listed to me the reasons why he

thoroughly believed that the skeleton truly was Richard. He said that, given the location of the body and the extant medieval and early modern maps of the area, the skeleton had been in a priory, which was an appropriate place for someone of importance to be buried. Furthermore, the remains were close to the altar, where someone of high status would have been buried. “The body was of the right age, time period, and class, and its wounds stand up to what we know of both his fighting skill and his death,” Paul said. “Also, there is the deformity of the back, which corresponds to the fact that he couldn’t be seen in a well-cut suit or clothes. People seeing his body naked [because during the Wars of the Roses period notable people who had been killed would have been stripped of their clothing] would have given something for the hunchback myth to be built on.” In addition to these reasons, Paul cited the fact that Richard had been traced through matrilineal DNA. “One or two of these factors would not necessarily be convincing on their own, but taken together they seem quite convincing,” Paul contended. He mentioned that he had looked at the writing of people who doubted that the skeleton was Richard, but he could not see that the arguments they raised were conclusive in any way. Paul and others of my interlocutors, mostly those in the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, fully supported fellow Richard III Society member and author John Ashdown-Hill, who asked the doubters: if it isn’t Richard III, then who is it? My interlocutors claimed that, although they suggested other possibilities, those who claimed that the skeleton was not Richard III could offer no satisfactory response. At the time of my research, this rift between those who trusted the University of Leicester’s decision and those who did not remained wide and fraught.

So, in the face of what many would deem to be inconclusive evidence, why did so many people hold an unshakable belief that the skeleton *was* Richard III? Besides lending the public the opportunity to attend a king's funeral, discovering and reburying Richard III's skeleton had a few key functions for my interlocutors. Locating the king's body allowed members of the Richard III Society to displace a myth that had previously been held as truth (that Richard III's body had been thrown into the River Soar), but, more importantly, it allowed them the chance – which had been denied to Richard III supporters throughout the last five centuries – to give him a dignified and honorable burial that was in line with his status as king. The fierce debates that raged in the sciences and humanities surrounding Richard III created a decisive moment for members of the Richard III Society; at a time when Richard III's name was on the tip of every tongue in the U.K., it was a point at which his reputation stood to be either made or broken by whichever narrative surfaced as dominant. This realization on the part of society members served to reify their central claims and fight harder for their sole aim: “justice for Richard,” a man who now seemed even more of an underdog than they had previously thought. In a climate of what they perceived to be underappreciation of the deceased king, members of the Richard III Society felt an urgent need to establish his innocence from crimes of which he had been accused, as well as his reputation as a good-natured and well-intended monarch. Because it offered them the chance to leap forward with regards to their primary goal, for society members, the skeleton *had* to be Richard.

For many of my interlocutors in the Richard III Society, the discernment of who Richard truly was, was framed as “fighting myth.” John Ashdown-Hill authored a book entitled *The Mythology of Richard III*, which aimed to debunk what he and other

members of the Richard III Society considered to be false stories about the king – a climate of falsity which had been abetted by the University of Leicester’s claims derived from scientific studies conducted on Richard’s skeleton. “Editing of this true story,” he writes, “seems to have been chiefly manipulated by the University of Leicester Press Office and its associates in order to claim maximum kudos in respect of the discovery, firstly for the university itself, and secondly for the city of Leicester” (Ashdown-Hill 2015: 7). I did not speak with any member of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society who disagreed with this claim. For them, University of Leicester affiliates had built on existing myths about Richard III, in turn propagating a cohesive yet false picture of the king’s life and death. Furthermore, this constructed system of what Richard III Society members called “myths” was for the sake of profit, rendering it all the more reprehensible.

There were those, too, who believed that Richard III Society members generated myths of their own within the society. Lynda once told me that myth played “too great a role” in the society and detracted from the efforts of those who saw themselves as historians – those members who parsed all available information in an attempt at accuracy and precision in interpreting past times and historical figures. She expressed great frustration with society members who propagated what she believed to be myth. “People get a picture in their minds,” she said, “and then they build it up, but it may not be something based on fact.” She invoked the example of the Middleham Jewel – a pendant found near Middleham Castle that, upon being dated, proved to have had its origins in the late 15th century. The Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society launched a fundraiser in order to raise the money necessary to test the soil which was

inside the locket, which would have allowed them to learn more about the piece's history. Lynda navigated this situation carefully, attempting to manage fellow society members' expectations regarding the information that could be found within the soil sample. "People expect the jewel to be proven to have been owned by Richard's wife," Lynda said, "but the fact is that the contents of the jewel may just be mud that tells us nothing." While Lynda expressed that she would not have been particularly bothered if nothing came of the analysis, she worried for those who, because of their attachment to the myth surrounding the pendant, had higher stakes in the outcome. "We have to fight myths," Lynda said, "especially if the goal of the society is to bring Richard to life as a real person. But they are making new myths all the time."

This making of myths speaks precisely to Paul Ricoeur's notion of "myth as the bearer of possibilities" (Ricoeur and Kearney 1978). Ricoeur states that "the original potential of any genuine myth will always exceed the limits of a particular community or nation. The mythos of any community is the bearer of something which exceeds its own frontiers; it is the bearer of other possible worlds" (Ricoeur and Kearney 1978: 117). Arguing that the development of a society is both synchronic and diachronic, he suggests that "myths have a historicity of their own" (Ricoeur and Kearney 1978: 113); myths, then, are predicated on the theorization of history much in the same way that they are predicated on possibilities of the future. They additionally demand answers to the questions "where do we come from?" and "where do we go?" thus allowing a culture to "return to its roots" and solidify its identity (Ricoeur and Kearney 1978: 114). On a national level, we can identify in the popular interest in Richard III's skeleton and reburial this reification of identity and opening into a possible future in which citizens

may understand more about the lives of the medieval English. On a regional level, we can see that the aforementioned events opened up a world of possibilities for Yorkshire Branch Richard III Society members, who sought to enrich their own understandings of the king's life and, in some cases, their notions of relatedness with him. In addition, the interface of what my interlocutors termed "myth" with "truth" served to juxtapose their "superior" knowledge and ethics with the ill-intended and even predatory aims of other individuals and organizations who would obscure truth and justice. For this reason, the argument surrounding the skeleton in the parking lot was, as Ricoeur would term it, an "opening" into the possibility of reversing a narrative and establishing certain moral and truth claims. However, at the same time, society members who held positions which were contested by others in the U.K. in turn contested the beliefs and narratives of other members within their own organization. The labeling of certain truth claims as myth thus emphasizes the fact that there exists a murky space between the two sides of stories surrounding local history.

It is notable that, with the discovery of the skeleton in the parking lot, it was not the narrative surrounding Richard III that was being contested but rather the *material evidence* of the narrative. The remains, to members of historical organizations and non-members alike, ostensibly yielded more solidified evidence than an oral tradition. In his book *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things*, Ian Hodder explores the interwoven categories of narratives and objects from the past, tracing the relevance of objects and their "entanglement" with human beings. Though he claims that Heidegger's contentions on the subject of material culture are anthropocentric in that they regard only the ways in which things affect humans, he incorporates

Heidegger's conceptualization of "gathering" into his theorizing of the importance of objects. He writes:

For Heidegger there is an aspect of the jug that is not captured by describing it as an entity or an object. The jug takes what is poured into it, and then pours the liquid out. The water and wine come from a rock spring or from rain or from the grape growing in the earth. The pouring out can quench thirst for humans or be a libation to the gods. So the jug connects humans, gods, earth and sky. It is this "gathering" that makes the jug a thing" (Hodder 2012: 8).

This concept of "gathering" is applicable to Richard III's remains; people's thoughts, wishes, and doubts were bound to the skeleton due to what it stood to either prove or disprove with regards to historical narratives. As Hodder argues, "entities (bounded essences) and objects (that stand up against humans) can only be known by humans through their character as things (that gather humans and other things into heterogeneous mixes). So, from such a perspective, we 'make' things" (Hodder 2012: 13). Just as myth is created, people created the identity and relevance of the skeleton in the parking lot. In the face of material evidence and an opposing argument, my interlocutors' historical narratives were at stake of being relegated as "myth." This demonstrates that the establishment of "truth" was an ever tenuous and unstable process which spurred my interlocutors to constantly reinforce their historical narratives through sharing information amongst themselves and educating the public about their versions of local history.

Myth, Method, and Belonging

Though each of the instances of truth claims in my research proved at times to be fraught and divisive in wider society, they served as a means through which people could make sense of both history and current events, allowing the pieces to fall into place, filling the gaps that Paul and Mick referenced and presenting a cohesive, meaningful, and useful story. Adherence to certain truth claims served as a vector for my interlocutors to express notions of affinity with past and current members of a social order, as well as belonging to a particular cultural tradition. In addition, they were a collection of culturally constructed stories that people seemed to oscillate between believing and being entirely unconvinced of. As Mark noted (at the beginning of this chapter), what is “true” and what is “not” can be extremely murky territory, not least because people act as if certain histories are true even though they may be largely contested. Equally confusing was the fact that people who held “alternative” – and thus disputed – narratives often engaged in tearing down ideologies opposed to theirs; though they believed themselves to be asserting the “truth,” they were destroying another form of knowledge whose proponents felt equal claims to “truth.” In being not entirely convinced of the veracity of certain narratives, my interlocutors sometimes believed and acted in accordance with disputed narratives, while dismissing them as useless in other instances. It is important to note, however, that there were others who were thoroughly dedicated to partisan narratives and viewed proponents of other histories as morally reprehensible. Whether or not they perceived accounts of past events to be “true,” and whether or not they supported positions inspired by such events, historical organization members existed in milieux of tales about the past. These tales influenced their opinions about history and society and

shaped their recourse to traditional tales in making sense and meaning out of the world around them.

Part II: Moralism and Modes of Being

I had woken up again to the sound of Sam singing. Early in the morning when I was barely awake, the gentle lilts of his voice often filled the hallways and cajoled his beloved dogs, Darcy and Mouse, to begrudgingly leave their beds. I had occupied the spare room in Sam's house on the outskirts of York on several occasions, but the singing was new. He was happier – despite several setbacks, such as his divorce that had been dragging on for a year and a half, and his inability to secure a promotion within either of the two Jorvik Group museums in which he worked: Barley Hall, a medieval townhouse museum, and the Henry VII Experience, a museum dedicated to King Henry VII which is located in an old gatehouse within York's medieval city walls. Because he felt unfulfilled with regards to his job, Sam consistently threw himself into researching local history and current events in his free time. Although he was employed at attractions that focused on elite figures of local history, Sam believed foremost in the history of "ordinary people" and felt that museums and scholars of history focused far too much on famous historic figures. He believed that the information that scholars could glean from larger numbers of "ordinary" citizens would have much further-reaching implications than a set of facts about one monarch. Perhaps this was a result of his training as an archaeologist – Sam held a Master's degree in archaeology, having focused on ancient dogs' teeth and what they could demonstrate about the relationship between humans and dogs hundreds and even thousands of years ago. Sam was one of several of my interlocutors who claimed to believe foremost in "facts," and, to him, archaeology provided insight into irrefutable truth. It was something about the bones – Sam believed that they held valuable secrets, and that they were incapable of lying.



[14. Sam in July 2016.]

Chapter Three: The Stakes of History: “Alternative” Narratives and Self-Representation

I sat in Michon’s office a number of times and heard her voice frustration with local museum boards and the State Historic Preservation Office of Nevada, whose positions were occupied almost entirely by non-Native people who regularly made critical decisions for local tribal communities. Michon was the head of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony’s Cultural Resource Program, whose mission statement explained that the program “revitalizes and perpetuates culture by its active expression of sovereignty through the preservation, protection and management of Native American cultural resources and traditional cultural properties throughout Washoe County, Nevada” (Reno-Sparks Indian Colony Cultural Resources Program). However, Michon felt limited in this capacity due to her perception that the other boards involved in upholding this goal had consistently fallen short of meeting the needs of her people, most notably because of their support for archaeology and what Michon termed “science.” She perceived it as criminal what the force she referred to as “science” had done to her culture; one of the many issues Michon took with “science” was the fact that it essentially rendered tribal cultures objects of the past in the public imaginary. Michon offered me an apt illustration of this notion in stating that countless museums had placed exhibits on local tribes directly after those of prehistory and before sections dedicated to the arrival of settlers, suggesting that Native American culture was trapped in the past. As a more fundamental critique, it seemed criminal to her that her culture should be rendered an object at all. Michon and other advocates for tribal self-representation continued to fight the forces which threatened a comprehensive and accurate understanding of their people. “Archaeology is comprised of theories and opinions, not fact,” Michon would often say

firmly. As the first and only “cultural resource person” for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Michon had paved the way for tribal communities’ improved expressions of sovereignty, though it had felt to her like an uphill battle much of the time. She had been determined to improve relevant legislation as well as the wider Nevada community’s understanding of Native Americans, and she once explained her foundation for such work in saying quite simply: “I am very outspoken, very strong, and I have my cultural beliefs.”

Michon and other members of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony engaged in activities that promoted what they deemed to be an oppressed narrative about their people’s history. Following from David Hurst Thomas’ *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* – a book she referenced often – Michon suffered from the fact that “Indian people in the present tense were ‘inauthentic’ because their culture differed from that of centuries ago. ‘Their memories were authentic,’ writes Philip Deloria, ‘even if their lives were not.’” (Thomas 2000: 46). In a world in which their experiences were either declared to be false or reduced to a footnote in dominant discourses of history, residents and employees at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony engaged in “indigenous interruptions” (Simpson 2014) and “infrapolitics” (Scott 2012) in order to educate the public about their past and present lives and ensure the continuity of their histories.

The Fight for Memory

Michon was born in Reno, Nevada but spent much of her childhood living in a traditional adobe home in Death Valley, California. This meant that, when she moved to

Death Valley, she had foregone readily available TV and McDonald's for a life without electricity. Although she initially resisted this drastic change, she began to love this way of life because it allowed her to be immersed in her culture. Michon was the youngest of 7 children whose mother was a cultural advocate and fought for her tribe to be federally recognized. Traditional culture was the lifeblood of their home, and Michon nurtured a growing sense of pride in her culture throughout her youth. Michon attended university, planning the entire time to return to Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and assist her people in any way possible. She earned a Bachelor's and a Master's in social work and returned to her community as a social worker, a position which she eventually found unfeasible because she knew everyone in the community personally. She was contending with cases involving such tragic situations as abuse and neglect but was personally implicated due to her relationships with those involved. "It was just too hard to see these things," she had told me. Around this time in the 1990's, the Colony was fighting a Chicago oil company that was attempting to dig a pit adjacent to the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. This situation led the community to realize that they needed someone to be in charge of their cultural resources, and many people encouraged Michon to carve out this nonexistent position. Michon left her job as a social worker and became, as she called it, the "cultural resource person." "I've been a cultural resource person all my life," she said, referring to her pride in and activism for her culture even before she held her current position. Michon was the first and only cultural resource person for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, and this position placed her at the forefront of many battles in which she sought to uphold the colony's autonomy. "It's not a humanistic world," Michon once stated matter-of-factly. "People don't necessarily want to do the right thing." As a result,

Michon's daily struggle was ensuring to the best of her ability that what was "right" prevailed.

Michon derived great joy from her work as a cultural resource person, not only because it allowed her to assert her people's views and beliefs but also because, as she said, her job was spiritual. Her ancestors handcrafted the objects in the Cultural Resource Program's exhibit, and when they made these works of art such as baskets, dolls, and beaded images, they were praying incessantly.



[15. A beaded image of past Paiute chiefs overlooking Pyramid Lake.]



[16. Dolls in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's Cultural Resource Program's exhibit.]



[17. A stuffed animal of Scooby Doo in the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's Cultural Resource Program's exhibit. Michon asked her co-workers if they could "Indian him up," so they gave him a beaded collar and a drum.]

She felt this spiritual energy in the presence of these objects and in the work she did to maintain the values that they represented to the community. Michon created a nurturing home for these objects, some of which she personally repatriated from various museums. She told me that her ancestors' spirits were attached to the items with nameless creators that were displayed around the Cultural Resource Program's building, and the spirits of her ancestors suffered when the objects were not cared for properly. The restitution she gave these pieces for being snatched by archaeologists and held hostage in cold and uncaring museums both brought her joy and fueled her intense desire to amend state laws surrounding the handling and "ownership" of pieces of her tribe's history. One of Michon's greatest recent victories lay in the fact that she helped to amend Nevada Revised Statute 383 Protection of Indian Burial Sites, a law surrounding human remains and repatriation. However, as often was the case, this achievement was not won without a battle.

Rebecca, the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer, had staunchly opposed many of Michon's efforts. An unpopular figure with Reno-Sparks Indian Colony employees and residents, non-Native Rebecca had handled all of Nevada's repatriation cases since she took her position in 1994 and had sat on a multitude of decision-making boards dealing with Native American sacred objects, human remains, and land. While she had been forced to concede to the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) which was passed in 1990 and outlines procedures for the repatriation of Native American sacred objects and human remains, it seemed that she had rarely done so without a fight. Championing archaeology and science and being a trained archaeologist herself, Rebecca, according to a few sources at Reno-Sparks Indian Colony,

once argued that it would be immoral *not* to dig in an Indian burial ground because of the information science could gain from such a pursuit. This statement was diametrically opposed to Native American values and wishes, which involved the dead remaining undisturbed. Scott, Michon's boss, a non-Native, and the Planning Director for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, was especially vocal about the injustice of the State Historic Preservation Officer's terms surrounding archaeological digs and repatriation laws. "To what end?" he once asked me in private. "The information they find out is not so valuable that it should override a living culture. It is disrespectful and wrong to dig people up to study them while their culture is still alive."

Scott focused primarily on facilitating colony members' expressions of sovereignty through the construction of communal spaces, and he and I spent time in several coffee shops, restaurants, and bars talking about his 16-year career as the Planning Director for Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. Over coffee in a local bagel shop he once admitted to me that certain of his ideas were too incongruous with tribal cultures to have been feasible for the community, but he consistently operated with the "seventh generation" principle in mind, meaning that he contemplated the effects that each of his decisions would have on the people living in the Colony seven generations in the future. Scott told me that he was half Czech and half Australian and, because he had immigrant parents, he had always had exposure to other cultures – especially when his family lived in what he called a "poor immigrant neighborhood" in San Francisco when he was a child. "My father worked for an airline and my mother had wanderlust," Scott said, explaining why he had traveled such a great deal as a child. When he graduated from high school he became a land surveyor, and he decided that this work would be much

more interesting overseas than in the U.S. This led him to work in South Africa and various other African countries, as well as Iraq and Indonesia, over a three year period. When he returned to the U.S., he attended college for geography and historical preservation. Once he had completed his degree, he began working for the regional planning agency. However, this soon lost its luster for him, and he decided that he needed what he referred to as “the extra lens of culture.” “I like being the observer,” he explained. He then told me that, in order to be a non-Native working for a tribal community, “you have to have thick skin, which I do... a little bit.” He was referring to the way in which Native people frequently made derogatory comments about white people, which could be interpreted as a type of indigenous “interruption” (Simpson 2014) of dominant culture. “I understand where they are coming from,” he said, “not that that justifies it. But if I said something about it, I wouldn’t be the observer anymore.”

Whether out of interest in “observing” or empathy, Scott persevered in attempting to build relationships with his Native co-workers. He assured me that these remarks he had heard were not about white Western *individuals* – meaning that they were not personal – they were about a culture which had historically been omnipresent for and critical of Native Americans. Scott understood this, and he did not mind the comments; after all, during his time at the Indian Colony, he had been able to “live history instead of just reading it in books.” He had heard horrible stories from elders that were often silenced in mainstream representations of history; they told him tales of being snatched and taken to boarding schools or being unable to walk the streets of Reno after dark for fear of being arrested for violation of the Indian curfew. Thus, with such a vastly different experience of the world, Scott was struggling, “going uphill trying to build trust and relationships”

when he first began working at Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. “There’s more overt discrimination here than anywhere else I’ve been,” Scott told me. “But the Native Americans have experienced a lot of discrimination. It’s at the forefront of who they are. Because they were always reminded that they are Indian, it’s embedded in their lens that I’m white. It’s not personal – we’re talking about culture.” He echoed Michon’s sentiments that Native American culture had consistently been treated as a curiosity or something to study, and also that it had frequently been dismissed as a thing of the past. Because of this, he recognized that Native Americans’ comments about white Western people “are not meant to hurt, they’re just part of the vocabulary.”

Scott justified this by stating that “definitely a tribe is about discrimination. You’re either Paiute or you’re not. It’s about a collective understanding. That’s how you survive. It’s a primitive expression, but... a tribe is an extension of family.” Despite this type of “discrimination,” Scott earned his place in Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and, at the time of my research, was widely liked and respected. Members of the tribe once presented him with a ceremonial ribbon shirt and he collected volumes of oral histories from several tribal elders for the Cultural Resource Program’s Oral Histories Project, which sought to spread awareness of the particulars of Native American lives.

“Personally, I don’t feel guilty,” Scott once said, referring to white guilt. “I wasn’t responsible for the past.” However, he maintained an understanding that other people held different perspectives, that they “really associate themselves with being white or Western.” He also contended that there were liberal people who immersed themselves in another culture because it eased the pain of their white guilt, though this stance was, according to him, far from his own reasoning for working for a tribal organization. I

once explicitly discussed with Scott my observation that the majority of the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony's management was non-Native, and he explained that this was because people were hired foremost "for their skills rather than their race," which demonstrated that employees of tribal organizations entertained explanations for these power dynamics that they regarded as rational and acceptable.⁸

However, it is clear that they rarely, if ever, spoke about the fact that so many white non-Natives occupied their organizations' positions of power. This dearth of discussion surrounding culture and race was also apparent within the Nevada Indian Commission, a state agency whose "activities are aimed at developing and improving cooperation and communications between the Tribes, State, local governments, and related public agencies with the purpose of improving, education, employment, health, well-being and socio-economic status of Nevada's American Indian citizens and enhancing tribal sovereignty, economic opportunities and community development" (About the Nevada Indian Commission). The Nevada Indian Commission oversaw the project through which certain buildings within Stewart Indian School, an Indian boarding

⁸ This same power dynamic was apparent in the significant police presence in any area where there was a high percentage of Native Americans. I once asked Scott if this was because there is a certain number of colony police in addition to the regular police force, or if there was more surveillance in areas highly populated with Native Americans. He began to answer by saying that every police officer underwent the same training; however, once they became police, the tribal police's jurisdiction was limited to tribal land and Native Americans. Non-natives who violated the law were deferred to local (non-tribal) police. Scott explained that there were more police in the area because tribal land constituted a smaller land base and a smaller population, and the police aimed to deter crime through making themselves a presence. He made sure to say that this did not mean that there were higher crime rates in areas highly populated with Native Americans; it was simply a function of how many police populated a given area and how much land they held jurisdiction over. He added that it was difficult to staff the police force on tribal land. "They want to hire people from within the community," Scott said, "but how do you arrest family members? How do you effectively uphold the law in a community where you grew up?" These issues resulted in many of the police in tribal areas being non-Native.

that operated between 1890 and 1980, would be renovated in order to become a museum of local tribal history. Within the Stewart Indian School community, there was obvious tension between the positive memories of community and school pride and the negative ones that left deep emotional scars on alumni. With the beginning of Bobbi and Chris' involvement with the museum project, people belonging to the very culture which instigated this violence against Native Americans had been occupying the highest managerial positions in the forthcoming museum. In order to temper the problematic nature of this situation and represent Stewart in the most accurate way possible, Bobbi and Chris assembled a council of alumni to inform the museum's presentation and message. "It's not our story," Bobbi explained. "We can facilitate the story being told, but we can't tell it."

When the subject of cultural differences did crop up, most people with whom I spoke seemed exceedingly uncomfortable with the topic. When I asked Chris why so many non-Natives worked for the Nevada Indian Commission, she certainly seemed to be evading the question; she provided an answer, however, in stating that, in some cases, job applicants applied to work at any state agency in Nevada, meaning that they did not necessarily apply directly to the Indian Commission. She added that having a greater amount of tribal input would be better, but "that's not how the process works." I found overall that secretary and warehouse jobs in both the Indian Commission and Reno-Sparks Indian Colony were occupied by Native Americans, while managerial positions were most often occupied by non-Natives. The fact that this replicated the structure of colonialism was not insignificant, given the historical context. There was an *absence* of explicit and earnest discussion about culture and race which was equally as noticeable as

the presence of a discussion would have been. This void rendered it difficult for actors to situate themselves structurally and historically within the organizations to which they belonged.

In addition, it is necessary to ponder the reasons why, when people were “hired foremost for their skills rather than their race,” people of the same race and culture were chosen for managerial positions the vast majority of the time. Scott once told me that, in order to live on the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, one must earn below a certain amount of yearly income. This resulted in many of the residents hovering near the poverty line. In addition, people who served on the tribal council were required to live on the colony’s land; Scott contended that, because of these regulations, the council was composed primarily of people who had not been financially successful and who had not lived outside the colony and experienced other modes of operation. Though Scott blamed this cycle for what he regarded as the plethora of “bad” decisions that the council made, it could also partially explain why actual residents of the colony were relegated to lower-status positions within the organization, due to the fact that access to education and other opportunities has historically been imbalanced when it has come to Native Americans. Both Scott and Chris, however, were operating under the assumptions of a particular form of cultural determinism which expected an even playing field for white Westerners and Native Americans. The way in which Scott used the term “culture” was as shorthand for “race;” however, it seemed that Native American members of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony did not make such a connection. In racializing Native Americans in a way that did not align with what they themselves believed about differences between people, Scott and Chris were inadvertently imposing the same type of problematic framework on

Native American members of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and the Nevada Indian Commission as white Western non-members of either organization, who did not understand the particulars of Native American lives.

How, exactly, then, did the process “work” and why had it not placed more Native Americans in managerial positions in organizations that were represented as being run for and by their own people? For another partial explanation we may turn to Rofel’s (1992) work, in which Chinese factory employees made a point of resorting to activities during work which harken back to modes of labor in China’s past, such as chatting, smoking, or relaxing in the sun during work hours. At Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Scott, a white non-Native employee, had been subject to many derisive comments and jokes about white Western people in general. Similar to Rofel’s informants’ behavior, this could be interpreted as an agentic practice on the part of Native Americans that expressed their discontent with the structuring of the organization. For the very same reason that Native Americans did not occupy many managerial positions, they could not afford to express this discontent outside of culturally acceptable venues such as rote comments and jokes about white people. Following from Rofel’s work, Calvão (2016) asks “how structures of domination and feeling are abstracted and thus, we claim, are hidden and obscured from the agents of production, and second, how these invisible structures come to bear on and become perceivable through social life” (Calvão 2016: 458). It was precisely the aforementioned quotidian activities that demonstrated recognition of and resistance to these invisible structures; I suggest that, in the cases of tribal organizations in Northern Nevada, resisting surveillance and other forms of power enacted upon indigenous peoples took the form *not* of mimicking dominant culture (e.g.,

taking positions that white people created and occupied), but rather disagreeing with the very premise of the power that was enacted upon them and expressing this through venues which were socially acceptable within Native American populations. This follows from the notion that Native Americans fundamentally disagreed with white Western modes of operation and, in times of both war and supposed peace, the two cultures were “talking past” one another for centuries. This line of thought is reminiscent of James Scott’s argument surrounding what he terms “infrapolitics;” in his book *Two Cheers for Anarchism* he suggests that “the great emancipatory gains for human freedom have not been the result of orderly, institutional procedures but of disorderly, unpredictable, spontaneous action cracking open the social order from below” (Scott 2012: 141). Scott contends that “infrapolitics” are inconspicuous methods of resistance occurring within the parameters of the hegemony which are practiced day to day and not necessarily recognized by hegemonic groups as being acts of resistance.

I do not mean to conclude that it was problematic for these organizations to have non-Natives present on their governing boards; what I suggest instead is that there were certain settler narratives with which non-Native Nevadans were enculturated that became manifest in their work and perpetuated problematic cycles vis-à-vis their relations to Native Americans. Although Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and the Nevada Indian Commission aimed to be sensitive to the needs of local tribal communities, the constellation of state-run agencies that addressed Indian affairs in Northern Nevada – including the aforementioned – reproduced problematic cultural dynamics through their hiring patterns and the subsequent opposition to tribal values that was inherent in certain non-Native employees’ perspectives. Furthermore, the way in which a problematic

cultural framework was blindly reproduced by white Western members of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and Nevada Indian Commission and imposed on Native Americans was, although unintentionally, a wolf in sheep's clothing. It was possible that Native American members of these organizations believed that their white Western managers understood their plight and aimed to rectify it, but perhaps they were able to see the pitfalls of such an ideology and act accordingly.

On Sovereignty

Despite such structural quandaries internal to Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the organization had become quite successful, at least fiscally speaking. Having risen economically due to renting some of its land to a Walmart Supercenter and various car dealerships in Reno, at the time of my research, the Colony owned several smoke shops and a considerable amount of land.⁹ The current chairman had held his position for 25 years, which employees considered to be a long time, and this lent to the Colony's stability. Scott summarized the relationship between Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, a sovereign entity as an Indian Colony, and the local government by saying that it was a relationship of mutual respect. He elaborated, stating that Reno-Sparks Indian Colony treated the American government as a complementary government, and they had traditionally had open dialogue. According to Scott, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony also consistently measured their actions with the question: "will it be a win-win situation in the end?" Scott believed that, although the colony had historically been subject to federal

⁹ In Nevada, Native American-run businesses are allowed to keep the state taxes they receive on products they sell, so it is particularly advantageous for Native Americans to sell tobacco products due to the significant taxes on them.

law but not state law, it had acted in many ways that were consistent with the state government. “When they acquire land for commercial purposes, they ask: to what extent can we grow and expand while adhering to the local government’s vision but staying within our principles?” Scott explained. This being said, the colony had the freedom as a sovereign entity to make decisions that were different from those of the state government. For example, at the time when I was conducting research, the colony was working with Truckee Meadows Water in order to allow them to run a connector through colony land, which the local government had not allowed on their land. “People at the Colony felt that this would be mutually beneficial, and they decided to allow it,” Scott said. He noted that the government viewed Reno-Sparks Indian Colony as fairly innocuous, and, overall, there was significant mutual understanding between the two governing bodies.

Although Scott painted a picture of sufficient cohesion, Native and non-Native views on governance, community life, and history were often in tension with one another. An example may be found in Native American responses to Scott’s ideas for the proposed cultural center at Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and for the Cultural Resource Program’s Veteran’s Day exhibit. Scott had thought that his grand plan for the cultural center would have gotten immediate traction, and he was quite surprised when it did not. It contained such symbolic notions as having three buildings; one to represent the past, one to represent the present, and one to represent the future. “Why has it been such a challenge?” he asked me. “Is it because a white messenger is promoting it?” Apart from this notion, he did have another theory. He believed that Indians preferred to practice culture in what he called an “organic” way, which I interpreted as meaning that they did not want to organize and compartmentalize their cultures and lives in the way that

Westerners have. This idea of separating culture out (for example, in Scott's idea of erecting buildings to represent the past, present, and future) was perhaps unappealing and unnatural to them and may have been seen as "imposing framework on their culture." Scott expanded on this topic, telling me that the Cultural Resource Program's exhibit of Native-made baskets had been extremely popular and many people came to see it. However, the subsequent Veteran's Day exhibit - which focused on one veteran who hailed from Reno-Sparks Indian Colony - was not as well received. Scott believed that this was because "the very nature of the tribe is the collective, not the individual," and the display of one person's accolades was not as respected as something made by nameless ancestors or the collective.

Scott consistently made a concerted effort to act in accordance with tribal beliefs and values, and this earned him the position as a respected member of the community. However, there were people who were involved with Reno-Sparks Indian Colony who were generally considered to be more of a hinderance than a help to the community's efforts. An apt example could be found in Rebecca, Nevada's State Historic Preservation Officer, who oversaw all cases of repatriation of human remains in Nevada and had been involved in a multitude of other of the colony's decision-making processes since 1994 when she took this position. She told me in her clean and polished office in Carson City, Nevada that her mission was to "provide guidance and assistance to sister state agencies, local governments, and private nonprofits," but some, such as Michon and Scott, would argue that her methods of doing so were at least inconsiderate, at most cruel and unjust to tribal organizations. Theoretically, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office was independent and did not answer to the State Historic Preservation Office; it operated in

exactly the same way as the State Historic Preservation Office but within its own jurisdiction. However, there were often disagreements and issues that arose surrounding the decrees which the State Historic Preservation Office imposed on the Tribal Historic Preservation Office. Rebecca acknowledged to me that there were disagreements – in fact, perhaps frequent disagreements – but she qualified her answer by saying that “the responsibility isn’t mine, it’s the federal agency’s.” She explained that Native objects or human remains were often found off of tribal land, and in these cases the Tribal Historic Preservation Office could represent the tribe, but the federal agency ultimately did the necessary evaluation in order to decide the fate of these objects or remains. Furthermore, the tribe had only been consulted if the objects were of religious significance because these were the only objects covered by the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), a federal statute established in 1990 in order to facilitate the repatriation of human remains and sacred or ceremonial objects to Native American tribes. Rebecca explained that burial laws were particular to each state unless NAGPRA had applied, in which case, it became a federal issue. Rebecca told me that she had always preferred to preserve human remains in place in order to avoid disturbing them, but they could not always be left. For example, if there was a property development and remains were found, those remains had to be relocated. She emphasized again that if something that was found was not of religious significance, Native Americans did not have more influence than anyone else in deciding what would happen to it.

Michon had previously made me aware of the extremely slow speed and precarious nature of repatriation, so I asked Rebecca how quickly an object could be repatriated. “The speed of repatriation depends on the responsiveness of the parties,”

Rebecca said. “My preference is to give as much time as is needed. I want to give the tribe as much time as I can.” The latest statute, which Rebecca showed me, stated that a tribe must respond within 10 days of being notified of the remains or object, or else they would lose the ability to decide its fate. I asked what would happen if there was no response, and Rebecca said that in this case the property owner would decide what to do with the remains. There were a few rules, of course; the property owner could not destroy them, and they would be encouraged to continue working with descendants of the deceased to eventually repatriate the remains. However, this type of follow-up was not enforced as far as I could tell.

Perhaps part of the reason why repatriation took so long – and why, reputedly, someone working in Rebecca’s office was 10 years behind on repatriating human remains – was because of the vast numbers of human remains that the State Historic Preservation Office had to process. Rebecca told me that a morphological analysis was used most often to determine whether the body was Native American, Asian, or non-native. In a morphological analysis, scientists look at features of the bones and attempt to determine which racial group they most likely belong to. However, sometimes experts were unable to tell from the evidence they had (for example, if all they had was a femur). In this type of case, the State Historic Preservation Office treated the remains as if they were Native, just in case. This meant that, in theory, any remains found in Nevada were treated as Native and had to be analyzed before the State Historic Preservation Officer could initiate the repatriation process. 10 days was not always enough for a tribe to gather their council, discuss the issue, and decide on a course of action, according to Michon.

However, Rebecca did not see the issue in this way that people such as Michon and Scott saw it.

Knowing that archaeology had significantly informed Rebecca's *modus operandi*, I once asked her how she saw the role of archaeology in Nevada's tourism and development. She said that archaeology was incredibly valuable in providing information about populations that did not receive attention previously (otherwise known as underrepresented populations). She added that it provided tangible evidence, and, in some cases, it was the only evidence left of a phenomenon or way of life. According to Rebecca, the hardest part of the archaeological process was crafting an interpretive message that would not "confuse the public." She had been trying to encourage more archaeological interpretation in museums and discussions about Nevada's history, because she believed that archaeology told a story that had not yet been told. Primarily, though, she hoped to "provide a connection between modern Nevada citizens and citizens from prior centuries." I asked why she believed that such a connection was important and she replied that people need to understand Nevada history and how it developed. "The problem is that a lot of the population has recently arrived in Nevada and they have no connection to the state's history," she said. She felt a compelling need to explain the importance and relevance of Nevada history to these people's lives. "The apex of a civilization is when they recognize and value their history," she contended. However, she noted that "a narrative standing alone falls flat," meaning that stories without visual evidence are difficult to engage with, while, in theory, objects are relatable for everyone. She also hoped to use archaeology and ancient objects to encourage people to become

stewards so that they would not vandalize or destroy historical sites. “We have to give them that sense of connection,” she said.

I asked Rebecca about the role of modern Native populations in archaeology and Nevada history, and she said that a great deal of the information “we” have about cultural practices has come from Native populations. “It’s an invaluable source of information,” she explained. However, she qualified this by saying that it was “information about cultures prior to Euro-American arrival.” In this statement she was relegating Native Americans to the past, just as Michon lamented that many non-Natives had done. However, Michon took specific issue with the State Historic Preservation Officer’s relegation of Native peoples to the past because the State Historic Preservation Office made many decisions which impacted the Tribal Historic Preservation Office and Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. In fact, most of the pieces of information Rebecca offered me about Native Americans had something to do with prehistory. She offered insight into the contestation of land between Native groups in the Great Basin, stating that, in prehistoric times,

there was a significant amount of movement around the Great Basin because of resource scarcity. If one tribe was unable to procure a certain type of resource, they would ask permission from a neighboring tribe to hunt or gather on their land. This meant that boundaries were very fluid. When settlers came and established rigid land boundaries, this became difficult for people whose ancestors used land that was allocated to another tribe.

Her contextualization of Native Americans in the past was just the perspective that Michon pointed out as being deleterious – Michon had asked, how can non-Natives

understand Native cultures and respect Native peoples if they were under the impression that such Native peoples existed only in the past? However, Rebecca said that she encouraged ethnography of Native populations in order to facilitate deeper knowledge of their culture and traditions. She said that she did not believe that “the Native perspective” was as appreciated as it should be (note the mistaken use of the singular, rather than plural “perspectives” and “cultures” that would acknowledge the multiplicity of tribes in the U.S.). Rebecca continued, stating that “we wouldn’t conduct any excavations now without the participation of the people related to those who created the site. We always want the participation of descendants.” When I repeated this last statement to Scott, he exclaimed that it was “a load of bullshit;” he was referring to Rebecca’s claim that she had always consulted tribal groups when excavating, as well as the notion that she believed that tribal groups should be consulted. Michon visibly disagreed with what Rebecca had said, but she was as diplomatic as ever. She had had time to perfect her public persona, though; after all, she had dealt with this sort of perspective and treatment for the entirety of her life.

Myth, Legend, and Current Events

The power dynamic between Native American oral histories and what Michon referred to as “science” could also be found in the very language used to describe each party’s histories. “Don’t say ‘myth’ or legend,” Michon once corrected me after I had used the terms without thinking. “That’s offensive. We call our stories ‘oral histories.’ ‘Myth’ and ‘legend’ have a negative connotation, like they’re not true.” Sputtering an explanation about how I was not referring to Native American oral histories but rather

locally-spun tales and ghost stories in English and white Western societies, I soon recognized that my scrambled explanation was futile. Michon had clearly endured decades of derision in fighting for her people's oral histories, to the point at which she cringed at the very words "myth" and "legend." What was the difference, however, between myth, legend, and what my interlocutors referred to as "history"? And what happens when a group of people has an agenda to establish a story as truth when others may or may not believe their version of events? Wally, one of the oldest and longest-standing members of the Nevada County Historical Society, was sitting in Searls Historic Library in Nevada City, California, flipping through a binder in a desperate attempt to find some crucial piece of information. I asked him what he was looking for and he gave me a short and uninformative response. I continued to ask questions and, though he was clearly irritated, Wally told me that his frantic search had to do with a group of people who had claimed to be the local tribe of Nevada City five years before and had sought the Nevada County Historical Society's endorsement. "They aren't real Indians," Wally explained, "they're usurpers." After telling me that this was an extremely complicated matter that he couldn't sum up in 30 seconds, he offered an abridged version of the story. Apparently, after this "tribe" had asked for the historical society's endorsement, the Nisenan tribe came forward and disputed the group's claim that they were the local tribe of Nevada City. The Nisenan contended instead that *they* were the tribe indigenous to what is now Nevada City. Pat, the head librarian at Searls, had been listening to our conversation and she interjected at this point she and many others believed that the "fake Indians" were seeking federal recognition as a tribe, which would have allowed them to build a casino. Casinos located on Indian land were historically notorious for the income

they accumulated for the tribes which owned them, and members of the Nevada County Historical Society doubtless believed that this group of people was seeking a means of significant income. When the group of “usurpers” asked for endorsement, the Nevada County Historical Society agreed to endorse the group without having done any kind of background check, only to discover the truth years later. At the time that Wally was searching through the historical society’s documents, he had been asked to provide proof of the endorsement in order to document the event. Pat added that once the Nevada County Historical Society signed a document which rescinded their previous position and stated that the Nisenan were the true local tribe, the other “tribe” left town and refused to conduct further business in Nevada City and nearby Grass Valley. Apparently, they relocated to a place near Yuba City, a town about 45 minutes away. “They are white people,” Wally concluded. “Posers.” Pat sighed and added, “we admitted we had made a mistake.”

What led those in charge of the Nevada County Historical Society at the time to agree to endorse the group of interlopers so quickly and without a background check? Their exclusive focus on settler history had resulted in their knowing very little about tribal history in even the area where they had lived and researched local history. The individuals in leadership positions in the historical society were doubtless attempting to do the right thing by endorsing the usurpers, but their commitment to and exclusive knowledge of settler history hindered them through leaving them with little knowledge of Native American history even in their own region. Much as Trouillot describes in his work on silences in accounts of history (Trouillot 1995), working “truths” have been established in this case that do not take into account essential pieces of evidence, and

people have operated under the assumption that these stories are true. However, as Trouillot notes, “historical process has some autonomy vis-a-vis the narrative. It is to admit that as ambiguous and contingent as it is, the boundary between what happened and that which is said to have happened is necessary” (Trouillot 1995: 13). For this reason, “At some stage, for reasons that are themselves historical, most often spurred by controversy, collectivities experience the need to impose a test of credibility on certain events and narratives because it matters *to them* whether these events are true or false, whether these stories are fact or fiction” (Trouillot 1995: 11).

As evidenced by the Nisenan tribe’s intervention in the situation surrounding the “usurpers” and the Nevada County Historical Society, as well as the work Michon performed on a daily basis for almost three decades, many Native American scholars and activists had attempted to rectify what they deemed to be misinformation that resulted from such a settler’s viewpoint of local history. Another pertinent example may be found in the fact that non-Native “experts” insisted that the Paiute-Shoshone tribe had lived in Northern Nevada for only 500-1,000 years, while the Paiute-Shoshone people claimed that they had occupied this land since the beginning of time. This issue came to a head with the discovery and genetic testing of Spirit Cave Man, a mummy found in a cave on federal land near Pyramid Lake in 1940 whose origins were contested for over 70 years before his repatriation to the Fallon, Nevada Paiute-Shoshone tribe in 2016. “Science fought it until the very end,” Michon told me, shaking her head.



[18. Pyramid Lake on Nevada's Paiute reservation, where Spirit Cave Man was discovered.]

Although Michon had always been extremely wary of what she called “science,” for the first time she recounted a story about a “good scientist” who helped the tribe with the repatriation of Spirit Cave Man. Apparently, this man had proven that Kennewick Man, an ancient skeleton with hotly contested origins who was found in Washington, was the ancestor of several Columbia Basin tribes. After conducting thorough and what he termed “gentle” genetic testing, he was able to facilitate the return of the bones to a coalition of tribes. This scientist, whose name was Eske Willerslev, invited the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone tribe to his lab, where he demonstrated that he was not using invasive techniques to test bones, which many Native Americans found offensive due to the damage that such processes did to the skeleton. The Fallon Paiute-Shoshone tribe agreed to allow Willerslev to conduct tests on Spirit Cave Man in hopes that such conclusive

tests would allow them to finally lay their ancestor back to rest. Willerslev found that the mummy lived more than 9,200 years ago - making him the oldest mummy found in North America - and was most closely related to the Paiute-Shoshone tribe, which allowed for the Bureau of Land Management to repatriate the mummy.

On the day of the private and somewhat secretive reburial of Spirit Cave Man in 2018, the Fallon tribe called Michon and asked her to attend the ceremony. Everyone present feared that there would be some sort of last-minute ploy by the Bureau of Land Management to stop the tribe from burying the mummy, so they kept the ceremony quite small. The Fallon tribe asked Michon to pick up Kennewick man's family on the way, who had come to witness this great victory of a tribe against the juggernaut of "science." Through Kennewick Man's family, Michon was introduced to the good and kind scientist Eske Willerslev who had restored their ancestor to them. She mentioned that she had asked if Willerslev had received hate mail from other scientists, and he confirmed that he often did, being that he had overturned several scientists' theories. She noted that "science" still would not believe that Spirit Cave Man was Paiute-Shoshone because he was proven to be about 9,200 years old and "science" believed that Paiutes had only been in this area for 500-1,000 years. Furthermore, there was another skeleton found that was tested and proven to be about 9,000 years old and related to Paiutes. However, according to Michon, this was hushed by "science" because it contradicted standing theories. "With archaeologists it's an ego thing," Michon explained. "They have these conferences, they drink a lot, and it's all about ego."

The fact that so many non-Native scientists clung to histories that had been proven false – even in their own terms – is a result of what I term "settler legend." Settler

legend is a sequence of events which has been constructed in order to legitimize settler history and authorize those who benefit from it. However, the genetic testing of Spirit Cave Man is particularly interesting because it was a case in which Native Americans used science against itself, proving their oral histories to have been more accurate than the Western alternative through the use of a scientific technique. Many scientists were, as Michon put it, “blown out of the water” by Willerslev’s testing of Spirit Cave Man. One such individual was Doug Oswald, who clung tenaciously to his theory that the Paiute-Shoshone had only been living in Northern Nevada for 500-1,000 years. Michon once told me that she had attended a talk of his at the University of Nevada Reno, and, without intending to, she and other members of her tribe burst into uncontrollable laughter when he asserted facts that they all knew to be false. Although they did not question him out of fear of being perceived as antagonistic, a student asked a question which illuminated the fact that his theories could not be correct, which Michon saw as evidence that tribe members were not holding an unreasonable grudge but were rather taking legitimate issue with inconsistencies in certain scientists’ theories.

What Really Happened?

This type of contestation on their part was ever framed, however, in the context of justice and the establishment of truth. As Michel Foucault notes in his “Two Lectures,” “we are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (Foucault 1980: 93). This is because, as he contends, power is inherently implicated in – and operates through – discourse. The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony’s Cultural Resources Program combatted dominant

narratives that had proven to be either deleterious or offensive to their members; however, much to their chagrin, they found that their crafted “truth” must be measured next to the “truth” that had traditionally been championed in wider American society. Why? We are forced into a cycle of producing knowledge (or submitting knowledge that has already been produced) as a form of truth, measured against the discourse which is considered truth. The marginal discourse must take on the dominant discourse’s terms in order to *even be intelligible to those who hold the dominant narrative*. Of course, this does not mean that a population must “give in;” there are several instances in which people have used the dominant narrative against the very people who held that narrative (Sahlins 1985). Discourse is essential to this conversation not only in terms of determining truth, but also in terms of remembering. As Jennifer Cole argues, “remembering is constituted by the particular discourses of which it is a part, and it is always occasioned by, and subordinated to, the socially constituted needs and struggles of individuals and the social discourses through which they are expressed” (Cole 2001: 25). Discourse is thus in a paradoxical position in which it both fosters and qualifies the ability to remember and effectively communicate those memories.

Yet we still have the issue of how to refer to discourses that are disadvantaged through a power differential. These dispossessed or widely disregarded knowledges are what MacDonald refers to in her book *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* as “other histories” (MacDonald 2013: 43). Sometimes these local or regional accounts of history and historical events differ from national accounts that are endorsed by larger populations, and sometimes they reinforce them. This is a fairly neutral term which is able to encapsulate all sorts of knowledge across a span of interpretations of

marginality. However, MacDonald's definition does not take into account the power dynamic associated with this process of evaluating knowledges in terms of their usefulness (or the danger they pose) to the dominant narrative.

Deleuze and Guattari offer the term "minor literature" to describe disenfranchised forms of knowledge. They define a minor literature by three notable characteristics: "deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political, the collective arrangement of utterance" (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 18). This means that minor literature is written in the colonizer's language, it has an inherently political nature, it has collective value (because the political is inextricable from the collective), and it deterritorializes one terrain as it maps another (disrupting and defamiliarizing one area of knowledge while suggesting an alternative). This description "amounts to this: that 'minor' no longer characterizes certain literatures but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established)" (Deleuze and Guattari 1975: 18). Minor literatures can be, then, an in-built condition or possibility in larger schemes of knowledge.

The issue of power is similarly built into Foucault's description of what he terms "subjugated knowledges." He distinguishes between two types: one is "the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systemization" (Foucault 1980: 81). This type of subjugated knowledge connotes the conflict and struggle in the production of knowledge that systematizing thought normalizes. They have been ever present in bodies of historical knowledge, but only revealed by criticism. The second type of subjugated knowledges to which Foucault refers are "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their

task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity” (Foucault 1980: 82). These types of knowledge are often easily written off; however, they also perform a crucial function. Foucault argues that “it is through the re-appearance of this knowledge, of these local popular knowledges, these disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work” (Foucault 1980: 82).

Foucault calls the union of these two types of subjugated knowledge a “genealogy,” emphasizing that they are both concerned with the ‘historical knowledge of struggles’ (Foucault 1980: 83). This draws our attention to the fact that each of these types of knowledge stands in opposition to what Foucault claims is a unitary body of theory that attempts to filter and order them in terms of some perceived truth. Subjugated knowledges thus struggle against science not because they are unscientific, but because they must arise through an *insurrection*. According to Foucault, seeing subjugated knowledges as a genealogy should involve an attempt to liberate them from the struggle against a unitary scientific discourse. The plight of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony when it comes to establishing and upholding sovereignty – both in practical terms and in terms of historical narratives – has provided an excellent example of such a genealogy, being composed of both of Foucault’s categories of subjugated knowledges.

In order to contextualize the power dynamics of history in the particular cases explored above, it is necessary to recognize that members of tribal organizations in Northern Nevada sought vindication for a particular way of thinking about historic events. This need for vindication points directly to a power differential between different groups of people in the ability to create history and my interlocutors’ urgent need to

rectify this. It is common knowledge that archaeology has long shared a problematic history with tribal organizations, yet it was clear from my interactions with members of Reno-Sparks Indian Colony and the State Historic Preservation Office that the two were not coeval in terms of clout or in terms of legitimacy in the eyes of wider American society. Tribal belief systems were the victims of attempted erasure and had continued to be systematically ignored. It is precisely at this nexus of history, culpability, and truth where memory performs an intervention. Some scholars have used the term “memory” to refer to knowledge that has been sustained in local communities for long periods of time and transmitted to successive generations – sometimes known as collective memory [Halbwachs 1992; Connerton 1989; Ricoeur 2008]). However, there is an inherent power dynamic that governs what is called “memory” and what people refer to as “history.”

While “what really happened” may not fit entirely into the categories of “memory” or “history” as they are perceived in mainstream society, a sequence of “true” events *can* be identified as existing within the bounds of a community. As Marshall Sahlins and David Graeber contend, “what actually happens in a given situation is always constituted by cultural significations that transcend the parameters of the happening itself: Bobby Thomson didn’t simply hit the ball over the left-field fence, he won the pennant. The better part of history is atemporal and cultural: not ‘what actually happened,’ but what it is that happened” (Sahlins and Graeber 2017: 17). “What it is that happened” may be found in repositories of “local knowledge” (Geertz 1983) that have been passed along from friends and relatives, informing communities’ views of the past. In this way, “what really happened” is contextually dependent and it follows that belonging in a community or historical organization colors any given person’s version of the truth.

Memory/history was thus at the root of my interlocutors' processes of discerning and fighting for truth. It informed their senses of moralism surrounding notions of justice through the creation and reinforcement of a moralized discourse, substantiated claims regarding the "truthfulness" of historic events, and served as a link between historical organization members and deceased individuals and past circumstances that they perceived to be somehow contiguous to their own lives. It is precisely those forms of memory which stand apart from dominant narratives of history that provide both the material and the rationale for arguing what my interlocutors perceived to be the unsubstantiated claims of dominant narratives. In challenging historical discontinuities, my interlocutors had tested the power structures inherent in the production and reproduction of memory and history, reorganizing narratives in order to reflect "what really happened." However, as I have demonstrated, power is not distributed equally among historical narratives, and this is reflected in the volume and scope of each history's voice.

History is What We're Made Of

"Long ago," Michon began, cradling and rocking the sacred vessel she had personally repatriated, "there were only animals. And they acted as people do." She proceeded to tell me her people's history of creation:

In the beginning there was a Creator, and he crafted a water bottle. He asked Wolf to take the special water bottle which contained special beans along a certain path, at the end of which, he was to set them free. Coyote interfered and said "come on, that Wolf always gets the important jobs! Give me a chance to

prove myself!” Creator knew that Coyote had a history of not finishing tasks, but he gave him a second chance. Coyote took the special water bottle and along the way he became enamored with it; he began to dance with it, kiss it, and celebrate it. Soon enough, the bottle began to rumble. He knew he was instructed specifically not to open the water bottle along the way, but he became so curious that he let it open a little bit. Suddenly, the bottle burst open and the beans came spilling out! These beans became humans who spread all over the world.

This was a rare case in which Native American oral histories and “science” could be interpreted as being in agreement, as Michon had contentedly pointed out. “All human beings are related, and we are made of stars and planets and water,” she said. “Science is finally beginning to prove this.” I was surprised to learn that Michon valued Western forms of knowledge enough to appreciate when her people’s knowledge and that of non-Natives appeared to be mutually intelligible, perhaps almost mirroring one another. When non-Natives recognized her tribe’s oral histories as truth, Michon felt that her truth and her people had been vindicated, and there was a promise of justice - or at least mutual understanding and appreciation – looming just over the horizon.

“Sadly, we’ll never know the truth,” Tristan said one day as we drank black coffee in a local pub. “It’s an important point that history is written by the victors. Whatever you do, wherever you look, you’ll always find contradicting sources. But it’s about finding the correct amount of information. So we can only go off the sources we have.” We were discussing the case of Richard III’s remains, which had supposedly been unearthed in 2012 and had sparked heated debates about the true identity of the skeleton that had lain under a Leicester parking lot for centuries. Tristan, a 28-year old employee at a care home for individuals with disabilities, pondered the question of “the truth” often. Although he readily admitted that his participation in the English Civil War reenactment group The Sealed Knot was entirely for fun and for the purpose of bonding with other organization members, he took local history incredibly seriously and felt that it should be taught more in schools. After pondering Tristan’s response, I asked if it bothered him that he will never know the truth about historical mysteries – incidents that were purported to have happened but had not been proven using conclusive evidence. “Not really, no,” he answered. “Because if everyone knew everything about one subject, no one would research it. So having a bit of mystery there keeps it alive.” The pursuit of truth, for Tristan, was an end in itself. Although he recognized that not all mysteries could be solved, an essential part of achieving vindication for individuals lost to history was to continue to seek the most accurate version of the past.

Chapter Four: “How is That Fair?” Brexit and Ideas of Justice in York, United Kingdom

The referendum in which Britain voted to leave the EU occurred on June 23, 2016 and witnessed one of the largest voter turnouts in British history, with over 30 million citizens voting. While those who wished to remain characterized those who wished to leave as xenophobic and anti-immigration, “Brexiters” felt hindered, their national pride allegedly suppressed by the stubbornness of those who were adamant that Britain should remain within the EU (Evans 2017). 51.9% of the population voted in support of the measure, while 48.1% opposed it (<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-32810887>), cleaving the country in half. The election incited an onslaught of citizens’ bitter criticism of the current British government, leaving nearly half of the population questioning – how could this have been allowed to happen? Given that 53% of those who identified as right wing and 50% of those who identified as left wing voted to leave – in addition to the fact that even those who had previously shown little to no interest in electoral events had come out to vote (Koch 2017) – some scholars have been led to think that, as a study of the election stated, “this debate might be increasingly decided by views on acceptable social behavior and moral fairness, rather than redistribution and the role of the state” (Stewart 2016). Rather than focusing on the actual outcome of the election, this would mean that voters were fixated on the moral implications of casting a particular vote and thus belonging to a certain contingent of citizens, either “leavers” or those who wished to remain. If we accept that this election was more morally inclined than those that had come before, what could have caused the extensive discussion of fairness surrounding the EU referendum? And how were current events and local history, for my interlocutors, fundamentally intertwined with the concepts of fairness and justice?

“Blood and Soil”: Exceptionalism and Independence

Angela, the chairperson of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, sat in my apartment with a cup of tea as we spoke about the legend of King Arthur, a well-known tale in Britain. She mused on the identity of the ancient, larger-than-life figure:

There probably was a man like Arthur, but whether he had a round table where everyone sat, probably not. He was a Roman and British prince, or leader, fighting people coming in. But Arthur is a lot of myth, and part fact; there are parts of the story all over the [British] isles. And yet you could turn around and say, “he didn’t exist”. So, I don’t know. But if Arthur didn’t exist there was someone quite like him. And that’s an example of something part legend, and yet the legend is so powerful because of what it stands for - it stands for resistance, resisting an invader, a foreign invader. And in England we like to think that we’re independent and if we don’t like what someone says or does, we can quash it. But he’s an example of someone who may not have been real but who has a very potent influence. They think Arthur and his knights rest somewhere, waiting for the call to rise again and save the country. That’s a very potent legend about King Arthur. He is called “the once and future king,” is King Arthur, and he’s supposed to be able to be summoned when his country is in dire necessity and he will rise to save his people. Now that is a very strange resurrection myth, you know. He’s almost like a rising God.

The story of King Arthur has been deeply engrained in the British population and, whether or not they had believed it in a literal sense, the notion of a resurrected

nationalist savior was something that the population had lived with for centuries. In the political climate surrounding Brexit, King Arthur was a figure lurking in the background, promising fantastic salvation from troubling times. The theme that was most discernable in Angela's comment, though, was the notion of British independence – a topic that several of my interlocutors in York spoke to, especially in connection with the then-recent Brexit decision. 28-year-old English Civil War reenactor Tristan harbored a strong sense of national identity and once told me when we were discussing Brexit that “contrary to what people think, Brexit isn't about immigration. It's about a lot of things. It's about rekindling our identity. What a lot of people are saying is that we haven't fought in two world wars to be told what to do by Belgium. You know, they fought against us, and now we are being told what to do by them. How can another country dictate what to do with us when they don't know anything about who we are? *How is that fair?*” In their pursuit to “revitalize” British “traditional culture,” then, certain of my interlocutors foregrounded issues of justice, fairness, and moral values through analyses of local historical figures and critiques of Brexit.

Tristan's rhetorical question, though, demonstrates that the stakes involved with the Brexit decision were high enough to warrant a moral appeal to other citizens in order to allow Brexit to go through. However, not only was Tristan speaking in moral terms – he also quickly began to speak in historical terms. Our conversation about Brexit led to a discussion of Sir Thomas Glemham, the soldier who Tristan's regiment of The Sealed Knot, a large English Civil War reenactment society, was named for.

[19. Below: Tristan, left, and three other members of Sir Thomas Glemham's regiment of The Sealed Knot.]



Tristan animatedly recounted to me some of the stories in which Glemham played a pivotal role. “I feel like there’s almost some sort of an honor in fighting for this person who’s been lost to history,” he said, “because he was a very big character, but he died at the wrong time of the war, so he wasn’t as recognized as [Oliver] Cromwell would have been.” Tristan felt that it was essential to remember someone who he considered to be a war hero and who, in the current cultural milieu, had been lost to time. “I think there is a definite kinship and a definite honor in being in that regiment,” Tristan said. “And it’s part of keeping it alive. I mean, if we weren’t part of his regiment, no one would know his name. Or few would. But his name would be even more obscure than it already is, so it’s all about keeping his person alive, keeping his history alive, because he was a figure during such an atrocious time during history. And this man, he fought, he kept York alive, he was a master of siege warfare,” Tristan said. “Why would you let that die out? Why does it always have to be about the major players? Why can’t the minor players be kept alive?” As was the case with Tristan’s discussion of Brexit, this particular

discussion of local history was framed in terms of fairness. Fairness, for Tristan, could be achieved by remembering important historical figures regardless of whether or not they went on to become national heroes. Furthermore, fairness in legislation and fairness in memory were two sides of the same coin. For Tristan, the knowledge surrounding certain figures could lead one to understand ideological undercurrents which shaped modern day society. There is another component of his comments which bear mentioning – there is an implicit “*should*” in Tristan’s stated views on Brexit and the memory of historic figures. Tristan believed that everyone *should* wish for Britain to leave the EU, and less popular historic figures *should* be remembered alongside those who had been granted more notoriety.

The topic of historic figures is pertinent to Brexit in the sense that, in the climate of the referendum, certain figures resurfaced, having gained popularity and having been spoken of often. None was more surprising than Dick Turpin – a highway robber and murderer in 18th century York, whom many of my interlocutors referenced and who was proving in my research to be one of the most ready-to-hand names in the city, second only to Richard III. One day, Mick, a Jorvik Group employee and tour guide on a bus tour of the city, brought up the name Dick Turpin during one of our conversations. This allowed me the opportunity to discover how exactly my interlocutors had been linking the notorious figure to a modern-day political decision. “What do you think is the importance of a folk hero like that?” I asked Mick. “Why is someone like Dick Turpin still a celebrated and famous figure?” “Well,” Mick answered,

We’ve got various figures throughout, we’ve got Billy the Kid, we’ve got Ned Kelly, we’ve got Dick Turpin, so in various countries they had a folk hero, didn’t

they? That was Bonnie and Clyde in America. So they were all heroes, and they're just going back to who was the – well, what am I saying, they were all horrendous, really but – 1800s Dick Turpin, early 1900s – late 1800s up to early 1900s, Bonnie and Clyde, Kelly in Australia, you know, various people have folk heroes, I think they call them, because the authorities, they kept them at bay all the time, see what I mean? They run them ragged, basically, made fools of the authorities.

A desire to make fools of the authorities was something that my interlocutors certainly felt in the wake of the EU referendum. With so many citizens in a state of indignation, politicians withstood a great deal of harsh criticism and even abuse. Those of my interlocutors who voted against Brexit claimed that the measure would have deleterious effects on both citizens of and immigrants to the U.K., while those who voted for the measure felt themselves to be victims of larger systems that would minimize British history and culture. Either way, for my interlocutors, the government was to blame.

Paul, a middle-aged employee at the Richard III Experience (a Jorvik Group museum) with whom I conversed about Brexit and possible forces fueling the debate, had noted the historical motives for each position. He said that, among the British population, there was a concentration on times when the U.K. had been “on its own” fighting people on the European continent. He believed that this view reflected a concentration on British exceptionalism, which grew out of a notion of British independence and isolation. He found that supporters of Brexit highlighted points in which the relationship between Britain and the continent had been antagonistic, which resulted in a sense of the U.K. “standing alone.” Paul mentioned that he had voted to

remain; “None of us thought anyone would be so stupid,” he said, referring to the surprise he and many others felt when the vote to leave went through. “It [the EU referendum] is driven by a false sense of British exceptionalism and fed by myths of history, nostalgia, and fantasy.” He added: “It’s not that the EU is perfect, and some things do need changing.” However, he did not feel that it was justified for what he opined to be 90% of the news about Europe in Britain to be incredibly negative. He contended that there was not necessarily hostility towards the EU but there was definitely hostility towards the British governing class and most Members of Parliament. “This was an opportunity for people who felt slighted by all types of governing to act against,” he said.

Sam, a 31-year-old employee at a few of the Jorvik Group museums, echoed this sentiment. He stated that there was a sense of isolationism in British culture that had encouraged Brexit. Furthermore, he told me that he believed this to be due to the fact that there was a British myth that the U.K. was alone in fighting the Germans during WWII – hence the popular notion of Britain as the “underdog” during the war. Damian, one of Sam’s friends and a historic tour guide in York, further explained this concept to me: “Britain may not have been the underdog in the colonial period, but they were the underdog in WWII. This is because they stood against Hitler.” He explained that “if you’re the underdog and you win, it’s so much better, but if you lose, it’s understandable, so it’s a good position to be in.” He felt strongly that history, especially the history of WWII, was the reason why British people had historically championed “the underdog.” This idea is corroborated by O’Toole, who writes in his article “The paranoid fantasy behind Brexit” that Brexit turmoil “was a product of England’s deeply divided and

strangely unsettled relationship to the second world war and what it meant” (O’Toole 2018). In believing themselves to have been the “underdog” of WWII, my interlocutors perceived Brexit as an attempt to subjugate their populace. O’Toole further explains that “in the imperial imagination, there are only two states: dominant and submissive, coloniser and colonised. This dualism lingers. If England is not an imperial power, it must be the only other thing it can be: a colony” (O’Toole 2018). In this binary, belonging to the EU would, for my interlocutors, render Britain a country to be acted on and ruled, rather than a country that acts on and rules. This way of thinking, as a vestige of the colonial past, colored British citizens’ perceptions of WWII, as well as all other successive events of historic significance.

Because they placed high value in historical explanations, my interlocutors continuously related Brexit – like they did many other topics – to history. In this sense, they were aligned with what Gusterson (2017) terms a “Nationalist Populist” movement. Gusterson argues that neoliberal practices have shaped recent political events such as Brexit by setting the stage for inherently racist regimes to take hold. Drawing primarily from the cases of the Trump presidency and Brexit, he outlines the common approaches and agendas of Nationalist Populist movements:

A hostility toward (at least some) immigrants and ethnic others, especially Muslims; a claim to speak for working people, whose interests are no longer well represented by traditional parties of the Left; an insistence that established government institutions have become corrupt or unresponsive to ordinary people; an attack on transnational organizations such as the European Union, NATO, the United Nations, and the World Trade Organization; a disparagement of

cosmopolitan elites; and a call for a return to (an invented) tradition” (Gusterson 2017: 210).

While my interlocutors held some of these beliefs, they did not, by any means, hold all of them. As we have seen, Tristan was not in the least opposed to immigration, nor did he disparage “cosmopolitan elites.” However, he did disparage the European Union, as well as the British government, which he viewed as being incompetent in addressing citizens’ needs; he also, in line with Gusterson’s typological suggestion, strongly believed that English tradition was of utmost importance and should be “revived” and maintained. Neither was Lynda, another Brexit voter, opposed to immigration or cosmopolitan elites; her vote was for Brexit because, as she explained to me, “*one should vote for the values, not for the personalities.*” Although Lynda voted for the U.K. Independence Party (UKIP) in the last election – which many of my interlocutors considered to be racist and xenophobic – she described herself as a socialist and was adamant that money needed to “seep to the bottom levels” in order for all citizens’ needs to be met; something she believed was impeded by the hiring of ever more managers who prevented the money from “seeping” to those who needed it most, which has been noted as a byproduct of postindustrialism in Britain by author Gillian Evans (Evans 2017). In suggesting that neoliberalism has created the international political and economic framework upon which nationalist populist movements have thrived, Gusterson echoes Evans, who suggests that Brexit resulted from deep societal discontent due to the postindustrial state in which Britain currently finds itself. As the economy had undergone a transition resulting in the devaluation of “blue-collar” manual labor, she argues, more managers were being instated, and more British workers were losing their jobs. Drawing on ethnographic

material she gathered while conducting research among working class and formerly pro left-wing Labour party neighborhoods, Evans analyzes her interlocutors' shift from voting for Labour to voting for what she argues to be the inherently racist, xenophobic, and more conservative British National Party (BNP) and UKIP. These parties were the forerunners for Brexit, and each of their respective constituencies contributed a significant number of votes towards the measure. In parsing the BNP's rhetoric and strategy as voiced by leader Nick Griffin, Evans explains,

Griffin fashioned a discourse of ethnic and cultural belonging that turned the post-colonial trope of indigeneity on its head. He described England as a land that belonged to those people whose ancient ancestors were born and bred there and who were therefore entitled to have their needs met before all others. The relative success of this strategy suggested that Labour's traditional voters were collaborating in the reconfiguration of politics away from class altogether and toward a new form of solidarity built on a cultural nationalism, in which their version of culture took precedence (Evans 2017: 218).

In charting the political stances of residents of working-class neighborhoods, Evans notes a dramatic shift in her interlocutors' voting patterns: while they had previously voted primarily for the Labour Party, BNP and UKIP now took the majority of residents' votes. This was not, however, an anomaly; Evans notes that a colleague's work on the Northern town of Stoke-on-Trent yielded the same pattern (Hart 1987). Evans' suggestion that political attitudes and behavior were, in a novel way, being primarily shaped by cultural nationalism, gives rise to a question: why is this happening – and why is it happening *now*? Her emphasis on cultural nationalism, the notion of “blood and soil” that resonated

with so many members of the British public, helps to explain the perspectives of some of my interlocutors. Drawing on a climate that heavily emphasized “traditional” British culture, a few of my interlocutors – such as Tristan – hoped for a release from the EU which would allow them to achieve such goals as reforming school curriculum to include more material on British history, and attaining more direct control over the funding in York’s heritage sector, some of which had traditionally been distributed by Belgium. In addition, BNP and UKIP serve a particular set of needs, as is apparent in Gusterson’s list of seemingly haphazard beliefs above. In a manner that could perhaps explain this particular constellation of qualities, Evans states:

This expression of discontent in postindustrial urban areas was matched by a whole range of other protest votes about life in Britain. As a result, an unintended alliance formed that combined an emerging cultural nationalism with a hodgepodge of previously unconnected complaints against austerity, the establishment, the EU bureaucracy, and capitalism more broadly (Evans 2017: 219).

Certain of my interlocutors expressed such through fears that Britain’s “traditional” culture was endangered and required revitalization, and that British citizens should celebrate their own history, rather than kowtowing to imported cultures.

The North/South Divide

Evans’ emphasis on Brexit voters’ notions of “blood and soil” suggests a distinct form of regional identity and expectations, in which even those who called themselves “British” differed dramatically amongst themselves. These differences among various

constituencies within the U.K. were the coordinate, for my interlocutors, of significant portions of their identities, as well as their moral tendencies. All of my interlocutors expressed to me that the English Northerners should be held in high contrast to Southerners. Tristan contended on several occasions that the English North was similar in many ways to the American South; so much so, that he had called the North the “Confederacy of the U.K.” What he meant by this was that the North of England had a history that shaped modern day communities in the region and was quite distinct from the history and dominant viewpoints in the other half of the country. The proverbial chasm between the North and South of England was not recent by any means – it reputedly began due to political and economic reasons nearly 1,000 years prior to my research. Bayeux argues in an article in *The Economist* that the divestment of wealth in the North began in the winter of 1069-1070 with William the Conqueror’s “Harrying of the North,” in which the new king of England launched a violent campaign to subjugate rebelling residents of northern shires. The destruction, which included looting, burning, and slaughtering, left residents in a desperate state, the memory and economic effects of which would prove to last for centuries; and, all the while, London remained the seat of power (Bayeux 2016). Although the North of England was not uniformly destitute since the Harrying of the North – and neither was the South uniformly wealthy – statistical analyses of both regions in modern times suggest that there was higher unemployment, fewer employment opportunities, and less available healthcare in the North than in the South, as A.E. Green shows in his article “The North-South divide in Great Britain: an examination of the evidence” (Green 1988). Writing in 1988, he observed “spatial inequalities in economic prosperity and power, house prices, health and electoral

behavior.” He argues that “the patterns of these spatial inequalities indicate the existence of a North-South divide, which also underlies urban and regional system divisions on the basis of urban size, hierarchical status and employment structure” (Green 1988: 191). However, this situation was complicated by such significant occurrences as World War II and the development of industry, which was primarily carried out in the North due to the availability there of raw materials. Writing in 2011, geographer Sara Gonzalez notes in her article “The North/South Divide in Italy and England: Discursive Construction of Regional Inequality” that England had maintained one of the highest inequality indices among the “high human development” countries, as evidenced by the United Nations Development Programme (2005). She further states that regional inequalities were a “contemporary problem exacerbated by the economic recession in 2008” (Gonzalez 2011: 62). However, Gonzalez argues that the situation became much more diffuse in recent years and, at the time when she was writing, it was an issue not of central government and regional policies but rather of regional definitions with undulating and ever-shifting political and economic significance. She writes:

Invoking the North/South divide speaks of historically entrenched injustices and path dependencies. It acts as a ‘discursive device’ to uncover problems in the capitalist system of a deeper kind than those identified at the more micro and individual scales. It speaks of issues of regional dependency, exploitation or even colonization (Gonzalez 2011: 71).

Gonzalez’s notion of the North/South divide as a discursive device is particularly apt; my interlocutors often made tongue-in-cheek remarks about southerners being unfriendly, ill-mannered, or lacking essential moral values that could have been interpreted as jokes, but

certainly held a kernel of what they believed to be truth. The divide was also apparent in pop culture; Southern British singer Morrissey penned a popular song that featured the lyrics “we hate it when our friends become successful / and if they’re Northern, that makes it even worse.”

Due to these economic and social discrepancies, people from the North of England largely viewed themselves as fundamentally different from those in the South of the country, citing examples of manners and matters of character such as integrity, loyalty, and genuineness. Once when we were discussing genealogy, Angela referenced what she called “the great North and South divide.” She said, “I had a friend do my family tree and it’s interesting how many of my family members DON’T come from Yorkshire, so I’m really only about 2 generations Yorkshire. But it’s about being from the North of England, rather than being a Southerner. It’s being Northern. And having some Yorkshire heritage, but not exclusively.” On the topic of what it meant to her to be Northern, Angela said:

As regards to king Richard, [Southerners] have a different attitude, I think. We tend to be a bit proprietorial because we have the sites associated with him. We feel that we – not own him, because no one can own another person or their spirit – but we feel closer to him when he was alive and well, before he became the caricature that he became. It’s a different attitude. I think Southerners don’t understand what all the fuss is about. But he was a Northern king, he identified with the North more than any other king. We’ve got a different attitude towards him, certainly. I think in the 19th century if you wanted to make your fortune, you went to London. There was always a sense of London being the center of

everything, everything is in London. So, for a while it was, “oh in the North there’s nothing going on.” But in the last 50 years things have been built here and we now have provincial facilities that are just as good as those in London. But at one time I think it was that London was the center of things, but that has changed, thankfully.

Although Angela believed that the North was not as marginalized as it once had been, she viewed the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society as a persistent expression of a particular type of local knowledge that had been, to some degree, denigrated and obscured over time. She told me that members of the Richard III Society in London “want academic recognition as a historical society – they want to be a learned society.” However, she quickly followed this with the statement that “we’re not all academics in history, or academics at all. But we are supporting someone who we think has not received justice. It’s a folklore. It’s an undercurrent, isn’t it, that goes along and surfaces occasionally.” As Angela saw it, the Yorkshire Branch was composed of people who possessed what many referred to as “Northern attributes” such as a sense of justice, loyalty, and good intent, who were living in accordance with their region’s history and values. Lynda echoed this sentiment, explaining to me why many Northerners felt that they could claim Richard III as their own. She contended that Richard was just and fair, and she knew this because of the laws that he implemented, such as his movement to rewrite all laws in English so that common citizens could understand them. “Richard had this way of thinking that was a Northern attribute,” she said to me more than once. The king’s sense of justice was, in her opinion, inherently tied to his identity as a Northerner.

The sense of engendering justice for the one and only English king who hailed from the North was reflected in the unusually large membership of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, which, at the time of my research, boasted roughly 200 members, while other branches worldwide ranged from only a few members to about 60 (Branches, Richard III Society). “People join our branch because this is the place where Richard lived his life,” branch secretary Pauline once told me. The members with whom I spoke unanimously mentioned Richard’s status as an “underdog” and cited the cause of “fighting for justice” to explain their membership in the society. Their unanimity was perhaps a product of their having come to speak the same “language” within the society; although they were previously inclined to believe the narratives circulated within the Richard III Society, these feelings came to fruition in a stylized discourse that members learned from one another and reinforced at essentially all group meetings.

It is important to remember that not only did many U.K. citizens perceive their country to have historically been “the underdog” – the North of England, to them, was “the underdog of the underdogs,” and the North figured prominently in their expressions of identity, morality, and history. “People from Yorkshire are always drawn home because it’s our identity,” Tristan once said. “It’s who we are.” According to Tristan, identity as a Northerner also lent itself to family-like structures within the Sealed Knot. He described the organization as “one big family” in which members called their older counterparts “mum and dad.” He recounted to me that a Sealed Knot member drove through the record-breaking flood in December of 2015 to bring Tristan food when he was trapped in his apartment. “They’ve seen me through thick and thin,” Tristan explained. “I would do anything for the vast majority of them.” These representations of

home and family were predicated for Tristan on the identity of his counterparts as fellow Northerners. Tristan told me that he liked history, but “in the grand scheme of things, it doesn’t really affect us.” He was adamant that he participated in the Sealed Knot not for the sake of history, but because of the family he had built with other members, as well as “for fun.” The Sealed Knot was a group of people with whom he shared interests, beliefs, as well as his identity as a Northerner. For Tristan, the historical organization was more familial and based on regional pride than a history that all British people could claim as their own. For him, family, home, and social bonds were rooted in Northernness; “we all are Northern,” he said. “All living within an hour of each other.”

This sentiment demonstrates a sense of autochthony, which, according to Peter Geschiere, “seems to represent the most authentic form of belonging: ‘being born from the earth itself’ – how could one belong more?” (Geschiere 2009: 2). Geschiere writes that “precisely its natural appearance, with the soil as a powerful referent, turns the claim of autochthony into a kind of *ur*-belonging” (Geschiere 2009: 2), yet he notes that the notion of autochthony is inherently vague and riddled with ambiguity, given that it is predicated on a subjective distinction of those who belong to the homeland and those who do not. Furthermore, he underscores the fact that the notion of autochthony is often harnessed by political leaders in order to demarcate belonging to a nation-state and, as such, it is an idea that is easily manipulated in order to abet political projects. Nonetheless, Geschiere notes that the concept has cropped up in varying corners of the world in the face of rampant globalization in what Geschiere terms, following Tanya Murray Li (2000), “the global conjuncture of belonging” (Geschiere 2009: 5). In Tristan’s case, this issue of belonging was on a much more local scale, for his notion of

autochthony served to differentiate Northern English citizens from Southern ones. However, the language he used to describe belonging in a Northern context was highly reminiscent of the language which Geschiere outlines. Furthermore, this language and thought process which distinguishes Northerners from Southerners *also* serves to distinguish British people from those they deem to be non-British. Autochthony discourse in this case thus has two valences which can be invoked depending upon the circumstances – something which perhaps plays into Geschiere’s statement that autochthony discourse is inherently ambiguous.

It follows that identity as a Northerner for my interlocutors did not lay in stark contrast to identity as a British citizen. Although I heard many Northerners describe themselves as Northern before describing themselves as British, my interlocutors found a way of maintaining national pride that was strong, though qualified by the fact that they perceived their own region to have been historically marginalized and fundamentally different than other regions within the U.K. Tristan, who voted for Brexit because he did not believe that Europe should dictate the terms on which the U.K. would operate, expressed a sense of belonging to the U.K. as a whole when I spoke to him a year after our initial conversation about Brexit. He said, “We never voted to be IN the E.U. We voted to be part of the common market. Europe is showing its true colors now and they are nothing but deceitful.” I brought up the fact that, at this time in the summer of 2018, there was public outcry over the fact that the Brexit campaign had exceeded its funding limit, which led several people to retroactively term the decision “illegal.” “Democracy is dead,” he lamented. “Just because some people don’t like Brexit doesn’t change things.” He added: “the country is deeply divided right now. There’s no changing that.”

With great dexterity, then, Tristan positioned himself as either a British Citizen or a Northerner depending upon the situation at hand. In Tristan's opinion, in order to remain aligned with British history and heritage, the country needed to break ties with those who would have fundamentally changed it given the chance, and framing himself as a British citizen in this context granted him the legitimacy to make this claim. In his perceived trajectory of history, Britain *must* have remained independent and isolated because of the work that British historical figures did in order to allow for the country's development and continued existence. Furthermore, he believed that members of British Parliament were doing a disservice to their own history by supporting what he perceived to be the subjugation of British people to foreign governments which were not historically allies. In this context, he viewed himself as British. However, Tristan simultaneously held the view that the North of England, which had already been marginalized within the context of British history, would suffer from a further degree of remoteness in government; the way he saw it, if Brexit went through, Belgium would control London, which would in turn control the North of England – this fear was rooted in his identity as a Northerner. In this way, belonging to the U.K. as a whole and belonging to the North were concentric circles; Tristan identified as a British citizen, but his membership within this community was thoroughly colored by his experiences in and beliefs about the North. His identity as a Northerner led him to primarily remember Northern examples from British history, such as those featuring Glemham – and act in accordance with what he had learned from them.

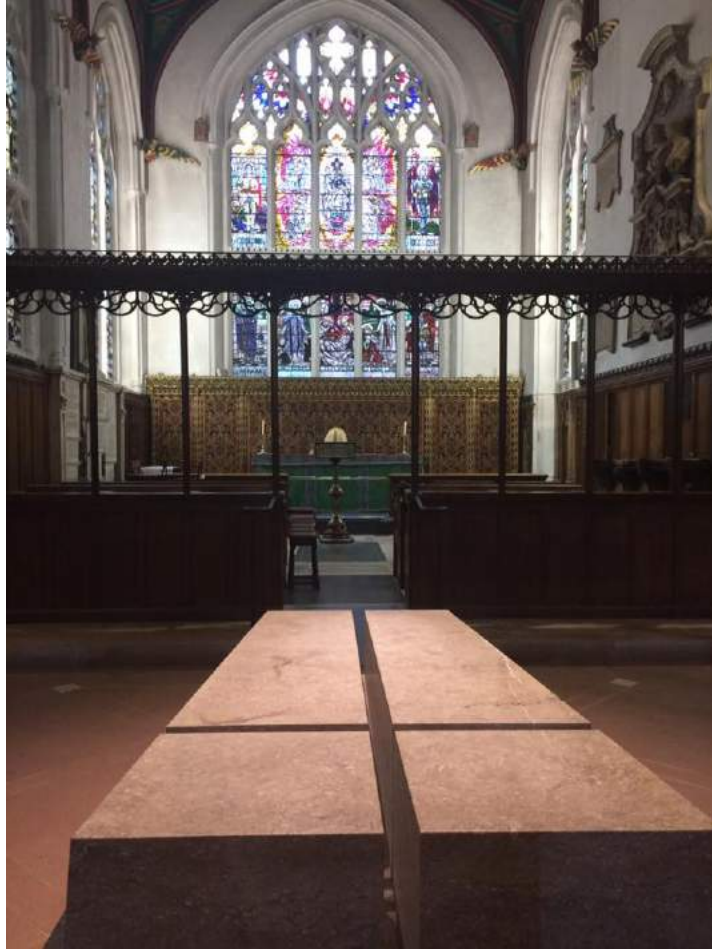
Memory, Justice, and the Local

Perceptions of a North/South divide were palpable at the time of my research, and they led to a bitter argument. It began with Philippa Langley MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, a title awarded by the Queen to outstanding British citizens), a screenplay writer and an especially active member of the Richard III Society, who hailed from the North of England and had long believed that Richard III was maligned by propaganda that was initiated by the Tudors. In her avid effort for justice, which many of my interlocutors framed as a Northern attribute, Philippa led the Looking for Richard project – a joint effort with fellow Richard III Society member John Ashdown-Hill – which rejected the historical narrative that the Northern King Richard III's remains had been thrown into the River Soar after his death and lost to posterity. Together they pored over all historical records available to them and traced Richard's body to a medieval monastery which, in the present day, had become a parking lot in Leicester. They uncovered the poor skeleton cramped into a short grave on the first day they broke ground in August of 2012. Due to this stunning find, Philippa garnered a great deal of attention from the media and the wider public. In her book about the experience of the Looking for Richard Project, Philippa writes that the project had two specific aims: first, "to search for the grave of Richard III and, if found, honour him with a reburial and tomb"; and second, "to attempt to bring to life the real man behind the myth" (Langley and Jones 2013: 14). However, society members worldwide who funded the project through donations had only three purposes: "Search for him. Find him. Honour him" (Langley and Jones 2013: 28).

The uncovering of Richard's skeleton ignited a fierce debate about where to bury the monarch. People residing in the North of England were adamant that Richard should be

returned to Yorkshire, the region where he was raised and the location of Middleham Castle, his favorite residence. However, Leicester had legal claim to the remains because the City Council only allowed Philippa to dig within their limits provided that, if she found Richard, he would be buried in Leicester Cathedral (Langley and Jones 2013: 16). Furthermore, many archaeologists and scientists who followed these events contended that, because Richard had no direct descendants to dictate where he should be buried and because he had died more than 100 years prior, he had to be laid to rest in the consecrated ground nearest to where he was found in accordance with the U.K. Human Tissue Act (2004).

Many residents of Yorkshire felt that this law was not aligned with what Richard himself would have wished for, and they fought vehemently on his behalf to return his body to his home city of York. Protests with the use of signs and chanting, as well as organized walk-outs of York Minster (the city's largest and oldest cathedral) due to the vicar's ties to Leicester and agreement with Leicester's claim on Richard's skeleton, were common occurrences in York during this



[20. King Richard III's tomb in Leicester Cathedral, Leicester, U.K.]

time. Despite certain Northerners' fierce efforts, in March of 2015, Richard's remains were interred in Leicester Cathedral with great ceremony. A sustained complaint among Richard III Society members in the North of England, however, was that Leicester had capitalized on the event of finding Richard. Predicting the influx of tourism that Richard's remains would bring, Leicester opened a Richard III Visitor Centre across the street from the cathedral and held several Richard III-themed festivals. When I visited Leicester in August of 2016, there were a few pubs undergoing construction in order to reopen; each of them bore an image of the king and a name that included some reference to him. The fact that Southerners would capitalize on Richard – as they were apparently

wont to do – was egregious, according to my interlocutors. “Leicester meant nothing to him. It’s the place where he was killed!” was a refrain I heard from several society members. “They just want to use him to make money,” several Yorkshire Branch members said. Philippa, in the interest of diplomacy, did not take a position in this tug-of-war. However, she made clear that her primary interest was honoring the king and achieving justice for him, even if legislation had rendered what many Northerners believed to be complete justice seemingly impossible.

Philippa told me she believed that by having a documentary produced about the search for Richard, the public would have become more sympathetic with her pursuit of justice for the king. However, what she did not anticipate was the fact that Channel 4, the sponsor and producer of the documentary, would splice together the footage in a way that would portray Philippa as – according to her description – “crazy.” We once sat on a bench surrounded by the ruins of Middleham Castle as Philippa, who was born and raised only a short distance away, told me about the entire experience, interrupted often by her friends and acquaintances who were passing by. “As a Ricardian you are denigrated and dismissed as slightly unhinged and emotional,” she explained, though I was already well aware of this fact. At one point in the documentary, Richard’s skeleton appeared laid out on an examination table in a lab, and, upon seeing his remains, Philippa burst into tears. This was often the first topic that people who were unfamiliar with the Richard III Society and the Looking for Richard Project latched onto in order to suggest that Philippa was either unhinged or “in love” with Richard III. When I asked Philippa about this moment, she shared with me that this project had taken eight years of research and was borne of her free time that had resulted from a serious illness. “That moment was the

culmination of those eight years of research,” she explained. “It was emotional because the project had taken up so much of my life.” The reason why Philippa believed she was ridiculed in the public eye was because she offered a perspective that was diametrically opposed to “older academics” positions on the issue. She told me that she drew heavily on what she called “local knowledge” – that is, the way in which people have a greater understanding of history that is local to them due to their experience with topics ranging from culture to geography to botany of their region. “Local history is so important in understanding the bigger picture,” Philippa said. One piece of local knowledge she offered to me as an example was the fact that there used to be a saying in the North that if a man was upstanding and generally considered to be good, he was called “a good dick.” She explained that it fell out of usage around WWII due to the influx of American soldiers who understood the word “dick” to mean something other than what was intended; however, Philippa claimed that it referred to “Dicken,” a nickname for Richard III. “It means that if a man is ‘a good dick,’ he is good like Richard,” she said. Philippa felt that her knowledge of the physical features and traditions of the North allowed her greater insight than her southern counterparts into what Richard was truly like, and this placed her in an advantageous position to achieve justice for him.

Philippa described to me how she perceived that these “older academics” – the vast majority of whom were employed at the University of Leicester or sympathetic to their scientists – had held on to “outdated views” in an effort to defend their reputations and refused to accept new information and perspectives. “That’s what disappoints me most,” sighed Philippa. “They have closed minds. They can be very dismissive and it’s frustrating. They will refer to you as an amateur.” In one conversation with such

scientists, Philippa politely expressed that every member of her Looking for Richard project – all of whom were members of the Richard III Society – had about 20 years of research into Richard. “How much do they have?” she asked. “A matter of weeks. Who are the amateurs then? If they could only open their minds a little bit and be a little more inclusive,” she said, “the possibilities of expanding their knowledge can grow exponentially. We [members of the Richard III Society] share our knowledge and we discuss it. We completely take off the blindfolds and think outside the box, that’s how new discoveries are made. They have to denigrate someone who is challenging them, it’s all about protecting their own reputations.” Philippa emphasized that, in contradiction to the scientists who conducted tests on Richard’s body, what she sought was knowledge, not a reputation. “I knew that I would look bad if the Looking for Richard project didn’t find Richard, but someone had to take the risk,” she explained. In addition to being denigrated for being an “amateur,” Philippa told me that she had also borne the brunt of a great deal of sexism and general hate in this process of learning more about Richard. One prominent historian apparently told her that “you need more than a pretty face to study history.” However, Philippa was not deterred. “Richard strove for justice all his life, but he hasn’t been given any,” she said. “The story we have always told about him needs to be corrected.” This was because, according to Philippa, “One thing that’s inherent in the British psyche is a need for fairness, justice.”

Regardless of whether or not my interlocutors believed that history operated on the axes of fairness and justice, this narrative of “justice for Richard” was echoed throughout the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society. Angela offered quite a

similar explanation for her interest in Richard III and the society. She referenced Shakespeare's play *Richard III* and all of the negative beliefs about the king, then said:

But Richard wasn't like that. If anything, he seems to have been rather politically naïve. But not a tyrant and not plotting to seize the throne from the word "go." Things happened to him – he was reacting to circumstances rather than making his own evil destiny, you know? King Richard is interesting because the popular image of him is through Shakespeare, not what we see through records. In between us and him there are many centuries, I know, but there was, at one time, a campaign to sort of rubbish him and make him into the worst kind of king and the worst kind of person. But on the face of it, he doesn't seem to have been. He can't have been as evil as that – in fact he wasn't. I don't think any other king has been vilified like that, and that makes one, well, a little bit – "hang on a minute, we need to do something about this!" So that his reputation is salvaged from all the opprobrium that was heaped on him for dynastic reasons.

It's not at all to do with what he was like or what his rule was like.

Kate, a 40-year old branch member who was named after Richard III's illegitimate daughter Katherine, explained how she had worked to achieve this sense of justice that so many society members had sought. Through working in York's Richard III Experience – one of the Jorvik Group's five museums – Kate said that she did her part by "just talking to people." In the museum, she often heard comments such as, "Oh it's Richard, he's a child killer, I've read the Shakespeare play," and Kate had the opportunity to tell them that "Shakespeare's play is not history, it's a portrayal." She expanded on how she accomplished this, stating:

I just kind of re-educate people, what people were taught decades ago when it was accepted that Richard was a horrible man and he did all these evil things. And then they pass it on to their children, and they pass it on to theirs, then someone says actually, if you read the historical, proper text, not just the Shakespeare, then you'll see Richard in a completely different light. Then you start to question things, and you get a lot more information. So, I just talk to people and hopefully re-educate them, sparking more interest so they want to go further. Some people couldn't care less, but some people want to do a bit more research themselves. So, if you can spark that in people, I think I'm doing a bit.

The way in which Richard III Society members spoke about justice seemed distinct from perhaps more popular usages of the term, so I began to ask them if they had been interested in engendering justice in other ways, such as donating or volunteering for other community-based organizations. In so doing, I hoped to understand why the injustice to Richard was so much more important to them than other injustices; what was it specifically about justice in the context of historical narratives that had been so compelling for society members? Furthermore, if the concept of justice was bound to the North in their minds, how else did they live and embody this value? I once asked Angela what she understood justice to be in a wider context outside of Richard III, and she responded:

Whether it's a criminal charge or a civil case, to make all the facts available, I think, if someone is accused of something or assumed to have done something, they can be judged according to all the evidence available from all sides, from all sources. Not just something that is negative, or something that is going to

extenuate them and not point out why they could have done something wrong, anything partial. I don't think that justice involves being partial or being incomplete in your information. You have to know as much as possible about both sides of an argument or both sides of a case and then decide, not according to any prejudices you might have. Because sometimes people change their minds about something. They'll say, 'I didn't know about that,' so obviously they look on the situation differently once they have all the facts. And that is doing it justice, I think.

She mentioned that she had not participated in activities that achieved justice for people living at the present time. Although she had signed petitions to her MP (Member of Parliament), she said, "I'm afraid it's something I haven't engaged in, I should have, really. I just tend to be interested in the abstract, which is... not good." I asked why she had engaged in activities that achieved justice for Richard III but not activities that would achieve justice in other contexts, and, after a moment of thought, she replied, "that's interesting. I really can't tell you. I really don't know. I think because it's an individual who's the focus of the campaign. But otherwise... when you put it like that it does seem very strange! It does seem irrational, doesn't it?"

When I asked Kate if she had fought for justice in other ways, she responded: "No, I don't think I do! Well, obviously if I saw something being done to somebody I'd help or step in or say something. I don't like bullies and that kind of thing, so I think I would say something. But I don't go out marching or protesting or writing letters to people. So maybe a little bit, but not completely committed to fighting injustice." Then she added, "I've never thought of that before. It's a weird concept, isn't it? Because one

person's justice isn't always someone else's justice." Both Angela and Kate seemed slightly embarrassed by my questions about justice; it was as if they felt guilty about seeking justice for Richard when they had not provided any sort of aid to others in the world who had continued to suffer. Although that was not my intention, it was interesting to learn that they viewed justice in the context of historical narratives as being distinct from current fights for social justice.

On the other hand, Lynda had consistently donated her money and time in order to achieve justice for animals and horse stable workers. "Justice is my thing, if you like," she once said. For decades, Lynda had believed in justice for creatures that could not speak for themselves, and justice for a king who had been badly treated throughout history and could no longer speak for himself. "Justice, 'good lordship,' fair play – it's all the same thing," she explained. "Let people do what they want within reason and have good lives." Lynda expanded on her views of justice: she contended that British citizens should not send money to places like Africa when, as she said, "we have people suffering here in the U.K." Furthermore, she held that the money people had donated to organizations like Oxfam never ended up reaching the people it was intended to anyway. Similarly, she suggested that NHS (National Health Service – the public health service in the United Kingdom) money had not seeped down to the level where it was needed. Instead, more managerial positions were created that "sucked up" all the money that should have reached the people. "Justice is not increasing managers, it's making [the money] seep to bottom levels," she asserted. She also told me that she strongly believed that people should not "throw money at the problem." "Make people work," she said, shrugging. "Richard saw this, he wanted change at the grassroots level." Lynda drew

another parallel between herself and Richard in her description of her sentiments towards editors who had edited the books she had authored, who had proven to her to be “redundant parasites.” She suggested that this was how Richard had felt about landowners, hence his efforts to change the structure of the system. “Richard was ahead of his time and he wasn’t appreciated by people in the South [where most wealthy landowners and influential individuals of the time lived],” she explained, “because there were too many people there with vested interests who stood to lose as a result of his imposing new laws.” Thus, his just and fair laws that intended to allow resources to trickle down to the people were not viewed as being just or fair, nor were they much appreciated by members of the court and wealthy landowners. This was how Lynda had viewed her own efforts: underappreciated because they went against the grain of what people with more money and influence considered to be truth and justice.¹⁰

It is essential to note also that members of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society perceived *themselves* to be victims of injustice due to their association with the society. Society members had been openly mocked by members of the public and even museum employees and members of other historical organizations; for this reason, they felt that their notion of justice – and, by extension, their northern-ness that informed their notions of justice – was under attack. For my interlocutors, the concept of justice thus transcended time, serving as a link between a maligned medieval king and modern-day

¹⁰ Perhaps, though, these conceptions of justice were a result of Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society members being late-middle-aged to elderly, middle-class Caucasians. This is not to say that all similarly-aged, middle-class Caucasians would have agreed with Richard III Society members’ concepts of history and justice, but perhaps in the context of the society, justice appeared similar to people who had similar racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds. Perhaps because of this, the type of injustice involving Richard was more easily relatable to them than other types of social justice for which people strive in the present day.

members of a society dedicated to his memory. The concept of justice also served, for my interlocutors, to juxtapose Northerners and Southerners, the latter being a group of people whom they perceived to be bereft of the concept of justice and interested only in capitalizing on *their* Northern king.

Just as my interlocutors framed history as being tied to efforts for justice, they considered Brexit using the same terms. Though they voted differently, each of my interlocutors voted in a manner that would promote what she or he considered to be justice and fairness in her or his wider community due to the fact that she or he existed in a region and in organizations in which people vocally valued and actively pursued justice in some form. Although neoliberal and postindustrial policies brought people's notions and valuations of what they perceived to be "traditional" English culture to the forefront, Brexit drew from these economic and political processes, becoming a visual manifestation of a deeply divisive argument about culture and history. Brexit, for my interlocutors, was either a terrible aberration or a solidification of the U.K.'s historically-backed trait of independence, and it is noteworthy that my interlocutors' positions on the measure were split, sometimes even when they belonged to the same historical organization. The link, then, was *justice* – justice being a category that each of my interlocutors strove for, spoke about, and dedicated significant amounts of time and effort to, regardless of her or his political opinions. The theme of justice, then, both tied members of York historical organizations to history that happened on their land and informed their opinions of current events in Britain, most notably Brexit.

Part III: The Social Nature of Local History

Lynda, a close friend of Scowen's and the Events Officer for the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, often accompanied Scowen and I on outings on which we drank copious amounts of coffee and browsed the same local antique stores again and again, just in case they had new inventory, or in case we had missed something on the jam-packed shelves. Lynda drew inspiration from these objects, reminding me often of how special they were. For Lynda, the antiques – some of which originated in ancient Rome, Greece, and Egypt – were almost talismans, holding the power, for her, to harken back to the time in which they were crafted. When she looked at them, she remembered how powerful history could be, and how, as she said, "all each piece of history needs is a voice." She drew inspiration for the history books she authored – three of which were sold in popular bookstores – from them, just as she did from her vivid dreams about the historic figures on whom her books focused. She loved these people dearly, despite the fact that she had never met them – a fact that people sometimes used to undermine her almost fervent feelings. Lynda was particularly fond of Sulla, a Roman general who lived from 138 – 78 B.C. She once described a dream to me in which Sulla approached her, shirtless and with his skin glistening, and she described how incredibly beautiful he was. "My Sulla," she had said. In the summer of 2017, she traveled to Rome "to see the places that were important to him." After the visit she was able to finish her book knowing that she had done justice to Sulla, both the warrior and the man. Lynda was, however, by no means exclusively dedicated to Sulla and Roman culture, or Richard III and the Wars of the Roses period of English history. She had a favorite object that had been housed in one of York's largest antique stores for a few years: an ancient Chinese statue of a horse that she would have bought in an instant if it hadn't been prohibitively expensive. "Isn't he beautiful?" she would coo, gazing at the intricate statue. "He's MY horse, and I'll be able to come back and get him one day." I told her more than once that if I had had £6,000, I would have bought it for her, and she laughed. She truly believed that the statue would one day find its way to her. What she felt for it – or, as she called the statue, "him" – was, like her love for Sulla, a special connection.

Chapter Five: Money and Moral Action in the Heritage Sector

“So,” Robert began as we sat in the quiet of the Centerville Museum in Northern California after closing time, the rainy day finally turning dark. “Have you figured out yet why I do what I do?” Robert was referencing his tireless efforts for both the museum and the Honey Run Bridge Association – both of whose minimal bank account balances he had almost singlehandedly increased several-fold over the course of his time as chairperson for both organizations. I remembered that he had once explained to me that non-profits were often antagonistic towards one another because they were competing for the same funds; however, he contended that if the groups could work together, they could save money. Despite the purported animosity that had previously existed between the Centerville side of town and the Honey Run side, Robert, being the chairperson of both the Centerville Museum and the Honey Run Bridge Association, decided to share advertisements for annual fundraisers between the two organizations, using one poster that notified the public of both events, and both groups saved money. This was a precedent for what developed into a culture of sharing and mutual benefit; at a fundraising event on a later date, one group had extra fruit, so they brought it to the other group, who was able to sell it. “It’s cooperating,” Robert said, “so we can save more money and have more benefit.” Robert believed that in this way he had significantly improved the relationship between the Centerville side of town and the Honey Run side because, as he said, “people are cooperating.” Robert also sought to bring income into the Honey Run Bridge Association by allowing for weddings to take place on the bridge – each for \$1,000. “When I took over the association, they had only \$6,000 in the bank. Now, we have \$23,000,” Robert proudly declared. For Robert, this drastic increase in the

association's funds would allow for them to continue working towards community cohesion and promotion of their local history. As an example of what *not* to do, Robert once told me that the last president of the Honey Run Bridge Association attempted to make the bridge available only for weddings that had been planned by his wife, who was a professional wedding planner. Robert expressed the relief he had felt when the man's plan had been blockaded on the grounds that it constituted a conflict of interest. Robert and others in the organization believed that it would have been immoral and against the community's best interest to privatize the historic bridge in this way. Robert had felt that this was reprehensible, given that his own intention was make use of the funds derived from weddings on the bridge in a morally sound manner – benefiting the community. The money Robert helped to generate, though, was not an end in itself; it was a necessary step to take in order to accomplish larger goals that were aligned with Robert's and other organization members' senses of moralism, which included a wholehearted support of community and community-minded behavior.

Robert waited patiently as I searched for the words to answer his question. Why *did* he expend so much time and effort in endeavors related to the historical organizations in which he took part, and why did he continuously strive for an increase in profit? “Well,” I said, “I think you really value community and you want to help people. I also think you want to make a difference before you get older, which we all do. But I think what it comes down to for you is community and helping people.” “Well, yes,” he answered. “But the fundamental thing is that I think people and organizations should help each other. I think that I’ve worked on myself enough, and I want to help other

people. It might be naïve, but I think that if you do enough loving things, it will inspire other people to act in loving ways as well.”

In this chapter I investigate my interlocutors’ engagement with money, along with their moralistic means of attaining and spending it. For members of historical organizations, money was a force that rendered certain practices – specifically, those that treated money as an end within itself – as “inauthentic.” They recognized that the heritage industry had the capacity to be instrumentalized and even drew examples of such “unethical” acts from their own communities. In believing that the heritage industry generated and mediated inauthenticity in certain forms of practice, my interlocutors operated in a context in which they understood that there were inauthentic ways to practice history; however, they asserted their own practices as “authentic.” In so doing, my interlocutors’ primary aim was to teach the public “true history,” rather than what they identified as “false history.” In this way, they understood themselves as holding a public trust; most of their organizations secured funding largely through public funds, and members saw it as their duty to utilize these funds to educate the public. The historical organization, then, both began and ended with the wider community, and the heritage sector at large entailed moral values that were not reduceable to market forces. I also investigate the ways in which certain historical organization members’ moralistic positions clashed with one another, demonstrating that, even within organizations, the practice of history cultivated multiple moral ends. Money was thus a medium through which disagreements salient to local history and the community were played out.

Ethics and the Mundane

As Michael Jackson writes in his book *The Palm at the End of the Mind: relatedness, religiosity, and the real*, “gifts not only engender life; they bring home to us that life is a matter of living with others, of sharing what we have with them. Not to give, not to receive what is offered, or not to pass on to others what we have received goes against the grain of life” (Jackson 2009: 217). From this point of view, the material is embedded in social processes and can be harnessed to solidify social bonds, to create and maintain community. Furthermore, Jackson’s perspective draws attention to the notion that money and goods are intertwined with and inseparable from ethics. There is, however, a qualification to the implementation of ethics on a wide scale; as Jackson suggests, it is “probably impossible to implement on a universal scale the kind of ethos that might sometimes be achieved in a particular workplace, a small community” (Jackson 2009: 187). The small community – such as the historical organization – is thus a forum in which particular conceptions of ethics may be practiced and become explicit, especially those surrounding money, given organization members’ constant efforts to gain funds and utilize them in what they deemed to be an ethically sound manner. The focus was thus primarily on how funds *should* be used.

In scholarly conversations surrounding moral economy and money in the anthropology of history, as anthropologist Sharon MacDonald argues, most literature has suggested that engagement with the past is performed for personal financial or experiential gain (MacDonald 2013). She points out that people tend to want heritage/memory/identity to be distinct from and opposed to commodities/industry/the market (MacDonald 2013: 110), but this is not necessarily the case in actual practice.

These categories are interwoven, and the notion of them being discrete is simply unrealistic. Authenticity is thus skewed; it is an ideal which many authors simultaneously critique and buy into, in the sense that they refute the notion of authenticity itself but decry the fact that there is a definite market associated with heritage. MacDonald notes that authenticity is “is concerned with the truth to a disposition and to the story – and vantage-point – that deserves to be told” (MacDonald 2013: 118). She argues that this authorization of histories is important because “if heritage is shown to be inauthentic – if it is not what it purports to be – then this throws the authenticity and legitimacy of the related social identity into question” (MacDonald 2013: 119). For this reason, it was of utmost importance to my interlocutors that their narratives be framed as truth and their practices be interpreted as authentic – an effort that they at times felt was undermined by engagement with money, which, in certain contexts, posed a threat of contamination. As Mary Douglas writes in her seminal book *Purity and Danger*, “The whole universe is harnessed to men’s attempts to force one another into good citizenship. Thus we find that certain moral values are upheld and certain social rules defined by beliefs in dangerous contagion” (Douglas 2003 [1966]: 3). Money, for my interlocutors, was a balancing act; while they deemed its association with heritage sector activity as potentially constituting a contagion, they were often forced to engage with money, seeking funding for their activities and donating to community members in order to fulfill their “ethos.” I thus argue that, instead of assuming that the presence of a market associated with heritage renders practices of history inauthentic, the use of money allowed my interlocutors to assert the authenticity of their historical narratives and place their ethics and their consideration for fellow community members in high relief. They

also viewed participation in historical organizations for gain as disingenuous and a transgression against the knowledge- and community-oriented aims of their organizations. In this vein of thought I suggest that a highly moralized practice of history in tandem with the acquisition of money for a historical organization served as a means through which certain moralized intentions could be accomplished, but it also presented, for my interlocutors, a necessity to establish “true” versions of history in their wider communities.

While money has been able to shape individuals within historical organizations, it also has an extensive history of shaping History writ large. This is because, through committing resources to a narrative, my interlocutors authorized certain histories, which resulted in a devaluation of other narratives. My interlocutors often used their personal money – in addition to organization funds – to contest dominant forms of history with which they disagreed; as we shall see, members of the Richard III Society refused to donate to the organization overseeing the construction of Richard III’s tomb because they deemed the design inconsistent with the king’s life and times, and they boycotted books, plays, and television shows that depicted Richard III in a way that they deemed to be inaccurate and deleterious. While refusing to engage with what they believed to be “false” narratives, they spent the majority of the branch’s funds to produce and circulate literature describing their own views on medieval English history. It was precisely this type of authorization on historical organization members’ parts that demonstrates how money facilitated their accomplishment of non-monetary goals that were aligned with the sense of moralism they shared with other members of their organizations. Refuting the commonly perceived axiom that consumerism within the heritage sector served to

promote the individual's personal gain, I pay particular attention to the ways in which my interlocutors attained, used, and discussed money. In so doing, I explore the ways in which money was tied for my interlocutors to morality and a sense of responsibility to the public, rather than constituting a factor which undermined these ends, as several authors hold (Brandt 1978; Lowenthal 1985; Geismar 2015).

What is at stake for historical organization members in this nexus of money and moral economy? Webb Keane performs a provocative intervention in the conversation surrounding these topics; as he argues in his article "How everyday ethics becomes a moral economy, and vice versa," the often-invisible factor that determines the circulation of funding and attitudes towards money is the social relationship. Keane writes: "the value of social relations is so fundamental to the formation of the self that it cannot be explained in terms of some other goal, such as maximizing utilities" (Keane 2019: 8). This statement is aligned with the fact that social relationships between people who had some interest or stake in local history were of the utmost importance. In establishing the fact that the concepts that make ethics explicit are social in nature (Keane 2019: 10), Keane underlines the essential nature of the social which precedes the maximization of utilities. In the case of historical organizations, maximization primarily takes the form of securing funding for endeavors related to the past. Hence Robert's efforts to generate funds for the Centerville Museum and the Honey Run Bridge Association and, through endeavors that focused on money, create a partnership between the two organizations. In this way, as Keane states, "social relationships are a core human value that cannot be reduced to instrumental explanations" (Keane 2019: 9). He further suggests that "the values that are associated with consumerist behavior surrounding the past are ultimately

not reducible to the instrumental purposes of maximized utilities: they are about becoming a certain kind of person, one whose virtues are recognizable and valued by others in social relationships” (Keane 2019: 7). The driving force, then – as scholars have noted – is not the system of value itself, but the moral underpinnings of the system and the operation of money in a manner that lends itself to the accomplishment of greater “good” within a given society, which in turn reinforces social relationships (Guyer 2004; Bollier 2002; Sahlins 1972). In this way, there was not necessarily a stark contrast between economic and social ends for my interlocutors, for their engagement with money aimed primarily to reinforce what they knew to be “truth” and disseminate this information widely. I argue that systems of exchange and money in the heritage sector were used as *tools* in accomplishing goals that were moralistic in nature, such as educating community members and ensuring the perseverance of “true” versions of history.

The heritage sector, however, facilitated multiple moral ends that were not necessarily consistent with one another. In York, Barry, the director of Red Tower York would complain to me about John, a member of the organization who Barry felt was always out for personal gain. Barry once said to me that:

John is our eco-warrior. But John is a very self-promoting sort of a person. He’s got a wonderful ethos for trying to save the planet and he’s very green orientated, he claims to have the smallest carbon footprint in the world. But with him, he likes publicity. He likes publicity for his campaigns, his anti-fracking, campaigns against fossil fuel, and all those sorts of things. I sometimes feel that his

involvement with the Red Tower is a vehicle for HIM, to have a connection with the media and other people.

Barry went on to say that, although John was listed as a director of Red Tower York, he never attended any of the meetings or helped with the events the organization put on.

Barry had been especially irritated that, even though John was a professional children's entertainer, he turned down Barry's request for him to put on a show for the children at a Red Tower York event. Barry's conclusion that John was entirely self-interested and not very community-minded led him to deem John's behavior reprehensible. It is important to note, however, that the determining factor for whether or not Barry liked the other organization members was whether or not he felt that they were community-minded.

Barry confided in me that another of the organization's directors irritated him, but he did not believe that this person was self-promoting or self-interested, so he still counted her as a friend and a useful community member. What Barry was acting against in his practice of local history was the member who facilitated personal gain through "social climbing" without making what he understood to be contribution. It is important to note that Barry's concept of community-mindedness was a very particular interpretation of this notion, demonstrating the fact that organization members' moral ends were often not coterminous, and this led to an implicit devaluation of certain members' ethical leanings. For John, self-promotion and publicity would allow his environmentalist practices – which he framed as being of significant benefit to the community – to gain traction. While he framed his "eco-warrior" activities as being community minded, Barry held that being community-minded could only take the form to which he had molded himself – engendering benefit for community members and attentiveness to local history.

Behavior surrounding money was thus a particularly tricky means of evaluating organization members, because the instrumentalization of social bonds in itself could be considered immoral by some of my interlocutors. Another example may be found in John Rudderow, a member of the Honey Run Bridge Association and the Centerville Museum Association, who community members referred to as the “Canyon Historian.” Having lived in the area for 25 years, he prided himself on having known Lois Coleman, the woman who started the Centerville Museum, who was an active participant in community activities and was extremely knowledgeable about local history. During our conversation, it quickly became clear that John was deeply skeptical of Robert, who was the chair of two of the historical organizations to which he belonged. He asserted that Robert was “trying to make his own brand” in being involved with local history – a position that he deemed disingenuous. “Egos, power plays, and the ‘my way or the highway’ attitude are common,” he said. “There are a lot of people who want their way.” John attributed this to individuals – such as Robert – “wanting control,” which he felt was antithetical to the nature of the organizations. “We’re all here for stewardship,” he said. “Some of us are greedy and want everything. But what we have to think about is, what are we leaving for the next generation?” It is interesting to note that Robert consistently spoke almost incessantly about the importance of community and benefiting others – he did not perceive himself as being, as John suggested, self-interested. This demonstrates that historical organization members’ desired ends – such as public education, community fortification, and establishing a legacy for the community – were often markedly similar for my interlocutors; however, they disagreed in seemingly fundamental ways because they held differing notions of how to accomplish these goals.

In this way, Keane's point about social relationships and ethics preceding money proved true in contexts of historical organizations. Individuals utilized money to facilitate the actualization of their ethics. However, this notion was not necessarily true for historical organization members in a clear-cut, binary manner. For instance, Keane's assertion that social relationships and ethics were the primary force behind people's efforts does not mean that aims of maximizing utilities did not exert due influence on social relationships and ethics as my interlocutors understood them. As Barry once said while explaining the role of ethics in shaping Red Tower York, "what's going to be a determining factor about how we pursue our original ethics is the ability to finance it, because if we're not making enough money to be able to finance the ethos, then you've got to tweak your ethos a little bit to make sure you DO make the money to be able to provide for it. So, it's a bit chicken and egg-ish, really, there." For Barry, the "history part" of Red Tower York actually inhibited the organization's ability to be what he termed "100% ethic." Barry once explained to me the issues the council had had with Red Tower York's attempts to simultaneously serve residents of the nearby social housing project and tourists walking along the medieval city walls, emphasizing the "hoops" that Red Tower York directors were forced to jump through that increasingly seemed never-ending and impossible. "If we'd wanted to wash our hands of the historic factors related to the Red Tower and just sort of ignored them," Barry told me, "then the organization would have been 100% ethic, but it's not." By this, Barry meant that, if they had not been forced to become a community interest company and extend their charitable acts to tourists interested in the city's history, they would have been more aligned with Barry's ethical vision of serving those in need in the local community. However, Red

Tower York was barely above water financially speaking when they decided to incorporate, and the ability to apply for funding as a community interest company secured their future existence – which meant that they would be able to carry out the work they desired to accomplish for those they deemed “less fortunate” in the community, even if this could not be their sole focus. In this case, the money – or potential future funding – made the decision for them. However, the driving force behind the organization’s very existence was to provide for others in the community, which was doubtless a socially oriented goal in line with the public trust that members perceived themselves to hold.

Money as Ethos

Although what my interlocutors referred to as the “ethos” of their organizations was of great significance to them, the intervention of economic factors, for some, presented situations in which they were forced to be flexible regarding their expectations of what they could achieve as organizations and how they could relate to other people both within and outside of the organizations. I also worked with organizations whose directors operated for the sole purpose of capitalizing on local history and had no qualms about vocalizing this aim. I argue, though, that through bringing income into the community, these historical organization members focused on the funding necessary to facilitate their ethics and community interests being actualized. One such organization was the Donner Summit Historical Society in Soda Springs, California, a small town in the Sierra Mountains which had historically revolved around skiing. Its claim to fame, however, was the fact that the Donner Party, a wagon train that departed for California

from Missouri in 1846, resorted to cannibalism in order to survive the harsh winter of 1846-1847 when they were trapped near Soda Springs. Norm, the president of the small Donner Summit Historical Society, had spent a great deal of his life in Soda Springs and noticed the morbid tourism that the town habitually drew. "People come off the highway looking for the place where the cannibalism took place," he told me. "If we didn't have the Donner name, you probably wouldn't be here either." I met Norm through Bill, his partner in running the Donner Summit Historical Society, who had given a talk at the Nevada County Historical Society's monthly meeting which I had attended. After meeting and speaking with Bill, I attended one of his historical hikes and was afterwards introduced to Norm, who did not attend the hikes but rather waited in the historical society's little shop front on Soda Springs' main road to attend to any visitors. The historical society building contained a massive collection of old photographs, antique snowshoes and skis, and other Sierra-related memorabilia. Norm always sat in an antique barber's chair – his throne at the head of a circle of wooden chairs near the pot-belly

stove that heated the small room thoroughly even in the bitter cold.



[21. Antique pictures and lanterns from the local area in the Donner Summit Historical Society building.]

The first time we met, Norm told me that he had arrived in Soda Springs in 1954 as a “ski bum,” which meant that he worked on the slopes in order to earn sufficient money to support himself, his goal being to ski as much as possible. “In those days, skiing was a way of life,” Norm said, “not just a day of entertainment.” During his time living in Soda Springs Norm had helped build the first chairlift at Donner Ski Ranch, a mountain that he and his wife later ran for 46 years. The only sojourn Norm took from living in Soda Springs was a stint in which he joined a mountaineer’s division in Colorado; during that time, he met people who went on to found some of the most famous ski resorts in the country. He and his friend who founded Vale, an immensely successful ski resort in

Colorado, hiked on the mountain when, as Norm said, “there was nothing there.” “I vowed to return to California and start a MORE popular ski resort where there were more people!” he exclaimed. Once he returned to California, he taught himself skills that were useful for operating his fledgling ski resort, such as logging and running heavy machinery and equipment. At the time of my research, Norm was still involved in logging and distributing firewood within the community.

On the first day we met, Norm told me that he became interested in history about 10 years before the time of my research when he met a woman named Margie Powell who had written a book called “Donner Summit: A Brief History.” Because Norm had a vast collection of old photographs, she had approached him to ask if he would supply some for her forthcoming book. When she saw what a collection he had, Margie deemed it imperative for them to start a historical society together. This was the birth of the 501(c)(3) organization – an organization that is charitable and therefore tax exempt – that became Donner Summit Historical Society. Norm, however, did not claim to be an expert in historical matters; “I’m just an old tractor driver who likes doing this kind of stuff,” he told me. Although Norm did not claim to have a vast knowledge of local history, he demonstrated an impressive cache of knowledge about the community’s past. He had told me about a change in ownership of crucial roads, as well as the construction of a freeway that happened in the 1960’s, stating that these shifts had changed the community – and not for the better. He said that in 1964 when the freeway was opened, everyone wanted to drive on the freeway instead of local roads, which resulted in less visits to local businesses. He also cited the case of neighboring Nevada County taking over Donner Pass Road, the main road in and out of Soda Springs, which created several

problems. First, it drove up prices of rent and goods and people who Norm dubbed “workers” were no longer able to live in the community. Second, once having bought the road, Nevada County wanted to tear down a historic bridge in Soda Springs. Norm and his close friends thought that this was preposterous, and they set out to save the bridge. The Nevada City council planned to either fill in the gap that the bridge spanned or build a new bridge; although they were open to rehabilitating the old bridge, they could not shoulder the cost of such an endeavor. Norm’s close friend wrote a grant application and ultimately received \$500,000 to save the bridge – a sum that the city council matched – and the bridge was, as Norm said, “saved.” Norm claimed that this bridge had since been excellent for the local economy, given that companies often filmed advertisements or movies on it, which left more money in the town of Soda Springs.

The experience of “saving the bridge” led Norm to conceive of other ways in which Soda Springs’ history could facilitate an influx of money into the community. One of his proudest accomplishments was rendering it possible for the local Highway 40 to be declared a historic route. “Why not capitalize it?” was the question that Norm posed to me rhetorically. He believed that capitalizing the Donner name and anything associated with it brought in tourists, which brought in money for the community. Norm habitually enlisted the help of the community in order to carry out the tasks necessary for tourism in Soda Springs; every spring, community members drove the length of historic Highway 40 to erect signs directing tourists to historic sites, and every fall, they returned to take them down to prevent them from being damaged by heavy snow. Norm, however, yearned for what he called “the old days.” “Living on Highway 40 was a whole way of life,” he said. He told me that there was a tradition they used to have in bars along

Highway 40 in which one man would start with a \$100 bill and buy everyone drinks, wall to wall. Then, someone who had been there and benefitted from this generosity would do the same thing at another bar along Highway 40, and this would continue until almost everyone who had been there had bought drinks wall to wall at a different bar along the highway. “It was a way of life,” Norm repeated. “You knew everybody, you helped everybody.” At the time of my research, the vast majority of the hotels where those bars had been located were gone.

This sense of loss was also apparent in Norm’s systematic endeavor to collect and preserve old photographs. About 5 years before, Norm had begun using Ebay to find antique photos of the Tahoe area. He said that when he began collecting there were many photos available, but at the time when I spoke to him there would be days when he could not find any at all. Some of his prized possessions were photos by Alfred Hart, a photographer for the Central Pacific Railroad who had taken photos of the railroad being built in the 1860’s. Norm explained that most existing antique pictures of the area were taken in order to become postcards. However, he believed that cell phones had changed what he called the “souvenir lifestyle,” having rendered postcards useless because, with the advent of camera phones, people could snap a quick picture of their own. The postcards Norm referenced often “made it into family albums.” Many had no date and no writing on them, and Norm said that he wished more were written on. He told me that he had learned a great deal from the writing, especially if there was an absence of identifying factors in the picture. Norm told me that when he gave talks to children, he always told them: “try to get a house, a car, a bridge in the background when you take pictures. If it’s just a picture of mom and dad, no one will want it later.” Norm had

noticed that, sadly, many of the family albums he located on Ebay were taken apart, the photos put up for sale. Norm visited Ebay often to collect objects pertaining to Donner Pass, whether they were books, posters, pictures, or other antiques. He had meticulously organized these materials, putting the photographs in binders that were clean, unwrinkled, and fully labeled. “It’s more than just a picture,” he said. “There are stories behind it. A lot of them are personal stories.” I asked him if he felt that he was rescuing stories by saving these photographs, and he said “yes, absolutely.”

It is essential to note at this point that Norm’s desire to capitalize on Soda Springs’ local history was borne of a particular sense of moralism; it was another permutation of, as Barry had put it, “financing the ethos” of the organization to which he belonged. For Norm, this ethos burgeoned from a deep sense of nostalgia for past decades and the loss of people and attitudes associated with them. For Norm, a “moral” way of living was being imbricated in a community and helping other community members – an approach that, through his work with the Donner Summit Historical Society, he sought to revive in the present. Capturing and presenting the history of a nostalgic time was a way for him to make moral claims on the present through comparisons of imagined moralities of the past. Norm’s position on history can be partially explained by Svetlana Boym, who writes in her book *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) that “nostalgia (from *nostos* – return home, and *algia* – longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy” (Boym 2001: xiii). Nostalgia has been described by scholars as impractically romantic (Brandt 1978), a means of salvaging meaning in a changing and incomprehensible world (Cohler 2008), or

a biproduct of current cultural struggles and disillusionment with imaginations of the future (Bissell 2008). Such nostalgia, though, was not by any means the driving force behind all of my interlocutors' interest in history. They viewed their practices of history as productive, fostering vibrant communities rather than spurring individuals' solitary engagement with markets associated with heritage. They were thus diametrically opposed to Brandt's argument that, "dislocated in time and place, the past has become a kind of theater. We buy tickets to it. In every sense of the word, we patronize it" (Brandt 1978: 62). Furthermore, they refuted David Lowenthal's claim that "we have partly domesticated that past, where they do things differently, and brought it into the present as a marketable commodity" (Lowenthal 1985: xxv). While authors such as Cohler and Bissell wrote of purposes of nostalgia that are applicable to Norm's situation, they miss the necessary and central point that the heritage market does *not* exist solely for monetary or other personal gain.

At times, though, nostalgia led to a profound sense of disillusionment which, for some of my interlocutors such as Norm, led to taking action in order to render the future more aligned with the qualities that he valued about the past. When Norm said that his foremost goal in the Donner Summit Historical Society was to raise money for the community, he was acting in line with Sharon MacDonald's contention that consumption in the heritage sector "draws nevertheless on a powerful popular drive to make consumption meaningful, to remove it from alienating social relations, to 'sacralise' it, to endow it with the *subjective*" (MacDonald 2013: 159). MacDonald argues that, for example, objects bought at museum shops often serve as mementoes, "carrying one time into another, even turning their owners into collectors" (MacDonald 2013: 159). The act

of consumption thus has the ability to transform the consumer in a meaningful way through linking her to a particular narrative or history. Furthermore, reinforcement of the community was one of the values which Norm felt had been lost to time, and in drawing community members together and protecting their heritage he was acting in accordance with what he perceived to be a historical narrative that existed in Soda Springs' past. Community invoked moral imperatives and frameworks for both Norm and Barry because it involved what they deemed to be the ethical treatment of others, and the building of collectives that would act in line with their ethical leanings. Of course they valued their communities also for social connection, material and emotional support, and a sense of connection and belonging. However, each of these factors constituted a building block with which they could construct a particular type of community that was aligned with their senses of ethics. Although the academic conversation surrounding nostalgia has evolved to include a great deal of nuance, many authors on the subject of nostalgia and engagement with the heritage sector have assumed – as Brandt did – that people's interest in the past constitutes consumerism for the sake of consumerism. Quite to the contrary, I suggest that acts involving money were, in fact, facilitating ethics being carried out *through* money. Norm and others of my interlocutors thus utilized money as a tool with which to accomplish the deeply and thoroughly moral goals of their respective societies, which were founded on a need to benefit and fortify their communities and actualize their imperatives of how community “should” be.

Money and Means

An apt example may be found in the Jorvik Museum in York, where I accompanied Beth on April 8, 2017 for the day of the museum's grand reopening. This day had been long awaited by all employees and volunteers; the museum had been destroyed by a record-breaking flood in late December of 2015 and was forced to close. The management took this opportunity to completely reimagine the exhibitions.



[22. A promotional flag for the Jorvik Museum's reopening on April 8th, 2017.]

Beth had escaped from managing at Barley Hall, another of the Jorvik Group's museums, to run an errand for the museum, but her primary goal for the excursion was to see all the people waiting in the April sunshine for the new Jorvik experience. As we walked, she said, "I can't believe it's finally the 8th of April!" Her comment demonstrated the fact that so much of the Jorvik employees' time and energy had gone into the remaking of the museum, and their hopes were high for an overwhelming response from the public. When we reached Jorvik there were men dressed in Viking garb playing music with traditional Viking instruments, and employees were handing out promotional flags and managing the line, which I thought was fairly long. However, Beth's face betrayed

disappointment, and she told me that she had hoped that it would have been longer. “It used to go around all the way to Boots [a pharmacy in the Coppergate shopping center] back when I started,” she said, gesturing towards the store opposite Jorvik across the open pavilion. “Back then, it would have been a two-hour wait,” she said. “Maybe more.” Beth remained in good spirits though – I told her that it was still early (only just past 10 in the morning) and that more people would most likely arrive as the day progressed. She said that she would come back in the afternoon to see if the line was any longer then. We then bumped into Helen, another Jorvik employee who had the day off and had come for the same reason we had – to ensure that the new Jorvik was meeting with success on its first day open. “I can’t believe it’s the 8th of April!” she exclaimed excitedly, just as Beth had. She also expressed how the amount of people who had come out was “fantastic” and “wonderful;” it was clear that Jorvik employees had invested a significant amount of psychic energy into the rebirth of the museum. I once asked Beth what was different about the new Jorvik, and the first difference she noted was the fact that the museum no longer “glossed over” the history of slavery in York – instead, it focused in part on a history upon which the past museum had not elaborated. She felt that this was an essential change in the museum’s constitution because, as she said, the “not-so-nice parts” of history needed to be addressed. The Jorvik Group was thus attempting to rewrite the story of history that presumably most York residents knew. In committing huge amounts of funding to this story being told, the Jorvik Group was positing this “new” history as a set of facts to trump what visitors previously knew about local history.

This authorization of certain parts of history was facilitated, in large part, by the public, because the Jorvik museum's much-anticipated reopening had only been possible due to full-force fundraising activities. Beth told me that the museum had insurance to cover rebuilding it exactly as it had been prior to the flood; however, Jorvik as a whole decided to take the opportunity of the museum's destruction to make improvements in its overall constitution. Shortly after the flood, museum employees launched what they called "Campaign Canute," an effort named for a famous Viking king which aimed to acquire as many funds as possible from the public in order to reconstruct the museum. Employees stood outside the museum with buckets to gather money from passers-by, sent out letters requesting donations, hosted special events, orchestrated raffles and fundraising pig races, and allowed people to sponsor parts of the famous Jorvik ride – a sensory experience in which visitors would be able to sit in a capsule and watch and listen to robots in a reconstructed scene of Viking York. Jorvik also teamed with other local venues and set up temporary exhibitions around the city; the money that these exhibitions raised went towards Campaign Canute. Donations were sent in by organizations and individuals alike, and Beth recounted to me how children had mailed in their pocket money in hopes of improving Jorvik. Campaign Canute raised about £1.5 million, and Jorvik employees were thrilled at the prospect of working in a new, state-of-the-art museum that would engage visitors even more effectively than before. The money that Jorvik raised through Campaign Canute served to improve the accuracy of the museum's message to the public and render visitor experiences more captivating and enthralling.

The Jorvik Group, as an organization that had tremendous clout within the heritage sector, easily secured funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund, a U.K. funding body that received money from the purchase of lottery tickets and allocated portions of it to organizations in Britain's heritage sector. Several of my interlocutors told me that attaining funding from the organization was extremely difficult and required a grant writer who "knew what they were doing." Through £6 billion over the 20 years before my research, the Heritage Lottery Fund had engaged in 37,000 projects, stating that "through continued lottery investment, we want to ensure that heritage can fulfill its potential to contribute to the U.K.'s economy, society and a better preserved and understood heritage in its broadest sense" (Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Framework 2013 – 2018). There was one particularly moralistic stipulation for their contribution, though, which was aligned with my interlocutors' aims: "our grants must deliver public benefits that exceed any private gain" (Heritage Lottery Fund Strategic Framework 2013 – 2018). This aim was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund's list of outcomes which a project was required to accomplish in order to secure funding. The list featured one mandatory outcome – "a wider range of people will be involved in heritage" – but there were a range of other outcomes that applicants could claim that their projects would accomplish. One particularly ambiguous outcome states that "the local area will be a better place to live, work or visit," meaning that

Local residents will have a better quality of life and overall the area will be more attractive. As a result of improving the appearance of heritage sites or of the opportunities you have provided for local people to visit, use, get involved with,

and enjoy heritage, residents will report that they feel greater pride in the local area and/or have a stronger sense of belonging (“Outcomes – the Detail”).

In addition to the Heritage Lottery Fund funding having created an explosion of jobs in the heritage sector, its processes generated more money in the heritage sector and presumably engendered a deeper sense of meaning and identity in British citizens. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s funding, then, was more than just money – it was a means of accomplishing ends that were social and moral in nature. This mirrors historical organization members’ engagement with funding in the sense that they sought foremost for money to engender benefits that were non-monetary in nature.

It is imperative to note that certain organizations also received money *through* social relationships. Red Tower York had one particularly supportive benefactor to thank for their continued operation. Barbara, a kindly elderly woman who lived in the social housing project that bordered Red Tower York, had donated significant sums of money and antique objects to the organization. Barbara would attend Red Tower York events, and sometimes Barry and I would visit her in her home; no matter the setting, though, I noticed the pointed attention that Barry paid to her and the way in which he catered to her every need. He would walk to her house in order to help her walk to the Red Tower, he brought her tea and cake, he sat with her for extended periods of time, and he walked her home when she was ready to return. Barry referred to her as the “great benefactor” of the Red Tower, telling me that she had recently donated an extremely valuable antique railway clock to the organization. Barbara was a much-valued member of the community because she knew a significant amount of history, both from personal experience and from reading about local history in her spare time. However, she was also valuable to

[23. Right: The railway clock Barbara donated to Red Tower York, proudly displayed in the Red Tower.]

Red Tower York because she aided significantly – financially speaking – in their continued operation. This is not to say that members of Red Tower York appreciated her *because* she had been so generous; members of the organization enjoyed personal relationships with her in addition to being grateful for her help. In this instance, money was not the driving factor for interest in history or personal relationships between members of historical organizations; it was, instead, a *means* through which people were able to establish and maintain social bonds. As



Keane writes, “people have to draw on a shared language of norms and values in order to be recognizable to one another. That is how moral economy, culture, and religion enter the picture. They don’t directly *cause* behavior, but they provide the tools that make it *understandable* and therefore, subject to ethical judgments” (Keane 2019: 10). Money was thus, for my interlocutors, a means to an end, something that would accomplish a greater social or moral goal.

Nevertheless, money had another purpose for my interlocutors. Certain members of the Richard III Society fundamentally disagreed with the way in which Leicester Cathedral handled the king’s reburial, and they utilized money to demonstrate their disdain for citizens of Leicester in general. Angela once reminded me, “as you know,

there are people in the society who contributed towards the tomb design who wanted their money back. They didn't like it, they didn't like any of the ceremony attending the reburial." These were society members who felt that the tomb was too modern, too "cold," or not related enough to Richard III's life. Their disparagement of people who had approved the design for the tomb was marked by their request to have their money returned; their act of funding or revoking funding from an endeavor thus demonstrated what they would support and to whom they owed their allegiance. In revoking their funding, Richard III Society members were asserting that the aesthetics of the tomb were not historically accurate, and they were thus asserting their own understanding of history over that of the people who supported a modern-style tomb. Not only was money indicative of moral values and constitutive of social bonds – it was also used as a tool through which my interlocutors leveraged certain historical narratives against others. This function of money was something that my interlocutors noted and expressed concern over. I once spoke with Sam, a Jorvik Group employee, about why so many Jorvik employees feared Brexit. He explained that Brexit would most certainly alter funding for the British heritage sector because the funds which were earmarked for the heritage sector went first through Brussels, and only after this was some dispersed to other EU countries. The uncertainty was where that would leave Britain in the clamor for additional funds, and whose narrative would become champion over others due to the commitment of funding to them.

Community and Legibility

Through the aforementioned examples, we may glean that morality served as a language through which my interlocutors were legible to one another. Their mutually intelligible morals and relationships with one another contextualized their engagement with money and rendered their community-inspired efforts a part of their perceived trajectories of history. Furthermore, members of historical organizations utilized one another's moral leanings surrounding history to evaluate what kind of a person the other was, and whether or not that person was aligned enough with members' vision for the organization to be considered a fundamental part of the organization. However, this argument gives rise to a crucial question: were morals an end within themselves for my interlocutors, or were they a post hoc explanation for some deeper cause of their behavior? Barry was driven by his strong need to "help people;" Norm feared his "way of life" slipping away entirely; and Jorvik employees were concerned with putting the museum group's best face forward. Each of my interlocutors cited ethics as influencing their need to act in the way that they did, and each utilized money in order to accomplish goals that were important for their communities. However, my interlocutors' deployments of morality had a dialectical relationship, informing and shaping one another. It thus mattered little whether or not they entertained ulterior motives for engaging with money surrounding their organizations, and pursuing the idea that they did do so would be purely semantics. The fact that they *chose* to describe their actions as being seated in a particular sense of moralism demonstrates that morality was at the forefront of their minds when it came to local history.

Although each of the organizations invoked in this chapter differed drastically in scale and had varying access to funding, it is notable that the thread of moralizing

discourse ran through each of their narratives surrounding money. In addition, each of them perceived themselves to be acting in accordance with a personal trust that they held. The paramount importance of benefiting the public through the dissemination of “true” history demonstrates what was, for my interlocutors, the essential nature of community; for them, the community was tied in with and equally as important as the histories they strove to craft and perpetuate. While money appeared to be an important factor in their efforts to accurately represent the past, it was only a means to an end that was exceedingly social in nature.

Scowen is a caring and sensitive 68-year old medieval weaponry specialist for the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society. Perpetually smiling and laughing, he enjoys pointing out historical details about his surroundings to anyone who will listen, including passers-by. He often stops to coo over babies and dogs, and he regularly helps elderly people to cross the road. He also leads annual walks of local historic battlefields and is ever learning more details about the past, fostering an intricate body of knowledge about several periods of history. Scowen thoroughly enjoys browsing in York's antique shops and, unlike his close friend and fellow society member Lynda, he rarely makes a purchase. He enjoys being in the presence of history in material form and pays acute attention to what has survived the centuries. Perhaps this is because so much has been lost – not only in terms of buildings and objects, but in terms of people and stories, both on a national and a personal scale. Scowen once told me that, later in his life and after returning from fighting in WWII, his father had spent time in Ward 42, the psychiatric ward in the neighboring city of Leeds where he lived as a child. Scowen's father had been standing on a bridge gazing into the water underneath when bystanders feared that he would jump. "My father fought in many battles in the war," Scowen sighed as he told me the story. "We didn't know about everything that had happened until the time he was in the hospital." Apparently, 20 years before, Scowen's father had been on a ship full of ammunition that exploded. Many of his friends were killed and he washed ashore, waking up wearing only one boot and his underwear. He had never told his family. Hence, 20 years later they found him on the bridge looking at the water because it reminded him of being on that ship. Although he had no intention of jumping, the police hauled him away to Ward 42. Scowen said to me, "he came back. But don't get me wrong – he wasn't the same man when he came back. He was quiet and sad." Scowen thus categorizes memories of his father as being either before or after Ward 42. When he lost his father, it was as if he had lost only a shell of the man – someone who was quiet, melancholy, and glued to the television. History is, to Scowen, a responsibility informed by his previous experiences, but it is also a joy. He seeks primarily to disseminate historical information and forge social bonds, for knowledge and relationships are of the utmost importance to him.



[24. Scowen and the author trying on hats at a York antique store. Photo by Lynda Telford.]

Chapter Six: Narratives, Social Bonds, and Methods of History

95-year old Brita sat down with me in Searls Historic Library, Nevada City's repository of town records that was funded and operated by the Nevada County Historical Society. Brita had spent decades volunteering in the library, where she sifted through old documents and photographs, treating each as a prized possession and an integral piece of Nevada City's history. On this day she spoke to me about her Cornish heritage – being descended from Cornish miners who migrated to the town in the 19th century to work in the booming mining industry – and her resulting implication in Nevada City history. She explained that Nevada City's mining history was marked by different stages in which distinctive techniques were used, and that different types of mining brought different populations of people in order to work in the mines. Nevada City had seen an influx of Cornish miners during the period in which hard rock mining was used. "The first round of miners were without skill," she said. She explained that the Cornish, however, were skilled and understood the intricacies of hard rock mining due to the large constituency within their community who worked in this capacity in Cornwall. Brita then told me that her father had worked as an engineer for one of the local mines, though building machinery was a hobby of his and did not end with the workday. She noted that Nevada City's mining museum contained a pelton wheel that her father had built to generate power for several household appliances in her childhood home. She then pointed to one of the black and white pictures on the wall which featured a lady with her hair perfectly coiffed and decorated with a bow. "That's my mother's graduation picture," she said, explaining to me that her mother had been a schoolteacher down the road when she had met Brita's father. Both of her parents were born and raised in Nevada City, and of equal

importance was the fact that they were both of Cornish descent. The legacy of Brita's parents was important to her, but the Cornish blood she shared with 19th century miners who had migrated to Nevada City similarly compelled her to remember her genealogy. Brita belonged to the Cornish Miners Society, and each Thursday she baked Cornish pasties and brought them for everyone at Searls to enjoy. Brita thus understood herself as not only "Cornish" – tracing her lineage back to the very founders of the city that she called home – but she also perceived her own history as being inseparable from that of her family, her ancestors, and the local area's mines.

Across the Atlantic in York, Angela once spoke of her notion of family; however, rather than discussing blood relations and genealogy, she described her relationships with other Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society members as familial. She said:

I suppose we are like a family, really. The branch has had a few hiccups, but we have settled down with some supportive members. And we are all hopefully working in the same direction, we all want to see that King Richard is properly rehabilitated. So, we are a family.

Similarly, Sealed Knot member Tristan felt a deep sense of loyalty and kinship with his branch of the reenactment group, as well as the historical figure who began the Sealed Knot. He said:

I would never leave it because it's my family and I feel like there's almost some sort of honor in fighting for this person who's been lost to history...[other group members] have seen me through thick and thin, and I would do anything for the majority of them. I think there is a definite kinship and a definite honor in being in that regiment.

In a manner that mirrored Angela's stance on family, Tristan conceived of his kinship circle to include not only members of his organization with whom he did not share blood ties, but also to include a man who had been dead for centuries.

The examples of Brita, Angela, and Tristan demonstrate that when my interlocutors did historical work, they thought through the lens of family, as they conceived of it. Family history, for many of my interlocutors, was the grounding on which local history was built. There was thus a dialectical relationship between family history, local history, and national history that operated through the making of historical knowledge. Family history, then, was the logic through which people were working when they made history. However, while some of my interlocutors were keenly interested in genealogy and blood ties, others were primarily interested in individuals they located within their kinship circles with whom they did not share a biological relation. In this chapter I will ask: how did my interlocutors situate themselves in their regions' historical landscapes given their claims to history that resulted from notions of kinship? And how did they understand and instrumentalize kinship bonds? I argue that historical organization members' circles of kinship included other members of their organizations, as well as deceased historical figures who were autochthonous to their regions. I further argue that my interlocutors' practices of history were rooted in a sense of stewardship that resulted from their implication in these kinship circles with both present and past members of their communities.

Genealogies, Or A Lack Thereof

I first met Tom, a lifelong resident of Reno, Nevada, in the fall of 2017. His wife Betty welcomed me into their home, joking that the strong wind that day had blown me all the way down their long driveway to the front door. A mutual acquaintance had informed me that 96-year-old Tom's nickname was "the Reno Ice Man" because of his in-depth study of the local ice industry in the late 1800's and early 1900's, as well as his relation to a man who was an ice harvester¹¹ in the area. I did not know at that point that Tom's research on the ice industry had led him to study the closely interwoven histories of lumber and railroads, and I was certainly not expecting the jam-packed research den that was his office. Tom and Betty's house was full of neatly organized maps, photographs, files, and lists of historical society members' phone numbers. Tom was mostly housebound due to his confinement to a wheelchair, but this did not prevent him from remaining in contact with friends he had met in historical societies over the years. Tom's vivid personality was most apparent to me when he was telling old family stories; his life pursuit had been to verify the details of his grandfather's many illustrious tales, and he was pleased to confirm to me that, thus far, they had all been true. We often sat around Tom and Betty's kitchen table while Tom explained his family lineage and history to me. Tom's great grandfather was Reverend William McCaulay, a Presbyterian minister who moved from Northern Ireland to New York City in 1793. This man's son – Tom's grandfather – brought a wagon train out West at the beginning of the Gold Rush and began mining in Nevada City, California. He later relocated a few times, to San Francisco and then to Reno, and that was when he became involved in the ice industry at

¹¹ An ice harvester was someone who traveled into the mountains in search of ice to bring to nearby cities and towns.

nearby Donner Summit. “The stories were passed down from my grandfather to my father to me,” Tom explained. “That is what got me interested in history.” Although Tom was especially fascinated by the ice industry, he understood a great deal about a wide array of eras and topics. This whole interest in history, however, had arisen from his desire to corroborate his grandfather’s stories. “Some of them seemed outlandish,” he admitted, “but I found newspaper stories that verified them.” Although what Tom recounted to me was a somewhat stylized narrative, it effectively demonstrated the fact that his family lineage situated him in both time and place. His understanding of history would have been bereft of context and the particular meaning which he derived from it without his firm situatedness within his own genealogy. Furthermore, it was crucial that Tom’s primary purpose in his involvement with local history had been to validate his grandfather’s stories; proving them “true” allowed him to reify stories of local history as well as his own kinship bonds which implicated him in such a history, thus establishing his position as a steward of both. In this way, Tom utilized kinship bonds with blood relatives in order to demonstrate his belonging in the area and his claim to the histories that had been maintained within his family.

However, biological relationships were not the only – nor in all cases, the primary – means of practicing kinship. I argue that kinship took many forms in my interlocutors’ lives, including bonds with blood family, fellow historical organization members, and deceased individuals who once lived on the same land that they did. In 1968 David Schneider theorized in his seminal book *American Kinship: A Cultural Account* that kinship relations are not determined in a categorical sense; rather, kinship is a choice, and individuals decide who is and is not a relative. The ambiguous nature of kinship

determination led him to conclude in the 1968 edition (though the 1980 edition of the book retracts this contention) that “there was no such thing as ‘kinship’, that it was a chimera, an artifact of bad theory” (Schneider 1980 [1968]: 119). Although he is acutely focused on the physical as a basis for kinship (most notably in the forms of blood relation and sexual intercourse), he holds that “the relationship is a matter of consent, that is, that it is voluntarily undertaken and voluntarily maintained” (Schneider 1980 [1968]: 94). Furthermore, Schneider holds that as an act of establishing closeness or marking appropriate distance, people use modifiers that mark either a sharp division of blood relative versus non-blood relative (restrictive modifiers) or what Schneider calls an “unlimited range of relatives” (unrestrictive modifiers) (Schneider 1980 [1968]: 22). He holds that blood relationships are involuntary and unable to be severed, while relationships by law may be retracted under appropriate circumstances. Apart from the cultural orders which determine the nature of the kinship bond, Schneider notes that there must be some type of underlying adhesive element which establishes relatives both by nature and law as kin; he finds that love is a suitable common denominator. He writes that

As a kind of relationship, love can be translated as *enduring, diffuse solidarity*. *Solidarity* because the relationship is supportive, helpful, and cooperative; it rests on trust and the other can be trusted. *Diffuse* because it is not narrowly confined to a specific goal or a specific kind of behavior...Two members of the family cannot be indifferent to one another, and since their cooperation does not have a specific goal or a specific limited time in mind, it is *enduring*” (Schneider 1980 [1968]: 52).

This is perhaps *American Kinship*'s most notable contribution to the study of kinship. Though in his book *What Kinship Is – And Is Not* Sahlins refutes Schneider's contention that there is no kinship – arguing that anthropological categories are not pre-made and awaiting discovery, but are rather carefully parsed – there is significant continuity between his definition of a kinship system and Schneider's definition of love. Sahlins writes: "this, then, is what I take a 'kinship system' to be: a manifold of intersubjective participations, which is also to say, a network of mutualities of being" (Sahlins 2013: 20). This can be taken to mean that, although Schneider's work was a product of its time in the sense that it is predicated on biological connections and a rigid definition of the person as a bounded entity, it still accounts for the fact that there is something highly subjective and elusive about the determination of kinship.

This insight has been maintained in kinship literatures throughout recent decades. However, beyond the attention to subjectivity and choice being consistently highlighted, recent literature has seen a shift towards more liberal and less restrictive understandings of kinship. In her book *Born and Bred: Idioms of Kinship and New Reproductive Technologies in England*, Jeanette Edwards defines kinship as

A mode of thought which orders and organizes immediate social worlds, and as such can neither be hived off as a discrete sphere of social life, nor be treated as one aspect amongst many of social organization. Instead it needs to be understood as modeling, and itself modeled on, cultural understandings of ways in which connections are made and unmade which permeate all domains of social life" (Edwards 2000: 27).

Kinship is thus diffuse and widely spread throughout many areas of society, and its logic operates perhaps in areas that are not directly related to blood-based relationships. As a modification of Schneider's theory – and in line with Sahlins – Edwards states that relatedness is determined by both biological and social concerns, but the biological is not a necessary foundation on which the social must be constructed. We may think of this as a statement on the technologies of kinship – that is, ways in which kinship is deployed. Instead of accepting kinship categories as natural or inherited, Edwards notes that kinship “presents people with a problem. It raises questions of what to recall and what to ignore; what to reveal and what to conceal” (Edwards 2000: 42). This is because, as Strathern notes (1981), kinship is a means by which to establish certain facts about oneself regarding positionality and status.

Historical organization members actively strove to create relationships with one another and chose to place fellow organization members within their kinship circles, in line with Edwards' description of the methods of kinship. As we shall see, they did the same with deceased members of their communities. The relationships my interlocutors forged with one another were, at times, closer and more familial in nature than those they shared with their biological families; however, as Tom demonstrated, there were those who maintained their connections with biological family members, which established their legitimacy and “right” to particular histories.

On the other hand, Robert, the chairperson of the Honey Run Bridge Association and the Centerville Museum Northern California, was wholly preoccupied with fostering new relationships with historical organization members, given that he had only relocated to the area six years before and had no blood-related family in the area. Robert, as a

“transplant” to the Centerville community, was forced to work harder than other members of the associations who had lived in Centerville all of their lives in order to be recognized and appreciated within the local history community. He often complained to me about women who he called “old hens” – elderly natives of Centerville who served on the museum board. “Anything I say, they don’t like it,” he said. “They just talk and talk and talk and argue with me. I’m about ready to be done.” Robert felt that these older members of the boards did not trust him because they did not understand why someone who had only lived in the area for six years could be so invested in the area’s history and community-run organizations. Although Robert was in a constant battle to win the locals over, his back-breaking work for the organizations spoke for itself, to an extent. However, he was not nearly as imbricated in local systems of kinship (both historically and in the present) as others in the organizations; he was forced to attempt to compensate for this shortcoming, and he was never entirely successful in doing so. Robert resigned from the Centerville Museum board in August of 2018 because he did not feel that he had been treated with respect and, as he said, “I’m sick of arguing with them and being treated as an outsider.” Unlike Tom, Robert was unconcerned with situating himself within a genealogy that legitimated his belonging to the historical organizations in which he took part. He sought foremost to forge connections with other members of historical organizations, rather than relying on a particular lineage to legitimate his place in the world of Northern California local history.

The Uses of Kinship Bonds

Kinship bonds were not, however, an end in themselves; they also fostered the tweaking and maintenance of historical narratives, allowing historical organization members to listen to one another and rearrange previously held beliefs, if necessary. These processes were especially visible in the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society, members of which were avid readers of articles and studies surrounding the Wars of the Roses period of English history. Most notable for our purposes, though, is the fact that they gave articles and studies preference if they were written or conducted by other members of the society with whom they shared bonds, as well as their fundamental views about English history. For society members to engage with research, it must have shared the opinion that Richard III was smeared by Tudor propaganda which had stuck throughout the centuries. Because this was the society's most central narrative, in the minds of many of my interlocutors, it could not be compromised. Boasting that they used the "most contemporary evidence" to develop their views of medieval history, society members often shared this information, describing what they had read to other members informally and in society meetings.

The Yorkshire Branch's dedication to their narrative in this regard was also apparent in their expenditure; each fiscal year, roughly 55% of their funds were spent on publications, meaning that the majority of the society's money was spent on spreading their particular narrative of history. In one such piece of writing, branch secretary Pauline wrote against a new BBC series called "The Hollow Crown" which featured a portrayal of Richard III with which the society disagreed, due to its depiction of the king as severely deformed and as a "psychopath." "Please do write and complain," Pauline compelled readers. In another branch update, Pauline wrote that "The ways Leicester has

managed to think up ways to either make money using Richard, or use his name as an advertising ploy have to be seen to be believed” (Richard III Society Yorkshire Branch Update, November 2015). The two aforementioned examples were sentiments that appeared in many branch updates and were intended to compel readers to take action against what many in the society considered to be grave injustices. Although the updates also contained information regarding branch activities and important figures in medieval English history, they nearly always featured a call to action in the form of writing complaints directed towards those who would misrepresent Richard III.

Members of the Yorkshire Branch were primarily interested in mapping out knowledge that had accumulated over decades and lifetimes; this fact was evidenced by the branch’s library, which was housed by secretary Pauline. The branch library was filled with books about the Wars of the Roses period of medieval history written by historians and amateurs alike. Several of the authors featured in this collection were past or present members of the society. The Yorkshire Branch also ran the Rosalba Press, a subset of the society which offered the opportunity for amateur historians (almost exclusively society members) to publish their own research about medieval England. The published projects often included speculations about the genealogies of key figures in the medieval period or alternatives to widely accepted theories about medieval personalities, families, and wars. Through the library, society members built a body of knowledge that reflected what they propounded as little-known truth. They also established the lineages and sequences of events which, to their minds, comprised England’s medieval world; the texts were the basis on which their theories operated. The authors traced these lineages – either metaphorically or literally – to themselves in the

present day, thus naming members of the Yorkshire Branch as heirs to this history and situating them in the genealogies of which they wrote.

Though each member reported having read texts that dealt with Richard III and the Wars of the Roses long before joining the Richard III Society, their membership in a collectivity caused them to learn a specific shared narrative and implement their knowledge in new ways. In addition to correcting what they deemed to be false narratives about Richard III, they often learned about other topics pertinent to the location in which they lived which had affected events in Richard III's life, such as botany, weaponry, and horses, to name a few. They shared this information amongst themselves, but they also made collective efforts to inform the public of their knowledge. One such instance was when the Yorkshire Branch made a concerted effort to install a plaque detailing Richard III's connections to the North of England in a church not far from the city of York. The collective nature of this knowledge – which spurred group efforts and provided a prime opportunity for connecting with other like-minded people – was indisputable; however, it had been spurred by closely held personal beliefs that predated participation in the collective. Pauline once told me that serving as secretary was, in her words, “my way of doing what I believe.” When I asked her why, she replied with one word: “justice.” “That is why I do this job,” she explained. “Because I believe in what I'm doing. If you ask the others, they will say roughly the same thing.” This common motivation extended to their reasons for joining as well; according to Pauline, “*they join because they want to be connected.*” This could be read as a connection to other society members, or as a connection to Richard III's lineage, which reaches into the present day in the embodied form of those who wished to do him justice. Being connected to other

branch members allowed their knowledge to flourish due to the sharing of facts and stories, but it also presented members with the opportunity to establish meaningful bonds with people who also valued history and justice. Being connected to Richard III, however, situated branch members in a circle of kinship broadly construed that extended centuries back.

“Historical Beings”

Legacy and social bonds constitute the focus of Thomas Wentzer’s (2014) work, which explores his deeply ethical sense of responsibility towards the past, as well as towards kin who experienced the past in his stead. His aim is to establish the individual as a responsive being – that is, someone who has an inclination and duty to respond to the past through the medium of historical experiences and narratives. Engagement with someone else’s experiences leads one to be considered a historical being because, as Wentzer says, the experiences of kin “provide an awareness of one’s situatedness or placement at this particular place and this particular time as one’s own” (Wentzer 2014: 34-35). In this manner, people claim past experiences as their own through hearing accounts of these experiences from their kin. Wentzer contends that “we are familiar with shared synchronic experiences such as a visit to a rock-concert or a soccer-game, when the experiential content is distributed synchronically to a set of people. In historical experience this distribution happens diachronically, over time” (Wentzer 2014: 37). This inverts the logic of events being experienced by one “true” subject, arguing instead for a concept of shared experience that leads people to become implicated in history through acting as “historical beings.” According to Wentzer, “the idea is that

somebody undergoes an experience on behalf of somebody else, in his or her place, literally speaking not re-placing, but pre-placing him or her” (Wentzer 2014: 37). Thus, historical experience is characterized by narrative structures in which both the narrator and the listener must commit to establishing the “experiential character of historical experience” (Wentzer 2014: 39). Wentzer concludes his article in stating:

I hence experience my historical heritage not as an anonymous past without addressee or destination, but as something that matters to me. In this respect my historical experience establishes my being responsible for the experience that was handed over. From a first person perspective then, responsiveness precedes responsibility; it is the existential condition to the answer that I am (Wentzer 2014: 42).

Social bonds, then, are inextricably bound to the experience of engaging with history.

Hallam and Hockey similarly emphasize the social nature of engagement with history. In their book *Death, Memory & Material Culture* they demonstrate the central role of material objects in the living’s cognizance of the dead and “question the predominant argument that the dead are sequestered and instead chart the ways in which lost generations and dead friends and lovers remain manifest – through well-worn garments, memorial prizes, photographs, street names, residual drops of perfume, war memorials” (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 5). Material objects, then, serve two functions: “Material culture mediates our relationship with death and the dead; objects, images, and practices, as well as places and spaces, call to mind or are made to remind us of the deaths of others and of our own mortality” (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 2). Tracing the use of *memento mori* in Victorian England, Hallam and Hockey argue that objects are instrumental in fashioning personal memory, yet they also serve as reminders of the

brevity of life and the inevitability of death. The notions of which Hallam and Hockey write were especially visible in the summer of 2016, when the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society was well underway with a fundraiser to test the soil and fabric inside the Middleham Jewel – a late 15th-century gold pendant found in 1985 near Middleham Castle, which had been Richard III’s favorite residence. Given that few objects which Richard III or those related to him owned remained extant, members of the Yorkshire Branch were clamoring to learn more about the Middleham Jewel, which they believed to have belonged to either Richard III’s wife or mother. “We may conduct the tests and find out *nothing*,” Lynda reminded the branch. “This isn’t a guarantee.” However, the majority of the branch members wished to go forward with the donation process and learn anything possible about the pendant. The branch also visited the Yorkshire Museum where the Middleham Jewel was housed, and the museum staff allowed each branch member to hold the pendant, which was an extremely memorable experience for those present. Touching the Middleham Jewel was, for members of the Yorkshire Branch, a rare chance to be in proximity with the women in Richard III’s life and, by extension, Richard III himself. Thus, as Hallam and Hockey state, “if personhood and social identity are fashioned through the body and the material objects with which this body is associated, then it is through that body and these objects (either directly or via associations with further bodies and objects) that the deceased are kept within memory” (Hallam and Hockey 2001: 37).

Because few objects from Richard III’s lifetime had remained, however, members of the Yorkshire Branch of the Richard III Society were often particularly enthusiastic to

visit places where the king spent time.



[25. The view from Middleham Castle, Richard III's favorite residence.]

The most obvious example is the ruins of Middleham Castle, where Richard was raised by his uncle and future father-in-law, the Earl of Warwick, after his father's death.

Edward IV, Richard's older brother who had held the throne before him, conferred the castle to Richard during his time as king. Land at this time was concentrated in the hands of the very few, and although Richard was lord of many castles and manors, he adopted Middleham Castle as his main residence. He brought his bride, Anne Neville, through its doors and she gave birth to their son, Edward, in the castle as well. Although Richard

was not able to visit frequently during his reign being that he was required to reside in London, he visited as often as he could. Edward continued to live in Middleham Castle while his parents were required in court, and, tragically, Richard and Anne were forced to rush to Middleham when they received news of their son's sudden death at age 9. 28-year-old Anne died in London only months thereafter in March 1485 of some combination of tuberculosis and heartbreak, and Richard met his end at Bosworth battlefield five months later, aged 32 (Seward 1998; Baldwin 2015; Ashdown-Hill 2015).

When members of the Richard III Society spoke about death in the king's life, they viewed him as an individual, a human being, instead of solely as a monarch.¹² History thus served as a means of reinforcing community by reminding members of the society that this man who once lived on the same land as them experienced loss and heartbreak just as they had. People in the North of England – especially Yorkshire – often felt an especially intense attachment to the king, who they viewed as their countryman and perhaps even relative. There was lore that, although Richard III was not known to have had direct descendants, there were secret illegitimate children of his born to women in Yorkshire. Several members of the Richard III Society wondered whether Richard could be a direct ancestor of theirs through such an undocumented lineage; a number of Yorkshire residents thus entertained ambiguous notions of biological kinship with Richard III. Though some of my interlocutors suspected that they may have been descended from Richard III, the majority felt themselves to be contiguous to him due to the fact that he was a “Yorkshire man.” They thus molded the king into a “relative”

¹² While Kantorowicz argued for “the king's two bodies” (1997 [1957]), he emphasized the dichotomy between a ruler's human body and the symbolic “political” body which was timeless. I suggest that, in the case of my interlocutors, the dichotomy lies in their perception of Richard III in the role as king and in his private, emotional life.

through emphasizing their similarities with Richard, which included the region in which they lived, their ideal of justice, and their sense of loyalty (Richard III's motto was *Loyaulte me lie*, which means "loyalty binds me"). This was a very particular idiom of kinship, yet the strength of society members' conviction that Richard was "their" (Northern) king warrants use of this term.

In a similar vein, according to Stephen Greenblatt, affinity for and memory of those long-deceased can be seen as the answer to a call from the dead: "remember me." Greenblatt observes in his article "Hamlet in Purgatory" that, although the ghost of Hamlet's father "cries out for vengeance," "the injunction upon which young Hamlet dwells obsessively is that he *remember*" (Greenblatt 2007: 138). Greenblatt holds that even after the Reformation, certain cultural forms such as theater retained the injunctions of a past age, staging "an ontological argument about spectrality and remembrance, a momentous public debate, that unsettled the institutional moorings of a crucial body of imaginative materials and therefore made them available for theatrical appropriation" (Greenblatt 2007: 145). This appropriation served as a means through which people could maintain ties with the dead which were no longer condoned under Anglican doctrine. After all, previous church doctrine had allowed for people to communicate with the dead, who, because of their ability to speak and appeal, were not completely dead. This method of contact was largely suppressed by new Protestant doctrine, but, according to Greenblatt, "it did not destroy the longings and fears that Catholic doctrine had focused and exploited" (Greenblatt 2001: 150). Though they existed in different contexts, early English Protestants and my interlocutors felt a strong need to respond to the deceased. For early English Protestants, this meant direct conversation with the dead

– this was a practice that, as far as I knew, none of my interlocutors engaged in. However, those in the Richard III Society *did* respond to what they perceived to be Richard III’s need for justice, striving to rectify his smeared reputation and educate themselves and others about his life – thus, in a sense, “conversing” with the dead through their addressing of what they perceived to be the dead’s “needs.” My interlocutors’ loyalty to Richard III, then, demonstrated that their concept of social relations included bonds – or at least one bond – which was fundamentally connected to concepts of temporality in the way that Greenblatt describes.

If we take this in conjunction with Wentzer’s work, there is an underlying argument for responsibility being just as much a corollary of kinship as it is of memory. For my interlocutors – as evidenced by the case of Richard III Society members’ connection with the king – memory and kinship bonds were mutually constitutive, each simultaneously preceding the other. The Yorkshire Branch members felt it was a necessity and a duty to seek justice for Richard. The past, then, was tied to kinship in its ability to legitimate and make ties explicit and to make memories shared. The result is the listener becoming what Wentzer calls a “historical being,” not just finding memory important, as Greenblatt argues, but locating herself within a community of memories.

Kinship Bonds and the Sharing of Knowledge

My interlocutors, then, perceived themselves as existing in circles of kinship that operated not solely on the axis of location, but also on the axis of time. They also drew upon these kinship bonds in further formulating narratives surrounding memory and history. Society members perceived certain among them to be more knowledgeable and

trustworthy in the realm of historic information, and often if one of these people made a certain claim, the others believed that it must be the case. Because of this, certain people's "new information" was privileged by virtue of that individual being especially historically knowledgeable and trustworthy. Scowen was one of those who other Richard III Society members deemed to be knowledgeable and accurate. In May of 2017 Scowen led a walking tour of Towton, where what is considered to be the bloodiest battle of English history took place in 1461. In what became a seven-hour long march around the town of Towton and its surrounding environs, Scowen led the small group of Yorkshire Branch members to a churchyard filled with plants and flowers. He gestured towards what he told us was a yew tree, describing its poisonous nature, as well as the fact that bows and arrows had been made from this tree in the middle ages. "The best bows were made from yew," he said, "but so many of the trees were cut down for this purpose that they started sourcing bows from Germany." He then drew the group's attention to a tall, thin rose bush covered in thorny spines and white blossoms with red centers. He told us that it was a Towton rose, a unique rose bush that grew only in the vicinity of Towton and had grown by the hundreds on fallen soldiers' graves following the battle which was named for the town. Though I later learned that the rose had reputedly not been seen for 70 years – and was often and easily confused with another very similar species of rose bush in the area (Leicester Mercury 2019) – Scowen was knowledgeable about the history of the Towton rose, which was of utmost importance to those on the tour. Scowen's extensive knowledge of medieval weapons – and, apparently, medieval botany – added to the arsenals of other members' knowledge. It augmented their pictures of life in high medieval England, which was an image they were ever striving to improve. In

this way, society members integrated knowledge held by another member of the society which contended with the local and regional; it fit into their own particular understandings of what Towton was like and what happened there during the Wars of the Roses, but it simultaneously allowed them to bond with other members of the group who shared and placed importance on that knowledge.

Another means of utilizing kinship to inform narratives of history and memory that was discernable among my interlocutors was their tendency to apply practical knowledge to historical information which was often completely unrelated to history. Lynda, an avid horse rider, once visited the hill in Bosworth field where king Richard was said to have been killed and, upon seeing the hill, determined that there was no way someone could charge a horse down such a short and steep incline. After this evaluation, Lynda decided that this could not possibly have been the place where Richard was killed. A few years later, scientists found evidence which suggested that this could not have been the location in which Richard III died. Relying on evidence gleaned from an unrelated field, Lynda was able to infer certain facts about history that informed her view of events. Furthermore, she shared this perspective with others in the Richard III Society, who trusted her lifelong knowledge of horses.

In Red Tower York, too, the sharing of knowledge unrelated to history proved useful for the collective. Barry possessed an admirable range of skills from woodworking to knowledge of machinery and equipment, and he often taught Red Tower York members what he deemed to be important skills. I was not excluded from those he sought to teach; he was constantly attempting to rectify my incompetent gardening skills. Upon asking me to tie up the excess growth on the Red Tower's tomato plants, Barry was

forced to follow behind me, fixing the leaves and adjusting the positions of the stalks, often undoing those I had tied and retying them. In the days before the Red Tower had electricity, Barry once asked me to start a generator for him, which was something that I had never done before. He fed the cord to me through a hole in the wall of the Red Tower and we attached it to the generator, which was chained to a nearby tree to prevent theft and had its copper wand dug into the earth. I had pulled ample slack on the cord through the hole in the wall – too much, apparently – and upon seeing this Barry joked, “your master’s program didn’t focus on basic logic, did it?” We laughed as he held the generator down and quickly pulled the starter with his other hand. It is important to note that Barry was, as the British say, “winding me up,” meaning that he was jabbing at me in a friendly way, as friends do to one another. Barry was thus placing me in his kinship circle not only through teaching me valuable skills, but also through joking with me in a way that he would with close friends or family. He strove to educate other members of the organization just as he had educated me surrounding matters of gardening and machinery, and it was evident that they truly did appreciate him. Alan, a member of Red Tower York, once said: “Barry is big and he’s loud and he makes people listen. So he’s a good commander, if you like.” Barry took his informal role of “commander” quite seriously, and his explanation of the purpose behind Red Tower York further demonstrates the social nature of organization members’ practice of history. Barry once said:

What the intention was, to give the local people a feel-good factor, somewhere for them to be able to come and have a drink and congregate and to some degree replace the things they used to do previously, because in that area there was

meeting places, there was working men's clubs, there was things for local grassroots people to go, and all those had disappeared, and what they were left with was the little bistros and coffee shops and things like that, which was no good to them, they don't want to be paying...they want to pay a pound or 50p or something for a hot drink and same thing for a piece of cake or something, not the expensive café prices. And so I thought it's a wonderful concept, the growing beds, growing stuff for free, and the pay as you feel and all that, it all combined to me and I thought it was such a wonderful ethic that I couldn't help but be captivated and want to be in on it.

More than an interest in history in itself, Barry had a keen interest in connecting with other members of the York community, and he utilized history as a method by which to accomplish this goal. His long hours spent tending the community garden and organizing Red Tower York events were intended to create a vibrant community space for York residents to enjoy.

Moral Responsibility

Although some members of historical organizations felt that they had laid the groundwork for a successful and lasting historical narrative and community, some feared for the future of the caches of historic knowledge surrounding their social bonds. This attitude was evident when Mike, one of the last standing members of the York Oral History Society, founded in 1982 and thus one of the first local oral history societies in York, told me about the society's history and the current predicament in which it found itself. Although he had no formal background in the study of history and had spent his

career managing a printing company, Mike, at 65 years of age, described himself as having always been interested in history, especially local history and the lives of fellow York residents in the past. He first approached York Oral History Society in the early '90s when his aunt revealed that she had been on a traveling troupe many decades earlier; Mike thought that York Oral History Society was the perfect venue for his aunt to tell her unique story. Much to his dismay, the society did not respond to his inquiry until 6 months later, immediately after his aunt had passed away. Mike regretted this late response deeply. "Family history is quite important," he said. "If you get the chance to record people's memories you should do so. When they die you don't get to have their voice or memories recorded." Mike had since interviewed hundreds of elderly York residents in an effort to record people who had not had a voice in the past. He and Van, another longtime member of the society, published several books – 40 to 50-page volumes that were "wildly successful," having sold many copies. The society had also begun to collect as many old photographs of York as possible, and at the time of my research they possessed an archive of thousands upon thousands of historic photos. In the early '90's the society's costs were minimal, and they were able to publish frequently. They also received grants from the city council which defrayed any costs they accrued. Mike told me that "it was our duty to put [the interviews] into the public domain because the people we interviewed had all died."

Eventually, the library that had housed York Oral History Society ran out of space for members to work in, forcing them to sublet a small office building, which was not a stable situation. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the society had run out of money. They had been very successful in the past and boasted a huge collection of

historic photos and published books, but because they had focused essentially all of their energy and resources on projects that became books, all the material they had used in the process was piling up. They then faced losing this wealth of materials because they were unable to find the people, resources, and time to digitize them. They had planned for a future for their society, yet it seemed to Mike that they would not be able to achieve it. “We’re in a bit of a dilemma at the moment, we’re a long way from finishing [digitizing],” Mike said. “Of course, the material should be in the public domain, but we’ve not got many members who can catalogue, so no one can access it.” What was at stake in this situation was the integrity of kinship circles that stretched into the past and provided continuity between present-day York residents and their forebears. Mike feared that the voices of York’s past residents would be doomed to oblivion, thus breaking these essential connections and traditions, without the security of digitized materials and the promise of future interest in the society’s endeavors.

In addition to the issues surrounding digitization, the society had struggled because city council funds had become vastly more difficult to obtain. Mike said, “We are quite poor in Britain currently, more than we were 10 or 15 years ago. At least in terms of public funds.” Mike had laid bare to me the society’s troubling situation. “That’s where we are, really,” he said. “Not going anywhere.” Mike felt trapped between an urgency to record memories that would soon be irretrievable and the prohibitive costs that such a project would incur. He told me that “the idea of oral history is, if you’re aware of some kind of community or way of life that is passing and needs recording, that’s what they should be looking out for.” I asked him if this feeling of imminent loss had been in the forefront of his mind when he was interviewing. He said

yes, definitely, and told me that this feeling of history slipping away allowed him to empathize with his elderly interlocutors. “I have to grasp this before it’s too late,” he added.

Engaging the Public

In a similar effort to maintain the integrity of the Yorkshire historical community, Damian, a friend of Beth’s and Sam’s and a historic tour guide in York, thought up an entirely new tour while I was conducting my research, and Beth and I happily agreed to be the first to experience it. We eagerly awaited the start of the tour one afternoon, though, upon seeing Damian standing alone at the meeting place, we ascertained that we seemed to be the only ones interested in participating. Damian tried to no avail to rope in passers-by, and as the church bells sang 3:00 he murmured, “I guess no one’s coming.”



[26. Beth stands next to the poster for Damian’s new tour in St. Helen’s Square, York, U.K.]

The moment of defeat was short lived, though; he quickly picked himself back up into his regular dramatic persona and informed us that the tour was now beginning. As we headed towards the first point of interest, Damian told us that most people forget that history is not about dates and places – “it’s about people.” “The people make it interesting,” he said, explaining why dates would not be the primary focus of the tour. He proved his point by telling us charming and memorable anecdotes about various sites in the city center, all of which were far more engaging than if he were to rattle off place names and dates. As we continued around the city, it became clear that the tour would focus foremost on history’s mishaps and quirks – what several of my interlocutors referred to as “the interesting bits.” Weaving through York’s cobbled streets and listening to Damian’s flawless presentation, Beth and I learned almost-forgotten pieces of information about the city’s history. After a few magic tricks with a pack of cards, Damian broached the subjects of oral and living history – by which he meant stories told by living people who actually witnessed historic events. He told us about a woman –he could not tell us her name because she was still alive – who saw bombs drop on York during WWII just next to St. Martin’s church, where we stood at that moment. The church remained in ruins, bearing the mark of a conflict that it seemed that modern-day citizens had all but forgotten, rushing past it without a glance on busy Coney Street. Damian’s explanation bridged all of the history he had told us about to the present moment in the form of a story that was still in living memory, demonstrating the transient nature of human lives and what scarred buildings, monuments, and the elderly’s stories are able to teach us.

Each of the methods detailed above demonstrates that members of historical organizations in Northern California and Nevada, as well as York, were constantly seeking to create and maintain social bonds through the medium of historical narratives. At the same time, though, historical narratives were predicated on the existence of social bonds, through which each organization's particular position on history was conveyed and sustained. The venue of the historical organization allowed my interlocutors to situate themselves in their wider understandings of history, allowing them to see their own relevance to their communities and the legacies they would leave once they passed. It was specifically the activities within historical organizations that my interlocutors perceived as constituting a lasting mark on both the community of the organization and the wider community of the city or region. The historical organization was thus a collective *within* the collective of the region, which operated within the parameters of a perspective colored by a larger collectivity (i.e., the nation) – as Tristan repeatedly noted, and as we saw at the beginning of the chapter, the contingencies of local historical figures' lives affected history on a national scale while remaining within local circles of kinship, broadly construed. "I do feel a loyalty to him," he once said in reference to the man who started The Sealed Knot. He transitioned seamlessly to discussing his relationships with other Sealed Knot members, which he described as "kinship": "we do have big, big fallings out but I would never leave [the organization] because it's my family and I feel like there's almost some sort of an honor in fighting for this person who's been lost to history." It is these people – the figures who had been lost to history and fellow members of the Sealed Knot – who inspired Tristan to participate in the organization. He took part because, as he said, "they are family."

Tristan's involvement with The Sealed Knot thus demonstrates that, through the historical organization, my interlocutors situated themselves simultaneously in three levels of collectivities: the historical organization, the region, and the nation.

The historical organization allowed members to inherit relevant histories and reify the genealogies and kinship circles in which they situated themselves. Belonging to a particular region or nation was, however, a prerequisite of membership in these organizations; without some type of *claim* to the history, organization members would struggle to establish their places within local systems of kinship, as evidenced by Robert's experience. Nonetheless, the social bonds created and maintained through the venue of historical organizations reinforced members' ideas of community cohesion and some degree of "relatedness" with one another that was forged in the context of local history. In addition, social bonds that extended beyond their lifetimes were a means by which historical organization members asserted their connectedness to their region and nation, thus establishing themselves as "historical beings" with a moral impetus to engage with local history.

Robert and I often sat at the picnic benches adjacent to Honey Run Bridge, a historic landmark that was the pride of the surrounding community. It was there that, with the rushing Butte Creek in the background, we discussed his efforts as the chair of the Honey Run Bridge Association and the nearby Centerville Museum, which chronicled the history of the small town that had been nestled in the canyon since the days of the Gold Rush. Sometimes we would broach the topic of my personal life, which Robert listened to with patience and understanding that he doubtless developed during his past career as a counselor. Often, though, we discussed the community which Robert consistently strove to influence with his particular understanding of history, relationships, and life. Robert told me that he would not tell people what to do with their lives – even if they resisted what he deemed to be historical truths. He contended that current issues in society were caused by people being unaware of their own history and refusing to educate themselves. “I have a serious problem with people who do not want to learn and who do not care about their communities,” he once said. He took community very seriously and followed every rule in the historical organizations that applied to him – for example, he could not be involved in decisions that concerned both organizations on which he served on the board for fear of conflict of interest. Robert’s morally based actions did not end with the boundaries of the historical organizations, though. He was raised a Christian Scientist, but he turned away from the religion because, as time went on, he found that it was not aligned with his experiences and beliefs. “How can you not recognize issues such as racism and poverty?” he asked, betraying his high concern for issues of social justice. Robert contended that, for the previous eight years, white people felt that they were losing their white privilege and they had consequently turned to extremist groups which were sympathetic to their fear of loss and change. “It’s important to be ethical,” Robert said, “even in your own life. That’s something that I see going away.” He would often gaze at the bridge as we spoke; it was a reminder of the values he had worked so hard to revive in a public whose sense of ethics was, according to him, slipping away.

In November of 2018, the California Camp Fire raged through Centerville and nearby Paradise, razing both communities and, along with them, Honey Run Bridge. Robert and his girlfriend Chris had not had fire insurance, given that the monthly fee for it had been prohibitively expensive. Robert and Chris were left without a home, belongings, or any type of compensation for the disaster. Although the landmarks were gone, though, Robert remained confident in the work he had done using the Honey Run Bridge as a venue to foster a sense of community within the canyon and beyond. “It’s about working together,” he had reminded me on several occasions, and he had every intention of continuing to do so in the wake of the disaster.

Conclusion: “How Fragile Our Knowledge Is”

“How fragile our knowledge is,” Paul mused as he stared into his beer. We had met again at a pub near York’s Richard III Experience – Paul’s place of work – and he had strolled the short distance to meet me after closing the museum for the day. “There are some things we can never know,” he said, “and we must make an educated guess.” However, Paul noted that, as he said, “everything is provisional.” He explained that there is a fairly accepted broad narrative of history, but he believed that even deeply entrenched narratives would inevitably be dropped because of new discoveries. Because of this, as he told me, he was primarily concerned not with the narrative of history itself, but with facilitating wider society’s understanding of what “the process of history *is*.” By this, he meant that the process of ebbing and flowing knowledge was more important than any given history that was widely believed at the moment. “The nature of history is that it changes due to uncovering new evidence and finding new ways of thinking,” he said. I asked Paul if it was possible, then, that the people often seen as “crazy Ricardians” (supporters of Richard III) were right after all, and the careful, neutral narrative that the Richard III Experience espoused was wrong. “It’s best to keep an open mind,” he said, “and yes, it is possible that these types of people are right.” He likened the situation to beliefs about the supernatural; he said that the way in which the supernatural becomes factual is similar to how historical conjecture can change, and it all depends on finding the one right letter in the archives, the one missing piece of the puzzle. “Wider theories should be acknowledged as theories,” he stated in his characteristic, quietly confident tone. He recognized the fact that certain voices had been shut out of the production of history, as he was well aware of the effects of politics, party

lines, and black-and-white thinking. Paul knew that he had been hired to do his job because he knew more about history than most people, and his foremost goal was to “put the knowledge out there.”

In our “age of information” in which knowledge is readily available, what does the contestation of historical narratives look like? Being especially attentive to the ways in which knowledge was produced, my interlocutors took part in facilitating the crafting and, ideally, eruption of what they deemed to be accurate knowledge among their local populaces. What was at stake for my interlocutors, though, often proved to be their reputations. Time and again I heard historical organization members (besides those in the Richard III Society) denigrating “Ricardians,” or, people who supported Richard III and fought to rectify the public’s understanding of him. This was a point on which several of my interlocutors – such as Sam and Tristan – and I never saw eye to eye. Beth was convinced of Richard III Society members’ lunacy until Jorvik management scheduled her to work primarily in the Richard III Experience. As she spent time around other employees who had specifically requested to work there due to their intense interest in the medieval king, she began to read the literature they suggested was more truthful than the narrative circulating around wider society, and her opinion began to change. After several months of working in the Richard III Experience, she told me that she had made a confession to her boyfriend Louis the night before. She had told him that she no longer believed that Richard III had killed the princes in the tower, his two young nephews that the mainstream narrative of history has accused him of having murdered in 1485 in order to secure the throne for himself. “In fact,” she had admitted to Louis, “I think he’s an

alright bloke.” “At first, he was shocked,” she said in partial jest. “He asked me how long this had been going on. I said, quite a while now. It wasn’t planned, it just happened.” Although this was a facetious exchange, it illustrated the stark divide, even within the history and heritage community, of Richard III apologists and those who judged the king guilty of various heinous crimes. Members of the Richard III Society were frequently accused of approaching this particular historical figure with an overabundance of romanticized notions and exceedingly emotionally-informed positions, but Beth was finding that those who had yelled, cried, and vehemently argued opinions on history with the staff were a small minority of the Ricardians who came from far and wide to visit Richard III’s beloved city. In fact, as Beth discovered, the majority of Ricardians were more interested in calmly poring through contemporary sources and disseminating what they deemed to be truthful information about Richard throughout their communities. “We’ve lost her,” Sam joked upon hearing Beth’s confession. Sam viewed himself as being facts-oriented and nothing could sway his opinion that “Ricardians” were – as many within and outside of the heritage sector thought – excessively emotive and even ridiculous.

While there was a tongue-in-cheek aspect of my interlocutors’ descriptions of Ricardians, supporters of Richard III took their self-imposed obligation to defend Richard III and establish their version of the truth quite seriously. Although museum employees were discouraged from promoting their own understandings of local history and historic figures, their job was, after all, to educate the public in line with the museum’s goals. Paul once told me that the first thing he would do when meeting a visitor was rapidly assess who he was talking to. This was because he needed to see “where they were

coming from” before deciding how to address them and how much, or what type of information to convey. He said that it was best when speaking with visitors to avoid contentious issues and to always be polite; however, as he noted, “it’s hard to be polite in the face of invincible ignorance.”

The methods of history which my interlocutors used were often met with a lack of understanding – or, perhaps more aptly, a lack of willingness to budge when it came to historical narratives. As Robert had pointed out, many people were resistant to viewing history in a way that contradicted what they had always been told. The efforts of historical organization members, however, demonstrated the fact that history ebbs, flows, and continues to be very much alive through its actively contested representation. Through their shaping of history, though, my interlocutors also shaped *themselves*. They rendered themselves stewards of crucial knowledge, as well as figures who resisted what they deemed to be inaccuracies and pernicious lies.

Their reputation as being strange – or perhaps even their status as pariahs – notwithstanding, my interlocutors established legislation, fought or fostered political trends, and established and maintained meaningful social bonds. These social and political processes, of course, exist in wider society outside the historical organization. However, they are rendered especially explicit and legible in the context of historical organizations, in which members’ perceptions of current events are drawn from and thoroughly colored by local history. Historical organization members were acutely aware of the forces that had shaped the present, and they demonstrated an understanding of the inner workings of historical narratives and history itself – of which many members of wider British or American society may have been unaware. The difference between the

historical organization member and the historical organization non-member was that, often, the member understood and brought into conversation the historical events that directly influenced current events and gave rise to the current state of their town, city, country, or people. In this way, their practice of history was inherently political; they could not separate current events from history, but neither could their histories escape the looming shadow of current events.

This is not to say that all historical organization members established the relationship between history and current events in the same manner; their thoughts and methods varied considerably, constituting at times compliance, at times dissent with policies and legislation. In fact, even certain individuals' efforts wavered between these two extremes. Vindication was central to Richard III Society members' efforts, while employees at the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony were focused on establishing and maintaining their sovereignty and identity. Red Tower York, on another register, utilized history and their status as a Community Interest Company in order to provide goods and services to people who were not particularly bothered about history at all, but were in need. Likewise using history for a perhaps counterintuitive purpose, Norm and Bill at the Donner Summit Historical Society were attempting to draw revenue into their town which had suffered as a result of the construction of a nearby freeway. Some, such as Norm, mourned their familiar way of life disappearing, while Michon, who had lived through entirely different circumstances, was less nostalgic about the past than others of my interlocutors due to the history of oppression of Native American peoples.

The research presented in this dissertation indicates that history is an active part of current lives, motivating various and multivalent efforts. Narratives about the past

provide historical organization members with a lens through which to analyze and draw conclusions about issues that are pertinent to them. Although historical events may be distant in time, for historical organization members they remain immanent in present-day narratives and discourses. While the average citizen may or may not realize how her motivations, moral leanings, and understanding of current events are informed by historical events, historical organization members are acutely aware of their historical narratives' relevance to their communities and lives and are thus able to draw upon history not only to establish their identities but also to comprehend their states of affairs.

It is also essential to note that, rather than causing individuals to succumb to micropolitical power, landscapes of local history present citizens with the ability to inform themselves and utilize several channels - including some established by the state, such as legislation - in order to implement what they believe to be justice and to improve their lives or the lives of their community members. This "justice" sometimes differs from the aims of the state and involves citizens harnessing the state's methods in order to accomplish their own purposes. Other times, state agencies that focus on local history, such as the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, attempt to carry out objectives associated with national "mainstream" history. What is important is that historical organization members acted within the framework of the hegemony (in this context being the "mainstream" historical narrative) in order to subvert what they perceived to be a hegemonic establishment. In so doing, they countered the juggernaut of entrenched historical theories, but their deftness and rootedness in their identities - which was informed by narrative surrounding the historically significant places in which they lived -

allowed them to provide incisive and meaningful critiques on what they perceived to be incorrect mainstream historical narratives.

With a strong political valence to their practice of history, historical organization members situated themselves within not only trajectories of local history, but also in concentric circles of communities, belonging simultaneously to a town, city, region, and nation. Rarely, however, did they describe how they saw themselves relating to countries other than their own. Strangely enough, though, some of my interlocutors were well-versed in international current events. Their lack of an international context for themselves and their efforts would suggest that they saw themselves as isolated from the rest of the world's communities; however, Barry's prescient predictions of president Trump affecting the U.K. came to pass after all, which he noted when the U.S.'s intention to "seek full market access for American pharmaceuticals and medical devices" became apparent (Kottasová 2019). This suggests that some of my interlocutors understood global political dynamics and were solely focusing on their own organizations as a constituent part of these processes. "We're going to make the Red Tower great ag— oh no..." Barry once said, covering his face with his hands. Though Trump and his slogans were fodder for many of Barry's jokes, Barry took political issues quite seriously. He perceived Trump as being xenophobic and a threat to refugees, American citizens, and international citizens alike. He sensed a connection between the U.K. and the U.S. and, as was characteristic of Barry, he drew upon history to link the two. Nevertheless, he remained focused foremost on his own neighborhood, the members of which reportedly felt "abandoned" by local officials and British government.

As Barry once said, “history is history. There’s nothing you can do to change it.” The interesting part of this is that, according to my other interlocutors, this statement is not true. For them, history changes with the surfacing of new historical narratives, the new “pieces of the puzzle,” as Paul called groundbreaking pieces of new information. Furthermore, historical narratives are altered when those who focus on history reevaluate and re-work narratives of the past, crafting a mode of history that serves their needs and desires. There are parts of history that remain mostly unchanged – such as features of land, monuments, and edifices – however, their role and significance is liable to shift along with the advancement of undulating and ever-partial narratives of history. The most crucial factor, then, is the way in which people *interpret and use* history. The past, for members of historical organizations in the Gold Country and York, features an unknown number of facets. With enough effort they can cause their chosen facet of history to shine, though it remains tied and indebted to the other facets. In this way, history is fundamentally political and collective, fostering communities and reminding practitioners that the past is not only ever-present – its roots reaching deep within our knowledge and our modes of being – but also perpetually malleable and contestable, its reach and effect growing as our knowledge of it changes.

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