June 2018

Producing the Past: Contested Heritage and Tourism in Glastonbury and Tintagel

Vivian Beatrice Gornik

University of South Florida, vgornik@mail.usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd

Part of the Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons

Scholar Commons Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.
Producing the Past: Contested Heritage and Tourism in Glastonbury and Tintagel

by

Vivian Beatrice Gornik

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy of Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: S. Elizabeth Bird, Ph.D.
Kevin Yelvington, D.Phil.
E. Christian Wells, Ph.D.
Glenn Willumson, Ph.D
Corinna Wagner, D.Phil.

Date of Approval:
June 19, 2018

Keywords: Anthropology, England, United Kingdom, Public Archaeology, History

Copyright © 2018, Vivian Beatrice Gornik
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Neil Rushton who introduced me to the magic of Glastonbury in 2012 and has remained a life-long friend ever since.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any dissertation, this work is the culmination of the efforts and contributions of several people. First and foremost, this work would not have been possible without the guidance and support of my advisor, Dr. Elizabeth Bird. Since my first day in the Department of Anthropology at the University of South Florida, Dr. Bird has been a kind and steady mentor. My academic success in the last four years is a reflection of her guidance.

I also grateful for the support and advice I’ve received from other members of the USF Anthropology faculty, including Dr. Christian Wells and Dr. Kevin Yelvington. Dr. Wells gave me my first tour of the department and has been a consistently friendly and approachable source of advice since day one. Dr. Yelvington’s courses in Anthropological Theory Today and Marx and Anthropology have significantly informed and shaped my work. His passion for theoretically grounded applied anthropology is passed on to any who are lucky to take a course with him.

I owe a huge thanks to Dr. Corinna Wagner who helped establish my funded position as a Visiting Research Scholar at Exeter University in summer 2017. My experience at Exeter University was nothing but positive and I am extremely thankful for the £5,000 that was given to help with my research expenses. Without this, my research simply would not have been possible.

Dr. Glenn Willumson was the advisor for my MA in Museum Studies at the University of Florida from 2010-2012. My husband and I sometimes refer to him as Professor Dumbledore, because while he is one of my go-to sources of advice, he never sugarcoats anything for the sake of my feelings. His mentorship has vastly improved my writing over the last several years and I hope that this is reflected in this dissertation.
I am also indebted to my family and friends. My mom, Susan, has continuously shown me how to be a strong and independent woman. She has always encouraged my sister and me to pursue our dreams. I will continue, probably for the rest of my life, to aspire to her no-nonsense approach to life. My sister, Vanessa, is one of my closest and best friends. The large gap in our ages has meant that we have always been close, rather than competitive. I know she will always have my back and I will always have hers. I am also thankful for the support I received from the rest of my family, including my dad Reinhold, stepmother Anibelka, half-brother Jonathan and uncle Helmut. We are a very modern family, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

Dr. Neil Rushton was my supervisor during my 2012 internship with the Churches Conservation Trust in England, which played a significant role in my interest in British national heritage. He has become a life-long friend and I am indebted to him for his moral support during my fieldwork in 2017. I would also like to thank my friends who contributed to my GoFundMe campaign to support my fieldwork in England, including: Rae Giard, Anjoli Harbert, Kelsee Hentschel-Fey, Jennifer Hilley and Bill Kargel, Lisa Miller and Brandon Schreinhofer.

Last but not least, I give thanks to my husband, Michael J. Miller. He is my rock and my best friend. His support has meant the world to me and I am grateful to have a partner in life who stands by my side in all my adventures.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables iv
List of Figures v
Abstract ix

Chapter One: Introduction 1
  The Brexit Context 1
  The Research Questions 3
  Overview of Chapters 3
  Geographic Context 5
  Britishness, Englishness and Cornishness 6
    Britishness and Englishness 7
    Non-English National Identities in the United Kingdom 10
  Heritage Management in the United Kingdom 13
    Scheduling Monuments 13
    Historic England and English Heritage 14
    The National Trust 16
    Discussion 17
  An Introduction to Tintagel 18
    Tourism in Tintagel 18
    Tintagel Castle 20
    King Arthur’s Great Halls 25
    St. Nectan’s Glen 26
    Other Sites in Tintagel 28
  An Introduction to Glastonbury 30
    Tourism in Glastonbury 30
    Glastonbury Tor 31
    Glastonbury Abbey 33
    The Chalice Well Gardens 36
    Other Sites in Glastonbury 38
  Summary 40

Chapter Two: Review of Literature 42
  Introduction 42
  Defining Heritage 43
  Heritage and the Nation-State 46
  Theoretical Approaches to Heritage 51
    Political Economy and Heritage 51
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Arthurian Centre</th>
<th>129</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Arthurian Centre as Contested</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arthurian Centre as Commodified</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Five: Results Glastonbury
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defining Heritage</th>
<th>134</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury High Street</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Walk Down the High Street</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Abbey</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Abbey as Contested</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Abbey as Commodified</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Tor</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Tor as Contested</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glastonbury Tor as Commodified</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalice Well Gardens</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalice Well Gardens as Contested</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalice Well Gardens as Commodified</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter Six: Research Conclusions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Returning to the Research Questions</th>
<th>178</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorized Heritage Narratives and Contestation</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagined Communities</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodification of Heritage</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Political Economy Approach</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage in post-Brexit England</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Heritage Management</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Studies and Anthropology</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Dimensions</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Research</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References | 203 |

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter and Approved Instruments | 211 |

Appendix B: The Legend of King Arthur | 217 |
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Categories of Study Participants 79
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Location of Tintagel and Glastonbury</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Map of Tintagel village, including main heritage-related sites</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Photo of the path from the village center down to the Tintagel Castle complex</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Scan of map featured in Black’s Guide to Cornwall, 1915</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Scan of the site map inside the visitor guide provided at time of ticket purchase</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The front façade of King Arthur’s Great Halls</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The location of St. Nectan’s Glen Car Park along B3263 between Tintagel and Boscastle</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A string of prayer flags and other cloutie tied to a tree near St. Nectan’s Kieve</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Map of Glastonbury town, including main heritage-related sites</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The view from atop Glastonbury Tor looking down over Glastonbury town</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Photo taken during ascent of Glastonbury Tor</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A portion of the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Scan of a map of Glastonbury Abbey grounds from visitor brochure</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Scan of map found inside the booklet <em>The Chalice Well: A place of sanctity, healing and peace</em></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Photo of Chalice Well Head</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Daily circuit for participant observation in Tintagel</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Daily circuit for participant observation in Glastonbury</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Scan of the April issue of The Oracle, a free magazine distributed in Glastonbury</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>A timeline featured in the Tintagel Visitor Centre exhibition</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 20: A selection of Arthur-related books for sales inside the Tintagel Visitor Centre

Figure 21: A map of the main sites and street names in Tintagel, Cornwall

Figure 22: Tintagel’s Fore Street with the Tintagel Old Post Office on the right-hand side

Figure 23: A view of Fore Street that includes a local café and souvenir gift shop

Figure 24: Map posted outside the Tintagel Visitor Centre showing all the available car parks in the village

Figure 25: The stairs that lead up the Gatehouse Courtyard

Figure 26: The beach at low tide, with the entrance to Merlin’s Cave visible on the right-hand side

Figure 27: View over beach rom the café/museum level of the site

Figure 28: The third level of the site featuring ruins of the medieval castle

Figure 29: The top level of the headland

Figure 30: Cover of a 1936 tourist guide for North Cornwall

Figure 31: Scan of the cover of the free visitor guide to Tintagel Castle

Figure 32: Scan of map inside free visitor guide to Tintagel Castle

Figure 33: The small indoor exhibition at Tintagel Castle

Figure 34: Introductory panel for the exhibition

Figure 35: First outdoor interpretive panel

Figure 36: Carving of Merlin’s face in the rock formations outside the entrance to Merlin’s Cave

Figure 37: The Gallos sculpture

Figure 38: A selection of local beers and ciders for sale inside Tintagel Castle souvenir shop

Figure 39: Armor and weaponry for sale inside the Tintagel Castle souvenir shop

Figure 40: Merchandise for sale inside the main Tintagel Castle souvenir shop
Figure 41: Small theater inside King Arthur’s Great Halls 122
Figure 42: A view of the Great Hall 124
Figure 43: A sample of the geological objects put on display inside King Arthur’s Great Halls 124
Figure 44: Rock piles created by visitors at the foot of the main waterfall at St. Nectan’s Glen 126
Figure 45: Part of the path along the river that leads from the carp park to the entrance of St. Nectan’s Glen 128
Figure 46: The beginning of the Arthurian Centre’s exhibit 130
Figure 47: Objects on display in the Arthurian Centre’s exhibit 130
Figure 48: Trenches from one of several archaeological digs held on the Arthurian Centre’s property 131
Figure 49: Queen’s Head bus stop looking over the High Street in Glastonbury 138
Figure 50: The sidewalk in front of the churchyard of St. John the Baptist 139
Figure 51: A chalk artist named Gaz creates color mandalas with positive quotes 139
Figure 52: The storefront of Stone Age inside the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard 140
Figure 53: The Library of Avalon in the back of the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard 141
Figure 54: Box of information for pilgrims visiting the Pilgrim Reception Centre 141
Figure 55: Outside façade of the George and Pilgrim 143
Figure 56: The view from heaphy’s Café across the High Street to the Cat and Cauldron 144
Figure 57: Scan of the back of the visitor brochure for Glastonbury Abbey 149
Figure 58: A group of visitors surrounds the last known location of King Arthur’s tomb 149
Figure 59: A female visitor places her hands on the walls of the Lady Chapel 150
Figure 60: A local female shaman, wearing a cloak, interacts with visitors at Glastonbury Abbey 150
Figure 61: View of the current exhibition at Glastonbury Abbey 152
Figure 62: Close-up of several panels in the exhibition at Glastonbury Abbey 152

Figure 63: The home page of the new touch-screen kiosk inside the Abbey’s visitor center 153

Figure 64: Abbey exhibition panel with large amounts of blank space 155

Figure 65: New interpretation panels inside the remains of the Lady Chapel 156

Figure 66: Scan of a brochure for a local, independently run, tour company called Spirit of Avalon Tours 158

Figure 67: Welcome and way-finding sign at the Abbey’s entrance along the High Street 161

Figure 68: Visitors atop the Tor on the first weekend in April 2017 165

Figure 69: Visitors atop the Tor, gesturing to landmarks in the distance 165

Figure 70: The National Trust’s interpretive panel placed at the entrance to the Tor landscape 167

Figure 71: Scans of the front and back of a printed card with The Glastonbury Moment prayer 172

Figure 72: Foot-washing participants embrace before leaving the Chalice Well Gardens 174
ABSTRACT

Heritage, the “present-centered” use of the past (Ashworth 2007) influences the identities of contemporary citizens (Palmer 2005, Sommer 2009). Grasping the ways in which the production and consumption of heritage takes place is becoming increasingly relevant in a post-Brexit Britain, where the national identity is constantly up for debate. This research asks: what role does heritage tourism play in (re)producing hegemonic national narratives in Glastonbury and Tintagel? And subsequently, what do these narratives say about broader conceptualizations of English identity?

Arthurian legend permeates the historical narrative in both locations. According to the legend, King Arthur was conceived and born in Tintagel, and ultimately buried in Glastonbury. Both Glastonbury and Tintagel are located in the southwest region of England and are home to significant national heritage sites. In Glastonbury, heritage sites include Glastonbury Abbey, Glastonbury Tor and the Chalice Well Gardens. In Tintagel, heritage sites include Tintagel Castle, King Arthur’s Great Halls, St. Nectan’s Glen and the Arthurian Centre.

Methods for this ethnographic comparative study include classic participant observation, semi-structured interviews, ethnographic photography and archival research. The focus here is on the producers of heritage (heritage management employees, local shop owners and community members) rather than the consumers (tourists and travelers). By using a holistic political economy approach, this research reveals how heritage is both contested and commodified in both Glastonbury and Tintagel. Rather than understanding “authorized heritage discourses” (Smith 2006) as simply the result of hegemonic forces imparted by heritage management organizations, this research reveals the
nuances created by the commodification of heritage in both Glastonbury and Tintagel, where tourism plays a significant role in the local economy.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Brexit Context

Britain is experiencing an identity crisis. Perhaps it has been since the fall of the empire, but most recently it has been rekindled, or perhaps illuminated, by the results of the Brexit vote on June 23, 2016. On that day, 52% of British voters voted in favor of the referendum to leave the European Union. Commonly referred to as Brexit, the results were widely reported as shocking (NPR Morning Edition 2016, Evening Standard 2016, USA Today 2016). In the year and a half since then, academics in many fields have been working to understand this political shift in the United Kingdom. Similar work has been done in the United States, as Americans come to terms with the election of the 45th President of the United States. One perspective on Brexit explains it as a backlash against the Labour Party’s multicultural platform.

The critique of multiculturalism first intensified after the July 7, 2005 attacks in London, which were perpetrated by a British citizen in the name of Islam. Many critics of multiculturalism asked why the perpetrator’s national identity did not outweigh his allegiance to extremist Islam, asking also what could prevent others from committing similar crimes (Asari 2009; Byrne and Jivraj 2015). For conservatives in Britain, multiculturalism breeds dangerous segregation rather than fostering social integration. This sentiment is summed up in these words from David Cameron in a 2006 speech to Parliament:

…if we are to bring our society together, then schools - all schools – must teach children that wherever they are from, if they are British citizens, they are inheritors of the British birthright … and every child in our country, wherever they come from must know and deeply understand what it means to be British. The components of our identity – our institutions, our language and our history (Political Speech 2006).
It is this idea of national identity in the wake of Brexit that I am particularly interested in; specifically the ways in which heritage institutions play a role in forming a national identity. The premise of my research is predicated on two main assumptions: (1) that heritage is a present-centered social process and (2) that heritage and national identity have been linked since the rise of the nation-state and capitalism.

Historically, nations have been “imagined communities,” fused by a cohesive national identity that relies on certain social practices, like language, ethnicity, religion, and other forms of heritage, for a sense of unity (Anderson 1991). Heritage, and heritage institutions, have supported national agendas through what scholars like Smith (2006) calls “Authorized Heritage Discourses” and what Geismar (2015) terms “heritage regimes.” As will be expounded on later, I have modified this terminology for my own research and will use “Authorized Heritage Narratives” moving forward.

While Brexit will impact all the countries within Britain (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) this project focuses solely on England. Specifically, this project explores the (re)production and consumption of “imagined Englishness” in two tourist villages in the English countryside: Tintagel in Cornwall and Glastonbury in Somerset. These two villages, linked by connections to the legend of King Arthur, rely heavily on tourism for economic survival. The dynamics of tourism place an interesting pressure on the role of heritage in the community. Heritage tourism is a unique arena in which to study issues of identity because as Sammells (2017) states, “[T]ourists’ gaze can be used to solidify the very national and ethnic boundaries they transgress” (1). The similarities and differences between these two villages position them for a productive comparative study in the ways in which heritage, national identity and tourism play out in southwest England.
Research Questions

The main goals of this research are to problematize national heritage in England and reveal the ways in which authorized heritage narratives, as well as unauthorized heritage narratives, compete with each other through (re)production and consumption in a tourist setting. Therefore, the main research questions for this project include:

1. What Authorized Heritage Narratives (AHNs) influence the (re)production and consumption of heritage in Tintagel and Glastonbury?
2. What types of “imagined communities” (British, English and/or regional) are reflected in the heritage presented in these two villages?
3. In what ways might heritage in these two villages be contested or controversial?
4. How are the AHNs commodified for consumption through tourism and how might this amplify or diminish this contestation?

These interrelated questions guided the selection of research methodology for this research project. Due to limited financial resources, this research was undertaken over the course of just eight weeks in the field and can be considered a rapid ethnographic assessment. However, the ethnographic fieldwork is supplemented by the analysis of written materials collected in the field, as well as historical documents through archival research.

Overview of Chapters

The chapters of this dissertation follow a traditional format. The rest of this introductory chapter I will present readers with a brief historical overview of both Tintagel and Glastonbury, providing the necessary context to understand both as places of tourism in England. This will include descriptions of the heritage sites that exist within each village, as well as historical uses of these sites for tourism as evidenced through archival research.

Chapter Two I explore the relevant literature on heritage, tourism and national identity. This research is inherently interdisciplinary as it straddles the boundaries of multiple academic
fields including: heritage and museum studies, tourism studies, and cultural anthropology. Therefore, the review of literature presents only what is necessary to contextualize this research project and does not aim to survey all academic work done in these areas. Some main points covered in Chapter Two include: defining heritage, heritage and the nation-state, the anthropology of tourism, and theoretical approaches to the anthropological exploration of heritage.

In Chapter Three I outline the methodology used for this research. The research design is contextualized using the aforementioned research questions and I discuss my approach to participant sampling and recruitment in this ethnographic project. I explain in detail the various methods used for data collection, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, photography and archival research. Finally, I explain my data analysis techniques based on a grounded theory approach, and I include a brief discussion of ethical concerns and my positionality as researcher.

In Chapters Four and Five I present the results for Tintagel and Glastonbury, respectively. Two main themes emerged through my grounded theory approach, and I use these to structure my presentation of results in both chapters. These two themes, simplified, are: heritage as contested and heritage as commodified. Finally, in Chapter Six, I sum up the conclusions of the research as related to the original research questions, as well as what contributions this research stands to make to the areas of heritage studies and tourism studies. I also address the applied dimensions of this project, study limitations, and recommendations for future research in this area.
Geographic Context

Before going into detail about the history of Tintagel and Glastonbury specifically, it is important to understand the general geography of England, particularly its southwest region which includes the counties: Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. This region of England is known for the beautiful landscapes that characterize many of our imaginations of the English countryside. The southwest region includes Dartmoor National Park, Exmoor National Park and several places designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) including: the Quantock Hills, Isles of Scilly, Tamar Valley, Blackdown Hills, East Devon, Roseland Heritage Coast, the Cotswolds and the Mendip Hills. Southwest England also boasts two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Stonehenge in Wiltshire and the Jurassic Coast in Devon. In short, southwest England is ripe with destinations for tourists both domestic and international.

Rather than choosing to do this research at a famous site like Stonehenge, I opted for these two lesser known but no less historically important places: Tintagel and Glastonbury (see Figure 1). Their geographic locations play an integral role in the types of identities with which locals may choose to identify. Is there a difference between Britishness and Englishness? And what role do regional identities, like Cornishness, play?
Britishness, Englishness and Cornishness

There is no necessary connection between the nature of Parliament, the boarding school, football hooliganism, fish and chips, snooker, the royal family, Monty Python and Admiral Nelson - except that they are all thought to be characteristically English. (Mandler 2006, 2)

What comes to mind when we think of England or Englishness? Is it different from Britain and Britishness? Is it a plethora of pop-culture references ranging from The Beatles, to James Bond, to Harry Potter? Do we think of the Queen? Colonialism? Tea and scones? While Americans might struggle in differentiating and defining Englishness and Britishness, it is an identity crisis with which many of those inhabiting the United Kingdom also struggle. The differentiation of Englishness from Britishness is made more difficult by the identities of the United Kingdom’s other national members, including Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The nuances of national identities, as well as regional identities, within the United Kingdom are a complex matter. This section serves as a brief discussion of national and regional identities in the
Britishness and Englishness

In his 2003 book *The Making of English Identity*, Krishnan Kumar writes, “The idea that nationalism is something pathological, something at the same time deeply foreign, is part of the English understanding of it. Hence the unwillingness to accept there is or can be such as thing as English nationalism” (20). He argues that it is impossible to consider England or Britain as independent or intelligible units of study because “both are fragments of a larger whole whose boundaries extend to the very limits of the globe” (15). Britain’s colonial past makes defining nationalism, whether British or English, extremely difficult. Authors, poets, artists and filmmakers alike have tried to tackle these questions. In *On Living in an Old Country*, Patrick Wright describes a concept he terms “Deep England” which is a familiar but vague image that many people embrace of England.

Deep England can indeed be deeply moving to those whose particular existence is most directly in line with its privileged imagination. People of the upper middle-class formation can recognize not just their own totems and togetherness in these essential experiences, but also the philistinism of the urban working class as it stumbles out, blind and unknowing, into that countryside at weekends. (Wright 2009, 86)

This notion of “Deep England” is particularly salient in discussions of national heritage when considering how many great country homes are parts of the repertoire of organizations like the National Trust. But what does contemporary England, and Britain for that matter, look like?

In 2015, Jivraj and Simpson published a comprehensive ethnic profile of the current British state, using and analyzing the results of the most recent census surveys from the Office for National Statistics (ONS). They acknowledge the difficulty in defining ethnicity: “the differences become blurred in multicultural societies such as Britain, where living in diverse
areas has meant minority groups have borrowed from one another and the majority culture to form new identities” (2). From an anthropological perspective there are obvious issues with the conceptualization of identity and ethnicity that is employed by the census surveys. However, they can provide useful information since the surveys require citizens to self-identify, which could provide unique insights into the lived reality, versus the perceived reality, of minority populations in Britain.

The ethnic makeup of Britain has been rapidly changing in the last few decades. Thanks to globalization and the increased mobilization of people, goods and ideas, people from all over have migrated to the Britain. Some interesting facts that Jivraj and Simpson (2015) drew from the census results on growing ethnic diversity include:

- In 2011, one in five people in England and Wales (20 per cent) described their ethnic group as other than White British compared with 13 per cent in 2001.
- The population of other than White British, White Irish or Other White has doubled in size since 1991, from 3 to 7 million, while remaining a small minority of the total population in 2011 (14 per cent).
- Ethnic diversity is increasing in all parts of England and Wales, and at a faster rate in those places where minority ethnic groups were fewest in 2001.

So what can we ascertain from this? According to the census results, minority ethnic diversity (as described as “other than White British”) is growing at an increased rate, especially in areas that in 2001 did not have much diversity at all. So not only is the overall diversity of the population growing, the geographic places and spaces in which the diversity is growing have also changed.

According to Jivraj and Byrne (2015), identification with “Britishness” has also been changing.

- Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian and Black Caribbean ethnic groups are most likely to consider themselves exclusively British.
- An English-only national identity is favoured by more than seven tenths of the White British ethnic group.
- Those in the White British ethnic group are less likely to describe themselves as English if they live in London rather than other parts of the country.
• Immigrants from regions where there is a history of British colonialism are more likely to consider themselves as British than those born in other world regions.
• Fewer than a quarter of Muslims do not identity with a British national identity.

From these observations we can make a few conclusions. First, that British colonial rule significantly influences the ethnic identity choices of those migrating to Britain. This makes sense considering their exposure to the former British Empire, not the “English” empire, seems to influence the ethnic identification of these immigrants. Interestingly, it would appear that while immigrant populations, especially those from former colonial areas, identify as British, “White British” tend to identify as English rather than British. This is a particularly useful observation when trying to draw the distinction between perceptions of Englishness and Britishness.

In a 2007 article Byrne asks, “where does Englishness stop and Britishness begin” (509)? She finds that class and race often determine whether someone identifies as British or English. In the vein of Paul Gilroy’s 2002 book There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack, Byrne concludes that Englishness is Whiteness.

Englishness is somehow truly what England should be - refined, rural, white and middle-class (albeit with troubling gender relations), whilst Britishness is a category which can absorb all that disturbs this notion. (Byrne 2007, 520)

In addition to the distinction based on race and class, Byrne found that younger citizens tended to shy away from affiliation with Englishness due to its post-colonial ramifications. “Being English means in some sense to bear responsibility for the collective actions of its people and politicians” including those which took place during colonial rule (524-525). Jivraj and Byrne (2015) also noted the intersection of Englishness with class and race during their analysis of the census survey data. They found that “the divergence between minority ethnic groups and the White British population” in terms of whether they describe themselves as exclusively
British or exclusively English reflected “the suggestion that Englishness is perceived by minority ethnic groups to be a ‘white’ identity” (69). However, when location is taken into account it appears that those White British living in Central London are more likely to identify as British rather than English. Jivraj and Byrne chalk this up to what many called the “London Effect” - where exposure to the multicultural nature of the capital city has created a heightened sense of awareness of Britishness over Englishness. To sum up then, the differentiation between Britishness and Englishness is not clear-cut, though research suggests that factors such as class and race play a large role in what identity an individual might favor.

**Non-English National Identities in the United Kingdom**

Prior to the identity crisis relating to involvement in the European Union, the United Kingdom was already facing questions of national identity following what is now referred to as “devolution” in the United Kingdom. Devolution is the transfer of centralized power from the UK Parliament in London to assemblies in Cardiff in Wales, Belfast in Northern Ireland, and Edinburgh in Scotland. These transfers happened through legislation in 1997 for Wales and Scotland and in 1998 for Northern Ireland. The process of devolution gives the nations of Wales, Northern Ireland and Edinburgh more power over their own affairs while still remaining a part of the larger United Kingdom. The legislation for each nation is slightly different and has conferred a variety of powers to the satellite assemblies while the UK Parliament still retains some powers, particularly to do with international relations and national security. These transferred powers have been updated through additional legislation in the 2000s.

This transfer of power marks a shift in forms of national identity and representation. To oversimplify a very complex situation, citizens in those three nations did not feel that a
government centralized in England necessarily had their best interests in mind. Further, the recent Scottish referendum for independence in 2014 serves as evidence of a strong Scottish identity. A remarkable 84.59% of voters turned out to voice their opinions, but the referendum was defeated with 55.30% voting to remain a member of the United Kingdom while 44.70% voted for independence.

I raise the point of Scottish identity because Scotland relates to a strong sense of Celtic identity – something it shares with nations like Wales and Northern Ireland, and geographic regions like Brittany in France, and Cornwall in southwest England. Like Welsh, Breton, Irish, Scottish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic, Cornish is a Celtic language. The Cornish language “Kernewek” is still spoken in Britain today, albeit by only a few hundred people (Mills 2016). This link between the English county of Cornwall and other Celtic regions of the UK like Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is part of the dissonance between Cornish identity and English identity. Originally classified as extinct by UNESCO, Kernewek has been revived in recent decades thanks in no small part to government funding from Parliament to the Cornwall Council; “roughly £150,000 a year since Cornish was recognized as a minority language in 2003” (“Cornish language” 2016). However, this funding was stopped in 2016.

The relationship between Cornwall and the rest of England has been one of contention for centuries. Again, to oversimplify a complicated situation, a centralized London government exploited Cornwall’s natural resources in much the same way as they did in British colonies. Beyond economic exploitation through taxation and the stripping of resources, Cornish language was suppressed through means like the Book of Common Prayer in 1549; written only in English as an extension of the English Reformation, the Cornish revolted in what became known as the Prayer Book Rebellion. At least 2,000 Cornish died and the cause was lost. This is just one of
many historical examples of tensions between Cornwall and the rest of England. In 2014 the Cornish people were recognized by the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Willett 2014). And, like Scotland and Wales, there is a Cornish nationalist movement that believes Cornwall should have a devolved legislative Cornish assembly (Woodcock 2015).

This tense relationship is not necessarily outwardly hostile, but studies have shown that many Cornish will identify as Cornish first, then British, and most likely not as English. Woodcock (2015) conducted an online survey on identity and attitudes about devolution of power in Cornwall asking participants to select one of the following descriptors: (1) Only Cornish, not English, (2) More Cornish, not English, (3) Equally Cornish as English, (4) More English than Cornish, and (5) Only English not Cornish. His findings revealed that Cornish people view themselves as separate from notions of Englishness. To that end, “more than half of the respondents rejected any notion of Englishness in their identity and a quarter prioritized Cornishness over Englishness” (Woodcock 2015). But what does this have to do with heritage?

Generally, regionalism has increased throughout England, especially in Cornwall, making it more difficult to (re)produce homogenous, national identities through national heritage sites without facing some kind of pushback or contestation. As will become more apparent in the results chapters of this dissertation, heritage sites in Cornwall find themselves mixed up in the Cornish vs. English tension, especially when heritage sites situated in Cornwall are managed by organizations with names like “English” Heritage.
Heritage Management in the United Kingdom

To say that the heritage sector in the United Kingdom is complex and complicated is an understatement. Rather than try to unravel all the intertwined organizations and legislation, I will outline the main points of the sector below in an effort to explain how heritage becomes designated and legitimized.

The first legislation that aimed to protect “heritage” was the Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1882. This act was the result of persistent calls from William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), founded in 1877, for formal legal protection for monuments deemed to be of national importance. The Ancient Monuments Protection Act 1900 extended protection to medieval monuments. The Ancient Monuments Consolidation and Amendment Act 1913 created the concept of “scheduling” monuments, as we understand it today.

Scheduling Monuments

Protection provided for scheduled monuments is given through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The first paragraph of the act reads:

An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to ancient monuments; to make provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest and (in connection therewith) for the regulation of operations or activities affecting such matters; to provide for the recovery of grants under section 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Act 1972 or under section 4 of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 in certain circumstances; and to provide for grants by the Secretary of State to the Architectural Heritage Fund (British Parliament 1979).

The 1979 Act states that the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport compiles and maintains a schedule of monuments. Once listed on the schedule, a monument, including built architecture and surrounding land, has legal protection under the law.
A scheduled monument cannot be a structure that is occupied as a dwelling, used as a place of worship, or protected under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. Structures that are occupied as dwellings tend to revert to the “listed buildings” process for protection. Scheduling makes it a criminal offense to “execute or cause or permit to be executed works that would demolish, destroy, damage, remove, repair, alter or add to the scheduled monument,” use a metal detector in an area designated as a scheduled monument, and/or remove any object of archaeological or historical interest discovered using a metal detector (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2010, 6-7).

Within Britain the governmental entities currently responsible for the archaeological and historic environment are: Historic England, Cadw in Wales, and Historic Environment Scotland. Criteria used for scheduling consideration include: period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, representivity and potential. Further explanation of these criteria are laid out on the Historic England website. Historic England will collect information on a potential heritage asset, define its boundaries and make the suggestion for its scheduling to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

*Historic England and English Heritage*

In 1983, a non-departmental public body of the British Government titled the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, more commonly referred to as English Heritage, became responsible for the protection and management of a collection of historic properties. Within the collection are famous sites like Stonehenge, Dover Castle, parts of Hadrian’s Wall and Tintagel Castle, as well as over 400 other sites and monuments.
In April 2015, English Heritage was reorganized and divided into two separate entities: Historic England, which maintains the protection functions of the old organization and a new “English Heritage Trust,” a charity through which the sites now operate and accept visitors. The English Heritage Trust has maintained the original English Heritage logo and brand identity. The properties remain in the ownership of the state, but are operated by the now independent English Heritage Trust charity. Meanwhile, Historic England continues to perform the heritage-related advisory and consultant duties for the government of the original English Heritage. The majority of English Heritage properties are under the guardianship of the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. A small minority is owned by other government entities or the Crown Estate.

Prior to becoming a charitable trust in 2015, English Heritage relied primarily on the government for its funding. As a charitable trust English Heritage now relies on income gained from admission costs, membership fees and income from cottages, cafes and shops on English Heritage properties. To ease the transition and help cover the maintenance of the properties until 2023, the English Heritage Trust was established through an £80 million grant from the British government.

The institutional vision for the “new” English Heritage is:

Gone are the days when people learned about history simply from reading books. People are increasingly looking for experiences that bring history to life in an engaging way and nothing beats standing on the spot where history happened. We offer a hands-on experience that will inspire and entertain people of all ages. Our work is informed by

---

1 The Crown Estate “is not the personal property of Her Majesty the Queen, but is owned by Sovereign in right of the Crown; the Sovereign is the legal owner but does not have any powers of management or control” (Crown Estate 2018).
2 English Heritage had approximately 1.34 million members in 2014/2015. English Heritage members get free entry into any English Heritage site, and a reduced entry fee to over 100 other non-English Heritage sites throughout England. Members also get half-priced entry to sites in the care of Cadw, Historic Scotland, Heritage Ireland and New Zealand Historic Places Trust.
enduring values of authenticity, quality, imagination, responsibility and fun. Our vision is that people will experience the story of England where it really happened (English Heritage 2018).

This same vision is reflected in their branding tagline: Step into England’s Story. English Heritage lists its values as: authenticity, quality, imagination, responsibility and fun. On authenticity the English Heritage website states:

We seek to be true to the story of the places and artefacts that we look after and present. We don't exaggerate or make things up for entertainment's sake. Instead, through careful research, we separate fact from fiction and bring fascinating truth to light.

On the other hand, the website also talks about imagination:

We seek to be imaginative in the way that history is brought to life, thinking creatively, using the most effective means, surprising and delighting people. We want each experience to be vivid, alive and unforgettable.

The tension between establishing “authentic” stories, while also creating vivid and unforgettable “experiences” treads the line between education and entertainment – a dilemma commonly faced at heritage sites.

The National Trust

Unlike English Heritage, the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or National Beauty, commonly known as the National Trust or simply the Trust, has always been a charitable organization. As such, it is funded through admission fees, membership fees, profit from cafes, and shops, and donations. The Trust operates across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland has an independent National Trust for Scotland.

According to the National Trust website, the Trust was founded on January 12, 1895 by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley. The first property given to the Trust in 1895 was a space of five acres of cliff top at Dinas Oleu in Wales. The Trust purchased its
first building in 1896 and its first nature reserve in 1899. As demonstrated by these first few acquisitions, the National Trust’s collection is the result of both purchases and donations or bequests. The Trust is now one of the largest landowners in the entire United Kingdom, owning over 610,000 acres of land.

The Trust has been criticized for initially focusing too much on the country estates of the upper class. After the first and second world wars, many estate owners were no longer able to maintain their vast homes and so donated them to the trust in lieu of death duties. And while grand country homes still make up a large portion of their collection, the Trust now oversees a diverse range of other properties:

We look after coastline, forests, woods, fens, beaches, farmland, moorland, islands, archaeological remains, nature reserves, villages, historic houses, gardens, mills and pubs and one of the world’s largest art collections. We restore them, protect them and open them up to everyone. For the Trust, conservation has always gone hand-in-hand with public access (National Trust 2018).

The Trust’s mission to protect special places is reflected in their branding tagline: For ever, for everyone. The goal to make National Trust properties for everyone is yet to be achieved, due to the steep admission fees at some locations. However, the Trust reached 5 million members in 2017, making it the largest member organization in the United Kingdom.

Discussion

The convoluted nature of heritage management in the UK is perhaps best illustrated by the example of Stonehenge. The stone circle is owned by the Crown’s Estate but is operated by English Heritage. The surrounding landscape was purchased and is maintained by the National Trust. The entirety of the site, including the circle and the surrounding land, is a designated World Heritage Site. This level of interlinking and overlapping heritage designation and
legitimation makes is difficult to discern what entities have influence and power over some of England’s most important national sites. So, rather than choosing a prominent site like Stonehenge, I chose two locations with heritage sites that are nationally significant but do not have the same international status as Wiltshire’s famous stone circle.

**An Introduction to Tintagel**

Tintagel is a small village of approximately 1,800 residents (according to 2011 census) located in the northern part of the county of Cornwall. Perched on the cliffs of the coast along the Celtic Sea, it is one of many villages that welcome tourists to the Cornish coast throughout the year. Wadebridge is the closest large town nearby. Tintagel’s local residents and tourists alike will make the thirty-minute drive through narrow, winding Cornish roads to run their errands here. Tintagel’s rural location means that many visitors stop in on their way to more southern Cornish destinations.

*Tourism in Tintagel*

The Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro is home to the Courtney Library and the Cornish History Research Centre. Part of my research included a trip to this institution to conduct archival research on Tintagel as a tourist site. The archivist was able to pull a selection of old tourist guidebooks that mention Tintagel in some way. Each of the guidebooks painted a similar picture of a beautiful but also mysterious landscape steeped in myth and legend.
Geoffrey of Monmouth established the Tintagel connection to King Arthur in the 12th century through his book *History of the Kings of Britain*. In that book, Monmouth narrates how King Arthur was conceived and born at Tintagel Castle. The impact of this connection is undeniable. In a 1954 *Guide to Cornwall Blue Book* the author states:

> Were there no Arthurian legend Tintagel would still be among the most spectacular places in Cornwall. The great cliffs, the headland that is almost an island, the sheltered coves, the clear sea, the deep, dramatic caves, the glorious suite of cliffs on either hand, would all ensure this. But since the headland is dominated by a castle, and the whole place permeated with the legend of an ancient king, then is high romance inescapably wedded to this naturally dramatic place (*The Guide to Cornwall* 1954, 14).

Tintagel, as both a destination for visitors seeking natural beauty, or history steeped in myth and legend, has, like the rest of Cornwall, relied heavily on tourism for economic sustainability. In addition to the main heritage site, Tintagel Castle, the village has several other related heritage

---

3 The evolution of the legend of King Arthur from Geoffrey of Monmouth to contemporary British pop culture is laid out in Appendix B of this dissertation.
sites that visitors may visit during their stay, including: King Arthur’s Great Halls, St. Nectan’s Glen, and the Arthurian Centre. The latter two sites are located outside Tintagel proper, but are often included on a visitor’s itinerary for the immediate area. Below I will introduce each site individually.

*Tintagel Castle*

The main heritage site in Tintagel is Tintagel Castle, which is currently owned and managed by English Heritage. It has been a notable tourist destination since the mid-19th century. The Victorian Era, spanning roughly 1837 to 1901, is named for the reign of Queen Victoria and is characterized, among other things, by a renewed interest in legends like King Arthur. The establishment of the railroad network across Britain in the late 19th century also made travel easier, but leisure and tourism remained an activity for the upper classes. Access by train proved particularly important to regions like Cornwall. This timeline aligns with the development of Tintagel as a tourist destination. Though it had been famous for centuries, thanks to the stories written by Monmouth, the decision to change the name of the village from Trevana to Tintagel in the 1850s served as a marker of the rising importance of the castle to the village.

A 1908 tourist guidebook titled *The Homeland Handbooks: Tintagel, Boscastle and the Northern Coast of Cornwall* describes the renaming of the village like this:

> The change of name is a remarkable example of the influence of the visitor upon Cornwall. Years ago this post town was Trevena, and letters had to be so addressed. Tintagel only applied to the headland ‘Dundagel,’ where King Arthur’s Castle stands, and to the parish. In course of time the whole place became known as Tintagel by reason of a post office decision to that effect, and, though the name of Trevena is still correctly used of the village, Tintagel the place is to the outside world (*Homeland Handbooks* 1908, 62-63).

I agree with the author of that guidebook that the changing of the village’s name is evidence of the powerful influence of tourism in Cornwall and Tintagel specifically.
Rev. R.B. Kinsman served as Vicar in Tintagel from 1852 until his death in 1894 and was one of the initial community members involved with conducting visitors to and from the castle ruins. The other important community member was Florence Nightingale Richards who served as “keeper of the keys” for the site from 1869 until 1939, when she retired at the age of 82. Her family had lived near the castle, at an old mill, and she was considered an expert local guide on the castle. She had to move on when the Ministry of Works took over management of the castle in the late 1920s.

There is a gap in knowledge about the site for the middle of the 20th century, which Head Properties Curator for English Heritage, Jeremy Ashbee, attributes to the fact that the information “is distributed through a large number of files in the archives of English Heritage, and so far no one has undertaken the large task of bringing them together.” In 1975 the Directorate of Ancient Monuments and Historic Buildings added a wooden bridge to improve accessibility to the headland on which the castle sits.

Also according to Ashbee, it is unknown exactly when access to Tintagel Castle required an entrance fee. Before the Ministry of Works took over management in the late 1920s, admission had been free. However, by 1931, there is evidence that an entrance fee would be collected at either the custodian’s hut or sometimes on the island; the amount of the fee is unknown.

English Heritage took over management of Tintagel Castle and many other sites in 1983, following the National Heritage Act 1983. In 1999 English Heritage faced strong pushback for their management of “Cornish” sites, particularly from groups like Revived Cornish Stannary.

---

4 Quote taken from email communication between Vivian Gornik and Jeremy Ashbee, Head Properties Curator at English Heritage, on May 9, 2018.

5 File AL0950 English Heritage Archives, Swindon, shows before, during and after photographs of the works.
Parliament, which viewed Cornwall as its own nation. In the 35 years since English Heritage took over management the visitor numbers have steadily increased. In 2004, the earliest available year with visitor figures from the Association of Leader Visitor Attractions, Tintagel Castle saw 181,010 visitors. In 2017 there were 246,039.

The ruins of Tintagel Castle sit atop a headland that stretches out from the coastline into the ocean. Visitors to the castle must descend from the Fore Street in the center of the village, down along a Castle Road into a valley that opens up at cove where, at low tide, visitors can also explore the beach and caves. The descent is steep and on a hot day, can be arduous for older visitors. A Ranger Rover shuttle service is available for £2 to those who cannot or prefer not to make the walk down, or back up the village center.

The headland at Tintagel was occupied during the Dark Ages. Archaeological evidence has revealed that it was the location of a large settlement that engaged significant trading.

Remains of pottery from this time suggest trade with places as far off as the Mediterranean.

Evidence from the Dark Age settlement suggests it was home to an important and powerful
historical figure. Whether that historical figure’s name was Arthur, however, is not proven. Additionally, what visitors actually encounter at Tintagel Castle today are the ruins of a medieval castle built long after the Arthurian timeline by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, in the 13th century. Richard was the younger brother of King Henry III. *Tintagel: A Historical Guide* argues that it was Tintagel’s legendary history that led Richard to choose the location for his own castle.

Of the castle ruins themselves, I have found no better description than this from the 1915 *Black’s Guide to Cornwall*:

> It is impossible for anyone to be disappointed in Tintagel, for owing to its position no photograph does it justice. The ruins themselves may be merely medieval, and they are small in extent, but standing as they do magnificently they give ample scope to the imagination … The fragments and traces are in such an imperfect state that visitors at all competent to form an opinion must be left to do without any help of ours … Nor can we dogmatise on the legends connecting Tintagel with King Arthur’s Court. We found an American fellow-tourist much disappointed not to be shown here the Round Table, and even half expecting the Holy Grail to be on view (Moncrieff 1915, 26-27).

Figure 4 (below) is a map included in the *Black’s Guide* quoted above. On the map one can see that the castle is named King Arthur’s Castle, located on Tintagel Head. The map also denotes the village by its former name, Trevena. Admission to Tintagel Castle costs £8.40 for adults, £7.60 for concessions (student/senior), and £5.00 for children. English Heritage members enter for free with proof of membership. Tickets can be purchased at one of four locations. The main ticket office sits in the center of town at the top of Castle Road. This is also where the Range Rover picks up. However, tickets can also be purchased at the visitor center at the bottom of Castle Road next to the café, gift shop and small exhibition space. A third option, if visitors have managed to pass the first two ticket options, is a small booth that also acts as the first actual gate into the site, and it is located at the foot of the bridge that leads onto the headland. A fourth and final option exists for any visitors accessing the site from the coastal path, and it sits at the top of
the site by the ruins of the Gatehouse Courtyard. Figure 5 is a scan of the site map inside the visitor guide given to every visitor with his or her ticket purchase.

Figure 4: Map featured in Black’s Guide to Cornwall, 1915. Image courtesy of the Royal Cornwall Museum Courtney Library.

Figure 5: Scan of the site map inside the visitor guide provided at time of ticket purchase.
More detail about the visitor experience at Tintagel Castle will be provided in Chapter Four. Thanks to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Tintagel Castle has been inextricably linked with Arthurian legend for centuries. The surrounding areas, including other heritage sites, also reflect this reality. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of King Arthur’s Great Halls.

King Arthur’s Great Halls

If a visitor walks from the main Visitor Center parking lot down along Fore Street toward the coast, it would be difficult to miss the signs for King Arthur’s Great Halls (Figure 6). The name is slightly deceiving as the site contains only one, main hall, which was an extension added to Trevena House by Frederick Glassock in the early 1930s.

![Figure 6: The front façade of King Arthur’s Great Halls, decorated with all manner of Arthurian and other knight-related objects.](image)

Inspired by Arthurian chivalry, Glasscock founded the Order of the Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table in 1927. The building was an extension of this inspiration. The hall he constructed contains 72 stained glass windows illustrating various parts of Arthurian legend. Admission to this site costs £5.00 for adults and £3.00 for children. A family ticket is available
for £10.00. The current manager described the site to me as a Tardis, a reference to the British television program Dr. Who, which features a blue Police Box that is much, much larger inside than it looks from the outside.

When visitors arrive to the site, they enter through what would have been Trevena House, which now houses the gift shop and ticket desk. From there, visitors are led into a separate room, the first part of Glasscock’s addition to the building, where they hear the story of King Arthur as narrated by Merlin. During the narration, a series of oil paintings depicting the story are lit up in theatrical style. The narration runs approximately ten minutes and then visitors can enter the grand marble hall and explore the stained glass windows, cabinets of local artifacts, a throne and even a round table before exiting back through the gift shop.

St. Nectan’s Glen

Located just outside town on the road between Tintagel and Boscastle, is St. Nectan’s Glen, a site of natural beauty renowned for its waterfalls and serene, peaceful atmosphere. Their website describes it this way:

St Nectan’s Glen is an area of outstanding natural beauty. Walk to the Waterfall & Hermitage through an ancient woodland with ivy clad trees and along the banks of the River Trevillet as it sparkles and gurgles busily on its journey to the sea. A place where animals and birds play amid a mysticism of fairies, piskies, serenaded by the wonderful sound of bird song. The area has been appointed a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to rare specimens of plants…. wander down to the Waterfall and experience one of Cornwall’s hidden treasures, one of nature’s beauties unspoil by man. Whether you’re on a pilgrimage or a day out the reward is in nature’s embrace.

St. Nectan’s Glen is a unique site that while “unspoil by man” is in no way immune to the myth and legend that permeates so much of Cornwall’s natural and archaeological heritage. This site is

Merlin is sometimes thought of as a wizard. He is a mysterious but wise character with supernatural abilities, present in many versions of the legend of King Arthur.
of particular spiritual importance to certain visitors, while simply being a beautiful site to visit for others. Admission to St. Nectan’s Glen is £5.95. Parking in the car park is free.

While the car park for St. Nectan’s Glen sits along the B3263, visitors have to walk for nearly a mile on the path along the Trevillet River to reach the ticket office and entrance to the site (see Figure 7). Once inside, visitors can view several small waterfalls along a meticulously maintained mix of dirt path and wooden boardwalk. The main sixty-foot waterfall is called St. Nectan’s Kieve. According to some legends, King Arthur and his Knights were blessed at the waterfall before going to battle. It is a Celtic tradition to tie strips of cloth, rags or ribbons to trees near sacred wells or springs. The practice of tying these offerings, known as Clootie or Cloutie, is alive and well at St. Nectan’s Glen. Visitors encounter them throughout the site, as well as other offerings left behind including rocks and coins (Figure 8).

Figure 7: The location of St. Nectan’s Glen Car Park along B3263 between Tintagel and Boscastle.
Other Sites in Tintagel

In addition to Tintagel Castle, King Arthur’s Great Halls and St. Nectan’s Glen, there are some smaller heritage sites in the area worth noting. These include, Tintagel Old Post Office, St. Materiana’s Church and the Arthurian Centre. The first two are located within Tintagel proper, while the last is located near Slaughterbridge a few miles outside the village.

Located in the middle of Fore Street between the Visitor Centre and the top of the Castle Road, sits a National Trust managed property: Tintagel Old Post Office. The building was originally a farmhouse, built over 600 years ago, around the same time as Richard’s castle on the Tintagel headland. It became the village post office in the 1870s. The building is remarkably well preserved and visitors can explore several of the old rooms during their visit. Many passers-by, perhaps unaware that there was a National Trust site in Tintagel, will simply take photos of the building’s architecture and move on toward Tintagel Castle. The National Trust also owns and maintains a small stretch of the coast just south of Tintagel Castle along the coastal path.
St. Materiana’s Church sits along the coastal path just south of Tintagel Castle. Many visitors are unaware that the church itself is older than the ruins of the castle managed by English Heritage. According to art historians, the Norman-era design and Saxon features date the church to the late 11th or early 12th century. It is still an active church within the parish today. The church sits on Vicarage Hill, a small, narrow lane that branches off from Fore Street and dead ends at the coast.

The Arthurian Centre is a privately owned and operated heritage site located near Slaughterbridge, about 15-minutes away from Tintagel village. I am including it here because of its association with Arthur, and because I was alerted during interviews with volunteers at the Tintagel Visitor Centre that they often send tourists there. The Arthurian Centre property is privately owned, but includes the land along the River Camel in Slaughterbridge where a 6th century stone supposedly marks the site of Arthur and Mordred’s last battle. The stone, which can be seen in person, lies on the riverbank and interpretive panels explain the carvings on the stone and their relation to King Arthur. The stone is located along a trail that leads from their visitor center and exhibition space out to the river. Admission to the property, including the trail the river, costs £4.00, and they offer 20% discounts for English Heritage and National Trust members. Concessions (children/students/seniors) can get in for £3.00.

As this section hopefully demonstrated, Tintagel has several important and popular heritage sites, many of which are impacted by the myths and legends surrounding King Arthur. Tourism is a critical part of Tintagel’s local economy and will continue to be so as Cornwall’s agriculture economy continues to decline.

---

7 According to some versions of Arthurian legend, Arthur was severely wounded in the Battle of Camlann by his enemy Mordred. Arthur was taken from the battle to the Isle of Avalon where he was laid to rest. Some believe the Battle of Camlann took place near Slaughterbridge in Cornwall.
An Introduction to Glastonbury

Glastonbury is a town of approximately 9,000 residents and sits in the middle of the English county of Somerset. Like Cornwall, the county of Somerset is predominantly reliant on tourism and agriculture. Despite having a population of less than 10,000 residents, Glastonbury has two major and several minor heritage sites that bring visitors in from around the UK and across the globe. One senior community member, Neville, said proudly: “There’s quite a lot for a little town! There’s the Tor, the Chalice Well, there’s the Abbey, there’s the White Spring … and the Rural Life Museum when it’s open.” Indeed, for such a small community, Glastonbury has quite a lot of heritage to share with the outside world.

Figure 9: Map of Glastonbury town, including main heritage-related sites. The town’s main street, the High Street, runs between Wells Road and Magdalene Street.

Tourism in Glastonbury

The Somerset Heritage Center in Taunton houses archives for the county ranging from army and census records to maps and newspapers. Part of my research included a trip there to conduct archival research on Glastonbury as a tourist site. Unfortunately, I was not able to locate as many old tourist guidebooks for Glastonbury as I was for Tintagel. However, the guidebooks I did view reinforced the idea that tourism in Glastonbury, initially in the form of pilgrimage, has
long played an important role in the community. As in Cornwall, tourism in Somerset became especially important as the economic sustainability of agricultural ventures declined.

Glastonbury’s cattle market was closed in 1989. While agriculture declined, the reputation of Glastonbury as a center for alternative lifestyles grew. Within Glastonbury there are several notable heritage-related sites: Glastonbury Tor, Glastonbury Abbey, the Chalice Well and a handful of smaller sites. Each of these sites are, in different ways, places of both pilgrimage and tourism.

**Glastonbury Tor**

Rather than describe the Tor to you myself, I will let the words of *Goodall’s Guide to Glastonbury* from 1912 do the work for me:

No one should visit Glastonbury without ascending it… It is a conical rising ground, a character of elevation which is common in the neighborhood, there being several, among others some near Godney, on the rising ground towards Wookey, and which are known as The Isles even now. The Tor stands out very prominently, and forms a landmark for miles around. It is 520 feet high, and had formerly a church on its top dedicated to St. Michael, of which the tower now alone remains. The ascent of the hill from Chilkwell Street is easy, and as the visitor progresses, it is pleasant to view the glorious prospect as it opens up. To assist the weary, seats are provided at the different stages. When halfway up, the pilgrim may easily image ‘The Island’ as it existed in the early days.

The view from the top of the Tor is a complete panorama of the surrounding Somerset Levels and the Mendip Hills in the distance (see Figures 10 and 11). *Goodall’s Guide* refers to the Tor as an island, which references both the geological fact that the area surrounding the Tor was once filled with water, as well as the belief in the myth that the Tor is actually the mystical Isle of Avalon. Welcome signs on the edges of town read: “Welcome to Glastonbury – Ancient Isle of Avalon.” A guide titled *Bath, Cheddar, Wells, Glastonbury* by Ward Lock, published in the early 1950s, says:
The Glastonbury of today, fair though its surroundings are and sheltered its position, would scarcely be recognized as Avalon, the ‘Apple Isle’ of ancient romance. But the one is identical with the other, and we can only conclude that climatic conditions must have altered it, as undoubtedly have the geographical conditions; for Glastonbury was once an island in the midst of the lake-like expansion of the River Brue. (Ward Lock 1950, 142).

As suggested above, Glastonbury Tor is perhaps the most iconic site in the area and is today owned and managed by the National Trust. The Trust is responsible for maintaining the grounds, which includes not just the hill, but also several plots of farmland surrounding it at its base. There is no admission cost to enter the site. Small donation boxes sit at the entrance to the two paths that lead to the top of the Tor. Interpretation is also minimal, even in regards to the remains of the tower of a church dedicated to St. Michael that sit on the top of the hill. This is, first and foremost, a site of natural and scenic beauty to be consumed in a self-guided way.

Figure 10: The view from atop Glastonbury Tor looking down over Glastonbury town.

Figure 11: Photo taken during ascent of Glastonbury Tor
Glastonbury Abbey

Glastonbury Abbey is currently owned by the Church of England and managed by the Glastonbury Abbey Trust, a registered charity guided by a board of trustees. Though walled off from the center of town on all four sides, it plays an important role in Glastonbury heritage and tourism. Like Tintern Abbey and Rievaulx Abbey, it was seized and pillaged by Henry VIII in the mid-16th century during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Glastonbury Abbey was one of the most important monasteries in all of Europe.

According to the current Glastonbury Abbey Learning Manager, the Abbey passed into private ownership following the Dissolution in 1539. It was first given to the Duke of Somerset by Henry VIII. In the late 16th century, Elizabeth I gave it to Peter Carew. Thereafter, various owners held it in private ownership until it was purchased by the Church of England in 1908. At the time of the purchase, a charitable trust called the Bath and Wells Diocesan Trust was formed and overseen by the diocese. In 1963 it became an independent charitable trust called the Glastonbury Abbey Estate. Since 2009 it had been known as the Glastonbury Abbey Trust.\(^8\)

During the period in which the Abbey was privately owned, the grounds and the ruins were not available to visitors, religious or secular, unless they were guests of the owner. According to the Learning Manager, the owners in the 1820s built Abbey House with the ruins simply forming an interesting feature in their garden. Today, several structurally imposing ruins are all that remain of a once grand complex of buildings. As the visitor map below illustrates, the Abbey grounds are quite large. Walled off from the rest of Glastonbury town, visitors are often surprised to find that this large park-like oasis exists just off the High Street. Glastonbury Abbey visitors enter through a visitor center (Number 3 in Figure 13 below) that includes an exhibition

\(^8\) Information provided by the Learning Manager in an email communication with Vivian Gornik on May 11, 2018.
space before entering the actual grounds. Admission costs £7.50 for adults, £6.50 for concessions (students and seniors) and £4.50 for children.

Figure 12: A portion of the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey

Figure 13: Scan of map of Glastonbury Abbey grounds inside visitor brochure

Many local residents have annual memberships, which costs £34.00 for adults, £23.00 for concessions, and £66.00 for families. The Abbey grounds include various monastic ruins, the
Abbot’s Kitchen, fishponds, an orchard, and what is billed by the Abbey staff to be an historically-accurate herb garden.

Also marked on the map of the Abbey are the sites of King Arthur’s Grave and King Arthur’s Tomb. According to legend, King Arthur and his wife Guinevere were buried in Avalon. Some interpret this as Glastonbury, specifically either Glastonbury Abbey or Glastonbury Tor. After a devastating fire in 1184, the monks at Glastonbury Abbey were in desperate need of money and support to rebuild. It seems an unlikely coincidence then that the monks later found the grave of King Arthur on the Abbey grounds. They uncovered the grave of a man and a woman, buried with a lead cross, inscribed with the phrase, “Here lies interred the famous King Arthur on the Isle of Avalon.” The finding of King Arthur’s grave resulted in an increase in pilgrimage to the site, including wealthy patrons who could offer donations to the monks. While the authenticity of the find is questioned by many, very few question the impact the legend has had on the number of visitors coming to Glastonbury both in the past and the present.

Glastonbury Abbey’s contemporary ties to the Church of England significantly influence the site. According to their website:

The charity preserves the fabric and grounds of Glastonbury Abbey ruins, provides education in the abbey's religious and historic importance for the public benefit and uses the abbey to advance religion in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England. As will become apparent in later chapters, this association plays a significant role in how the site is interpreted and experienced by visitors today – even those who are there for a simple stroll and a cup of tea.
The Chalice Well Gardens

The Chalice Well is a lesser-known site located on the east side of town, just off Wells Road leading from the High Street to the Tor. This site is also owned and managed by an independent trust. Wellesley Tudor Pole founded The Trust in 1959 to protect the Chalice Well and the surrounding gardens. Pole believed the Chalice Well was an incredibly important spiritual place, and wanted to enable visitors and pilgrims to experience the waters and gardens in perpetuity. Admission to the Chalice Well costs £4.30 for adults, £3.50 for concessions and £2.15 for children. The main features of the gardens include the Chalice Well Head and Sanctuary, a meadow, King Arthur’s Court and Healing Pool, a cluster of yew trees and the Vesica Pool at the bottom of the gardens (see Figure 14 below).

The Trust refers to the well and the surrounding gardens as a Living Sanctuary. This is first and foremost a sacred and spiritual place. No one knows where the water originates, but within the gardens they begin at the Chalice Well Head (see Figure 15), run under the upper portion of the gardens and come out at The Lion’s Head spout before trickling further down the gardens, leaving red stained rock in its wake due to high concentration of iron and other minerals. Some legends connect the red waters of the Chalice Well to the blood of Christ and the Holy Grail. It is also known as the Red Spring, or the Blood Spring. A small gift shop, a meeting room, and a retreat house that is available for rent are also part of the garden property.
Figure 14: Scan of the map found inside *The Chalice Well: A place of sanctity, healing and peace*, which is available for purchase inside the Chalice Well gift shop.

Figure 15: The Chalice Well Head sits in a slightly sunken, stone circle at the top of the gardens.
Like St. Nectan’s Glen near Tintagel, The Chalice Well Gardens represent a national tradition of appreciating and preserving sacred sources of water. Clouties can be found tied to the branches that hover over the Chalice Well waters throughout the gardens and visitors can often be found collecting water to take home from Lion’s Head spout. Although a small space compared to the Tor and the Abbey, the Chalice Well Gardens are an important part of the heritage in Glastonbury.

Other Sites in Glastonbury

In addition to the Tor, the Abbey and the Chalice Well Gardens, visitors to Glastonbury can also experience a few other heritage sites including: the Somerset Rural Life Museum, Church of St. John the Baptist, Wearyall Hill and the White Spring. The Somerset Rural Life Museum was undergoing a yearlong, £2.4 million renovation during the time I conducted my fieldwork. The museum is managed by the Southwest Heritage Trust and according to their website, “tells the story of Somerset’s rich rural and social history” and that visitors can “explore rural life from the 1800s onwards” and learn about “the county’s heritage including its landscape, food and farming, working life and rural crafts.” Due to the closure for renovation, I was unable to include the museum in my research.

The Church of St. John the Baptist is a 15th century building that sits in the middle of town along the High Street. Inside the church, visitors can view 15th century architectural features, medieval vestments and a 20th century carving of Madonna and Child. A cast iron fence surrounds the churchyard, but during open hours the churchyard is often a busy space. Visitors and locals alike will use the green space on a clear, sunny day. The church maintains strong ties with Wells Cathedral in Wells, the next town over.
Admission is free and visitors often stroll in for a quick peek before heading to other sites in town.

Wearyall Hill is one of the main hills that make up the Glastonbury landscape. According to legend, Joseph of Arimethea visited Glastonbury after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. During his visit, Joseph stood at the top of Wearyall Hill, planted his staff in the ground, and it blossomed into a Glastonbury Thorn tree. Glastonbury Thorns are considered holy trees, and there are several throughout town that are said to be saplings of the original. Glastonbury Thorns, or Holy Thorns, can be found on the grounds of Glastonbury Abbey, the Chalice Well Gardens, the churchyard of St. John the Baptist, and atop Wearyall Hill. The hill itself also affords visitors a unique view of Glastonbury town with the Tor in the distance.

Finally, the White Spring resides on the side of Well House Lane, outside the walls of the Chalice Well Gardens. It is seen as the counterpart to the Red Spring, or Blood Spring, that runs inside the gardens. The White Spring can be accessed through an old pump house built on the site by the Water Board in the late 19th century. The site is now managed by the White Spring Glastonbury Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving the site as a community resource. Admission is free.

The inside of the pump house remains dark, lit only by several candles along the walls and a few rays of sunlight that peek through a gate on one side of the building. The interior is very much a temple-like space, with offerings from visitors placed in various nooks and crannies. It is not uncommon to come across someone softly playing a pan flute in a darkened corner, or to hear someone praying as the sound of trickling water resonates in the background. Visitors can bring containers to collect water to take home from a spout outside the pump house.
Like the quote from Neville at the start of this section on Glastonbury suggested, this small town has quite a lot to offer in the way of heritage sites. Tourism and pilgrimage has been an integral part of the Glastonbury community in the past and will continue to be a critical part in the present and future.

Summary

This introduction chapter has laid the initial foundation for the research presented in this dissertation. The current post-Brexit context has emphasized the importance of studying contemporary national identity in the United Kingdom. Based on the premise that heritage and the nation-state have always been linked and that heritage is a present-centered social process, anthropologists can study the use of heritage and the subtle ways that heritage sites (re)produce particular narratives while silencing others and how this might impact perceptions of national identity. Adding the dynamics of tourism to a community places an additional, interesting pressure on the role of heritage in that community. Tintagel, a small tourist village in Cornwall, relies heavily on tourism for economic sustainability. Its main sites include Tintagel Castle, King Arthur’s Great Hall, St. Nectan’s Glen and the Arthurian Centre. Glastonbury, a slightly larger town in Somerset, also relies heavily on tourism and its main sites include: Glastonbury Tor, Glastonbury Abbey and the Chalice Well Gardens.

To summarize, this project aims to reveal how heritage, ideas of national identity or “imagined communities” and tourism come together in Tintagel and Glastonbury using the following four research questions:

1. What Authorized Heritage Narratives (AHNs) influence the (re)production and consumption of heritage in Tintagel and Glastonbury?
2. What types of “imagined communities” (British, English and/or regional) are reflected in the heritage presented in these two villages?
3. In what ways might heritage in these two villages be contested or controversial?
4. How are the AHNs commodified for consumption through tourism and how might this amplify or diminish this contestation?

These questions reflect the theoretical foundation on which this project is built and which is outlined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Why this rash of backward-looking concern? What makes heritage so crucial in a world beset by poverty and hunger, enmity and strife? We seek comfort in past bequests partly to allay griefs. In recoiling from grievous loss or fending off a fearsome future, people the world over revert to ancestral legacies (Lowenthal 1996, ix).

Human tendency to look to the past is something we can all relate to. The past, in its intangible and tangible forms is passed down through generations. We have ancestors or more recently deceased relatives that we admire. We share photographs, stories, recipes, objects. We look at where we came from to give us guidance for where we’re going. However, heritage, and its invocation in museums and at heritage sites around the world, reflects more than just a celebrated past. The heritage we encounter today plays a significant role the formation and justification of our present-centered identities. Our connection to the past informs our present realities. At the same time though, our contemporary social processes influence how and what heritage we encounter. Be it the ruins of a once grand building now surrounded by green fields, reclaimed by nature, or the remnants of pottery displayed behind plexiglass in a museum gallery, our heritage is as much about the present as it is about the past.

This chapter is a survey of literature on several themes including heritage, national identity, hegemony, ideology, tourism and museums. It cannot and does not attempt to cover the full breadth of anthropological knowledge produced on these issues. I try first and foremost to tease out the most important and influential approaches. Some main points that will be explored include: (1) the ways scholars have defined heritage, (2) the inextricable link between heritage
and the nation-state, (3) an argument for using a political economy approach to understanding the function of heritage in contemporary society, and (4) the role that tourism plays in the contemporary heritage industry. Where a global perspective is applicable, it is given. However, the primary geographical focus here will be on the United Kingdom, specifically England. I begin below with a brief survey of varying definitions of heritage to establish a concise terminology to use as I move through the rest of the discussion.

Defining Heritage

What is heritage? Is heritage tangible? Is it intangible? Is it both? Until the early 2000s, global heritage authorities like UNESCO viewed heritage as strictly tangible, physical things, including objects and monumental architecture. However, as of 2003, UNESCO recognizes an intangible dimension to heritage with the passage of the Convention on the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage. However, institutions like UNESCO still have a static view of heritage. It is something that can, for them, be identified using a checklist and which can be encapsulated and preserved for posterity. This stands in direct contrast to what most scholars are now arguing, which is that heritage is anything but a static “thing.”

The evolution of heritage definitions began in the late 1980s. Robert Hewison defined heritage as, “that which a past generation has preserved and handed on to the present and which a significant group of the population wishes to hand on to the future” (1989, 16). This definition implies a kind of continuity of heritage, that it is something passed on, perhaps in the same, static, preserved state. A few years later Walsh (1992) and Fowler (1992) defined heritage by distinguishing it from history; defining heritage as distinct simply by virtue of its location within
the leisure and tourism industry. Heritage is a commodity, while history is not. This distinction between heritage and history would continue with Lowenthal in 1996.

In *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, David Lowenthal argues that heritage “clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes” (1996, xv). Here we begin to see a shift in defining heritage beyond the past and including the present and “present purposes.” This is, according to Lowenthal, also how to differentiate between heritage and history. For him, heritage serves a different purpose in the present than history. Furthermore, “Heritage is immune to critical reappraisal because it is not erudition but catechism; what counts is not checkable fact but credulous allegiance. Commitment and bonding demand uncritical endorsement and preclude dissenting voice” (121). This is not to say that history itself is immune to criticism, or that history does not also encounter issues of reflexivity in the post-modern world, but rather that history and heritage might be invoked in different ways. This immunity will resurface in a later discussion of heritage and hegemony.

Another similar term to heritage is memory, which is also different from history. According to Pierre Nora “Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition … history is perpetually suspicious of memory … History’s goal and ambition is not to exalt but annihilate what has really taken place” (1989, 8-9). Nora differentiates between history and memory in the same way that Lowenthal differentiates between history and heritage: by motive. For Nora, “memory is life...history, on the other hand, is reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer” (1989, 8). Here one could argue that his use of the word “reconstruction” aligns Nora’s view of history with Lowenthal’s view of heritage - they both focus on motive and opportunism in their distinctions. It becomes clear rather quickly that terms like history, heritage and memory are often used
interchangeably yet their meanings and values are convoluted and complex. For the purposes of this essay, I am focusing primarily on “heritage” but may at times reference memory and history throughout the discussion as they are inextricably linked.

I agree with many contemporary scholars (Ashworth, Geismar, Lowenthal and Smith) who argue that heritage is (re)produced in the present. According to Ashworth (2007), “heritage is present-centered and is created, shaped and managed by, and in response to, the demands of the present” (3). In this way, “heritage can be as much about forgetting as remembering the past” (6). The demands of the present can be cultural, social, political, economic, etc. One example of these contemporary issues is what MacDonald (2014) terms “migrating heritage” - which references the tensions experienced by migrating populations who are moving to new places but still seek to bring their heritage with them. In her recent *Annual Review of Anthropology* article on “heritage regimes,” Geismar (2015) explains: “No longer is heritage understood to be simply material culture; rather, it is perceived as an assemblage of subjects, objects, processes and practices” (73). Smith (2006) would agree with Geismar to say that it is the processes and practices surrounding the tangible objects and things that creates the meaning and therefore creates the actual heritage that we pass on. It is the “present-centeredness” of heritage that gives it value.

For Smith, “‘heritage is therefore ultimately a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings” (11). I strongly agree with Smith’s position, which is illustrated well in this excerpt from her book *The Uses of Heritage*:

While places, sites, objects and localities may exist as identifiable sites of heritage – we may, for instance, be able to point to such things as Stonehenge, the Sydney Opera House, Colonial Williamsburg, the Roman Coliseum, Angkor Watt, Robben Island, and so forth – these places are not *inherently* valuable, nor do they carry a freight of innate meaning. Stonehenge, for instance, is basically a collection of rocks in a field. What makes these things valuable and meaningful – what makes them ‘heritage’, or what
makes the collection of rocks in a field ‘Stonehenge’ – are the present-day cultural processes and activities that are undertaken at and around them, and of which they become a part (Smith 2006, 3).

Indeed, our social practices and processes make the collection of rocks in the English countryside a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most popular tourist attractions in all of Britain. It is these social practices and processes that make the anthropological exploration of heritage particularly intriguing for me. The evolution of heritage definitions from Hewison and Lowenthal to Smith illustrates the current emphasis on heritage as a process rather than a thing. This is echoed by two similar definitions of heritage from Sommer and Ashworth respectively:

Heritage, or in a wide sense the past, is created to justify the present, or, more precisely, one specific interpretation of the present and by implication expectations for the future. The past is created by people, and is created with specific goals (Sommer 2009, 103).

To reiterate, heritage is that part of the past that we select in the present for contemporary purposes, whether these be economic or cultural (including political and social factors) and choose to bequeath to a future, whatever posterity may choose to do with it (Ashworth 2007, 35).

With this approach to heritage in mind, I move now to discuss the historical and contemporary link between heritage and the nation-state.

**Heritage and the Nation-State**

In various publications, Geismar, Lowenthal and Smith all allude to the development of the importance of heritage alongside the development of modernity, characterized by nationalistic interests in capitalist production. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) were among the first scholars make this claim that heritage, a reverence for the past, was an “invention” that evolved alongside the development of the nation-state. As expressed by Geismar:

Hobsbawm’s seminal articulation of the ‘invented’ nature of tradition [was] important in developing a new critical paradigm for heritage studies that understood the grand history of European heritage within the domains of museums, historic preservation, and folklore.
as integral to the constitution of the modern state and its political economy (Geismar 2015, 74).

It was the development of the modern nation-state and the need for a unifying force to ensure social cohesion and identity that led to heritage as we observe it today (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, 263). Nineteenth-century nation building required a hegemonic, ideologically driven heritage narrative to justify its existence and this concept was then exported globally through colonial networks.

Others, like David Harvey, have argued: “heritage has always been with us and has always been produced by people according to their contemporary concerns and experiences” (2001, 320). His argument contradicts the accepted thesis of Hobsbawm and Ranger and those who have built on their assertions.

Every society has had a relationship with its past, even those which have chosen to ignore it, and it is through understanding the meaning and nature of what people tell each other about their past, about what they forget, remember, memorialize and/or fake, that heritage studies can engage with academic debates beyond the confines of present-centered cultural, leisure or tourism studies (Harvey 2001, 321).

Harvey goes on to argue that almost all scholars place the appearance of the heritage “phenomenon” in the second half of the 19th century, however “it certainly cannot be claimed that heritage is only about economic practices of exploitation” (323). For the purposes of this research, I disagree with Harvey’s claim.

Quite simply, my research focuses specifically on national heritage and I therefore cannot ignore the surge of heritage-related (re)production that occurred alongside the development of the European nation-state in the late nineteenth century. This becomes particularly pertinent considering the geographic focus of my research is centered in post-colonial, post-devolution and post-Brexit England. Similarly, I will introduce below a theoretical framework based in a political-economy approach, which most certainly cannot separate heritage from the “economic
practices of exploitation” or the contemporary power and influence of the state. Therefore, while Harvey’s assertions may be applicable in certain explorations of heritage, this is not the case for my own.

The birth of the modern nation-state coincided not so accidentally with the rise in the appreciation of heritage – a calling on the past to justify and unite the contemporary and the future. As Lowenthal discusses in *The Heritage Crusade*, it was in ‘modern times [that] community fealty [became] narrowly bounded” (1996, 60). Harvey (2001) would disagree, saying that “much earlier examples exist of where a particular notion of heritage is used in order to legitimate a ‘national consciousness’ or a communal memory akin to an early nation state” including, for example, Britain’s Bonfire Night tradition.

When it comes to Harvey’s claim, in my opinion, this then becomes a question of degrees. Is the prevalence of Bonfire Night the same as massive, imposing institutions being filled with ethnographic (read colonial) loot from the far reaches of the empire? One cannot discount the surge in heritage-related practices, such as the establishment of some of the world’s most (in)famous museums, coinciding with the rise of the nation-state and the surge of capitalism. Earlier examples do demonstrate that humans used the past in their present existences. However, the degree to which this was done to justify and sustain nation-states was amplified in a way that cannot be ignored. My perspective therefore, aligns with Hobsbawm and Ranger’s thesis.

Benedict Anderson set forth one of the most cited conceptualizations of the nation-state in his book *Imagined Communities*. He proposes the following definition: “it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (1991, 6). Despite any inequalities or exploitations that actually take place, the nation is always “conceived as a
deep, horizontal, comradeship” (7). Anderson traces the development of the nation-state along the evolution of capitalism, which coincided with advancements in communication with the beginning of mechanized printing and the “fatality of human linguistic diversity” (43). Vernacular languages trumped local dialects and a mastery of the common language became a part of being a citizen. If our citizenship deeply informs our own identities, then by extension so does heritage and the past.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) argue in “Beyond Identity” that social scientists, including anthropologists, should be wary of using the term “identity” too simply and too loosely. Conceptualizing all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of ‘identity’ saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary (2).

With this valid critique in mind, I proceed here using the term “national identity” to refer strictly to a person’s conceptualization of their own membership to a particular nation state; in this case, England. Not only did the nation-state and capitalism assume hegemonic roles in the latter half of the nineteenth century, conceptualizations of citizenship and national identity were also changing.

Geismar, Lowenthal and Smith each echo this timeline in their discussion of the development of the importance of heritage. In Lowenthal’s (1996) words, “19th-century nationalism roused mass allegiance to icons of collective identity, including architecture, music, folklore, and language. From emblems of persons and property, flags became symbols of national soil” (63). In Geismar’s (2015) words, “Modern heritage regimes formed through European nation-states were domesticated globally in the nineteenth century through imperial networks” as the colonizers looked to antiquity to create foundations for their nationalist
frameworks (74). And in Smith’s (2006) words, “The origins of the dominant heritage discourse are linked to the development of nineteenth-century nationalism and liberal modernity” (17).

Lowenthal discusses the similarity between heritage and religion in the first few chapters of *The Heritage Crusade*. Religion is generally accepted as a form of ideology, so here I extrapolate that then heritage can also been seen as having ideological tendencies. According to Asad (1979), “sometimes ideology is treated as a social relation, and sometimes as systematic utterance, and that in both its guises it is…being mediated and structured…by authorizing discourses” (620). Smith (2006) also uses this concept with her term “Authorized Heritage Discourse.” If national heritage is present-centered then it is a part of our present reality and present discourses about national identity. Heritage discourse, and discourses in general, can be verbal or take the form of nonverbal communication through objects and symbols.

I would argue that the link between heritage and the nation-state has the characteristics of ideology, structured by specific political and economic circumstances; narratives are produced, authorized and then reproduced. Discussion of ideological authority also brings up concepts like power and hegemony. As Chen (1996) states, “Hegemony is not exercised in the economic and administrative fields alone, but encompasses the critical domains of cultural, moral, ethical and intellectual leadership” (17). Hegemony infiltrates multiple facets of human life including those dealing with heritage. Below I will outline my theoretical approach to studying heritage through political economy using the concept of hegemony.

---

9 The *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology*: “If the analytical value of some terms derives from their descriptive precision and specificity of meaning, other words – such as discourse – owe their utility to multiple layers of meaning and their ability to stimulate ambiguity” (Barnard and Spencer 1996, 162).
Theoretical Approaches to Heritage

This research project is anchored in a political economy approach and uses the concept of hegemony to explore authorized heritage discourses and narratives. In this section I outline and explain the basic tenets of the political economy approach, and briefly trace interpretations of hegemony before moving into a discussion of how it relates specifically to research on heritage.

Political Economy and Heritage

Contemporary political economy approaches ultimately derive from the influential works of Karl Marx. The influence of Marx on anthropology has been far and wide, though often difficult to define concisely. The following excerpt from Roseberry (1997) traces two primary interpretations of Marx’s theoretical approach:

Among the many marxisms that have laid claim to Marx’s work, two grand traditions can be delineated: one that makes Marx’s framework a science of society and history, positing an evolutionary teleology; and another that uses a historical materialist framework to grasp both the innermost secret of social structures in terms of the appropriation of labor and the specific structured constellations of power that confront working people in particular times and places (Roseberry 1993, p. 341; Thompson 1978, pp. 188-90).

The second remains a valuable and creative tradition despite the political defeat of the first tradition. Indeed, that political defeat might be considered a condition of possibility for the further development of the second.

Stripped of evolutionist “grand narratives,” Marx’s work stands in critical relation to much that is now dominant in social theory. It is, first, materialist, in its broad assumption that social being determines social consciousness and its more specific assertion that the forms and relations through which humans produce their livelihoods constitute fundamental, and determining, relations in society.

It is, second, realist, in its confidence that these forms and relations have a material existence and can be described and understood in thought and text. It is, third, structural, in that it envisions these forms and relations as consolidated over time in classes, powers, and institutions. Fourth, among the most important structures Marx analyzed are those of class. Fifth, he saw these institutions exercising a determining influence over human action” (Roseberry 1997, 43). [Emphasis Added]
The focus on the material, structural and institutional factors of social life is a common part of contemporary anthropology, particularly that which has an applied or social justice focus. Today, we see the influence of Marxism manifested in several theoretical approaches including political economy. Some of the basic tenets of a political economy approach include analysis of the structural (political) and the material (economic) influences on social being.

In the sense that this project focuses on the production of heritage as both contested (political) and commodified (economic), this research is built on a political economy approach. However, this does not have a strong social justice bent, which is often found in anthropological political economy. Rather, there are applied dimensions, which will be discussed further in the last chapter.

In “On Keeping and Selling: The Political Economy of Heritage Making in Contemporary Spain,” anthropologist Jaume Franquesa (2013) demonstrates how political economy and the use of the concept of hegemony often go hand in hand whereby hegemony can provide a conceptual framework for exploring the power and influence of political and economic structures in society. Relating this to heritage, Franquesa states:

[H]eritage is not a neutral category open to endless manipulation in a perfect pluralist society but a hegemonic, ideologically loaded notion operating in interlocking social fields fraught with power differentials and inequalities tending to reinforce these power dynamics (Franquesa 2013, 347).

Before exploring further how heritage is hegemonic, I will first briefly outline definitions of the concept of hegemony.
In his 1996 *Critique of Anthropology* article, Donald Kurtz explores the many ways that anthropologists have appropriated and interpreted Gramsci’s work on hegemony. Kurtz’s main critique is that so many anthropologists use other social scientists’ interpretations of Gramsci, rather than referring back to and reading the original writings themselves. As such, Kurtz explains how the concept of hegemony is incredibly complex and there is no single agreed-upon definition of what it is or how it works.

According to Kurtz, there are two main types of interpretations of hegemony. The first views hegemony as “domination” which uses “coercion and force against those who resist its authority and power” (1996, 106). This is one side of the dialectical coin of hegemony, the other side of which represents “moral and intellectual leadership” (1996, 106). This latter form of hegemony uses:

…Intellectual devices to infuse its ideas of morality to gain the support of those who resist or may be neutral, to retain the support of those who consent to its rule, and to establish alliances as widely as possible to enable the creation of an ethical-political relationship with the people (Gramsci 1971, 207) (Kurtz 1996, 107).

Kurtz argues that while hegemony works in a dialectical relationship between these two forms:

Hegemony construed as an organization of agents that provide intellectual and moral leadership is the key to understanding Gramsci’s idea of hegemony and his political project, which is to analyze the role of the political-ideological superstructure in political processes (Kurtz 1996, 107).

This idea of “moral and intellectual leadership” is reflected in Hall (1979), where he explores how structures of hegemony “work by ideology … ideology provides the ‘cement’ in the social formation, ‘preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc’” (333). Hegemony works to create “moral and intellectual leadership” through institutions like the family, the church and cultural institutions, but also through other administrative units like the police and the army. It
can only be maintained through solidified ideology, an authorized discourse, which allows for one particular message or meaning to be voiced ahead and over others. In order for it to be produced and subsequently reproduced, “it [has] to win a kind of credibility, legitimacy or taken-for-grantedness for itself. That involve[s] marginalizing, downgrading or de-legitimating alternative constructions” (Hall 1982, 67). It is this concept of legitimacy and marginalization that can be related to heritage and national identity.

Smith (2006) describes this power and hegemony as “authorized heritage discourses.” Hegemony, however, is never complete, which is why there is room for counterhegemonic movements like those discussed in Franquesa (2013). So, the existence of an authorized discourse assumes the potential existence of an unauthorized or counter discourse. As Smith (2006) argues, “heritage is about negotiation” and Meskell states that, “…all heritage work essentially starts from the premise that the past is contested, conflictual, and multiply constituted” (2012, 1).

Through this idea of heritage, hegemony and its link to the nation state, we can observe both who produces heritage as well as who is not authorized to produce it. Further still, we can extrapolate what is included in heritage and what is left out, as well as what this may imply for the hegemonic powers structuring the political and economic circumstances under which our observations take place.

*Heritage and Discourse*

Smith’s term “authorized heritage discourse” describes both her theoretical and methodological approach, which includes detailed critical discourse analysis (CDA). This project does not include CDA, but her terminology is useful beyond that so I will move forward using
the term “authorized heritage narratives” as a means of discussing heritage and hegemony. These narratives are produced and subsequently consumed under particular social, political and economic circumstances.

In a 1985 article, Hall explores how Althusser’s critiques of vulgar Marxism allow for a materialist approach to understanding social phenomena like ideology, which goes beyond pure economic determinism. For both of Hall and Althusser, ideas may be created in the mind but they appear in the world as social phenomena, through language and discourse, which give them meaning. And social phenomena can be understood as they occur under specific material circumstances. This approach stands in direct contradiction to more idealist perspectives like those of Weber or Foucault. As Hall (1985) argues, “Knowledge, whether ideological or scientific, is the production of a practice…Social relations have to be ‘represented in speech and language’ to acquire meaning” (98). Here again we see the importance of language and discourse in the production, maintenance and reproduction of ideology. Additionally, Hall argues that the function of ideology is to reproduce the social relations of production.

“It is produced in the domain of the superstructures: in institutions like the family and church. It requires cultural institutions such as the media, trade unions, political parties, etc., which are not directly linked with production as such but which have the crucial function of ‘cultivating’ labor of a certain moral and cultural kind – that which the modern capitalist mode of production requires” (1985, 98).

It is a continuous feedback loop between ideology, discourse and the material circumstances creating specific social relations that creates the authorized discourses of the superstructure. Therefore, Hall’s logic follows that the social scientists must analyze language and other social behaviors to understand the “patterns of ideological thinking which are inscribed in them” (1985, 100). This emphasis on social behaviors in understanding ideological thinking makes the research particularly suited for anthropologists.
The relationship between language and social practice is critical here. Discourse is a social action. As was established earlier, it is heritage discourse and the social practice surrounding those discourses that gives heritage meaning. Stonehenge becomes more than a collection of rocks because of the discourse and social practice surrounding it today. So here I continue on with Hall’s perspective on studying ideology through the materialist approach, which aligns with Smith’s proposal when she states: “I anchor my analysis firmly in an understanding that social relations are material and have material consequences, in a way informed by critical discourse analysis” (2006, 13). According to Hall:

Men, then, reproduce themselves as social individuals through the social forms which their material production assumes. No matter how infinitely complex and extended are the social forms which men then successively develop, the relations surrounding the material reproduction of their existence forms the determining instance of all these other structures (1979, 315).

Smith also says that discourse as a social action acknowledges that the way people talk about things like heritage has material consequences. This emphasis on material circumstances dovetails with my political economy approach to this research. A political economy approach takes into consideration the influence and hegemony of the state, as well as the influence of economic and material factors in society. The same hegemonic forces that influence the production of heritage extend to its consumption as well.

**Heritage as a Commodity**

Heritage is produced for consumption, whether or not that consumption requires financial investment. Hewison (1987) wrote a seminal work titled *The Heritage Industry*, which laid the groundwork upon which much of contemporary heritage and tourism studies are based. In the article titled, “Packaging the Past,” Baillie et al (2010) explore both the many ways in which
heritage is produced and packaged for consumption, as well as special situations in which heritage is not allowed to be commodified. For example, places connected with “dark heritage” like the Holocaust, which can be categorized as “traumascapes,” experience commodification differently (58).

Heritage has become part of a market in the sense that tourists both domestic and international have a plethora of options when it comes to types of heritage to consume during their leisure time. According to Baillie (2010) the notion of “commodity” has expanded since Marx’s original interpretation and can now include things like heritage, which becomes part of the “experience economy” (53-54). Further:

[T]he quality and value of the experience provided determines the price that can be charged. People have the means to pay for entertainment and heritage sites compete for visitors, thus trying to offer value to the experiences that they are marketing (Baillie 2010, 55).

What Baille et al (2010) describe as the process of “heritization” is similar to Kirschenblatt-Gimblett’s (2006) “valorization and valuation” unsurprisingly raises questions of authenticity.

**Heritage and Authenticity**

Are visitors to heritage sites looking for authentic heritage experiences? What does authentic mean? In his essay “Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction” Edward Bruner (1994) aims to define “authenticity” because, as he acknowledges, “anthropologists know, the meaning of any expression is not a property inherent in the wording or in the dictionary, but rather is dependent on the perception and practices of those who use the expression” (399). He goes on to present four possible definitions for authenticity using the context of his case study of New Salem in Illinois. These excerpts from the essay describe the four approaches:
Authentic in this sense means credible and convincing, and this is the objective of most museum professionals, to produce a historic site believable to the public, to achieve mimetic credibility. This is the first meaning of authenticity. … [the second] is a complete and immaculate simulation, one that is historically accurate and true. … the first is based on verisimilitude … the second meaning [is] based on genuineness. … There are at least two other meanings of authenticity. In the third sense, it means original, as opposed to copy; but in this sense, no reproduction could be authentic by definition… In the fourth sense, authenticity means duly authorized, certified, or legally valid… it is the authoritative reproduction … one legitimized by the state of Illinois. This is a fascinating meaning because, in this sense, the issue of authenticity merges into the notion of authority. The more fundamental question to ask here is not if an object or site is authentic, but rather who has the authority to authenticate, which is a matter of power (Bruner 1994, 399-400).

To summarize, authenticity can be based on verisimilitude, genuineness, originality and/or authority. In Bruner’s fourth sense of authenticity we see echoes of both hegemony and the concept of authorized heritage discourses. However, Bruner also acknowledges that visitors are rarely aware of this form of authenticity. Rather, tourists are looking for experiences. The tension between entertainment and education is illustrated in the real world example of English Heritage, which has set itself the guiding values of “authenticity” and “quality,” but also “imagination” and “fun.” The latter two values influence tourists’ perceptions of the value of their experiences. This brings us back to the discussion of the commodification of heritage.

Heritage for Sale

As the quote below suggests, we can generally agree that culture, or cultural heritage, is something that is bought and sold – commodified.

Logically, anything that is for sale must have been produced by combining the factors of production (land, labor, or capital). This offers no problem when the subject is razor blades, transistor radios, or hotel accommodations. It is not so clear when buyers are attracted to a place by some feature of local culture (Greenwood 1989, 172).

However, in his study of the commodification of local culture in Fuenterrabia, Guipuzcoa in Spanish Basque Country, Greenwood (1989) initially had difficulty applying the concept of
commodification to cultural heritage in cases where “activities of the host culture are treated as part of the ‘come-on’ without their consent and are invaded by tourists who do not reimburse them for their ‘service’” (1989, 173). Studying this kind of impact of the commodification of culture is a key component of the anthropology of tourism today.

In his article “Tourism and Legends: Archaeology of Heritage” John Robb (1998) explores what he calls “heritage complexes” which include “the commercial exploitation of local heritage themes adjacent to the bound of official protection” (580). In his view, the heritage site that may be demarcated by formal boundaries set by heritage management institutions does not constitute the whole of a consumer’s experience of heritage. Rather, the local businesses within the “complexes exploit heritage resources for profit and help form, reflect and reinforce visitor expectations” (580). In a way then, the commodification acts like an authorizing heritage narrative in how it influences what is bought and sold.

This sentiment is echoed by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2006) when she says that “The moment something is declared heritage, it enters a complex sphere of calculation” in which processes of valorization (e.g heritage listing) are followed by those of valuation (e.g. working out the income from increased tourism) which can in turn lead to further valorization, further valuation and so on (193-195). This dual influence of valorization and valuation is important. The valorization mentioned by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is the aforementioned ideologically informed authorized narrative, while the valuation, informed by the valorization, turns the heritage into a consumable commodity. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s perspective is similar to Greenwood’s, who explains the ways in which commodified heritage is like a commodified natural resource:

The commoditization process does not stop with land, labor and capital but ultimately includes the history, ethnic identity and culture of the peoples of the world. Tourism
simply packages the cultural realities of a people for sale along with their other resources (Greenwood 1989, 180).

The commodification of heritage is not necessarily done with malicious intent. The idea that tourism and selling heritage is profitable has permeated most parts of the globe and the prospect of capitalizing on a community’s resources is often hard to dismiss. However, the results are not always in the best interest of the community at large.

Commodification and Cultural Loss

In discussing his case study, Greenwood reveals that the commoditization of one of the public rituals done at his field site led to “the collapse of cultural meanings” (1989, 178). Upon returning two years after his observations, he found out that the community was having trouble holding the ritual, which depended on voluntary participation. “In the space of two years, what was a vital and existing ritual had become an obligation to be avoided” (178). Rather than community members participating voluntarily, Greenwood predicted that, “ultimately, they will have to pay them, just as the gypsies are paid to dance and sing and the symphony orchestra is paid to make music. The ritual has become a performance for money. The meaning is gone” (178). This is just one example in which commodification has led to cultural loss and other negative impacts on a community.

In From Stonehenge to Las Vegas: Archaeology as Popular Culture Holtorf (2005) argues that rather than fight against the tendency to commodify heritage for entertainment purposes, we should embrace it because people are interested in good stories. However, this must be done with an awareness of not “distorting and trivializing history” (Baillie 2010, 56). In some cases the commodification process can lead to disagreement about heritage discourses. As Baillie et al (2010) state, “Agency in the commodification process is no longer unidirectional … this
implies a democratization of the heritzation process in which local non-experts can push for or against the development of commodified past” (61). This pushback echoes the previous discussion of heritage’s hegemonic influence and the existence of counter-discourses.

What Greenwood’s example of cultural loss illustrates though, is one of the critical challenges that anthropologists who study tourism will continue to face: how do we deal with the inherent forces of change that are part and parcel of the tourism industry? As Greenwood puts it:

No simple approach exists. To prohibit cultural change is nonsensical. To ratify all change is immoral. To occupy the turf in between requires that anthropologists link the study of tourism to the broadest theoretical issues in the discipline: culture as representation, cultural diversity, culture’s dynamic properties, the importance of mythic authenticity, the character of intercultural interactions, and the links between political economy and systems of meaning (1989, 185). [Emphasis added.]

These prescriptions are met in the aims of the research laid out in this dissertation. So, to sum up, tourists buy into the stories that heritage sites tell both literally, through the purchase of admission tickets and souvenirs, and theoretically, through consuming and legitimizing the presented interpretations. Baillie et al (2010) argue:

We should move beyond the reification of heritage as priceless and the myth that the commodification of heritage can only be seen as a necessary evil. Now we can start to investigate the empowering, as well as disadvantaging force that the commodification process can have for both heritage producers and consumers (69).

I concur. The anthropological study of tourism, however, is a fairly recent endeavor.

**Anthropology of Tourism**

*Early Works*

Though not as young as heritage studies, the anthropology of tourism is a fairly new area of study. Early works in this area (Mauss, Van Gennep and Turner) tended to apply the anthropological analysis of ritual and pilgrimage to the study of tourism. For those early scholars
it made sense to view tourism similarly to pilgrimage, where a journey is three-fold: traveling to a new place, experiencing a liminal stage as visitor not resident, and then returning home (Bruner 2005). Graburn made similar arguments about journeys away from home followed by a return. Recently, however, anthropologists have struggled with how to approach tourism.

From an ethnographic perspective the anxiety about tourism is especially acute, given that bad ethnography is labeled as touristic, that travel writing is central to the early history of anthropology, and that tourism performs outmoded ethnography (Bruner 2005, 7).

The appropriated outmoded ethnography referred to here is exactly what Bruner observed during his time studying tourism in Indonesia. There he saw tourism as “chasing anthropology’s discarded discourse, presenting cultures as functionally integrated homogenous entities outside time, space and history” (2005, 4). Thomas (1994) argues that tourism marketers use an “essentialist” vision of foreign cultures and presents them as static entities, much like anthropologists were guilty of in the early days of ethnography.

In Encyclopedia of Tourism, Leite and Swain (2015) present an overview entry on the anthropology of tourism that states:

Today tourism figures into anthropological research on a myriad of topics, including local and global politics, economic development, social inequality, gender, ethnicity, nationalism, construction and performance of identity, cross-cultural communication, discourse, representation, diaspora and globalization (1).

And while tourism figures into a plethora of other anthropological research, the anthropology of tourism itself is now a field of study in its own right. Based on the literature I have surveyed, I would break the research done in the area of anthropology of tourism into three main categories: tourism and development, tourism and experience and tourism and commodification. All these categories are inherently interwoven but I present them below as separate.
Tourism and Development

In 1977, as part of the seminal volume *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Greenwood wrote:

Tourism is now more than a traveler’s game. A few years ago, we could lament the lack of serious research on tourism, but now, like the tourists themselves, social researchers are flocking to tourist centers. This is necessary since tourism is the largest scale movement of goods, services and people that humanity has perhaps ever seen (171).

This movement of goods, services and people is one of the reasons why tourism is often viewed as a potential solution to stalled economic development. Much of the early study of tourism took place in developing countries, where tourism was and continues to be viewed as a potential source for economic development. So anthropologists and sociologists began to explore and document the socioeconomic impacts of tourism on specific communities. Unfortunately, many have found that tourism was not a sustainable form of development. Echtner and Prasad (2003) wrote an entire article on the three myths of tourism in developing countries. Even early, Greenwood (1977) wrote:

The literature generally points out that tourism provides a considerable stimulus to the local and national economy, but it also results in an increasingly unequal distribution of wealth. Tourism thus seems to exacerbate existing cleavages within the community (171).

However, since the tourism industry is so diverse, it is necessary for social scientists researching its impacts to not view it as a monolithic industry. There are many models for using tourism for economic development, but a particular form of tourism is a reflection of that place’s political and economic contexts. In addition to studying how tourism can impact the economy of a community, anthropologists have studied the way that tourists actually experience their visits.
Tourism and Experience

In addition to the focus on tourism as development, much of what else has been written about tourism relates to tourist experiences, issues of authenticity and imaginaries. One of the most seminal works in this area is John Urry’s *The Tourist Gaze*. In it, Urry explains how tourists travel to consume experiences that are different from what they can encounter or experience at home. We can see this same escapist trope used in various travel and tourist advertisements today. Tour companies and travel agencies claim to offer authentic experiences. As relates to tourism and experience, early anthropological work by Graburn (1977) argued that tourism was a kind of secular ritual. Cohen (1988) critiques some basic assumptions regarding authenticity and the tourist experience and advocates for a more nuanced research of tourism and tourism policy. Bruner (2005) does not engage in discussions of authenticity, arguing instead that “authenticity is a red herring, to be examined only when the tourists, the locals, or the producers themselves use the term” and that anthropologists should “move beyond such limiting binaries as authentic-inauthentic, true-false, real-show, back-front” (4-5). I agree, and will not engage with authenticity in this research project. Rather, this research looks to understand how tourism influences the hegemony of particular authorized heritage narratives.

Salazar and Graburn (2014) argue that, “a critical analysis of tourism imaginaries offers a powerful deconstruction device of ideological, political and sociocultural stereotypes and clichés” (2). Further, “anthropologists are in a special position to both understand and criticize sociocultural imaginaries” (5). This echoes Bruner (2005), who says we should, “examine tourist productions with their larger historical, economic and political contexts and study the very particularistic local setting within which they are displayed. It is how ethnographers study culture” (5). This again reinforces the applicability of an anthropological approach to the study
of tourism, and supports the usefulness in applying a political economy explanatory framework to that research.

It is difficult to study the tourist experience without also taking into account both how the tourist consumes commodities during their experience and how their experience itself is a commodity. As previously established:

Experience may be the ultimate tourist commodity, but in itself experience is inchoate without an ordering narrative, for it is the story, the telling, that makes sense of it all, and the story is how people interpret their journey and their lives (Bruner 2005, 20).

[Emphasis added]

This emphasis on storytelling and narration leads me to one of the other major foci within heritage studies. In addition to studying heritage through the lens of tourism and commodification, significant literature exists on the study of heritage as a bundle of stories and narratives – narratives that can be challenged or contested.

**Heritage as Contested Narrative**

To vilify heritage as biased is thus futile: bias is the main point of heritage. Prejudiced pride in the past is not a sorry consequence of heritage; it is its essential purpose (Lowenthal 1998, 122).

In 1995, Michel Trouillot challenged historians and other academics involved in studying the past to consider how any historical narrative is “a particular bundle of silences” (27). The cliché that history is written by the winners is certainly true, but Trouillot revealed the extent to which and how silences are produced in the historical canon. According to Trouillot (1995), silences enter the process of historical production at four points:

… the moment of fact creation (the making of sources); the moment of fact assembly (the making of archives); the moment of fact retrieval (the making of narratives); and the moment of retrospective significance (the making of history in the final instance) (26).

Even though Trouillot explicitly discusses history, I believe his ideas can be used in the discussion of heritage as well. Smith (2006) talks about the, “power relations underlying the
“discourse” which identify “those who have the ability or authority to ‘speak’ about or for heritage… and those who do not” (12). This echoes the earlier quoted sentiments of Hall (1982) who argued that the production of hegemonic ideological narratives inevitably requires and involves the “marginalizing, downgrading or de-legitimating alternative constructions” (67). Trouillot’s interpretation of this explores how the power and hegemony of particular historical narratives work to overtake and silence others.

The tricky bit about exploring and explaining the production and reproduction of heritage is that it happens at several stages and on several levels. Each stage has different power dynamics and therefore different hegemonic authority over the narrative. Power enters the story several times and in different ways, contributing to both the creation and interpretation of heritage. For example in her review article, Geismar (2015) focuses on “the intersection of anthropology and heritage regimes” whereby “heritage regimes” refer to the “key role that the nation-state plays in mediating and producing heritage” (72). Here silences are occurring at the moment of fact creation as well as the moment of fact assembly. The heritage regimes that Geismar discusses are the contemporary equivalent of Trouillot’s historical narratives, which are “premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power” (1995, 55). Trouillot argues that a truly scientific history is not possible because power starts at the source.

Thus the presences and absences embodied in sources (artifacts and bodies that turn an event into fact) or archives (facts collected, thematized, and processed as documents and monuments) are neither neutral nor natural. They are created. (1995, 48) [Emphasis added.]

I emphasize “created” because this speaks to the (re)produced nature of heritage and it also reflects how heritage can be biased. This lack of neutrality gives heritage the potential to be contested. However, it is important to point out that contestation takes place in varying degrees.
A nuanced view of contestation is at the center of one of Edward Bruner’s well-known research projects. In *Culture on Tour*, he presents a discussion of why tourists visit New Salem, marketed as the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln. He explains that many visitors have motivations for visiting which have nothing to do with American history.

New Salem is a contested site in what might be called a soft contestation between a narrative about Abraham Lincoln’s place in American political history and a narrative about folk culture in nineteenth-century America. Or to put it another way, the Abraham Lincoln story is one told at New Salem by the state, which is the official producer, and by academic historians, while the folk culture story derives from American popular culture. The two narratives struggle for dominance as the tourists resist or undermine the official interpretation of the production (Bruner 2005, 11). [Emphasis added.]

The struggle between narratives is the contestation, but the degree of the struggle can vary. The distinction between soft and hard contestation is important. While a site like New Salem encounters soft contestation, a place like Masada, Israel encounters hard contestation, due to the real physical and emotional struggle that accompanies the ideological and intellectual struggle. If we look at the contestation at heritage sites on a spectrum, New Salem and Masada would be on opposite ends; soft and hard respectively. While the “state” may be involved as authorizing producers on either end of the spectrum, the “state” and its hegemony may appear most obvious where there is hard contestation. This makes the anthropological exploration of hegemonic heritage narratives and soft contestation even more intriguing. Therefore, even if the hegemony is not blatant, and it is obfuscated by other factors, it is still influencing the narratives. In Bruner’s words, “[N]arratives are not only structures of meaning but structures of power” (1986, 144). Both structures of meaning and structures of power can be studied anthropologically through a political economy approach.

I move now to conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the role of museums in heritage work. Even though this research project does not look specifically as museums, the
heritage sites included here are presented to the public using museological, interpretive methods. Therefore, it is useful to understand the basic history of museums and their role in creating particular authorized heritage narratives.

**Museums and Heritage**

*European nation-making also involved bringing things from overseas and putting them on display in the new national museums. While the core of national heritage was home-grown, home-found, or home-made, stuff from elsewhere could become part of the national patrimony. From the cup of tea to the Christmas tree, for example, products from overseas could become part of what was and is considered ‘British’ and part of national tradition.*

(MacDonald 2014, 53)

To reiterate, it is no coincidence that the rise of the heritage institution and use of the past through heritage happened alongside the rise of capitalism and nationalism. Nations needed physical institutions in which to display their newly formed national ideologies. “Some of the world’s greatest museums, and what have been some of its most powerful nations, were born, more or less, under the same sign” (Levitt 2015, 6). In addition to the institutionalization of museums as collectors of national identity, many nations began conservation and management of historic buildings and other non-portable antiquities (Smith 2006, 18). In the late 1800s, Britain saw the introduction of institutions like the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty, today known simply at the National Trust, which specialized in the care of landscapes and property. It should be noted that English Heritage was not formed until 1983 through the National Heritage Act.

Alongside the development of the nation-state, “musealization” can also be attributed as a response to modernity and the rise of technology. “[It] can be seen as a form of temporal anchoring in the face of loss of tradition and unsettlement brought about by the increased tempo of technological and related change” (MacDonald 2013, 138). Whether the motive was the
justification of colonial agendas or a reaction to rapid industrial and technological change, museums and the nation were inextricably linked. But the world is now a very different place. The roles and purposes that museums once had have eroded as national identities become more difficult to conceptualize.

In their qualitative study of six U.S. national museums, Drengwitz et. al. (2014) found that “today’s national museums are deeply contested spaces that reflect – some to a smaller, some to a larger extent – the diverging interest and expectations of different social and political groups” (97). They posed the question, “All unite under one flag, but are all united in U.S. national museums” (97)? These are precisely the types of questions that many working national museums, or at national heritage sites, are currently facing. “A crucial question for museums today concerns their role in the world in which nation-statist identities are being challenged. Are they too inextricably entangled in ‘old’ forms of identity to be able to express ‘new’ ones?” (MacDonald 2012, 273). This potential for the expression of new identities is an area of research that will become critical for museums in the future and is related to the impetus for this research project. That said, it is also important to understand some of the ways that museums have been dealing with crises of identity and representation in the last few decades. Therefore the next section explores the postmodern shift in museums and how this relates to heritage narratives more broadly.

*The Postmodern Museum*

As with the creation of historical and heritage narratives, the curation of museum displays is filled with silences, created by explicit choices that align with an authorized present-day narrative. The objects chosen for display in early museums sent clear messages about what
represented the nation and what did not – as well as who represented the nation and who did not. Any colonial aspirations of a particular nation were also justified by displaying the objects of other cultures that had been conquered, demonstrating the nation’s ability to wield control beyond its own borders, creating the racial and ethnic hierarchies necessary to sell a colonial agenda. When discussing the recent postmodern shift in museum and heritage work, the British are perhaps easy targets due to their colonial and imperial past. I want to note however, before I proceed, that the United States is by no means less guilty of these same museological injustices.

Drengwitz et. al. (2014) emphasize this in their article that explores the narratives presented in several Smithsonian museums, including National Air and Space Museum, National Museum of American History, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden and the National Museum of the American Indian. They found that most national museums, “surrender to the powerful concept of a homogenous national identity” and that even the National Museum of the American Indian, which presents information on only 24 of 2000 communities and Native Nations, has fallen victim to this, presenting a narrative that “denies the plurality and fragmentation of de-facto reality” (103). They conclude that: “many national museums are pretty focused on portraying a national and unified narrative” and that most of today’s national museums “are invested in nation-making” (104).

Returning to the United Kingdom, the British Museum as an institution continues to be a shrine of the nation’s colonial past. Institutions like the British Museum are considered by some to be “universal museums,” where the world is quite literally on display. The argument follows that universal museums make world heritage more accessible to more people than if visitors had to travel to each individual country represented in the exhibitions and galleries. However, the
injustice stems from just how so much of the world’s heritage ended up on display in a single museum on a small island in the north Atlantic.

In 2002, the International Council of Museums issued the Declaration on the Importance and Value of Universal Museums, directly addressing issues of postcolonial repatriation. With respect to objects like the Parthenon Marbles housed in the British Museum, the declaration states, “…over time, objects …have become part of the museums that have cared for them, and by extension part of the heritage of the nations which house them” (ICOM 2004, 4). This is nothing more than a continued neocolonial power play by which the authorizing narrative now tries to absorb these items into the contemporary heritage of the United Kingdom. In my opinion, the hegemonic power of these institutions continues despite some arguments otherwise.

By the end of the 20th century, many museums were embroiled in the flux of change as a “new museology” began taking hold of the field. Whole volumes have been written theorizing and problematizing the museum space and curatorial choices in the postmodern world (see Karp and Lavine 1992, Karp 2008). This new museological paradigm called into question the social and political role of museums and challenged the collection-centered museum model (McCall and Gray 2014, 20). Language and education were gaining traction over the importance of objects.

Weil (2002) describes this shift in his article “Making Museums Matter.” The pendulum of curatorial authority was swinging away from the curators and academics and in the direction of community members and public service. Museum professionals began recognizing the importance of involving indigenous groups in the curation of their own material histories. However, even this approach is still in its infancy. Implementing this new museum theory in practice has proven difficult (McCall and Gray 2014). Some success stories that are often cited
include The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, New Zealand, where curators worked with Maori community members and where colonial and indigenous histories are presented side by side. Another example is of several northwest coast museums near Vancouver, Canada, which have integrated First Nation voices in their exhibitions (Clifford 1992). But is this enough? Does this “new museology” approach do enough to counter the hegemonic power of other authorized heritage narratives?

The difficulty in changing the narrative is, in my opinion, exacerbated by what Drengwitz et al (2014) refer to as restricting factors within a museum’s “field of power,” which in their American case study included things like: financial limitations, dependence on stakeholders, and “the benevolence of Congress” (100). In my opinion, these types of restricting factors are equally influential in the United Kingdom. However, in addition to those factors, I would add that the renewed rise of nationalism, observed in moments like the vote for Brexit, also play an influential role in the ability to change narratives. Nationalism, and a renewed fervor for campaigns against increasing migration and immigration throughout Europe, cannot be ignored in this formula.

You just have to walk down the street of any immigrant neighborhood – Washington Heights in New York City, Kreuzberg in Berlin, of the Bijlmer in Amsterdam – to realize that big changes are under way… as a matter of fact, more people than ever are on the move…at the same time, we live in a world of heightened diversity. Because people from a wider range of countries – with different legal statuses and levels of access to benefits – travel to a greater variety of places, new patterns of inequality and discrimination are emerging… in 2005, for example, people from more than 179 countries lived in London. How they answer the question “Who are you?” gets complicated. (Levitt 2015, 4)

Indeed, “who are you?” is the question that nation-states continue to try to influence through authorized narratives and which makes the study of heritage and museum narratives inherently anthropological.
As established earlier, it is in the nation-state’s best interest to foster that unquestioned “horizontal comradeship” that veils discrimination and exploitation. In an increasingly mobile global society, ideas of heritage and nationalism are becoming critically important as many nations struggle with their identities.

To a considerable extent this upsurge of public nationalism reflects the crisis of a social system which, while its development is leading directly to the destruction of traditions and customs (many of them locally based), at the same time demands an ever deepening course of cultural meaning to legitimate itself. (Wright 2009, 127-128)

The national museums and heritage sites that have for so long represented their ideal selves, no longer reflect what is truly happening outside their institutional boundaries. Levitt (2015) asks, “So, in today’s global world, what kinds of citizens are museums creating?” Or even more critically, “Are museums perhaps too intimately linked up with material- and place-root, homogenous and bounded, conceptions of identity to be able to address some of the emerging identity dilemmas of the ‘second modern age’ or ‘late modernity’?” (MacDonald 2012, 273).

The nation-state is not conceived as simply administrative or coercive, but “educative and informative” (Chen 1996, 18). The question then is, what messages, what narratives, form the foundation of that education? In the eyes of the nation-state, the lesson plan must include some way to overcome “the seemingly ceaseless flows of postcolonial migrants whose ongoing transnational ties to homelands and nationalizing projects abroad call into question local national integration and unity” (Silverstein 2005, 364). Will museums continue fulfilling this role? Or is the museum as an institution simply ill-equipped to continue its initial mission under contemporary circumstances? And if it is, what direction will museums take? Does this forecast a coming severance between museums and the nation-state?

The “new museology” aligns with critiques that scholars have leveled against traditional museums, which “tell nationalizing stories that simply do not reflect the cultural or social
experience of subaltern groups” (Smith 2006, 36). The postmodern turn and the reflexivity it brought with it has significantly influenced how scholars view the purpose and function of museums. It is at this intersection between nationalist aims and the mobile global reality that I situate my current and future research.

**Summary**

By synthesizing the literature reviewed here, I move forward with this working definition of heritage: Heritage is a present-centered use of the past that is manipulated and negotiated by and for current political and economic circumstances. Due to the present-centeredness of heritage and its observability manifest in social practices and processes, it is an ideal subject for anthropologists to study. Particularly, heritage lends itself well to applied anthropological research, which ultimately aims to create knowledge for the sake of solving real-world problems and injustices, of which there are many in the area of heritage. The current tension between those in favor of multiculturalism and those against it in Britain is one such problem that can be addressed. The decolonizing of the museum and heritage narratives is another. Heritage, by default of its influence on nationalism and national identity, plays a critical role in ideas of Englishness at the national, regional and local level. As Ashworth states, “[Heritage] is open to constant revision and change and is also both a source and a repercussion of social conflict” (2007, 3). Therefore, I also believe that applied anthropological research in the area of heritage can ultimately turn up the volume on silenced narratives in contested spaces.

This chapter has presented the relevant literature to contextualize three main areas of academic study that are relevant to this research: heritage, national identity and tourism.
Chapter Three will outline the methodology used to operationalize the research questions of this project.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

I was an attentive listener, always available to hear their reactions to and understandings of the sites presented to them on the tour itinerary. I told the tourists I was an anthropologist specializing in Indonesia and that I had an interest in tourism, but I did not stress that I was studying them. There was a delicious ambiguity to my dual role: I was an anthropologist but also, in effect, one of the tourists; my professional self but also one of them (Bruner 2005, 1).

Research Objectives and Questions

Broadly, this research aims to problematize national heritage in England and to reveal the ways in which authorized heritage narratives are (re)produced and consumed. By exploring how the heritage sector promotes and perpetuates particular national narratives through tourism, policy change suggestions could be made to make national heritage more inclusive and representative of Britain’s diverse reality. In a post-Brexit Britain, the rising backlash against multiculturalism can and should be fought. While heritage can and has been used to (re)produce nationalistic views, it could also be used to combat xenophobia and promote understanding through diversity (Ashworth 2007; Levitt 2015; Pendlebury 2004).

Specifically, the objective of this research is to understand the production of national heritage in England through the comparison of Glastonbury in Somerset and Tintagel in Cornwall. Understanding the way that these narratives function under the political and economic pressures of tourism could shed more light on the possibility of infusing future narratives with more emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity. The research questions, as introduced in Chapter One, are:
• What hegemonic forces include the (re)production and consumption of Authorized Heritage Narratives (AHNs) in Tintagel and Glastonbury?
• What types of identity (British, English and/or regional) are reflected in the heritage presented in these two villages?
• In what ways might heritage in these two villages be contested or controversial?
• How are the AHNs commodified for consumption through tourism and how might this amplify or diminish this contestation?

Research done in the realm of tourism or visitor studies has only recently started to incorporate the depth and holism that qualitative ethnographic fieldwork can offer. To this end, I wanted this interdisciplinary project to contribute to that growing literature. Rather than conduct a purely survey, quantitative-data-orientated project researching tourists and visitors, I opted to use some more classic anthropological methods including participant observation and interviews to research the “producers” of heritage tourism in both Tintagel and Glastonbury.

Research Design

MacDonald argues that “to hear quieter voices, research needs to take place within everyday practice rather than only through more actively interventionist, and inevitably more predetermined, techniques such as interviews” (2013, 64). By giving equal focus to “quiet voices” the researcher can avoid generalizations that may otherwise be made due to more “dominant” voices being overly valued. For this reason, this mixed-method research project relief on a combination of participant observation and interviews, reinforced by archival research and ethnographic photography. Not only is this a multi-sited study (Hannerz 2003), it is also multi-temporal and multi-scalar. In both Tintagel and Glastonbury, I collected data at multiple heritage sites of varying sizes and management styles. Archival research was also done to contextualize the present-day observations with historical observations.
**Sampling and Recruitment**

Sampling is an important feature of any anthropological research. Sampling methodology has significant implications on the validity of the data and any conclusions drawn from those data. This study uses nonprobability sampling, specifically a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. According to Bernard (2011), social scientists in pursuit of cultural data, rather than individual attribute data, should use nonprobability sampling which requires the researcher to find key expert informants. Rather than collecting data from a “sufficiently large, randomly selected, unbiased sample,” nonprobability sampling is “called for” when conducting in-depth studies of a few cases (143). Studies of narratives often have small sample sizes, due to the intensive nature of the research. Similarly, if the nature of the research topic is sensitive, recruitment may take quite a long time based on the building of relationships and trust. While the topic of my research is not sensitive, the research questions are not simple. Therefore, like Bernard (2011) says, “Really in-depth research required informed informants, not just responsive respondents – that is, people whom you choose on purpose, not randomly” (143).

This same sentiment is echoed by LeCompte and Schensul (2010) who refer to “reputational case selection” where researchers decide what kind of individuals they would like to study and then get help from community members to identify individuals who fit that criteria (285). They also discuss “criterion-based selection” which include intensive case finding and comparable case selection approaches (287). With both Bernard (2011) and LeCompte and Schensul (2010) in mind, I sought out specific types of informants in both Tintagel and Glastonbury.

My final sample size included 25 semi-structured interviews with people who were in some way involved in heritage, tourism or both. This included people fitting into one of the
following categories: heritage professionals, vocal local community members and business owners. Heritage professionals ranged from site managers and learning managers, to costumed and non-costumed site guides. What I call vocal local community members included people who had been residents of either town for a minimum of three years, were recognized as active community members by their peers and whose opinions were easily solicited. The final category of business owners included individuals whose businesses and livelihoods were dependent on the tourism taking place in the town. Table 1 includes a breakdown of the participant distribution across those categories.

Table 1: Categories of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Professional</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal Local Community Member</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the sample size was smaller than I had hoped for. Unfortunately, the reality of visiting these sites during peak tourist season meant that many individuals were too busy to participate. This was somewhat of a Catch-22 because had I conducted the fieldwork in the off-season, I would not have been able to observe as many tourists at the sites themselves. Overall, I am content with the quality and content of the interviews I was able to complete, which will become evidence in the results presented in chapters four and five.

Data Collection

The data collection for this dissertation took place between March and July 2017, during which time I made two separate trips to England: once for the fieldwork in Glastonbury (March -
April) and the second time for the fieldwork in Tintagel (June - July). My status as a Visiting Research Student at the University of Exeter led me to also spend three weeks in Exeter in between my time at each field site. Below I will detail how data were collected in each of the following categories: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, ethnographic photography, collection of interpretive/promotional materials and the survey of archival materials.

**Participant Observation**

Participant observation is perhaps the most classic of ethnographic fieldwork methods. Consisting of mostly being present and participating in the everyday lives of the people you are trying to understand, the aim of participant observation is to move away from an etic (outsider) perspective, toward an emic (insider) perspective. By experiencing some of the same everyday activities as those we are interested in, we can gain a more in-depth, empathetic understanding of how a community works. The actual act of being a participant observer is, however, only half of the work. The other half is documenting the experiences and observations in thorough and detailed field notes. My participant observation was conducted nearly every day of the three weeks in Tintagel and the four weeks spent in Glastonbury.

A typical day in Tintagel involved a short drive from my lodgings in Trewarrett, a small hamlet, to one of the many car parks available in Tintagel. After spending the first few days paying for parking, I discovered a free car park along the coastal path. It required more walking on my behalf, but it saved me a lot of money.

---

10 The United Kingdom as a whole includes an extensive network of public walking trails or footpaths. They can cross both public and private land. There is a nearly continuous coastal path...
From the coastal path car park I would take one of two routes, but both would complete the circuit shown in Figure 16. Depending on the weather and time of day, I either started with Tintagel Castle or I started with Fore Street. On an average day, I spent about an hour in town and then two hours on site at Tintagel Castle. Other days were spent outside Tintagel proper, visiting St. Nectan’s Glen or the Arthurian Centre.

![Figure 16: Daily circuit for participant observation in Tintagel](image)

My frequent visits to the castle grounds were made possible by purchase of an English Heritage annual membership for £45. After several visits, I began to recognize particular English Heritage employees and they recognized me. Whenever possible I would have short conversations with them. I also spent quite a lot of time observing visitors to the site. I wanted to know how visitors used this multi-leveled, 18-acre site; what paths were most popular, where did visitors make stops, what interpretive panels did they read? Through repeated visits on different days of the week, at different times of day and under varying weather circumstances, I began to gain an understanding of how visitors interact with the site. In town, my observations were

along the edge of the southwestern peninsula that includes the counties of Cornwall and Devon. The coastal walks and other walks throughout the U.K. are a major part of the tourist experience.
similar. Where were people parking? Asking for information? Eating? Shopping? All of these factors were relevant in painting a cohesive picture of heritage tourism in Tintagel.

A typical day of participant observation in Glastonbury was a bit different. While I had a rental car the first week to get my bearings, my budget and lodging arrangement required me to take two buses to get to Glastonbury for the remainder of my time there. This meant that while my journey into Tintagel was roughly ten minutes, my journey into Glastonbury was just over an hour, depending on how the bus schedules lined up that day. I was not able to stay in Glastonbury on very many evenings because the buses stopped running around 8pm. However, riding the bus afforded me the opportunity to observe what types of people got off in Glastonbury with me every day.

![Figure 17: Daily circuit for participant observation in Glastonbury](image)

Most days I would disembark the bus at the top of the High Street at the Queen’s Head stop. There are three stops in Glastonbury on the bus route coming from Wells. By getting off at the top, I could make my usual rounds through all the shops on my way to the Market Square near the George and Pilgrim and the entrance to Glastonbury Abbey. On as many days as possible, after finishing up observations at the Abbey, I would grab some food and make the half
hour walk up to the top of Glastonbury Tor. From the center of town, at the Market Square, to the top of the Tor, is a roughly 1.2 mile walk. After finishing observation on the Tor, I would come back down and return to the High Street where I either continued observation, or opted to take the bus back to my lodgings.

As with Tintagel Castle, I purchased an annual membership for admission into the Abbey grounds for £23. This allowed me to come and go several times in a single day if I wanted to, without worrying about extra cost. There is no admission to for the Tor, as it is an open landscape. And I simply paid the $4 admission for the Chalice Well the few times I visited there. I became a regular at the Abbey and several staff knew me by the end. At both the Abbey and the Tor, like at Tintagel Castle, I would explore the site in much the same way a tourist would, observing how people interacted with what it had to offer. When possible, I shadowed guided tours so I could hear both the “official” interpretation of the site as well as the types of questions visitors would ask. In order to gain a thorough understanding of the visitor experience at both places, I visited on different days of the week, at different times of day and under varying weather circumstances. It goes without saying that not a large number of people are keen to trek up a 512-foot hill in a blustery and cold mid-March rain shower.

My observation on the High Street involved entering several shops and observing what visitors were interested in, what they were saying about the products and what they ended up buying. But I was interested in how the entire community, not just the tourists, so I often sat on a bench and observed a set of regular street artists who set up shop outside the gates of St. John the Baptist Church in the middle of the High Street. In addition to this sort of daily participant observation, I sought out opportunities to participate in other local events. My schedule allowed me to sign-up for a ceremonial foot washing at the Chalice Well Gardens.
Semi-structured Interviews

All interviewees voluntarily participated in the research project. They were made aware that their participation could be terminated at any time, without negative consequences. Potential interviewees were identified following the first week of participant observation in which I became acquainted with community members and persons who worked in the heritage and tourism sector. I initiated casual conversations and when someone appeared interested in learning more about my research, I collected contact information. Once I established these relationships I used my USF IRB approved recruitment email to solicit possible participation in the interviews (Appendix A). Some declined, while others accepted. If the individual was interested in participating, we continued to communicate via email to set up a convenient date, time and location for an in-person interview.

The semi-structured interviews varied in length, depending on the participant’s willingness and ability to spend time with me. In some cases, participants were happy to spend an hour and a half talking to me, while others were pressed for time due to other responsibilities and could only spend half an hour with me. Several of these individuals became key informants who went on to introduce me other community members and my network slowly but surely expanded.

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning that although there was an interview guide (Appendix A), participants had the freedom to go on tangents or suggest other topics for discussion that they felt were relevant and I asked follow-up questions when appropriate. Bernard (2011) says that semi-structured interviews are best “in situations where you won’t get more than one change to interview someone” (157). Due in part to the limited amount of time I could spend in the field, as well as the nature of peak tourist season keeping many of my key
informants quite busy, I knew I would not have the opportunity to interview my participants multiple times. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to use my limited time with interviewees as efficiently as possible.

Each interview began with a review of the IRB approved informed consent form (Appendix A). As Bernard (2011) says, it is important to “assure people of anonymity and confidentiality” at the start of an interview. He also suggests letting interviewees know why you think their opinions and/or knowledge on a particular topic are important. So following the review of the IRB form, I would explain why I felt their input was useful for my research. I then followed the interview guide as closely as possible. Following general questions about the interviewees occupation, experience in the heritage sector and educational background, the interview guide included questions on a series of topics:

- Heritage: What is heritage? Why is it important?
- Society: Do you think there is a difference between Britishness and Englishness?
- Tintagel or Glastonbury: What is special about the heritage sites here? How would you describe the role of heritage tourism here?
- Arthurian Legend: What role for the Arthurian legend/myth play in the heritage of this town?
- National Identity: In your opinion, what role does national heritage play in forming a national identity?

As mentioned above, not all participants could afford to spend more than half an hour with me, so some times not all topics were covered. In other instances, when there was enough time, I also asked participants to complete a brief free-listing activity. I would give them a word (like heritage, England, or Glastonbury) and they listed the first ten words that came to mind. I found that more of my Glastonbury participants had time to do this than those in Tintagel. While the results of the free listing were useful in thinking of themes for analysis, the results are not thorough enough to warrant any in-depth analysis in and of themselves.
**Ethnographic Photography**

In addition to collecting detailed fieldnotes through participant observation and conducting semi-structured interviews throughout my time in the field, I also took and collected 100s of photographs. These photographs included documentation of the heritage sites themselves, including their interpretative panels, as well as visitor interaction with the site when possible. Any photos taken of visitors were done in a non-intrusive way, so as not to disturb their visitor experience. I also took care to make sure that visitors were only photographed under circumstances where, ethically, they did not have expectations of privacy. I also took photographs on the Fore Street in Tintagel and High Street in Glastonbury, documenting the shops, what was for sale, and the general atmosphere.

Ethnographic photography is less like tourist photography and more akin to documentary photography (Wilder 2009). The goals are not necessarily aesthetically pleasing, perfectly composed and exposed photographs. Rather, the goal is to use photography as a means of collecting data. Like field notes, a photograph is never a complete or true representation of a cultural observation, but it offers details that can be analyzed later within a broader context. In my case, I took photographs both to document my observations in a way that my fieldnotes could not, but also so that they could later serve to jog my memory during data analysis.

**Collection of Interpretive and Promotional Materials**

An important component of any tourism experience is access to and use of advertisements and interpretative materials. These materials, ranging from flyers and shop signs to site brochures and guidebooks, are equally important in creating and maintaining specific heritage narratives for tourist consumption. This is why I spent time during my participant
observation days collecting these types of materials to further contextualize my fieldnotes and observations. For example, Figure 18 below is a scan of the cover of a free local magazine distributed on the High Street in Glastonbury.

Survey of Archival Materials

Understanding the current ways in which authorized heritage narratives are (re)produced and consumed in a tourist setting would be one-dimensional without also having a historical context for the heritage tourism economy in those settings. As such, I visited both the Royal Cornwall Museum (RCM) and the Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC) to conduct archival research on tourism in both Tintagel and Glastonbury respectively. I made arrangements for my visits ahead of time. At the RCM I was able to email with an archivist and explain what I was looking for. She had pulled several items for me before I arrived. Alternately, at the SHC I had to do my own searching through their online catalogue and email them a list of eight items I was interested in viewing ahead of my visit. In terms of quantity, I was able to examine more samples at the RCM than the SHC, but both places provided useful historical context for my contemporary observations.
Figure 18: Scan of the April issues of The Oracle, a free magazine distributed in Glastonbury, which features advertisements for businesses and events around town.

Data Analysis Methods

Photography Annotation

Upon returning home from the field I sorted through all the photographs I had taken and began to organize them into separate categories. For example, the photographs taken in Tintagel were divided into the following categories: Tintagel Castle Gift Shop and Museum, Tintagel Site and Outdoor Interpretation, Fore Street including King Arthur’s Great Halls, and Other Heritage that included photos from The Arthurian Centre and St. Nectan’s Glen. Similarly, photographs taken in Glastonbury were divided into the following categories: Glastonbury Tor, Glastonbury
Abbey, The Chalice Well Gardens, and The High Street. Once the photos were categorized, I annotated them, describing the content of the photograph as well as what I felt was denoted and connoted by the photograph and why it was important. This annotation was supported by details originally written in my handwritten fieldnotes. Certain themes began to become apparent throughout this annotation process including: contact zones, identity, commodification and authorized narratives. Contact zones were places in which visitors interacted with heritage in some way. Identity referred to ways in which a particular identity was represented by something in the photography. Commodification simply referred to consumable commodities apparent in the photography. And lastly, authorized narratives referred to recurring or “official” narratives that were told through something in the photography.

*Interview Transcription and Grounded Theory*

Ryan and Bernard (2000) discuss two kinds of written texts which result from qualitative research: “(a) words or phrases generated by techniques for systematic elicitation and (b) free-flowing texts, such as narratives, discourse and responses to open-ended interview questions” (769-770). This project deals primarily with the latter in the form of semi-structured interviews and field notes. Upon returning home from the field, I transcribed all interviews. Interviewees were also given pseudonyms to maintain anonymity. Transcriptions were completed for data accuracy and thematic analysis, rather than in-depth discourse analysis. The benefits of using discourse analysis for the study of heritage have been well documented (Waterton, Smith and Campbell 2006). However, this research is taking a broader political economy approach and does not aim to complete a detailed and nuanced analysis of the actual discourse. Rather, it looks at the themes raised in discourse in their broader political and economic contexts.
Once all the interviews were transcribed, the photographs were annotated and relevant interpretive materials were sorted, I reread all the texts and began coding for recurring themes. Some of the themes had already started to become apparent while I was conducting the fieldwork, while others became apparent through the process of transcription and annotation. This form of analysis is based on a Grounded Theory approach. According to Bernard (2011), “human experience is patterned … discovering pattern in human experience requires close, inductive examination of unique cases plus the application of deductive reasoning” (435). Grounded Theory is one way of completing this type of inductive examination and includes three steps: “coding the texts for themes; linking themes into theoretical models; and displaying and validating those models” (435). So once the themes were determined, I began looking for links between them.

Over time I was able to identify a set of four main themes or concepts, which included: heritage contact zones, heritage commodification, authorized heritage narratives and discussion of identities. These four themes then led me to formulate linkages between them and ultimately determined two main categories analysis and discussion: (1) heritage as contested and (2) heritage as commodity. These two categories echo the “valuation” and “valorization” of heritage discussed in Chapter Two.

Overall, my approach to the analysis of my field data is what some may call “old-school.” I transcribed my own interviews and then coded by hand simply using different color schemes to indicate different codes. Similarly, I “memoed” by hand - making notes about the linkages between codes on the hard copies of interview transcriptions and field notes. I then assessed how these memos worked together to create an overarching theoretical perspective to explain the observations I made during my time in England. I believe this approach allows me to
fully comprehend and digest the data I collected in a detailed manner that may not have been possible with the use of computer software.

**Ethical Concerns**

Both Tintagel and Glastonbury are small towns. This comes with pros and cons. The clichéd idea that everyone knows everyone is a fairly accurate depiction of both places, so it is difficult to maintain a participants’ anonymity from anyone who is familiar with the town. While pseudonyms are given, and some potentially identifying information is withheld in the results section, it could still be possible for a reader, who is familiar with either Tintagel or Glastonbury, to make an educated guess about who a particular informant might be. However, the nature of this research is something I would characterize as low-risk. Nothing revealed by any of the participants, if publically known, would be a source of conflict or distress.

Another ethical concern was that I was potentially interrupting my participants’ workflow during peak tourist season. As mentioned above, I was flexible in the amount of time allotted for interviews. However, it is still worth acknowledging that I was entering the field during my participants’ most busy time of year, so I was conscious about using my time and theirs, as efficiently as possible. In general though, this research is particularly low-risk and I did not encounter any serious ethical issues while in the field.

**Researcher Competence and Positionality**

In 2012 I completed an eight-week internship with the Churches Conservation Trust in England, as part of the completion of my M.A. in Museum Studies. During that time, I interned for Dr. Neil Rushton, then Conservation Project Manager for the southwest region, who oversaw
several projects at different historical church sites. I completed various projects, including coordinating an Open Day at the Church of St. John the Baptist in Inglesham. My internship afforded me the opportunity to meet people in various parts of the heritage sector, including archaeologists, wall-paintings conservators, educators and volunteers. I have a particularly fond memory of a day I spent whizzing around the countryside to three separate churches with Dr. Rushton, Mick Aston (of Time Team fame) and Michael Worthington (a dendrochronologist), to take wood samples from church pews and screens for dendrochronological dating. When I returned to the United States I knew I wanted to return to England and eventually do further research there. My MA project-in-lieu of thesis “Reading Between the Layers: Exploring Wall Paintings in our Medieval Parish Churches – An Interpretation Plan for the Churches Conservation Trust” stemmed from my internship experience.

My academic background is a mix of anthropology and museum studies. I completed my BA in Anthropology and MA in Museum Studies at the University of Florida in 2010 and 2012, respectively, and completed the necessary coursework toward a PhD in Applied Anthropology between 2014 and 2016. Courses relevant to this research include research methods, visual anthropology, heritage tourism and public archaeology. In addition to working with the Sulphur Springs Museum and Heritage Center locally, I also conducted an ethnographic project evaluating school programming at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL. My internship experiences combined with my educational background and community work in both anthropology and museum studies prepared me to successfully execute this research project.

In this research project I believe my identity as a white female helped me relate to my participants in my initial interactions with them, in ways that may not have been possible had I been a person of color. In fact, the color of my skin made it quite easy for me to blend in for the
purposes of participant observation. Although there was no immediate language barrier, my American accent did, at times, result in my being stereotyped as a tourist. Given that I was studying heritage and tourism, this was not actually a hindrance. Also, as someone who grew up in Orlando, Florida, the idea of living temporarily in a tourist destination was something I was rather familiar with. I did not find myself feeling uncomfortable in a tourist setting, surrounded by visitors from all around the globe. Having traveled a lot throughout my life, “being” a tourist was second nature. All of these factors led to what I would characterize as an easy entrance into the field. I encountered the usual obstacles of having to create rapport with locals, especially given my time limitation, but I did not face any racism, sexism or xenophobia that some anthropologists face when entering the field in a location that is significantly different from their home.

In this chapter I have presented the rationale behind my research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques, as well as addressed how my positionality and ethical concerns played into how this research project panned out. In the next two chapters, I present the results of this research.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS TINTAGEL

But we soon lose sight of the prosaic in the poetical, for looking to the heights at our left we discern the lofty, ragged, storm-beaten ruins of a castle wall, and gazing forward to the almost island pile before us we see more ruins – indubitable signs of an ancient military stronghold. This is, indeed, the very seat and cradle of romance, for it is Tintagel Castle, the legendary birthplace and home of King Arthur (Pascoe 1878, 12).

In this chapter I will present the results of my research into heritage, identity and tourism in Tintagel. The format of the chapter is as follows: I will begin with an exploration of the ways in which some of my participants in Tintagel define heritage. I will then present the data I collected, from various sources, on the heritage sites in Tintagel. The results will be presented around two main themes: heritage as contested and heritage as commodified. These same two themes will be used in Chapter Five, the results for Glastonbury, and in the discussion section of Chapter Six.

Defining Heritage

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, definitions of heritage can vary, even within several academic fields. This was no different for my research participants who each had a unique perspective on what constituted heritage and what did not. So, before I expound on the ways in which I observed heritage as both contested and commodified in Tintagel, I want to share ways that some participants defined heritage. The three definitions below are from interviews with employees at English Heritage, the organization that manages Tintagel Castle. These three individuals represent both different employment rank, as well as employment length.
I think heritage…in the end heritage is storytelling isn’t it? It’s the stories we’re told and which gives you that sense of identity. And I think that primarily that’s the way I would see it. And heritage, yes to sum up, I would feel that the stories that we believe in, in our own society, are the ones that resonate with us and we then relate to our community through that process. – Oliver, English Heritage employee

Heritage, obviously, it could be your own heritage, it could be like … I’m from Birmingham, so I do a lot of my own sort of family tree and everything, so that’s all my heritage … and so obviously for a lot of people here, Cornwall is their heritage, but for me, working here, heritage is like just looking after heritage in general. Yeah the word heritage can cover a multitude of things really but as I say, to me, it’s just looking after the site, our heritage, and as the old saying… you know, for future generations. - Dorothy, English Heritage employee

I feel that heritage is about cultural memory… there is built heritage, there is intangible heritage, there is, you know, the heritage of myth and legend, the heritage of personal heritage … you know… and what places, historic sites and museums do is enable society to retain that cultural memory.
- Lily, English Heritage employee

Each of these definitions, or musings on “what is heritage,” is quite different from the other. For one person it is about storytelling and identity, while for another it is about preservation, and yet another it is about memory. However, it is worth noting that none of them mention the commodification of heritage, although each of them is involved in this process in some way by working for English Heritage at Tintagel Castle.

Similarly, although each of them discusses different types of heritage, none of them refer to the ways in which those different heritages might be in tension with one another. The results below will demonstrate that heritage in Tintagel is both contested and commodified. I begin first with a description of what I observed on Fore Street, the main road that passes through Tintagel, which is lined with shops, restaurants, cafes, B&Bs and hotels. I will then go on to present the results of my ethnographic inquiry for Tintagel Castle, King Arthur’s Great Halls, St. Nectan’s Glen, and finally the Arthurian Centre.
**Tintagel Fore Street**

If you arrive in Tintagel before 9am on a weekday, you won’t find very many people walking around. This village truly wakes up just before 10am, when shops open and the buses of tourists begin to arrive. Several buses will park at the Tintagel Visitor Centre, which sits at the top of the Fore Street and marks, for many, the edge of the village. The Tintagel Visitor Centre’s architecture stands out as different from everything else in town. It is a circular building, perhaps an homage to an Iron Age round house, covered in dark wood paneling. The restrooms are accessible from outside, so many of the tourists pouring out of the newly parked buses rush straight to the toilets. Few, if any, actually enter the Visitor Centre. They’ve come with their own tour guide who assembles them outside to discuss the day’s itinerary.

**Tintagel Visitor Centre**

Those who do venture inside the Visitor Centre will find a nearly equal mix of souvenir shop and museum space. The left half of the building is dedicated to a dated exhibition that documents the history of Tintagel while the right half of the building features a huge variety of Cornwall and Tintagel-related items for sale. In the exhibit there are old TV screens that are difficult to view due to a slight glare on the plexiglass. Some of the hands-on labels that can be lifted or turned have begun to squeak. The content of the exhibit features several timelines alongside traditional didactic panels divided by subject, though there is no apparent order to follow in viewing the exhibition (see Figure 19).
Figure 19: A timeline featured in the Tintagel Visitor Centre exhibition. In the background, other panels are also visible.

The content of the exhibit is also available for purchase in booklet form for £3.99. Here is an excerpt of the opening text describing Tintagel:

Tintagel: A Place of Inspiration
Tintagel has a unique atmosphere. The famous headland with its mysterious ruins has, for centuries, been cited as the stronghold of the Kings of Cornwall and the legendary birthplace of King Arthur. This link, however tenuous, has played a major part in the popularity and growth of this small Cornish village.

What is notable here is the acknowledgement of the “tenuous” nature of the link with King Arthur, while still admitting how critical this link has been to the sustainability of the village as a tourist destination. The second portion of the introductory page reads:

This book is the perfect companion to discover Tintagel and highlights the several facets of its character. Here you will find the village story, its link to the Arthurian myth and the romance of Tristan and Iseult; its Celtic heritage; its archaeological past; its unique geology and its rich natural diversity.

This small booklet manages to present a contextualized historical account of Tintagel as a whole, including both what is scientifically and archaeologically known, as well as what is believed due to myth and legend. I am reminded here of an article by Baxandall (1991), who argues that
museums and exhibits are perhaps not the best medium through which to present other cultures, simply because books and film may do a better job. In this case, what makes the Visitor Centre’s exhibit tedious to view as a visitor, is its likeness to a book. The content of the exhibit is quite literally lifted, word for word, reformatted and placed in booklet form. As a booklet, it works quite well in presenting multiple perspectives and narratives – a luxury, or perhaps motive, not shared by some of the other interpretive materials that visitors may encounter in Tintagel.

Meanwhile, the souvenir half of the Visitor Centre offers a disjointed assemblage of objects ranging from books related to King Arthur and Poldark\textsuperscript{11} postcards to locally made soaps and Chinese-made fidget spinners (see Figure 20).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{arthur_books.jpg}
\caption{A selection of Arthur-related books for sale inside the Tintagel Visitor Centre.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{11} The \textit{Poldark} television series airs on BBC One in the U.K. and on PBS in the U.S. Based on the historical fiction novels of the same name by Winston Graham, \textit{Poldark} tells the story of Ross Poldark and his family. Ross returns to his home in Cornwall after serving in the Revolutionary War in America. Dramatic events ensue involving his relatives and his rival, George Warleggan. This series is set in and filmed in Cornwall. It is not uncommon to come across pubs or inns named after characters or places from the series. In fact, there is a Poldark Inn just a few miles from Tintagel.
The Visitor Centre is run entirely by local volunteers due to a lack of funding and support from the Cornwall Council which one elderly volunteer called “utter rubbish” insisting that the higher-ups should understand that “Cornwall runs on tourism” and that small villages like Tintagel need a Visitor Centre. In many ways the Visitor Centre’s bipolar identity as both heritage interpreter and souvenir seller illustrates the two main themes that will recur throughout my presentation of results in this and the following chapter. The evolution of Tintagel is a manifestation of this continuing tension between presenting particular authorized heritage narratives and the economic factors that encourage the commodification of heritage.

Figure 21: Map of main sites and street names in Tintagel, Cornwall

A Walk Down Fore Street

Tintagel’s Fore Street essentially begins at the Visitor Centre and ends at the bend where visitors can choose to follow Castle Road left down into the valley to the beach and the castle ruins, or continue right along Fore Street and ultimately dead-end into Atlantic Road which leads only to the Camelot Castle Hotel. Figure 21 above is a map of Tintagel showing Fore Street as
well Castle Road that leads down to Tintagel Castle and Vicarage Hill which leads to St. Materiana’s Church along the SW Coast Path.

A visitor walking down Fore Street toward Tintagel Castle would come across a huge variety of establishments ranging from small cafes, a fish and chips shop and a candy store, to gift shops with names like Cosmic Gifts, Pendragon Gifts and Little Gems. The local pubs have names like King Arthur’s Arms Freehouse and Guinevere’s Restaurant inside The Old Malthouse Inn. Two bed and breakfasts along the Fore Street are named Avalon B&B and Castle View B&B. This naming of establishments along Arthurian themes is not a recent development. In fact, in a 1957 British Railways Holiday Guide to Southwest England there is an advertisement for “Camelot Flats Tintagel” described as “beautifully situated in our grounds, overlooking King Arthur’s Castle and the Coast of Cornwall” (319).

Halfway down the street on the left, just before Tintagel Old Post Office, is Trevena Square, which is a small open public square with several pay-to-use toilets for the tourists. The occasional busker may be seen here. Many of the smaller shops place water bowls outside their doors for the many dogs that accompany their owners on their Tintagel visit. Several local residents with whom I spoke mentioned that Tintagel has recently undergone some updating and tidying to make it more appealing for tourists. Above-ground power lines were removed, Trevena Square was tidied up and general curb appeal was increased. One of my participants, who remembers Tintagel from his childhood, and who now lives and works at Tintagel Castle, said:

When I was young, my father had a shop in Boscastle. He was a wood carver. And my summers when I was at school - I would spend my summers in Boscastle, sort of sitting in his shop trying to sell the stuff that he was making … he didn’t do too much of the

---

12 Boscastle is a small village and fishing port located five miles northeast of Tintagel. It also relies on tourism as part of its economy and is one of many stops along the Cornish coastal path.
shop because he was too busy making stuff … and so, Boscastle and Tintagel kind of had this, it’s not competitive quite, but you either really like Boscastle or you either really like Tintagel. There’s that kind of thing going on. And I’ve always felt that Boscastle is a sunny place, I’ve always felt that Tintagel is a gray, rather overcast place most of the time. My opinion has changed somewhat since I’ve been working here. Has [Tintagel] changed much? It hasn’t changed greatly. Stuff looks a lot tidier and cleaner than when I was a child. And, they did some really quite good townscape work, ten years ago or so, did all that kind of thing and I think that’s really improved it in some ways … and the same families still kind of run the place, and it hasn’t really changed that much I don’t think. – Oliver, English Heritage employee

Another participant echoed similar sentiments about the townscape update:

People always come here and think this is Camelot. I don’t think what they did with the village, which was really nice ‘cause they took all the overhead cables down and smartened it up and everything like that, you know, but so… this is probably where you may need to talk to English Heritage statistics people, because I’m not really … But just from being on the ground here, I never felt it made a difference. It was always just people coming in to see King Arthur’s Castle. Some people like the improvements as always, and some people don’t, you know. – Dorothy, English Heritage

As seen in Figures 22 and 23 below, Tintagel’s Fore Street looks clean and welcoming for visitors.

For a small village, with a Fore Street no longer than 0.3 miles, Tintagel has six car parks available for visitors. This is one of many observations that demonstrate the importance of tourism for the village. The distribution of the car parks relative to the size of the rest of the village is illustrated by Figure 24, a map posted outside the Tintagel Visitor Centre. This map does not include street parking just east of the Camelot Castle Hotel along Atlantic Road, or the free National Trust car park beside St. Materiana’s Church. This remarkable number of car parks is necessitated by the number of visitors coming to town to see the main heritage site: Tintagel Castle.
Figure 22: Tintagel’s Fore Street with Tintagel Old Post Office on the right-hand side with the old stone wall.

Figure 23: A view of Fore Street that includes a local café and souvenir gift shop.
Tintagel Castle

On a surprisingly hot summer day in June, I observed a little boy and his older female relative exiting the site near one of the ticket offices. The older woman seemed amused and remarked to one of the English Heritage employees at the gate, “He’s got a recommendation – a slide, from the top down to here!” The employee laughed. Visitor comments regarding the number of steps were common. In fact, if there is one thing that characterizes a visit to Tintagel Castle, it is a significant amount of physical exertion. From start to finish, a visit to Tintagel Castle involved a lot of walking and a lot of steps. On another occasion I observed a middle-aged couple coming through the exit complimenting the site but joking, “We won’t be doing that again for a couple of years!” And in yet another moment, I observed a German woman say to her husband, “Das ist recht steif, oder?” This roughly translates to: “This is pretty steep, isn’t it?”
Indeed, the stairs between the multiple levels of the site are often steep, but well maintained and equipped with handrails (Figure 25).

![Figure 25: Stairs that lead up to the Gatehouse Courtyard – the portion of the site that sits separate from the rest of the headland.](image)

To see the entirety of this multi-level, 18-acre site, visitors are faced with 100s of steps, but are rewarded with some spectacular views of castle ruins, the cliffs and the ocean. Although there are numerous nooks and crannies, I break down the site into four main levels:

- **Beach level** – visitors can descend stairs down to the beach and at low tide, are able to walk into Merlin’s Cave (Figure 26)
- **Café/Museum level** – this is the level just above the beach and it contains the main facilities and amenities, including the café, museum, shop and membership office. (Figure 27)
- **Castle level** – from the café/museum level, visitors ascend steps up onto the headland and into the ruins of the medieval castle built by Earl Richard. (Figure 28)
- **Top level** – from the castle level, visitors ascend the last set of steps to the top of the headland where the foot prints of the Dark Age settlement are evident. It is windy at this level and sea gulls stalk unsuspecting tourists and scavenge for free food. (Figure 29)
Figure 26: The beach at low tide, with the entrance to Merlin’s Cave visible on the right-hand side of the photograph.

Figure 27: View over the beach from the café/museum level of the site. This is starting point for the majority of tourists who have descended from the Fore Street down into the valley, which opens up onto the beach.
Figure 28: The third level of the site featuring ruins of the medieval castle built by Richard, Earl of Cornwall.

Figure 29: Top level of the headland, where visitors often take photos of the vistas surrounding them.

**Tintagel Castle as Contested**

As discussed in Chapter One, the contemporary name of the village is a result of the popularity of this site; the original name of the village was Trevena. According to statistics found
on the English Heritage website, Tintagel is among the top five English Heritage sites in the country in terms of visitors numbers. One participant who works for English Heritage remarked:

I was always really surprised that we are the second busiest site for English Heritage. Certainly, Stonehenge is in the stratosphere by comparison but the number of people we have here, the number of people prepared to pay seven pounds, to go in and see this… and they are all coming for a variety of reasons … I think you have groups of people coming for different reasons but I think primarily it’s that idea that Arthur might have been here. – Oliver, English Heritage employee

The popularity of the castle is undoubtedly the result of its link with the legendary King Arthur. Below I will demonstrate how that link with King Arthur has resulted in a soft contestation at this heritage site.

The Arthurian tradition at Tintagel started with History of the Kings of Britain by Geoffrey of Monmouth and has persisted to this day. Several historical tourist guides that mention Tintagel make explicit connections to Arthurian legend. For example, as seen in Figure 30, the cover of the 1936 Tintagel: North Cornwall official guide features a kingly figure, presumably Arthur, holding a sword that could be Excalibur. In the image he rises above the silhouette of the headland on which the castle ruins sit. A 9th edition Tintagel Official Souvenir Guide, from the early 20th century, describes the site this way:

Its bleakness and its humanity, its openness and its ancient secrecy. The castle ruins which tradition has associated with King Arthur and his Knights awaken the enthusiasm of sightseers from the world over; but what binds them to Tintagel is the spirit of Cornwall which the place expresses (4).
Figure 30: Cover of a 1936 tourist guide for North Cornwall. Image courtesy of the Royal Cornwall Museum Courtney Library.

While some guides are quick to acknowledge the link with Arthur, others take care to emphasize that there is a contested nature to the history of Tintagel. For example, a 7th edition of *The Little Guides: Cornwall* from 1930 says:

> In speaking of Arthur it needs the greatest caution to separate the true, or rather the probable, from the false or improbable. There is absolutely no certainty, except a very certain voice of persistent tradition (237).

This last line illustrates how soft contestation can take place at a site where knowable truth encounters deeply held, “persistent” beliefs and traditions. Another example comes from a 1960 anthology compiled by Hilda and S. Canynge Caple titled *Tintagel: In Fact and Fiction*, which attempts to characterize what I have identified as soft contestation in this way on the first page of the booklet:

> Tin-tagel! To thousands of English people these syllables go clothed in grandeur because there are two Tintagels: one is in Cornwall, the other in cloudland. One on the map; the
other spun out of verse and music: and this is the real Tintagel, no dead rock in a grey sea, but a country of dream more real than reality, where there are still music, the breaking of lances and the pain of love (1).

These are all historical examples of how the site was (re)produced in the past. So, how is it viewed and perceived today? Has anything changed? What is the Authorized Heritage Narrative that is (re)produced at the site today? Do the “two Tintagels” mentioned above still compete with each other and what role does English Heritage, as a powerful managing entity, play in the contestation between the two?

Visitors purchasing admission tickets from any of the four English Heritage ticket offices for Tintagel Castle will receive a site map stapled to their receipt. Three of the four ticket offices are at direct entrances to the site itself, while the fourth is at the top of Castle Road and Fore Street before visitors walk down into the valley. The visitor guide they receive is minimal but informative (see Figures 31 and 32). First and foremost the Visitor Guide serves as a way-finding tool, but it is also the first taste visitors get of the tone and style of the site’s interpretation. The introductory text reads:

History and legend are entwined on this rocky headland, which has long been connected with the story of King Arthur. Occupied since at least the late Roman period, Tintagel became a thriving Dark Age settlement and port. In the 12th century, Geoffrey of Monmouth named it as the place where the legendary Arthur was conceived. It was almost certainly this link to the legendary hero that inspired Richard, Earl of Cornwall, to build his castle here during the 1230s. Today a visit to the site will lead you across a spectacular landscape, through centuries of history and into Tintagel’s legendary tales.

This short introduction immediately places the onus of responsibility for the Arthurian connection squarely on the shoulders of Monmouth. The introduction also put Arthur front and center despite the fact that all the other interpretation at the site shies away from the connection and focuses on archaeological knowledge. This is one of the ways that the tension between the “two Tintagels” manifests itself on site.
In terms of other interpretive material, visitors can purchase an in-depth booklet, or simply follow the map in the visitor guide to the outdoor interpretive panels. The outdoor panels are less than two years old, and were unveiled alongside two artistic installations as part of a reinstalltion of the site. The new outdoor interpretive panels feature graphics, text, and in some
cases, touchable bronze models of objects relevant to the story being told on the panel. It is worth noting that the panels are written in the historical present, perhaps as an attempt to get visitors to empathize with, or otherwise relate to, the characters of the story on the panels.

[The new interpretation] on the island - that’s been a huge improvement because before that there were literally just a few little panels. And unless you actually bought the guidebook, that was it really. There wasn’t a lot. So we kept saying that there should be more. And now, I think they’re really nice because they’re almost like little stories, you know, rather than just saying this is this, and this is this. So, that’s been very popular … people do really like it. – Dorothy, English Heritage employee

In addition to the outdoor interpretation, visitors can view a small exhibition (Figure 33) inside the main building on the café/museum level, which also houses a gift shop, information kiosk and toilets. The exhibit can be divided into four main categories: (1) how Tintagel Castle became linked with legend, (2) Tintagel in the Dark Ages, (3) the medieval castle, the ruins of which are what visitors see today, and (4) how the legend continued to shape the image of Tintagel in the Victorian period and onwards.

Some of the same information from the outdoor panels is repeated here, suggesting that the designers did not anticipate that visitors would necessarily view and read both sources of information. The main repetition comes in the form of the introductory panel in the exhibit and the first outdoor panel visitors encounter while walking out to the viewpoint above the beach, before climbing the many stairs up to the castle level of the site. The two can be seen in Figures 34 and 35 below.
Figure 33: The small indoor exhibition at Tintagel Castle. It features two main panels on either side of a 3D model of the headland in the center of the room.

Figure 34: Introductory panel for the exhibition.
Both panels read: “Tintagel has long been known as the place where the mythical king was conceived, and its history is entwined with the legend. But what really happened here?” Like the Visitor Guide, these introductory panels attempt to separate the fact from fiction, but this effort is undermined by other efforts English Heritage itself has undertaken, particularly two artistic installation that were included in the re-launch of the site alongside the new outdoor interpretation and museum exhibit.

**Gallos and Merlin**

In the last two years, English Heritage has commissioned two art pieces to accompany the new outdoor interpretive panels. Both pieces were unveiled to the public at the same time as the new panels, so I assume here that all the pieces were part of the same initiative to update and improve the visitor experience. While the new interpretation is perhaps deliberately vague about the site’s connection to Arthur, these two art pieces seem to represent the internal tension about whether or not to embrace the Arthurian legend. The first is a carving of Merlin’s face in the natural rock formation outside the entrance to Merlin’s Cave on the beach (Figure 36 below).
Based solely on media representations of this carving, one might think it was massive in size, a disastrous blemish on the natural environment, visible from all around. In reality, this carving is part of a now unofficial visitor scavenger hunt. The carving is only slightly bigger than a human face.

Figure 36: Carving of Merlin’s face in the rock formations outside the entrance to Merlin’s Cave on the beach at Tintagel Castle.

According to both Dorothy and Oliver, visitors very often descend onto the beach level expecting to find it easily, but end up coming back to the café/museum level to inquire about its location with an English Heritage employee. During one afternoon at low tide, I was sitting on one of the large boulders near the Merlin carving to observe how people react to it. In one instance a woman called to her friend several feet away, “There you go, there’s Merlin’s face!” And her friend replied, “Oh! I almost missed that.” They then took a selfie with the carving before moving on. According to Dorothy, this sort of thing happens all the time:

They’re going “Where is it? Where is it?” And they come up [from the beach] asking “Where was it?” and then they go back down and it’s like … you sort of get mixed feelings then when people who weren’t very happy about it see it and they go “Oh well
actually that’s not too bad,” while others say well it’s a natural rock and it shouldn’t have been carved into – Dorothy, English Heritage employee.

The second art piece is a metal sculpture named Gallos\textsuperscript{13}, which according to English Heritage is a representation of a Dark Age king (Figure 37 below). Gallos is extremely popular with visitors. On any occasion that I was up on the top of the headland observing, there were visitors queuing to take photos of or with Gallos. Based on what I observed visitors saying, the sculpture was generally interpreted to be King Arthur, despite being given the name Gallos by English Heritage. “It’s a statue of King Arthur,” said one father to his young son. “George, you wanna stand next to him?”

Several visitors who had their photos taken with Gallos made a point of holding the sword with him. Perhaps if they view Gallos as Arthur then the sword has particular meaning because of his famous feat of pulling the sword from the stone.

Other things I overhead visitors saying while interacting with Gallos included a German parent asking their daughter, “Willst du ein Foto mit Arthur?” which translates to: “Do you want a photo with Arthur?” And perhaps most importantly, the artist who created the sculpture also thought of the figure as Arthur:

And to be fair, [English Heritage] decided the name. Throughout the whole build process, while I was modeling the piece, it was King Arthur to me. But when it came to, you know, near completion, I think they got slightly cold feet because of the whole of idea of the Disneyfication of the site … they thought that Gallos as a name would suit them. – Albert

---

\textsuperscript{13}“Gallos” is Cornish for “power” and refers to the evidence of a powerful Dark Age leader on the Tintagel headland.
Whether it is the decision to change the name, or the semi-permanent quality of the Gallos installation, the reception of Gallos has been overwhelmingly positive – unlike the mixed reviews of the Merlin carving.

So, obviously, you’re going to get both sides of it, but we don’t seem to have had that with the statue. People just seem to love the statue. Nobody’s ever come down and said, I don’t think you should be putting that up there. – Dorothy, English Heritage employee

Albert also mentioned having created another sculpture piece, which has yet to be installed. While I cannot divulge many details about the piece, I believe the same hesitation that English Heritage showed in renaming the sculpture Gallos, has led them to postpone unveiling this second piece. The discussion of the Gallos statue and the Merlin carving and the fear of accusations of Disneyfication, leads me to my discussion of the commodification of heritage at Tintagel Castle.

_Tintagel Castle as Commodified_

The obvious place to begin investigating how Tintagel Castle is commodified is in any one of the three souvenir shops inside the English Heritage perimeter. The items for sale cover a
vast array of topics related to Tintagel specifically, or Cornwall more generally. For example, locally produced beers and ciders are available for purchase. The brands bear names that harken to ideas of Arthur like: Castle Gold, Lancelot Golden Ale, Magik Best Bitter, and Tintagel Brewery’s Merlin’s Muddle (see Figure 38 below). Also available for purchase in the main souvenir shop are various forms of armor and weaponry including the swords and helmets see in Figure 39. While some of the swords have generalized “historical” names like Pompeii Gladius, others have site-related names including Avalon Sword, Excalibur and Squires Templar Sword. They range in price from £65 to £250.

Figure 38: Selection of local beers and ciders for sale inside Tintagel Castle souvenir shop.
Figure 39: Armor and weaponry for sale in the Tintagel Castle souvenir shop.

The next section of the main shop is particularly shameless in its promotion of all things King Arthur. In addition to selling sword-in-the-stone snow globes of varying sizes, there are other snow globes with an English knight inside, branded with the name “Tintagel Castle” on the outside. I noted with curiosity that the producers of these products chose to use the St. John’s Cross flag, rather than the Cornish flag. Also for sale are magnets, a “King Arthur 4 Figure Set” and Excalibur letter openers. A book titled *A Brief History of King Arthur: The Man and the Legend Revealed* sits beside a model of the Sword in the Stone. Plastic toy dragons, a Sorcerer’s Apprentice hat, postcards, pencils and a random book of spells embellish the many shelves holding varying sized replicas of the Gallos sculpture (see Figure 40.)

The most prominent image in the souvenir shop is Gallos, who, for most visitors, is a representation of King Arthur, so I extrapolate then that Arthur is the most important image for sale in the shop. Gallos figurines, key chains, pencils, thimbles and postcards are available for purchase in all three souvenir shops, and a smaller selection is available at the ticket booths.
Despite the effort to avoid Arthur in all the official interpretation, except in discussing the site’s connection to literature and art, the commodification of King Arthur at Tintagel Castle is painfully apparent. That said, Oliver felt that the use of Arthur was, in some ways, half-hearted – perhaps reflecting what I would call the soft contestation of the site:

I think it is part of the identity here and I think that – well I’ve just been saying recently whether trying to market the remains of the medieval castle is actually the mistake here and that what we should be doing is really building on the story of Arthur and also particularly the Dark Ages settlement. The real story here is the Dark Ages settlement, it just is sort of so obvious. With anything that is mythological, you can’t say, but in the end the heritage is the myth, it’s not the person, it can’t be the person. And so, we are finding out some really interesting stuff.

I mean, the possibility that there was somebody here that was extremely powerful, because we were trading with the Mediterranean, they wanted tin for their bronze and we had that and consequently that island was a key place to trade from … And so, out of that comes a strong character of some kind and it seems to me that, if you wanted to call it marketing, marketing that is a much stronger offer than a building that doesn’t really exist anymore and is actually not as old as the church. – Oliver, English Heritage employee
So, on the one hand, Oliver feels that there has been a missed opportunity to promote the site in a different way, but he also understands the claims of Disneyfication. I believe what he’s arguing for is a more evidence-based case for the existence of an Arthur-like figure at the site. Albert, the Gallos creator, shared similar sentiments on the use of Arthur at Tintagel:

It’s obviously an important site, so potentially, maybe a figure like Arthur did exist there you know … but I suppose throughout the years its become known for that so from a purely kind of touristic way to bring tourists in, people come there for the Arthurian connection, so why not make the most of that you know? Without that maybe not as many visitors would go there and it’s sort of an out of the way little village … maybe it wouldn’t be as, you know, as rich a little village then you know? So I suppose I think well, make the most of what you’ve got! (laughs) – Albert

Claims of Disneyfication and commodification of the site can also been seen in visitor comments on Tintagel Castle’s social media platforms. The back of the Tintagel Visitor Guide includes ways of to “keep in touch” which includes their website, Facebook and Twitter. Since the unveiling of the new interpretation, Gallos sculpture and the Merlin carving, English Heritage has released information about a proposed bridge that will be built on the site. The bridge would connect the currently disconnected gate house remains with the rest of the headland.

So, what they’re trying to do now, if it all goes through, is reinstates a bridge across there for two reasons: one being the level, when you stand there it would be at the level that it used to be at when it was a castle or a settlement and the other, for access for people who can’t manage the steps. – Dorothy, English Heritage

While English Heritage’s motivation might be one of accessibility, some of their social media followers have voiced significant discontent about the bridge proposal. In commenting on a photo of a recent archaeological dig on site in Summer 2017, one Facebook user said, “I thought it was the foundation for the new KFC at the end of the bridge.” Perhaps the combination of the new interpretation, artistic installations and now this bridge, some visitors see a rapid and unwelcome transformation of the site. For English Heritage employees like Dorothy, who has worked at the site for 19 years, change can be tricky:
The village thrives on the castle, because the shops, that’s what it’s all about, you know. So, they wouldn’t have businesses if it wasn’t for the castle but then they’re not happy, sometimes, if you do too much and that has an impact on things … so it’s a tricky one really … getting the right balance. – Dorothy, English Heritage employee.

Balance. This appears to be the goal English Heritage has for the site, but demonstrated here so far, the soft contestation regarding the history of the site, as well as the added pressure the commodification adds to the equation, make it difficult to achieve this balance. Meanwhile, other sites in Tintagel do not appear to struggle with this same tension, either fully embracing Disneyfied Arthur, or avoiding him altogether.

**King Arthur’s Great Halls**

King Arthur’s Great Halls are a fixture on the Tintagel Fore Street. According to George, the site’s main employee and manager, many of the bus tours that include Tintagel Castle on their itinerary will also include King Arthur’s Great Halls. They either start with the castle and then pop into the Great Halls on their way back to the bus, or they pop into the Great Halls to get their Arthur fix, before heading down to the Tintagel Castle ruins. George describes his job as:

Basically, I know the history of this building, and that’s really what I’m here for: to tell people the history of the building, and it gives them the story of King Arthur before they go down to the ruins. - George, Manager at King Arthur’s Great Halls

King Arthur’s Great Halls, as I will argue below, does not deal with the same soft contestation or tension as Tintagel Castle. Having full embraced Arthurian legend, there is little in the way of conflicting interpretations.

**King Arthur’s Great Halls as Contested**

As outlined in Chapter One, visitors to King Arthur’s Great Halls sit through a 10-minute theatrical “light show” narration of the story of Arthur before entering the actual Great Halls
This story, told by Merlin, does not make any distinctions between historically accurate information and the myth and legend surrounding King Arthur. The narration speaks with authority and requires visitors to engage in a temporary suspension of disbelief.

Figure 41: A small theater inside King Arthur’s Great Halls. Here, visitors watch and listen to the story of King Arthur as narrated by Merlin.

On my visit, George led me into the “light show” room and insisted I sit “in the big chair” indicating a throne at the front of the room. He then turned off the lights, started the program and exited. “My name is Merlin” came over the speaker system. Merlin said he would tell the story of Arthur “using my magic powers.” Programmed lights would illuminate particular oil paintings or objects in the room as they pertained to the story. In ten minutes, the narration covers the entirety of any possible events in Arthur’s legendary life, from the giving of Excalibur to meeting Guinevere, and from Lancelot’s betrayal to the search for the Holy Grail. There does not appear to be a single agreed-upon version of the Arthurian myth being told. It simply covers all the possibilities. The room itself smells damp, old and musty. The walls are covered in assorted old wallpaper and velvet curtains. The ceiling is carved wood and the floor is covered in an assorted array of rugs. The most authentic things in the space though, are probably the cobwebs.
In my opinion, the “light show” narrated by Merlin is too long. Even as an adult with an interest in Arthurian legend I had trouble focusing and paying attention for ten full minutes. While the illuminated paintings serve to illustrate the parts of the legend, they are ultimately flat, non-interactive objects. The other objects illuminated in the room, like the “sword in the stone” do little to embellish the experience. From the “light show” room, visitors exit into the Great Halls where they can see the 72 stained glass windows that depict the life of Arthur, as well as a massive stone throne and a wooden Round Table. The hall is expansive (Figure 42).

In the corner, a conspicuous CD player plays lute and harp music ostensibly to create a sense of atmosphere. In the back of the hall there is a collection of objects on display, which resemble a “cabinet of curiosity” more closely than a contemporary museum exhibit. (Figure 43). Displays like this require more work on behalf of the visitors who are forced to find connections between the objects and the ethos of the site. In this way, the transmission of the values of the Knights of the Round Table is incomplete. After viewing the Great Hall, visitors double-back down a narrow hallway and exit the building through the gift shop.

When I asked George about the theatrics of the site he said:

An awful thing to say but some people believe it. Believe that everything that I’ve got is real, and obviously it’s not. Because there is no proof on King Arthur, but no body can disprove it. That’s the wonderful thing about the legend. - George
Figure 42: A view of the Great Hall.

Figure 43: A sample of the geological objects put on display at King Arthur’s Great Halls, notably without context or interpretation.

King Arthur’s Great Halls as Commodified

I would argue that the entirety of King Arthur’s Great Halls is the result of the commodification of the King Arthur connection in Tintagel. When Frederick Glasscock built the halls in the 1930s, his mission was to spread the values of chivalry, as promoted in the legend of King Arthur. While the site does still host an annual meeting of the Fellowship of the Knights of the Round Table, today it is primarily a tourist site. And while the “light show” and the stained glass windows tell the stories of Arthur, which are imbued with the values Glasscock held dear,
the ultimate function of the site now is the entertainment, not education, of visiting tourists.

George believes that the tourists know this and leave their visit satisfied by the experience.

They’re usually satisfied because they don’t realize how big it is until they get in there. And they don’t realize what artwork is in there, the stained glass windows and the old oil paintings… from the front it’s very deceiving, it’s like a Tardis. It’s like Dr. Who’s Tardis. It is very, very big.

He also acknowledges the critical role that tourism plays in Tintagel as a whole:

Without King Arthur… I mean King Arthur draws them here because of Camelot, the ruins of Camelot down there. And without that, this is mainly tourism area… farming and tourism… and of course King Arthur brings them here from all over the world, and I mean all over the world. … South Korea, Vietnam, India, last week um… Brazil, Russia… literally, it amazes me working here, where they come from. All over the world. Literally everywhere… Therefore it benefits the hotels, the guesthouses, the cafes, the shops… some people will come to visit us, purely us and nothin’ else. But they usually come here before they go to the ruins or after the ruins. – George

As a privately owned and operated tourist attraction, King Arthur’s Great Hall do not bear the burden of presenting the same kind of authorized narratives as English Heritage at Tintagel Castle. In fact, King Arthur’s Great Halls represent the ability to present commodified, alternative interpretations for tourist entertainment and consumption. In that way, this site represents the extreme end of the Disneyfication spectrum that Tintagel Castle has only recently become a part of.

St. Nectan’s Glen

Like King Arthur’s Great Halls, St. Nectan’s Glen is privately owned and operated. The absence of a hegemonic managing authority like English Heritage, affords the site more freedom and flexibility in its interpretation. Unlike King Arthur’s Great Halls though, those managing this site also actively work against any sort of overly commodified Disneyfication.
St. Nectan’s Glen as Contested

St. Nectan’s Glen is primarily a place of natural and geological heritage. Its waterfall and the surrounding glen, with native plants and wildlife, have different meanings for different people. In the absence of any formal interpretation, all different types of visitors can come to St. Nectan’s and feel that their interpretations of are equally valid and valuable. John, the manager at St. Nectan’s Glen, describes it this way:

The waterfall has a great deal of value on lots of levels for many people. There are spiritual perspectives, both from a Christian and a Pagan philosophy. And, there are many slightly mythical experiences that people draw from their presence and lots of people say hello or goodbye to their lost loved ones here. Many people leave prayers here, which are often signified by coins or clouties, which are colored ribbons that they tie onto the nature. I would say that’s the key significance of the area … an enjoyment of nature.

Visitors can engage with the site in their own ways and at their own pace. John’s primary restriction is that all visitors respect the nature, and the experiences of their fellow visitors. As such, this site is a quiet, reflective space. The loudest noise is the falling water and the lively wildlife in the trees.

Figure 44: Rock piles created by visitors at the foot of the main waterfall at St. Nectan’s Glen.
The visitors to St. Nectan’s Glen represent a wide variety of people. According to John:

We have quite a lot of international visitors … Quite a lot of visitors from Spain and Germany, in particular. We’ve had American visitors coming through now and … as you mentioned, Glastonbury, sometimes we get visitors on a pilgrimage tour, so I’ve noticed there are tour groups that are orientating themselves to a heritage tour … might have gone to Stonehenge, might have gone to Avebury, might have gone to Glastonbury, and then they come down to Tintagel and perhaps do some of the stone circles in Cornwall as well.

St. Nectan’s Glen offers information about the natural environment, but provides next to no interpretation of the site’s history or the site’s significance to any particular heritage. In choosing to leave the interpretation open to the visitors, rather than authorizing a particular narrative by curating words on an outdoor panel, St. Nectan’s Glen sidesteps the kind of soft contestation found at Tintagel Castle.

St. Nectan’s Glen as Commodified

The commodification of St. Nectan’s Glen is also minimal. John explains the role of St. Nectan’s Glen in the local economy this way:

We employ most of our staff from the local villages. Some of the local Cornish people are actively hostile towards visitors. So, I wouldn’t say they’re actively hostile to us and perhaps hostile is too strong but there is some noninvolvement with people and there’s some involvement with people. I try to source as much of our resources, work, locally. Whether that’s repairing vehicles or buying fuel or buying pasties or employing labor as is possible. So we’re doing our best work locally wherever possible. Like having the schools visit and so forth and things like that. And the local visitor centers are our main ambassadors. We don’t go out of our way to advertise. We’re quite a small site. I think this site could easily be spoiled by too many visitors so I’m very wary about doing too much advertising.

There is a small shop on Fore Street in Tintagel that operates as an ambassador for the site.

We have a product range to help support our local trading system and try to support the infrastructure that we’re building. And the shop is an ambassador for us and it’s also to tell the visitors in Tintagel that we exist. So again, we are using that as an advertising vehicle, but it’s the visitors that are local in Tintagel visiting anyway. The type of product that we’re selling is supporting local artists … we also sell crystals.
This admission to selling crystals is the only obvious reference to supporting one type of interpretation over another, in this case, recognizing that many visitors to St. Nectan’s Glen follow New Age religions and would be interested in purchasing gifts like crystals. But even the small gift shop on site sells a minimal number of items. The café, too, offers visitors refreshments at the end of their 1.25 mile hike in from the car park, but does obstruct the appearance or experience of the site. John views the hike to the site as the start of the visitor “connecting with the elemental experience that is St. Nectan’s Glen,” but also admits that the hike acts as a kind of filtration system that limits the number of visitors they receive (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Part of the path along the river that leads from the car park to the entrance of St. Nectan’s Glen.

Even the recent addition of a new footpath around St. Nectan’s Glen was not aimed at increasing visitor numbers. Rather, it was built to enrich the current visitor experience by making the viewing of the minor waterfalls easier and less invasive on the nature. John emphasized that the footpath was “sympathetic” to the existing nature, and was created using only wood, and rock from a local quarry. What St. Nectan’s Glen represents in the larger Tintagel community is a quiet rejection of both the authorization of particular heritage narratives and the over
commodification, or Disneyfication, of heritage for economic gain. For St. Nectan’s Glen, less is most definitely more.

**The Arthurian Centre**

The Arthurian Centre was created about 20 years ago when the site’s manager, Ross, and his wife, purchased some land along the River Camel. A 6th century stone, known as the Arthur Stone, had been found along the riverbank near Slaughterbridge, the supposed last battle site of King Arthur. As a privately owned and operated passion project, the Arthurian Centre is a unique heritage site.

**Arthurian Centre as Contested**

The interpretation presented at the Arthurian Centre is the result of research conducted by Ross and his wife over the last 20 years.

Whether you’ll ever discover who Arthur was, or whether it’s a title or a name, all that sort of thing, probably never know, but we can say, we know that our stone has been dated to about 540 A.D. It’s found after they identified the site as the last battle site, and Tintagel is also now been found to be 6th century and high status, so this area is very important in the early medieval period, whether it’s about Arthur or not. – Ross

The Arthurian Centre includes a small exhibition (Figures 46 and 47) installed inside the visitor/ticket office, which visitors can view before setting out on the short trail down to the riverbank. Along the way, visitors will see the trenches from previous archaeological digs (Figure 48). These digs are done in collaboration with Winchester University, and aim to find out more about the Cornish heritage of the site. Some of the items found during these archeological investigations are on display in Ross’s exhibit.
Figure 46: The beginning of the Arthurian Centre’s exhibit.

Figure 47: Objects on display in the Arthurian Centre’s exhibit.
Ross is adamant that any interpretation or information presented at the Arthurian Centre be based on scientific and archaeological evidence. This is one of the reasons that over the last several years, they have moved to learn more about the site’s general Cornish history, and not just its link with the Arthurian story. However, Ross acknowledges that the Arthurian story is an important part of Cornish heritage and identity. Even Ross’s explanation of “sword in the stone” sees it as a metaphor rather than something that actually happened:

There’s something called the Nebra Sky Disk, which was found in the Alps a few years ago. It’s the earliest depiction of the heavens, possibly use for navigation for ships, that sort of thing, and it’s been dated to 1650 BC. And the gold content and the tin in the bronze, in this thing, are all from Cornwall. They’ve traced the isotopes back, so, being able to take tin out of the rocks, and the gold out of the rivers and all that sort of thing, goes way back, probably 4000 years at least in Cornwall. So, if you can take, and this is what I think, if you can take metal out of rocks, and make a bronze blade, and nobody else can do it, 4000 years ago, you’re going to be the most powerful person. You’ve drawn the sword from the stone. And that’s where power comes from, is metal smelting and metal trading. And Cornwall is famous for that. That’s why I think the stories have been so strong here. And why Cornwall has always been a relatively safe place. It’s had the power and the trading.
**Arthurian Centre as Commodified**

Ross’s emphasis on sticking to archaeological evidence is a direct reflection of his goal to avoid what he views as the kind of “Disneyfication” that is happening in Tintagel village and at Tintagel Castle.

What we’ve tried to do is steer clear of the Merlin crystals, knights in shining armor, stuff. Although we do sell a few things to the kids, because they’ve come here for that. We try not to go down the Disneyfication of Arthur too much. And being around here, I worry that Tintagel is going that way a bit too much. English Heritage are putting things on the island that, perhaps, you know, some people wouldn’t like.

Not been up to the statue yet and I haven’t seen the Merlin face they’ve carved in the rock either. And I can understand people being upset about the Merlin face, because it is carved in the natural rock, it’s not … if it was an installation, you know you could take it away again, or whatever, but yeah… so sometimes maybe they do things just for headlines. Get trending.

According to Ross, the Arthurian Centre gets over 10,000 visitors but they “don’t really count visitors. It’s not really about that.” When asked about the role of tourism in Tintagel, and Cornwall generally, Ross said:

So everyone is making some money of it. So generally, it’s fairly important. Farming has gone backwards a bit. The fishing industry’s gone backwards. So what else is there? Tin mining is gone. So yeah, you’ve got all your standard police officers, fire officers, teachers, they’ve all got their incomes but all the rest of us have to make the money in the summer and then try and get through the winter. And we’ve all got two or three jobs. My wife and I both have other jobs.

In this case, Ross’s allegiance to telling an archaeologically and evidence-based version of the heritage at his site, morally prevents him from engaging in overly commodifying his site to make more money.

**Summary**

Tourism plays a major role in the livelihood and identity of Tintagel. There appears to be a continual struggle to find a balance between making enough money in the six weeks of summer
peak tourist season to get through the winter months, and not exploiting local heritage in such a way that seems inauthentic or disloyal. Based on the quote below from a 1915 Black’s Guide to Cornwall, this tension has been a part of Tintagel for quite some time:

The accommodation for strangers has been much developed, to the discontent of fastidious artistic eyes, which are particularly scandalized by the reaction of a large hotel, the King Arthur’s Castle, to flaunt its comfort above the stern seclusion of Barras Head (Moncrieff 1915, 26).

Smaller heritage sites located outside the Tintagel village perimeter, like St. Nectan’s Glen and the Arthurian Centre, appear to have an easier time of avoiding the overly commodified, Disneyfication trends of the village itself. However, those establishments located within the village, including King Arthur’s Great Halls and Tintagel Castle, appear to be consumed by the power of the tourism industry. As will be made in Chapter Six, the hegemony of the authorized heritage narrative the not the only influential power working on the (re)production of heritage. Rather, the valuation and commodification of heritage through tourism appears to have substantial sway, causing friction as locals try to achieve a balance in what is presented.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS GLASTONBURY

It’s very popular in the pagan community, Glastonbury. It’s seen as their kind of flagship place. Some of them don’t like it, but a lot of people really, really do. Because it’s one place where you can go around with a robe and a staff and people are just kind of like, ‘oh hi!’ not ‘what the fuck are you wearing?’ – Jane, Glastonbury Community Member and High Street Shop Owner

In this chapter I will present the results of my research into heritage, identity and tourism in Glastonbury. The format of the chapter is the same as Chapter Four on Tintagel. I will begin with an exploration of the ways in which my participants in Glastonbury define heritage. I will then present the data I collected, from various sources, on the heritage sites in Glastonbury. The results will be presented around two main themes: heritage as contested and heritage as commodified. The same two themes will be used in the discussion section of Chapter Six.

Defining Heritage

As demonstrated in Chapter Two, definitions of heritage can vary greatly. This was no different for my research participants who each had a unique perspective on what constituted heritage and what did not. Before I can expound on the ways in which I observed heritage as both contested and commodified in Glastonbury, I want to share the variety of ways that participants defined heritage. The definitions below represent the views of several National Trust employees, as well as employees at Glastonbury Abbey, and a local community member.

Heritage, for me, it means, the history of community I think. And that can be seen in the houses, in the buildings, but it can also be seen in landscapes, so it doesn’t have to be just buildings… so, let’s think about orchards, about food systems, that is heritage to me. And also, what shapes a community… it’s hard to define (laughs) – Amelia, National Trust Ranger
[It is] a legacy. It’s what we leave behind for other people you know? And it gives you a sense of where you, you know, all that history, I mean, a sense of your background … why you’re here and what’s gone on before you. It’s all that really. – Hugh, National Trust Ranger

Heritage is … parts of our countryside, and that’s both buildings and artifacts and the countryside, the things that matter, the different skills that have been around - just preserving, keeping them alive not letting them become things of the past that rot away – Susan, National Trust Volunteer

[F]or me heritage is taking care of your past and learning from it, whether it be cultural heritage, or a heritage site, such as this, or whether it just be celebrating Guy Fawkes on the Fifth of November, that’s still part of your heritage. It’s something that’s important to your culture, your nation. And it’s a very difficult thing to deal with because now with, with the Internet, the world is becoming smaller … I don’t know … but to me, it is part of the fabric of who you are as a person sometimes as well. You know, you can move to a different country but you don’t lose your heritage. – Caroline, Glastonbury Abbey Education Employee

I think it’s something, aspects of our past that we have inherited so that could be, buildings, it could be objects, art, traditions, language, literature…. Anything from past generations that we’ve held on to I guess. And I think our interpretation of heritage certainly changes over time. But what I guess what a society values at a given time changes depending on their focus at the time. – Lucy, Glastonbury Abbey Management

These first few definitions reflect a wide array of interpretations, but include several common themes, including: differentiating between tangible and intangible heritage, preservation of the past, and some reference to an idea of inheriting or passing on heritage to other generations. For Hugh and Caroline, it also has to do with a person’s identity and sense of self. Lucy is the only one to refer to any sort of change over time saying, “Our interpretation of heritage certainly changes over time.” As someone working at a high management level at Glastonbury Abbey, Lucy is likely to have been exposed to heritage studies literature, which often discusses heritage as a present-centered social practice.

One of the most detailed responses I received for the question “How would you define heritage” came from Timothy, one of the vocal local community members that I included after
another participant referred him to me. He and his wife are active community members that have lived in Glastonbury for several years and plan to open a bed and breakfast in the near future.

The materialistic answer would be, it’s what English Heritage and the National Trust own and do. It’s what’s in our museums and galleries. But that is not what heritage really is to me… to me it’s something slightly less tangible. And subjective, probably. England for a while now has been going through various identity crises and so the whole issue of heritage is all bound up with England’s confusion about you know, what it is… is it part of Europe? Well we’ve just seen that issue blow up. What is the United Kingdom you know? With half my heritage from Ireland I have a different view on it anyway. I think English people feel heritage is incredibly important without being able to put their finger on exactly what it is. And that’s fine and inevitable. One thing that struck me when I was working in politics was that people fight viciously over their visions of paradise of the past and this can be a problem. I think it’s a problem in Glastonbury too. People get very emotional about idealized images of the past, which they may have imbibed without knowing who fashioned them and encoded them and with what values.

He goes on to say:

There something quite conservative and stuffy in the British heritage mindset which can be quite exclusive. It’s a sector that, there’s no polite way of putting this really, it attracts people who are from a privileged set or often who don’t need to work for a living particularly. And the values of people who indoctrinate and inculcate in that mindset give skewed vision of what heritage is.

In these few minutes of his interview, Timothy seems to have encompassed several of the themes of this research project, including issues of national identity, the intangible and tangible nature of heritage, and the ability of heritage to be manipulated and skewed. As a vocal local, Timothy’s observations of Glastonbury are nuanced and I will reference his interview several times in this chapter. Below I present the results of this research in Glastonbury. I begin with a description of the High Street, Glastonbury’s main road and the heart of the town. I will then present the results for each of the three main heritage sites: Glastonbury Abbey, Glastonbury Tor and the Chalice Well Gardens.
Amelia and Hugh, two National Trust Rangers that manage Glastonbury Tor, describe the town this way:

There’s loads of crystal shops as you would have noticed. I think it’s gotten more of that middle class, hippie aspect to it. So yeah, really trying to cash in on the spiritual nature of the Tor. I find it quite surprising ‘cause the Tor and the people that you find there, don’t want to deal with commercialism. They’re travelers quite a lot of the time. And that’s got nothing to do with trying cash in, so it’s quite an interesting one. It’s not what I expected. It’s like walking around in a festival sometimes. Really strange. – Amelia

Well, [it’s] somewhere in the 60s (laughs). Um… it changed and slowly but surely all the shops have gone over, you know because there’s a lot of witchcraft stuff in the town, I mean obviously you’ve been there, you know… it’s a fantastic place and real mix of stuff. Sort of, 60s counter culture mixed with pagan stuff, mixed with you know, witches and wizards and then you’ve got your intellectuals there, your philosophers, they’re all in it and you know, to kind of sit on a bench in Glastonbury town, and you’re sat next to people that look like dropouts, but they’re not you know… they’re just living their lives in a completely different way. So, it’s a fantastic place in that sense. Um… I love the fact that it is unconventional. It’s different. You know, I don’t live there but I love it for what it is. – Hugh

Timothy has a slightly different perspective than Amelia and Hugh, who could be considered “outsiders” as they do not live in the community.

Well, the sheer tacky commercialism of some of it … and if I was in my sort of switched on Marxist mood, I would say this is all opium of the subculture, as long as you’ve got your Reiki and your crystals and your cheap clothes to distract you from what’s really going on, then you know, we’ll keep you drugged. - Timothy

All three of these individuals touched on some common themes that many people use when describing Glastonbury. Below is my own description of the High Street and its unique characteristics, based on my field notes and participant observation.
A Walk Down the High Street

Similar to Tintagel, if you arrive in Glastonbury before 9am on a weekday, you won’t find very many people walking around. On most days, I would arrive to Glastonbury by bus and disembark at the top of the High Street at the Queen’s Head stop (Figure 49).

Figure 49: Queen’s Head bus stop looking down the High Street.

The top of the High Street includes a barbershop, salon, laundry service, real estate offices, an Indian takeaway and a Chinese takeaway. At first glance, this section of the High Street looks standard but a closer look reveals the shop on the corner selling Moroccan glass lanterns and carved wood products with incense slowly pouring out of the front door, and a small souvenir shop selling “hippie” clothes.

Further down is an organic grocer called Earthfare, a popular local café/restaurant called The Hundred Monkeys, the Post Office, an arts and crafts supply shop called Sew Over the Moon and Coffee Zero. As the morning progresses shops begin to stir, local cafes set up tables and chairs outside on the sidewalk, locals are walking their children to school, trucks make deliveries and local buskers and artists begin to set up outside the churchyard in front of the Church of St. John the Baptist. The church sits in the middle of town, halfway down the High
Street. The uniqueness of Glastonbury is on display here, a chalk artist draws mandalas, and musicians play not just guitars, but also harps, hang drums and pan flutes (Figures 50 and 51).

Figure 50: The sidewalk in front of the churchyard is often full of buskers and local artists.

Figure 51: A chalk artist named Gaz, regularly creates colorful mandalas with positive quotes. Here he is in front of the Church of St. John the Baptist, accompanied by other buskers.

The further down the High Street one goes, the more colorful and vibrant it gets. Storefronts are painted in yellows, reds and purples. Shop windows are intricately decorated like detailed dioramas, and the smell of various incense sticks permeates the air. Shop names include

At a few points along the High Street, past the churchyard, visitors can leave the High Street and explore short, small alleys that branch off and include additional shops and cafes. One of these alleys opens up into what is known as the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard. The establishments in this courtyard include Courtyard Books, The Goddess Temple, and Stone Age (Figure 52). At the far end of the courtyard sits the Library of Avalon, which is also home to the Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre (Figure 53).

Figure 52: The storefront of Stone Age inside the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard.
Figure 53: Library of Avalon, in the back of the Glastonbury Experience Courtyard. It also houses the Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre.

Figure 54: Box of information for pilgrims visiting the Reception Centre.

The Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre is the first stop for many spiritual visitors and tourists. The Reception Centre provides them with information about the town and surrounding areas, including the sites and events relevant to their particular spiritual orientation. Sybil is one
of the community members that works at the Reception Centre and she said the following in her interview:

In the main, curiosity brings people here. But then something gets hold of them and my work, our work, helps people to make the most of Glastonbury according to their needs and requirements. Rather than us saying, you need to go and do this or you need to go and do that, we present options that will fit with an individual’s particular need … journey. Everything is very individual.

A small box of notecards at the entrance of the center includes information for a variety of “spiritual paths” (Figure 54) and a message on the box reads: “Our policy is to offer information to visitors and residents alike and to contribute towards developing a greater understanding of the diversity around us.” The goal of understanding diversity comes out in a kind of Glastonbury motto that several of my participants mentioned, which is: Unity through Diversity. This message resonates around town.

Of the many establishments lining the High Street, the community finds particular value in the George and Pilgrim (Figure 55), which sits on the bend where the High Street turns left at the Market Square. The G&P, as many locals refer to it, is both a hotel and a pub. Completed in 1475, it is one of the oldest buildings in town. It was originally established to house pilgrims coming to Glastonbury to visit the Abbey.

Today, it sees a steady stream of both locals and tourists. Anyone entering the main entrance is immediately greeted with the smell of stale beer and old musty carpet – but there is something genial about the place. The dark wooden beams and plaster walls are decorated with tapestries and murals that make it feel a bit like a Renaissance faire. The glass windows are a mixture of clear and colored glass, which cast geometric shadows on the seating area and the bar. The bar manager can be seen standing outside just before 11am every morning, having a
cigarette before the start of business for the day. He wears dark trousers, a white button-down shirt, gray vest and the occasional cravat.

Figure 55: Outside façade of the George and Pilgrim

Two of my participants, Neville and Jane, have made the window booth at this pub their de-facto office when they’re not running their shop on the High Street. Timothy, a self-proclaimed “mystic anarchist,” described the value of the George and Pilgrim this way:

There’s probably no other place in the town where people from different groups and different kinds of people can actually meet, in the same space. So what often happens is, after a lecture or an event, in the Town Hall, or the Assembly Rooms, people adjourn here and it’s a great place to get to know people you haven’t yet met, have a good ol’ time. And I love those moments where people come together, across spiritual and belief system boundaries. - Timothy

Just next to the G&P is the Market Square. This space used to serve as part of the agricultural market that was once Glastonbury’s main economic engine. According to Neville, “Glastonbury, until the 1980s, early 1980s, was a cattle market. And had what would be considered a normal High Street up to that point.” Today, the Market Square is only used on Tuesdays, when outside food and crafts vendors come to sell their wares. Next to the Market
Square, there are a few more shops, including Cat and Cauldron (Figure 56), Elestial, Little Imps Toy Shop and Man/Myth/Magik. Across the street are Heaphy’s Café, Tin Pot Pasty Co, Lazy Gecko Cafe and shops called Wish You Were Here and Lady of the Silver Wheel. Just beyond Little Imps Toy Shop is the entrance to Glastonbury Abbey. This is essentially the end of the High Street. Further on are just one or two shops and St. Dunstan’s Car Park, one of three car parks available in town for visitors.

Figure 56: The view from Heaphy’s Café across the High Street to the Cat and Cauldron.

The current character of Glastonbury is one often described by locals and tourists alike as “different” – yet open and friendly. According to Jane, who runs a shop on the High Street with her partner Neville:

Pagans come to Glastonbury because it’s their town. They like to be able to dress in the way they want to dress and they talk about what they want to talk about in public. I do see quite a lot of gay couples who are open about it, because nobody’s going to have a crack at them. But that’s more of a national thing now anyway. Christians come here for pilgrimages and for events and retreats. A lot of people come for workshops and retreats - New Age stuff. People come generally as tourists. Some people come to gawk at all the (gestures with air quotes) weirdos, - Jane

So alongside the heritage sites Glastonbury has to offer, the colorful and vibrant High Street is also a big draw for tourists and pilgrims alike. Below is an exchange between Neville and Jane
that illustrates the tension that sometimes surrounds the commodification of Glastonbury for tourism purposes:

Neville remarked, “It’s relatively gentle and relatively different so people who like a bit of bottled risk, or a bottled difference, can come here and soak it up for a day or so and then go away.”

Jane added, “A lot of people don’t like that, actually, locally. They want it to look like everywhere else.”

“And good luck with that,” quipped Neville laughing. “Because everywhere else is closing!

Sybil, from the Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre, who sees the town as divided into two distinct populations, expressed similar feelings. For her, there are the Avalonians, or those who identify with the spiritual and mystical characteristics of the town, and the Glastonians, who are, for lack of better terminology, the “normal” locals, who are not always happy about the proliferation of the Avalonian lifestyle. Sybil said:

Safeguarding heritage is quite key I think, to prevent the dilution of everything. [We] are passionate about our High Street. We might not like some of the shops that are on it and a lot of the Glastonians will complain vociferously about, yet another crystal shop, yet another hippy shop, another one selling tat, and the importance of it is though, that all these are independent.

The slow collapse of High Streets around the country is something that many small towns and villages are currently grappling with. As residents choose to purchase their goods and services elsewhere, many locally owned and operated shops have had to close, and end up being replaced by charity shops or franchised chains. Glastonbury has faced some shop closures, and for a while did not have an active bank in town, but it has, for the most part, been able to stave off the demise of their High Street, primarily through the embrace of tourism and their contemporary New Age identity. In addition to irking some of the locals who would like to have a “normal” High Street with hardware shops, multiple banks and grocery stores, the New Age flamboyance
of Glastonbury creates friction for one of the town’s most conservative heritage sites:
Glastonbury Abbey.

**Glastonbury Abbey**

Glastonbury Abbey is perhaps the most obvious example of a hegemonic, authorized heritage narrative in Glastonbury due to the Abbey’s continued relationship with Church of England (COE). The COE represents exactly the kind of institution that resides in Marx’s superstructure. Below I will explain how the authorized narrative is presented throughout the Abbey grounds, creating the circumstances for friction in this contested space. I will then also present the ways in which the authorized narrative is made flexible to accommodate commodification for the sustainability of the site long term.

**Glastonbury Abbey as Contested**

Lucy is a high-ranking member of management at Glastonbury Abbey. Below she describes the plethora of reasons that bring visitors to the Abbey. This diversity in visitor motivations is one of the biggest challenges that employees at the Abbey face in interpreting and presenting the site for the public.

[There] are very many reasons why people come here and we have done a bit of the work on this, although it needs to be done in more detail. Some come because they feel as though they ought to see Glastonbury because loads of people have heard of it and very often they’ve heard of Glastonbury because of the festival, not necessarily because of the Abbey. Many come because of the history, and its Christian, early Christian foundations. Others come for the Arthurian and Joseph of Arimetha legends. Others come just because of the spiritual focus, whatever their beliefs are. And some come because it’s a nice day out (laughs) – Lucy, Glastonbury Abbey

Caroline has been working at the Abbey for the last nine years in a variety of educational roles. For her, the biggest challenge of working for and at the Abbey is finding a delicate balance
between the narratives they are telling at the site, and the variety of narratives that diverse visitor populations want to see.

Glastonbury is one of those places where there are so many different things written about it that for me, the important message to get across is what we actually know, rather than what people suppose may happen, you know. You go to the George and Pilgrim across the road and they’ve got a bedroom where Henry VIII is said to have stayed while he watched the Abbey burn at the Dissolution… You know, the alternative facts … so it’s good to get across the real facts.

But it’s good to get things across in the way that people want to listen. And people want to hear. So in a way, the real story to get across is what people want to learn about the Abbey. Some people come with different learning objectives… So, I think the real story of the Abbey, more than the alternative story of the Abbey you know… so many different stories circulating. The execution of the Abbot, Abbot Whiting, was a black magic rite! Well it wasn’t, you know.

You still have people and… the lady who insists you show her the tomb of Mary Magdalene because she’s read book and she knows it was here. It wasn’t. And, we can’t show anybody any tombs, even the ones that we know were here. So it’s getting the correct story across. But not - not demolishing peoples’ own belief at the same time, because you can’t do that. It’s just wrong.

So this is the contested nature of Glastonbury Abbey. On the one hand, the management at the Abbey aims to tell the “real” history of the place, based on archaeological and archival evidence. On the other hand, many of the visitors coming to Glastonbury are on spiritual paths that do not align with that of the COE and which often rely on alternative interpretation of the Abbey’s history. The tension and friction arises when the visitor’s motivations for visiting, and use of the space, do not align with the master narrative of the site.

When it comes to the spiritual use of the space, the Abbey has a strict policy. According to the brochure given to all visitors, “No services, prayers, music ceremonies or rituals can take place without written permission from the Director of the Abbey.” (Figure 57) Lucy expands on this policy below:
One of our charitable objects, which I’m sure you will have looked at, is to promote religion according to the doctrines of the Church of England. And so, we have to be quite careful not to em… offend people, who think that object is very important. – Lucy

Caroline, as an employee who deals more directly with visitors on a daily basis than Lucy, offers a more detailed explanation of why the restrictions on spiritual use of the space are in place:

Because the site is still used for Christian services, any ceremonies of any sort whether it’s Christian, alternative, whatever, have to be given prior permission. It can be a problem because it stops other visitors getting to those places because you don’t feel that you can interrupt when somebody’s holding some sort of ceremony or prayer. It’s very difficult as a member of the public to be able to say, “Well actually, can we just see here?”... So, we do usually say that no you can’t do that here. It can be a big problem. It really can you know. We’ve had people lighting candles and walking around chanting. And some people find that offensive. So, again, it’s the balance of letting people believe what they want to believe and then not being offensive to anybody no matter what their belief. So it is just finding a balance all the time. – Caroline

During my visits to the Abbey grounds, I observed quiet, inconspicuous spiritual use of the site. For example, it was not uncommon for me to watch a visitor walking barefoot through the ruins, near the location of the altar of the Abbey, where according to certain guidebooks a pair of ley lines reside in the ground. Similarly, I watched a group of Spanish-speaking tourists huddle around the grave marker of King Arthur, placing the palms of their hands on the ground, closing their eyes and engaging with the space. Some members of the group were rejoicing in their presence at the site, hugging and kissing each other. Some were praying. Others meditated. (Figure 58) And yes, their presence as a large group may have obstructed other visitors from engaging with the Arthur grave in that same moment, but for the most part their interaction with the site was quiet and respectful. I also observed visitors placing their hands on the ruins themselves, possibly seeking particular spiritual energies (Figure 59).

Ley lines are hypothetical paths or routes in the landscape that link specific landforms or man-made structures of spiritual or religious significance. They are believed to give off energy, which can be felt and/or traced through the ground. Glastonbury is believed to be the point of convergence for several important ley lines. The scientific community rejects the existence of ley lines.
Figure 57: Scan of the back of the visitor brochure, which includes important bullet points of information for visitors’ use of the Abbey grounds.

Figure 58: A group of visitors surrounds the last known location of King Arthur’s tomb.
Figure 59: A female visitor places her hands on the walls of the Lady Chapel and remains there in a meditative state for a few minutes.

One day a local shaman came to visit wearing a cloak and walking with a staff. Many of the visitors approached her, asked her questions and took photos with her (Figure 60). It was unclear to me if they realized she was not a part of the costumed docents that the Abbey provides for guided tours. But perhaps this instance is a perfect example of how the local New Age identity of Glastonbury and the traditional character of Glastonbury Abbey can create friction.

Figure 60: A local female shaman, wearing the cloak on the left, interacts with visitors at Glastonbury Abbey.
According to Lucy, the main narrative to be told at the Abbey is, “it’s early origins, but based on archaeological evidence.” This approach is reflected in the current exhibit on display in the Abbey’s visitor center. The exhibit is dated, but all Abbey employees are aware of this.

People don’t know where they’re supposed to look first and they can’t tell what follows on from the last bit. So I think it needs to be done in a more chronological order, so people understand which bits come first. And, in a more ordered manner so it flows better... And again, that’s you know, if we did something next year, 10 years time it would be dated. You know. (laughs) So it’s a difficult – heritage sites, we don’t have money to be able to be updating things all the time you know. I mean even our heritage signs, when you look at the one on King Arthur’s grave, it’s almost a museum object in itself. – Caroline

It was put in the 1990’s so it’s quite old now and of course that’s one of the areas that we want to develop as part of our project. We haven’t gone into the detail of the actual exhibits but we have identified the themes for interpretation for the whole site, which we did in an interpretation strategy several years ago. - Lucy

The exhibit itself focuses on the history of the Abbey complex, which includes several buildings, and the people that lived and worked there. An emphasis on architecture and tangible Christian heritage is evidenced in the prominent use of remains from the building. The exhibit quite literally focuses on what is concretely known, rather than any esoteric or mystical interpretation of the past. Included on display are artifacts found during various archaeological digs, as well as a large 3D model of what the Abbey would have looked like before it was destroyed (Figure 61). The dated nature of the exhibit is obvious in its design elements but also in the language used. For example, the title of the panels in Figure 62 is, “Grandly Constructed to Entice the Dullest Minds to Prayer.” This could easily be interpreted as patronizing, and I observed more than a handful of visitors chuckling, or making a point of reading the title aloud to whomever they were visiting with.
Figure 61: View of the current exhibition at Glastonbury Abbey

Figure 62: Close-up of several panels in the exhibition at Glastonbury Abbey

The most recent addition to the museum is a pair of touch-screen kiosks put together through a partnership between the Abbey and a nearby Reading University. As shown in Figure 63, the topics covered in the kiosk focus primarily on the architectural history of the site, but it does also include a tab on “Arthur’s Tomb.” In this section, the text explains the role of Geoffrey of Monmouth in establishing the link between the Abbey and King Arthur. One page
differentiates between facts and myths and reads, “Glastonbury legends developed over 1000 years and they cannot be proven or disproven by a single piece of archaeological evidence.” So unlike the older museum exhibit, this new interactive element does provide information for visitors, not unlike the information provided at Tintagel Castle regarding its connection to King Arthur. Notably, however, there is no mention of other spiritual interpretations of the site, as would be expected if the interpretation must remain true to the values of the Church of England.

Figure 63: The home page of the new touch-screen kiosk inside the Abbey’s visitor center.

While there are plans to update the exhibition in the near future, Caroline believes that, even with a clear master narrative, presenting the history is challenging. For her, the heritage sector is always a few steps behind, due mostly to funding. But beyond that, she says, “You’re never going to find a one-size fits all in a museum or in sites.” This is particularly difficult in a space that faces soft contestation like Glastonbury Abbey.

The exhibition’s dated appearance could be overlooked if the content had a clear order or flow. In my brief observations, many visitors seemed confused and timid as they progressed through the space. Visitors first encounter a large piece of carved stone, seemingly an architectural feature of the once great Abbey, sitting unprotected on top of a wooden pedestal.
There is no interpretation. In many ways this first feature demonstrates the age of the exhibition. At the time it was installed, exhibitions focused more on objects of visual interest rather than educational and engaging interpretation (Alpers 1991; Baxandall 1991).

While the exhibition content discusses both general populations and specific individuals, the exhibition objects focus heavily on the architecture of the abbey and so the overall feel is one of a dehumanized Glastonbury Abbey. Objects on display include those excavated during various archaeological digs – but their accompanying text does not paint a story of how the objects represent human experiences. Similarly, many of the objects are simply pieces of carved stone. Some are accompanied by illustrations or photographs that convey their larger context within the abbey building, but many are simply displayed without enough information for visitors to understand their importance.

Additionally, dense blocks of text obscure what few objects are on display. The text is, in my opinion, in too small a font to be appreciated from any reasonable distance. This is particularly frustrating considering that many of the panels have considerable blocks of blank space in their design. The dense text reads as highly academic, using a generous serving of jargon, which betray curatorial assumptions of visitor education and class. In this sense, and going along with Bryne’s (2007) discussion of Englishness as a race and class-based category, the exhibition feels extremely English.
In many ways the exhibition and the visitor center as a whole feel monastic and austere. Whether this is intentional is unclear. The most effective element in the exhibition is a large glass case inside which resides a detailed 3D scale model of what the abbey would have looked like pre-Dissolution. The recently added touch-screens include a vast amount of updated information. Its various layers and modalities make it a user-friendly source of information. However, the home page reads, “Here you can explore the different phases of building and expansion that the Abbey experience over the centuries, focusing on a few key buildings” for which the buildings include “The Saxon Churches,” “The Cloister,” “The Abbot’s Complex,” “The Lady Chapel,” and “Arthur’s Tomb.” Here again is a focus on the past in purely architectural terms with the exception of the nod to the legendary connection to Arthur.

In the case of King Arthur, the touch-screen content does a good job of explaining the social, political and economic context of the “apparently miraculous discovery” of Arthur and Guinevere’s bones by monks at the Abbey. By discussing the context, it places the Arthur connection in Glastonbury within the larger context of both the county of Somerset and England as a whole. The use of first-person accounts of the event from archival material also works to
humanize the story. Perhaps it is also the familiarity of the character Arthur, but this section of the touch-screen exhibition feels the most accessible.

All that said, perhaps the shortcomings of the exhibition are not so significant considering that I observed many visitors simply skipping the exhibition entirely and going straight outside. This seemed to be the case especially for those visiting the Abbey as part of a large group. On a practical level, the exhibition is simply too small to accommodate large numbers. But on a visitor experience level, it is perhaps most advantageous to wow the visitors with impressive ruins right off the bat. For those visitors who do not take the time to view the exhibition, or are simply not interested in reading copious amounts of didactic text, their experience is based primarily on the physicality of the ruins and the visual interest of a well-kept park.

Outside on the Abbey grounds, interpretation is minimal. Recently however, the Abbey was able to fund the conservation of the Lady Chapel portion of the abbey, investing also in a set of new interpretation panels. These panels also focus primarily on architectural information, highlighting what the Lady Chapel would have looked like before it was destroyed (Figure 65).

Figure 65: New interpretation panels inside the remains of the Lady Chapel.

15 Lady Chapels are small chapels found in larger churches, cathedrals or abbeys, and are dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
All the other outdoor interpretation however, remains old and minimal. There are a series of brown signs that simply mark parts of the abbey among the ruins with phrases like “East Wall of the Cloister.” The most detailed of these marks “King Arthur’s Tomb” and reads:

Site of King Arthur’s Tomb. In the year 1191 the bodies of King Arthur and his Queen were said to have been found on the south side of the Lady Chapel. On 19th April 1278 their remains were removed in the presence of King Edward I and Queen Eleanor to a black marble tomb on this site. This tomb survived until the dissolution of the abbey in 1539.

In many ways, this sign reflects the narrative still told by costumed docents at the Abbey today. During my stay I was able to have conversations with two of the guides, Henry and Charles. Henry is a fairly new addition to the educational team, and explained how his passion for history led him to this job after his doctor told him he needed to get out of the corporate world for his health. Henry’s main goal as a guide is for visitors to not “come away thinking this is just a ruin.” The most common question he’s gotten relates to his costume, and is whether or not he is a real monk.

Charles has been a guide at the Abbey for two seasons now, and according to him no two tours are ever the same. He explained how some guides use a more character-oriented approach while other are more academic and focus on the chronology of the place. Charles places himself in the latter category. He likes to have conversations with his tour groups, rather than lecturing them. Charles said that ley lines and energies are outside his theology but that he knows a lot of people come to the abbey for that, and that it shouldn’t be underestimated. He acknowledges that there are “intense beliefs” and “emotional investment” attached to the Abbey and he doesn’t want to provoke an ill feeling for any visitor. When I asked him “what is the biggest challenge in your job?” he replied: “Practically, the weather. Intellectually, achieving a balance to meet all visitor needs.”
For those visitors not engaging with costumed guides, there is little interpretation available outside the visitor center. In addition to the brown signs there is one large outdoor panel that includes an illustration of what the Abbey would have looked like intact, so visitors can look at the ruins in the background and imagine a complete building. When asked about the most difficult challenge in heritage management, Lucy replied:

Meeting everybody’s expectations. Because to build on the point I’ve just made, everybody has a very different view of what’s important to them. Unfortunately they don’t always recognize that other people have a different view. And that particularly also comes into play when there’s a spiritual dimension as there is a very strong one here. So it’s balancing people’s beliefs and expectations.

Here Lucy acknowledges the diversity of interpretation of the importance of the Abbey, but she remains adamant in the historical and archaeologically based narrative the Abbey currently promotes. In addition to the individuals and groups that continue to use the Abbey grounds in their own spiritual ways, another form of resistance to the Abbey’s hegemonic narrative comes in the form of tours run by local independent guides (Figure 66).

Figure 66: A scan of the brochure for a local, independently run tour company.

While the Abbey does not officially condone these tours, they cannot, in a practical sense, prevent them from happening. On these tours, led by guides whose spiritual orientation does not
align with the COE, visitors hear alternative histories and alternative interpretations of not just
the Abbey, but all the heritage sites in Glastonbury. The tour company featured in Figure 66,
Spirit of Avalon Tours, states in their brochure, “We invite you to explore the historic, spiritual
and metaphysical sites and majesty that is Avalon… We will follow in the footsteps of our
ancestors along the Dragon Path through this enchanted land.” The Dragon Path refers to the
Dragon Line, one of the ley lines believed to run under parts of Glastonbury, and using the name
Avalon refers to the legend that Arthur was buried here. It was not unusual for me to see one of
these guides, dressed in colorful, eclectic clothing, narrating a mythological, rather than
archeologically supported history of the Abbey. One of these tour leaders, Tristan, who is not
affiliated with Spirit of Avalon, had this to say about his own tours:

My tours I put out there to attract more spiritual people and my main interest is in Joseph
of Arimethea and Mary Magdalene, who I strongly believe came here and built the first
ever Christian church here. That’s my kind of main interest personally. But, that brings in
King Arthur stories and the Celtic Christian church stories and everything else that came
from there… also, it weaves in Druids and kind of the Goddess tradition here, because
they all worked together back then, there was no separation. And I think that lack of
separation that Glastonbury was built on many thousands of years ago, has served us up
until modern day. There are a lot of very strong characters that have tried to claim
Glastonbury in a certain way, or in a certain fashion, but they don’t succeed because it is
a place for all traditions, all beliefs, to exist together, you know. And we’ve got lots of
different histories and focuses that are in the town, but I think they all mix together really.

Tristan spoke of his interpretation of the death of the last Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey during
our interview. His version is exactly the version that Caroline mentions in her interview as being
an alternative fact. According to Tristan:

Abbot Whiting was hung drawn and quartered on the Tor. Normally Abbots were hung
on the grounds of their Abbey you know, quite more humanely done, but this was
literally a black magic ritually and dragging him up the High Street up to the top of the
Tor where he was hung, drawn and quartered, which do you know what that means?
He’s hung and before he died he’s taken down, his innards are drawn out, painfully
drawn out, and then his body was cut into four pieces. His head was cut off and put on a
spike outside the pilgrims entrance to the Abbey, his genitals in his mouth, and then the
four parts of his body were sent to Ilchester, Bath, Bridgewater and Wells to create a
circle around Glastonbury and basically, to tell them if you don’t behave, this will happen to you. But I believe it was complete planned, black magic ritual to disperse any spiritual leadership in this town. And then once that had been created the cooperation of Glastonbury was created … so yeah there are, there are those in town that really are not happy about having alternative people here and would love to the stories that we share to disappear one day. But it’s not gonna happen. They’re gonna have to accept that.

Tristan started giving tours in the early 2000s, as a part-time way to earn some extra money. He now runs his business full-time. So while these independent tours represent a refutation of the authorized narrative presented at Glastonbury Abbey, and a resistance to other hegemonic forms of heritage, they also represent one of the ways in which the space is commodified for tourist consumption.

Glastonbury Abbey as Commodified

Despite the Abbey’s attempts to present the narrative that is supported by archaeological evidence and authorized by the Church of England, many of the visitors to the Abbey are interested in and invested in other stories associated with the place. This tension between the desire to promote a single narrative while also bringing in as many visitors as possible to financially sustain the site is illustrated in the banner that sits at the entrance to the Abbey (Figure 67). The first block of text reads, “Discover the history, legends and spirit of one of England’s most important and fascinating abbeys.” This is fairly generic and vague, but does use language like “legends” and “spirit” which speak to narratives outside the authorized one that the Abbey’s management aims to tell. It is also telling that the second block of text, which reads “Renowned as the legendary burial place of King Arthur and the earliest Christian foundation in Britain,” places the Arthur myth before the archaeologically-known early Christian foundations of the site. So while Arthur, and other alternative or mystical history attached to this space takes
a back seat in the actual on-site interpretation, the banner enticing people to come in puts them front and center.

Figure 67: Welcome and way-finding sign at the Abbey’s entrance along the High Street.

In addition to the ticket sales of individual visitors and families, the Abbey relies heavily on the visitation of coach groups as well as school groups. This dependency means that the education department is often at the mercy of a changing national and international curriculum, requiring the Abbey’s programming to be flexible to meet the needs of students and their teachers. Caroline explains how school groups from France often visit English sites related to King Arthur:

If you talking myth and legend, you can include King Arthur in there. We get about 6,000 French children visit us a year, and they come here predominantly because it was said to have been the burial place of King Arthur. You know, they have, they go to Tintagel for
the birth of King Arthur, Cadbury Castle because that’s said to be Camelot, and then here because it’s said to be the death of Arthur.

So while the main authorized narrative at the Abbey dismisses the Arthurian connection, the Abbey provided programming related to Arthur to continue bringing in school children from overseas. Similar to the school groups, Glastonbury Abbey receives many visitors who are part of a bus tour around the country.

We get a lot of coach parties who come here because they want to know about King Arthur. Equally we get quite a few who come to discuss Joseph of Arimethea. And again, it’s a founding story. We have no way of knowing there was any fact in it or not. It’s a story. But they come here because for them it’s a valid part of a story. So, I should say, we have quite a large proportion who come here for the myth and legends. – Caroline, Glastonbury Abbey employee

Here Caroline reveals that despite the goals the Abbey’s management might have in promoting a single authorized narrative, the need for financial sustainability requires them to also meet the needs of as many visitors as possible – even if those visitors’ expectations do not align with that authorized narrative.

Although the Abbey appears to be somewhat flexible for the sake of remaining sustainable, it has also managed to avoid any claims of Disneyfication. While the Abbey includes costumed guides, the interpretation itself is quite sterile. No one is dressed up as King Arthur and there are no programs that act out the finding of the bones of Arthur and Guinevere. According to Lucy, the events that the Abbey chooses to host must align with the predominant authorized narrative of the site:

So, even with our events program, we have a very lively program of events, which gets bigger each year, which ranges from theater, huge music concerts to little recitals in the Abbot’s Kitchen… reenactments all that kind of thing, they’re all related to themes connected with the Abbey and we try and measure everything that we do against our sort of fundamental ethos. So we wouldn’t ever do anything that we didn’t feel was in keeping with the Abbey. But that is quite a juggling act. (laughs) – Lucy
Those in management at the Abbey seem to be aware of their need to remain relevant and sustainable, but adhere strictly to their overarching, authorized narrative in making any decisions about marketing and developing the visitor base of the Abbey.

[We] have the education and learning arm for all our visitors, not just schools… which we’ve got to balance with marketing and developing our business to make the Abbey sustainable. At the same time preserving what people call the tranquility of the place, and the natural environment, which is very important to our visitors. - Lucy

So, while the very real stone and concrete barrier of the Abbey walls normally keeps the chaos of the High Street at bay, the wall cannot keep the esotericism out 100%. The Abbey grounds, as a complete landscape, means different things to different people. The hegemonic authority of the Abbey’s management, influenced by their on-going relationship with the COE, presents one authorized narrative of the space. This creates friction and a soft contestation of the heritage presented at Glastonbury Abbey.

**Glastonbury Tor**

The Tor is the most recognizable feature of the landscape for miles around. A 1950s Ward Lock *Guide to Bath, Cheddar, Wells and Glastonbury* describes it like this:

From whichever direction one approaches, Glastonbury Tor is seen rising like a beacon out of the surrounding marsh and meadow, and it is fitting that the Tor should be our introduction to Glastonbury, for legends tell us it is to the Tor that Glastonbury owes its foundation (142).

Unlike Glastonbury Abbey, Glastonbury Tor creates much less friction and contestation in the community. Below I will explain how it is the National Trust’s decision to limit interpretation and focus on the conservation of the landscape that enables this site to be quite a peaceful, uncontested space.
Glastonbury Tor as Contested

The Tor is a unique and special place. It is part landscape, part heritage site. When asked to describe the Tor, two of the National Trust rangers that manage it said:

I think it’s a [globally] important site … because of all the layers of history and the myths and the legends and everything else that goes with it but um… it’s so diverse - what it means to people, you know, and I just love the place and I love - you know I’m not really religious in any sense, but for a lot of people it’s a religious place. All religions, you know, it’s not just like one, so there’s so many layers there. That’s why it’s such an important place… I’m probably one of the last people to pick up on any of that, you know I don’t go there to… for paganism or whatever, you know, but I’m glad that that’s there and that diversity is there, you know. That makes the place a rich place, you know, for me. – Hugh, National Trust Ranger

[The Tor] has such strong links to the community. And you know, all around the world. People come to visit it and they feel that they’ve got a really strong connection to it. – Amelia, National Trust Ranger

When asked what type of people visit the Tor and why, Amelia, Hugh and Susan said:

Am I allowed to say hippies? (laughs) Lots of and lots of different people but the kind of people you see up there the most are very, very spiritual people. People really, who are interested in ley lines and crystals and that sort of thing… um and traveling instead of being stationary in a house… yeah, mostly that kind of person but then you’ll also see families, you see foreign visitors as well, who just want to check out what Glastonbury is about… heard about the legends and want to get a bit closer to that. Hippies…and tourists! (laughs). The landscape is very interesting. You’ve got that one, hump on a really, really flat environment, so you get a really good view. But really, it’s to do with the legends I think. And the spiritualism as well. – Amelia, National Trust Ranger

Everybody. All walks of life. Age groups. It just has that something special about it you know, it’s there, it’s open to everybody and I mean, when I’m up there, I bump into people from all nationalities um… you know, all varying reasons why they’re up there. It’s not just on the tourist trail it’s that people are going there for a reason often, you know? Spiritual reasons. That’s it’s main, yeah I would say, it’s a very spiritual place. – Hugh, National Trust Ranger

I was actually amazed at how eclectic that mix is and with a lot of National Trust sites you tend to get middle aged or the older generations. I think Glastonbury Tor bucks that. It’s completely different because you get a lot of people from abroad that come because of the mystical aspects of Glastonbury, but you get tons of families, and you do get older people but I would have said … it’s across the board much more than some of the other National Trust sites. It’s different. It’s got… so many heritages that people from…people who probably wouldn’t necessarily always visit historic sites, come to it because of its
unusualness… You talk to people and there’s just people from all walks of life who are there for different reasons. Some are walking their dogs, some are coming to stand at the top and look at the stars, or the sky. Some of them just bringing their children… so I think, I couldn’t put one reason on why people go there. I think it’s one of the broadest reasons. – Susan, National Trust Volunteer

These few interview excerpts begin to illustrate how the Tor is a special, meaningful place to a diverse range of people, and that the visitors represent and embrace that diversity (see Figure 68 and 69).

Figure 68: Visitors atop the Tor the first weekend in April 2017.

Figure 69: Visitors atop the Tor, gesturing to landmarks in the distance.
Unlike Glastonbury Abbey, the Tor features very little interpretation. Aside from the signage featuring the National Trust logo and site name, there are only three interpretive panels on the entire site. Two identical panels are placed at the bottom of the Tor, at the two main entrances to the site, and a third is mounted inside the remains of the tower on the top of the Tor. Figure 70 is the panel posted at the entrances of the site.

The opening text of the panel reads: “Welcome to Glastonbury Tor, one of the most famous and sacred landmarks in the West Country. From the summit at 158 metres, you can get amazing views over three counties – Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire.” This opening text emphasizes the landscape and the beauty of the views, which is among the visitor motivations listed by my interviewees. The next section “What is the tor?” reads:

Tor is a West Country word of Celtic origin meaning hill. The conical shape of Glastonbury Tor is natural – due to its rocks. It is made up of horizontal bands of clay and limestone with a cap of hard sandstone. The sandstone resist erosion, but the clays and limestone have worn away, resulting in the steep slopes.

Based on the order in which information appears on the panel, the second most important piece of information focuses on the geology of the site. The next section continues with this theme, by emphasizing the landscape and the environment:

Before modern drainage, the tor in winter would have towered as an island above the flooded Somerset Levels. The terraces on the slopes date back to medieval times, when the hillside was one of the dry places where people could grow crops and graze animals.

So the initial emphasis in this panel is on what is scientifically known about the landscape, rather than any historical and legendary connections to the site. The next section, “A place of pilgrimage” however, reads:

The tor has been a place of pilgrimage for over 10,000 years. Many thousands of people still visit each year, some for its links with religion, legends and beliefs, and other because it is such a renowned landmark.
In two brief sentences, this interpretation acknowledges multiple claims on the importance of the site, without favoring one over another. The final section of the panel explains the “History of the tower” and reads:

On the summit is St. Michael’s Tower, part of a 14\textsuperscript{th}-century church. It was built to replace a previous church which had been destroyed by an earthquake in 1275. The second church lasted until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539. At this time, the tor was the scene of the hanging of Richard Whiting, the last Abbot of Glastonbury.

This small but dense panel provides visitors with a brief overview of the Tor, placing emphasis on what is scientifically known about its geological and environmental importance, while still acknowledging its spiritual relevance to a vast variety of people. Rather than viewing the limited interpretation as some sort of evasion, I believe the National Trust aims to appear welcoming to as many potential visitors as possible.

Figure 70: The National Trust’s interpretive panel placed at the entrance to the Tor landscape.

The National Trust rangers and volunteer that I interviewed all agreed that minimal interpretation is best, but also agree that there is room for improvement, primarily in the physical state of the actual panels themselves. Below are some examples of their perspectives:
I think the amount is just about right. I think you want one board at each of the entrances and then I think people should be left to discover it on their own really so I don’t – I wouldn’t want to see lots of interpretation boards at the top. So just upon entering you can read a little bit if you like, if you want to find out more you can find out more online, but I think it’s just enough. Just in a really bad state! – Amelia, National Trust Ranger

Well at the moment you can see with your own eyes, there’s fairly old interpretation. It’s just got worn out because it’s been there at least 15, possibly nearly 20 years now. It’s just looking very poor. The information there is trying to cover a lot of things so it’s kind of acknowledging the size and shape of the place, and what draws people there. There’s mention about the labyrinth there. And there’s mention about, I think, Arthurian legend. There’s certainly stuff about archaeology on there, and a little bit about the history, so it’s covering an awful lot of things at present. – George, National Trust Ranger

I think you’ve gotta keep it very basic. I think, I don’t think you need any interpretation there. I think [visitors] interpret, you know it’s there - it’s what they interpret when they go there. And you want to, you know, I don’t think it’s something we should display necessarily, but you want to dig a little deeper, you don’t have to go very far to find out an awful lot of things about Glastonbury Tor. It’s all out there. You know. So, um, it’s a sort of something you can take to any level you want really. I don’t think us stamping a mark on it can improve it. I don’t think there’s anything we can do to make it any more than it already is. Quite the opposite. Less is more. – Hugh, National Trust Ranger

The consensus appears to be that the amount of interpretation should be equal to or less than what is currently at the site. Other members of the Glastonbury community who are not directly involved with or work for the National Trust also echo this sentiment. Sybil, who works for the Glastonbury Pilgrim Reception Centre, does not believe it is the role of the National Trust to interpret the many ways the site is spiritually important for visitors.

The National Trust is very much set up to take care of those sites. I think a little bit more openness that other people have these beliefs about that could be there... But as to promoting it, no I don’t think that’s their job whatsoever. They just look after the hill (laughs). – Sybil

The less is more approach is not only reflected in the way the site is interpreted, but also in the absence of its commodification.
Glastonbury Tor as Commodified

As a National Trust site that is free and open at all visitors, this site does not include the usual exit-through-the-gift-shop or steep admission cost dynamics that other National Trust sites, like grand country houses, might face. In fact, it is the lack of commodification that several people referred to in their interviews when describing why the place was special.

It’s about what’s there now and what we leave behind for other people. For me. [It’s] important that it remains, you know, what it is. With Glastonbury it’s a really special place, you know, it’s steeped in history and for that to be ruined or changed for me would be, you know, a terrible thing. So, that’s part of why I buy into this … don’t want it to change… I want it to stay like it is. It’s had a lot of, you know, Glastonbury town is gradually starting to creep up the hill, you know, so for me, I don’t want to see any more of that. I just want that place left alone and that is basically it. (laughs) And we’ll just keep it like it is… I mean you most likely to go to Tintagel, either by car or coach or you know, it’s on the tourist route in that sense … Whereas [in Glastonbury] you go to the town and walk around… it’s a different kind of thing and long may it reign, you know… I’d hate for there to be a car park [by the Tor] or something like that appear. You know what I mean? It’s not been spoiled. You just walk it. It’s just there. – Hugh, National Trust Ranger

You see you’ve got places like Stonehenge but they’ve become commercialized and Glastonbury hasn’t. Glastonbury is still Glastonbury. The Tor is still the Tor. Nothing’s been put around it, to spoil its peace. And I think that’s huge. I mean I think of me going up it as a 19-year-old, and it was the same as it is now. I mean obviously steps and things have been done, but the actual Tor is no different. And there aren’t many places where you can say that. Glastonbury has stayed true to itself, I think. – Susan, National Trust Volunteer

These comments each refer to Glastonbury as some kind of pure, untainted space. The idea that commercialization, or commodification of the space, could ruin what makes the Tor so special permeates each of these comments.

The National Trust hosts a handful of events at the Tor at different times of the year. These events involve the local community but are also advertised more widely to bring in other visitors. These events are usually free of charge and reflect some aspect of local heritage or tradition. Amelia described one of the events during her interview:
Organized a Wassail at the beginning of the year. Do you know what a Wassail is? It’s where you have a bit of a celebration for the apple trees basically. So people get together and it’s an excuse to have a party in the dark months when people need a party. That’s what it’s been about, so it’s years and years old tradition – get together, drink a bit of cider, sing a few songs, have a ceremony, toast the apple trees and they bring you in a good harvest for the year. … So I was there a fair bit around then trying to set it up and get people involved, and that was very important for heritage I think. – Amelia, National Trust Ranger

And unlike the Abbey, the National Trust does not bar the use of the Tor for other spiritual or traditional ceremonies and activities. The Tor is regularly used in solstice and equinox celebrations like Beltane and Samhain. Glastonbury town hosts a plethora of conferences and meetings for various groups throughout the year and it is not uncommon for those groups, like for example those attending the annual Goddess Conference, to include a pilgrimage up the Tor in their itinerary. Praying, meditating, singing, chanting, even hand-fasting ceremonies are all allowed and regularly performed on the Tor without fear of judgment or being asked to leave. The Tor is a unique and special place that remarkably does not appear to face the same issues of contestation and commodification faced by other heritage sites in Glastonbury.

**Chalice Well Gardens**

The Chalice Well Gardens are owned and operated by an independent trust. Surrounded by a tall wall on all sides, this site sits near the foot of Glastonbury Tor. This space is primarily a spiritual place for reflection and meditation. There is no interpretation on the site in the form of panels or signage. Visitors receive a small brochure upon entering, but that is the only guiding information given. Like the Tor, the absence of interpretation allows the space to remain fairly uncontested and uncommodified.
The ethos of the Chalice Well Gardens can be summed up in the phrase, “Many paths, one source.” This refers to the wide range of spiritual paths followed by the visitors to the Chalice Well, and the single, pure source of water that pumps 24,000 gallons of water through the gardens each day. One of my participants, Neville, describes a community event held in 2012, which culminated in a gathering of representatives from several faiths inside the Chalice Well Gardens:

One of the reasons Glastonbury itself is as fascinating as it is to academics because there is no real reason why fifty separate faith groups should be able to coexist in such a small place. (laughs) And yet, they do. One of the other things that they did at the Chalice Well, two or three years ago now, was they had one spokes person from every faith group in a circle, all spend 30 seconds or a minute just saying hello and welcome and this is who I am and this is what I do, and that was … it may or may not have bonded that particular group of individuals, but as a statement of intent it was enormously strong and that was organized by the Pilgrim Reception Centre who are also very strongly for the multi-faith aspect. – Neville, Glastonbury Community Member and Shop Owner

Another example of the “many paths, one source” perspective comes in the form of the Glastonbury Moment, which is a prayer that has been circulated throughout the community and across the world. Representatives of the Chalice Well and the Pilgrim Reception Centre help spread this message. Copies of the prayer (Figure 71) are available in several places around town for locals, tourists and pilgrims alike.
The Chalice Well’s physical separation from the rest of town, as well as its independent management, free this heritage site from participating in direct contestation at the site. Based on my interview with Francis, a member of the board for the Chalice Well, the separation is somewhat intentional.

It is just out of town and it is perceived as that, and there were various attempts over the years to get it more into town, but town you know, is a certain thing, it’s a market place. And it has a lot of different energies going on. I think the Abbey comes under pressure as well. - Francis

I did not get the sense that the separation was based in a negative judgment of the town and what it offered, but that the town and the Chalice Well simply had different goals. In some cases though, the Chalice Well has been accused of being insular. During my interview with Sybil she said:

So there is communication going on but, five years ago, you wouldn’t get Chalice Well communicating with the rest of the town in any way, shape or form. They would open up their gates and say come to us. But they would never come out and into the community.
And, that place is such integral part of the Glastonbury heritage, it is used to their own advantage rather than for the benefit of the town. – Sybil

In this sense then, the soft contestation around Chalice Well does not happen within the site itself, but between the site and the rest of the town.

*Chalice Well Gardens as Commodified*

One of the main differences between the Tor and the Chalice Well is that there is an admission charge to enter the gardens. There is also small gift shop at the bottom of the gardens, near the exit, and proceeds from this shop go toward the maintenance of the gardens themselves. The gardens are also available for events in the hours before they open to the public in the morning and a few hours after they close in the afternoon. So while the Tor and the Chalice Well share the characteristic of being landscapes without much interpretation, the Chalice Well does have a slightly more commodified element.

During my time in Glastonbury I was able to participate in a ceremonial foot washing at the Chalice Well. There was a small fee to attend this event, £4, and it had to be paid online during registration. I was one of the first people to arrive for the event. We met in “King Arthur’s Court” inside the gardens, at the edge of the healing pool. Any visitor is welcome to walk through the healing pool, but this was a more formalized foot washing. Once everyone had arrived, we stood in a circle and held hands. All the other participants had brought one or more friends along, so I was the odd person out. But the atmosphere was welcoming. The woman leading the ceremony, Lydia, encouraged us open our minds and our hearts to the “spirit of the Chalice Well,” explaining that this was “a holy place.” We then paired up with a partner who would guide us through the ceremony. Each person took the shoes off their partner’s feet and then helped them walk through the healing pool. We then dried our partner’s feet before applying
essential oils. At first it was awkward. I was doing this with a complete stranger, but I attempted to keep the ethos of the Chalice Well in mind to make sure the person I was paired with wasn’t getting the short end of the stick, so to speak. We were all women except for one man, who had accompanied his partner to the ceremony. I was the youngest by probably ten years and I was the only foreigner based purely on an observation of accents. Despite feeling so out of place, the ceremony and those participating in it made me feel welcome. Once everyone had completed the foot washing, Lydia brought us back into a circle for a closing prayer. She then hugged each of us before we left (Figure 72).

Figure 72: Foot washing participants embrace before leaving the Chalice Well Gardens.

Events like this are common in Glastonbury. They are experiential. But they are also part of the commodification of Glastonbury. In this case, the fee was minimal. There are individuals and organizations in Glastonbury though, that charge larger fees for similar services, whether it’s foot washing ceremonies, or yoga and meditation instruction, or a realignment of chakras. All of these performances are linked with the spiritual nature of Glastonbury, but they also offer a source of income for its residents.
Overall, compared with the Abbey, the Chalice Well is not a contested space. As a landscape, rather the ruins of a historical building, the space is there to be enjoyed, rather than interpreted. Those wanting to learn more about the history of the Chalice Well can easily find that information online, or in one of the many books sold in the gift shop. It shares this trait with the Tor. But like the Abbey, it must remain financial sustainable, so there is an admission cost and there is minimal programming that requires a fee for participation.

Summary

As in Tintagel, tourism plays a significant role in the livelihood and identity of Glastonbury. There is a tension in finding a balance between remaining true to its ethos of “unity in diversity” while also commodifying certain parts of its heritage to remain financial sustainable. There is also an added pressure for certain sites, like Glastonbury Abbey, to remain true to a single authorized heritage narrative, which can cause friction in a town that identifies as being welcoming to such a huge variety of spiritual paths.

I mean in a sense Glastonbury has always been multicultural because it’s attracted people from all over the world. It speaks to people of many different faiths and beliefs. – Lucy

You can’t afford particularly in Glastonbury, not afford in a financial sense but in a way of offending people who come, if you promote too much of a belief system one way or another, because the world is so much smaller and the world is very different to what it was 50 years ago, never mind 500 years ago. (laughs) – Caroline, Glastonbury Abbey employee

For both Caroline and Lucy, the Abbey is a place that requires a nuanced balancing act. Both of them recognize the authority of the Church of England over the space, but also do not aim to fully discredit other people’s beliefs. Alongside the friction that can be caused by the presence of so many differing narratives, Glastonbury experiences tensions around the commodification of their heritage, too.
There’s also the commercial aspect of it… Glastonbury is really a spiritual tourist town, economically, in many respects. And so there is an inevitable element of competition that people have a shop, selling a particular product, or if they have a book shop, selling a particular kind of books … For example, there is a new Christian book shop in town, which is you know quite remarkable, on the lane by St. John’s Church. A couple of people are specializing in Orthodox Christian materials, which you know, very unusual but Frank, the guy whose opened it, has recently joined the Greek Orthodox Church. Now very countercultural, of the current New Age culture in Glastonbury, so obviously they won’t be having many of your standard pagan, occult, magic books in the shop because its against the principles of the shop and likewise, you wouldn’t see those kind of books in many other book shops. So, even with an element of tolerance there economic and ideological competition with people each hoping that they will get their share of the passing trade and interest the people visiting the town.

Like I said earlier, tourism is important in the town. It has a name and a reputation and deservedly so, and even though are lots of B&Bs here, the market is not saturated. During the peak season there are always times when people can’t find somewhere to stay here. And for Kate and me, it’s really a sense of vocation. When we started coming here ten years ago, we both had demanding jobs in London at the time. It was refuge. It was the opposite of the stresses and strains of the big city life. It was being on retreat. It was green and pleasant and all the associations with Glastonbury and we want to offer that to other people. – Timothy

Timothy and his wife are an example of community members who are planning to get involved in tourism. Neville and Jane have owned several establishments in town but now run only a single shop on the High Street. Neville had this to say when I asked him about heritage in Glastonbury: “The heritage is here … is sold. It’s sold by the pound – Neville.” Commenting on the commodification of heritage, particularly Arthurian legend, Jane had this to say:

We don’t make much off Arthur here really… I think we could do a lot more but I think I’d be a little bit reluctant to see it go down the sort of Disney route. And Tintagel is a bit tacky and does make a big thing about Arthur because that’s kind of all Tintagel has got. Whereas Glastonbury has lots of things. – Jane

For Jane, perhaps, Tintagel is a one-trick-pony, which requires it to make the absolute most of what it does have to offer. Glastonbury, on the other, had “quite a lot for a little town” and is able to be more flexible and accommodating. But generally, there is a sense that too much
commodification and/or commercialization would lead to a dilution of what makes Glastonbury so special.

In the last chapter of this dissertation I will discuss in further detail the conclusions I was able to draw from this research on Tintagel and Glastonbury. I will close this chapter with a quote from my interview with Timothy, as he describes Glastonbury.

I would say most people I know in Glastonbury, even if they have no interest in Christianity at all, feel there is something special about the place, something special about the Abbey ruins that they can’t quite put their finger on, and I know, out and out Pagans and Druids who get sentimental and misty-eyed thinking about what was done to the last Abbot, and the wreckage of the Abbey by Henry VIII and his goons. And something is speaking to them across belief. Something which is somehow to do with heritage… Sometimes living in Glastonbury feels like living in a reenactment village and I love that. It’s not so rational. - Timothy
CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter will contextualize the results of this research within the broader themes laid out in the introduction and literature review. First, I return to the research questions that guided the project, unpacking a bit further the ways in which the results answered those questions. Second, I will discuss the contributions that this project stands to make in two areas of the political economy approach as well as the anthropological study of heritage. Following that, I will explain the applied dimensions of the project, particularly what it could mean within the context of the continuously unfolding Brexit situation in the United Kingdom. And finally, the limitations of this research are laid out, along with recommendations and suggestions for future research that can be built upon this project.

Returning to the Research Questions

The two assumptions on which this research was based were: (1) that heritage is a present-centered social process and (2) that heritage and national identity have been linked since the rise of the nation-state and capitalism. These two assumptions, in combination with the post-Brexit socio-political context of Britain, led to the following four research questions:

1. What Authorized Heritage Narratives (AHNs) influence the (re)production and consumption of heritage in Tintagel and Glastonbury?
2. What types of “imagined communities” are reflected in the heritage presented in these two villages?
3. In what ways might heritage in these two villages be contested or controversial?
4. How are the AHNs commodified for consumption through tourism and how might this amplify or diminish this contestation?
Below I will revisit these questions and demonstrate how the results of the research have further illuminated my understanding of heritage, identity and tourism in Tintagel and Glastonbury.

**Authorized Heritage Narratives and Contestation**

The contested nature of the heritage in both Glastonbury and Tintagel reflects how identities compete with each other for legitimacy and hegemony. As demonstrated in the results chapters, one of the main themes that arose from my ethnographic fieldwork was the idea that heritage was contested in various ways in both Tintagel and in Glastonbury. In both places, the contestation is what Bruner (2005) would refer to as a “soft” rather than “hard” contestation. In Tintagel, the most contested site is Tintagel Castle. In Glastonbury it is Glastonbury Abbey. Both sites face similar challenges. Their link with the legendary King Arthur has brought people to visit over the centuries, but it is a history that cannot be proven.

At Tintagel Castle, the remains of the medieval castle, though picturesque, are not what make the site significant in an archaeological sense – it is the Dark Ages settlement. But as demonstrated by Dorothy’s comment below, visitors are rarely drawn to Tintagel to learn about the significant Dark Ages settlement that existed on the famous headland.

[It’s] a tricky one because you know, [English Heritage] obviously want to concentrate on the actual, real history of the place, like the Dark Age settlement, real history as such... even though you know, there probably wasn’t a person here called Arthur, I don’t think they’re every going to separate it. Because it’s almost like you’ve got to have the King Arthur connection in order for people to get interested in the previous history. – Dorothy, English Heritage Employee

The contestation at Tintagel Castle is the entanglement of a centuries’ old legend with contemporary archaeological knowledge and heritage management. And while English Heritage may appear to be promoting a single authorized heritage narrative that avoids King Arthur, the
decisions made regarding the Merlin carving and the Gallos sculpture illustrate the continued struggle and contestation.

At Tintagel Castle, the historical tensions between Cornwall and the rest of England lie just under the surface. Efforts by English Heritage to incorporate “Cornishness” into the site are noticeable, particularly the use of the Cornish language on the new outdoor interpretation panels and on the facades of the ticket office and gift shop. While the majority of visitors won’t be able to read it, in the same way many visitors cannot read the Welsh on signs in Wales, it gives the site a sense of identity separate from “English” – something unique. However, the decision to name the sculpture Gallos instead of Arthur is not, in my opinion, as effective. Nearly every visitor that I observed referred to the sculpture as Arthur, and why should they think otherwise when there is a carving called Merlin outside the cave on the beach? In this case, the omnipresence of Arthurian legend distinctly overshadows any attempts to create a visual representation of a powerful Cornish leader.

In addition to adding elements of the Cornish language, the new outdoor interpretation is primarily written in the historical present, which aims to create empathy between the visitor and the past about which they are reading. This kind of emotional connection is part and parcel of a “good story” which aligns with English Heritage’s tagline “Step into England’s Story.”

At Glastonbury Abbey, the link with King Arthur has been critical since the monks claimed to have found the bones of Arthur and Guinevere in the graveyard on the abbey grounds. At the time, the find brought pilgrims, who in turn brought money, which helped the monks rebuild the abbey following a disastrous fire. Today, the link with Arthur continues to bring visitors and pilgrims alike, but it creates a soft contestation at the site. The Abbey’s relationship with the Church of England, and the management’s decision to interpret the site based only on its
early, archaeologically-known origins, marginalizes a significant number of visitor motivations which are based on other spiritual paths.

A large wooden cross sits in the lawn between the visitor centers and the start of the Abbey ruins. A plaque of the cross reads, “The Cross. A symbol of our faith. The gift of Queen Elizabeth II marks a Christian sanctuary so ancient that only legend can record its origin.” My guess is that less than half of the visitors to Glastonbury Abbey read this small plaque. However, those that do would get a very clear sense of the Abbey’s on-going connection with the Church of England and by extension, the British Monarchy. There is no other clear indication of this connection. I think there are pros and cons to making this connection obvious to visitors.

On the one hand, a clear relationship with the Church of England might better convey the continued Christian sanctity of the space and discourage locals and tourists alike from using the space as a kind of community park. However, if this were the case, the Abbey’s management would appear contradictory, even hypocritical, by hosting its annual series of events on the property, including outdoors plays and festivals. A period-costumed guide would seem out of place if it was made clear that the Abbey was a “Christian sanctuary.” And so here the tension surrounding commodification and the creation of tourist experiences manifests itself.

But I think perhaps its use as a community space is the best way to diversify the stories told at the Abbey. People from all walks of life, not just Christian ones, can enjoy the space. I think the management is on the right track, but could do more to appear more welcoming, particularly in terms of the exhibition inside the visitor center.

At Glastonbury Abbey the legitimacy of the narratives told through the visitor center’s exhibition and minimal outdoor interpretation is contested and challenged by the independent tour guides who present alternative stories. These tour guides are profiting from the
commodification of what in Holtorf’s (2005) view are simply better stories for visitor consumption. Even if those participating in the alternative tours do not believe everything the guide tells them, the experience itself seems to have more value for them. In discussing visitor interactions with period-costumed guides at Hampton Court, Baillie et al. (2010) explain that:

Through this activity the visitors remained conscious of the fact that are *not in the past*, yet they were happy to *make believe* that the interpreter was from the past. This practice enabled them to learn from the interpreter and have fun during their *value added* visitor experience (61).

In the absence of a fully engaging exhibition, it is this type of suspension of disbelief and “fun” while learning about a “good story” that the Abbey could do a better job of providing. I do not believe that “good stories” and faithfulness to the historical and archaeological record are mutually exclusive. The Abbey’s costumed guides are a step in the right direction but their costumes are confusingly from various periods in time and, as far as I was able to observe, mainly provide the same dehumanized stories given in the current exhibition.

In resistance of the Abbey’s authorized heritage narrative, independent local guides have stepped in to fill what they see as gaps in the interpretation of the site. While this illustrates a contestation at the site, Tristan, one such local guide, does not believe it precludes a working relationship between the Abbey and the alternative community in Glastonbury.

They honor me and who I am and what I do, in the Abbey, because they know I bring a lot of people there and I’m not a threat to them. I’m honest. And down to Earth, as I see it. But I always say this is how I see it. You know, they have their thing, and I would never work for them because I could never not say what I believe goes on there, but I think it works as it is now. I would like to see the Abbey entering into the spirit of Glastonbury and the community of Glastonbury a bit more … but they’re good people you know. And they’re hands are tied by the Church. But the Church doesn’t actually involve themselves very much, they just say no you can’t do that. But generally, it works. I don’t think it needs to change really. I would like to see more unification with the spirit of Glastonbury community but that’s about it really. — Tristan
The other sites in Tintagel (King Arthur’s Great Halls, the Arthurian Centre and St. Nectan’s Glen) and in Glastonbury (the Tor and the Chalice Well Gardens) face much less contestation. King Arthur’s Great Halls and the Arthurian Centre, though representing opposite ends of the interpretive spectrum, are both less contested because they have chosen to embrace the ends of that spectrum, rather than seeking a balance in the middle. By this I mean that King Arthur’s Great Halls unabashedly embraces a Disneyfied approach to telling the mythical stories of Arthur as they relate to the history of the Great Halls, and the Arthurian Centre chooses to stick strictly to what is known archaeologically.

Glastonbury Tor, the Chalice Well Gardens and St. Nectan’s Glen share the common thread of being primarily places of beautiful landscape that visitors engage with on a level that does not require explicit interpretation. This absence of an authorized narrative is authoritative in itself – it sends the message that in these places, all spiritual paths are welcome and the landscape should be shared by all walks of life. For both Tintagel and Glastonbury, the answer to the question “whose heritage?” is dependent on who you ask. This supports the idea that hegemony is never complete and that counter discourses and narratives are contesting the legitimacy of heritage management institutions.

*Imagined Communities*

The last research question raised by this project asked what identities were reflected in the heritage presented in both Tintagel and Glastonbury. As argued in Chapter Two, heritage and identity are intimately linked as they influence each other. Both heritage and identity can be studied anthropologically as products of present social practices. Based on my findings, I would
argue that there are several imagined communities existing at once in both Tintagel and Glastonbury.

Sites like Tintagel Castle and Glastonbury Abbey have particularly strong authorized heritage narratives that play into ideas of national identity, through their association with English Heritage and the Church of England, respectively. These authorized narratives reflect what Anderson (1991) described as “horizontal comradeship” that obfuscate diversity in favor of national unity. But, what I found remarkably interesting was the identities based in regional and religious affiliation that seemed to stand in resistance to national identities.

In Tintagel there is a strong sense of Cornish identity, which is reflected in sites like the Arthurian Centre and St. Nectan’s Glen, where the heritage is about the local identity and not a national identity exported from a big city 100s of miles away. It is also reflected in the fact that my participants chose not to describe Tintagel as representing national heritage. For them, Tintagel was first and foremost a Cornish site, and second a site of international importance.

Similarly, in Glastonbury, the sheer diversity in religious affiliations and interpretations of the importance of the various heritage sites dilutes any clear national narrative. Participants often described Glastonbury as a global or internationally important site, rather than national. So despite some sites being managed by organizations with names like English Heritage and National Trust, the kind of nationalistic “imagined community” that Anderson describes, was not revealed through this research.

Commodification of Heritage

Both Tintagel and Glastonbury are inextricably tied up in the tourism industry. Tintagel has been reliant on tourism for a longer period of time than Glastonbury, but both present cases
in which heritage is commodified for tourist consumption. The influence and impact of tourism on how heritage is (re)produced in both places cannot be underestimated. During a conversation I had with Charles, one of the costumed guides at Glastonbury Abbey, he told me he often jokes with visitors saying, “Good ol’ Arthur, still bringing people to the Abbey.” And it is true. One of the big draws that brings in visitor ticket sales is King Arthur, but unlike the Tintagel community, Glastonbury has commodified a whole spectrum of heritages for tourist consumption. One need only walk down the High Street to see this illustrated in practice. The establishments on the High Street reflect the “unity in diversity” sentiment shared by so many in the Glastonbury community. But the commodification of heritage is a delicate balance and requires constant negotiation.

Like the Greenwood (1989) case study presented in Chapter Two, commodification can lead to the loss or collapse of cultural meaning. Community members in both Tintagel and Glastonbury seem to be aware of this, and it is reflected in those who outwardly resist extreme versions of “Disneyfication.” But flexibility in commodification is also a means to gaining financial stability and sustainability. As Jane and Neville explained, High Streets around the country are falling into financial difficulties, but Glastonbury has managed to avoid that. However, the High Street’s success should not be taken at face value.

We’re like a swan … it glides serenely on, but underneath it is frantically peddling. And it’s the same for any business here. I see the landlord here pretty much every day and he’s just got problems after problems after problems. – Jane

Yeah footfall is not high enough. We struggle. Everybody struggles… We used to have more premises but the recession did for that, but actually I’m kind of happy with where we are now. We are highly original and we’ve got to be to diversify and to compete. It’s retail at the end of the day. It’s got all the issues of retail. [Glastonbury] actually has all the small town problems. It has its drug addicts. It has its fights at night. It has an underbelly of criminal activity. It also has some very very kind and generous people…we also have all of the absolutely standard High Street issues. That is, we have to pay local
business rates, business taxes. We have to pay VAT and we have to pay the rent. And we have to find staff who are competent and honest. – Neville

In fact, some community members like Timothy, question the long-term sustainability of Glastonbury’s current mode of heritage commodification for financial stability.

There is a more systemic issue of people often coming to this place to take something rather than to give to it and how sustainable as a community when that is the case, symptomatic issue, people don’t like to talk about it. They ought to. The number of charity shops, charity shops don’t pay business rates, so every time one of these shops open, someone that could have had a local business here can’t… and the local authority doesn’t derive benefit from it… it’s politically incorrect to challenge charity and charity shops but I think one has to… so, if our town is just going to turn into a town of crystal shops and charity shops does it have any future? If it turns into a place full of… a place characterized by depression and money gradually running out, shabbiness gradually increasing, the number of people with too much time on their hands and street drinkers, then it’s not even gonna be a desirable tourist destination anymore. – Timothy

Tintagel has made an effort to remain a desirable tourist destination, with recent modifications and tidying of their Fore Street. Like in Glastonbury, community members in Tintagel may not always be completely on board with commodification, but they realize that it is a means to an end.

The village thrives on the castle, because the shops, that’s what it’s all about, you know. So, they wouldn’t have businesses if it wasn’t for the castle but then they’re not happy, sometimes, if you do too much and that has an impact on things so it’s a tricky one really … getting the right balance. – Dorothy, English Heritage Employee

For Oliver, the commodification of Tintagel is not a new phenomenon.

I mean, if you think the village actually took the name, because it isn’t Tintagel, and so … that kind of Disneyfication of the place started a long time ago. And yeah, they’ve played on that all those years. – Oliver, English Heritage Employee

I believe that both the contestation and commodification of heritage in both Tintagel and Glastonbury reflect what Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (2006) refers to as the feedback loop between “valorization” and “valuation.” For Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, “The moment something is declared heritage, it enters a complex sphere of calculation” in which processes of valorization (e.g
heritage listing) are followed by those of valuation (e.g. working out the income from increased tourism) which can in turn lead to further valorization, further valuation and so on (193-195).

There is a dual influence on the continued (re)production of heritage. If valorization in this case is the authorized heritage narrative, and valuation is the commodification of heritage, then my observations in both Tintagel and Glastonbury echo Kirschenblatt-Gimblett’s model. This understanding of how heritage works is a direct reflection of the political economy approach that serves as a foundation for this research.

The Political Economy Approach

One of the main contributions that this research project stands to make is an additional case study in which a political economy approach is applied to the anthropological study of heritage and tourism. Key to the political economy approach is the understanding of cultural productions within their larger historical, economic and political contexts. As demonstrated throughout Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People without History*, we must understand communities, regions and nations as connected and interactive rather than discrete entities.

Some of the key elements of a political economy approach include the analysis of the role of the State and other hegemonic institutions, the influence of processes of commodification and commercialization, and the significance of history, particularly economic history. Each of these factors plays a role in (re)producing the cultural observations an anthropologist aims to understand. Below I will explain each of these factors within the context of my research in more detail.

In this research, the role of the State and other hegemonic institutions is reflected in the authorized heritage narratives (re)produced by institutions like English Heritage at Tintagel.
Castle and the Church of England at Glastonbury Abbey. These authorized narratives echo what Drengwitz et al. (2014) refer to as “the powerful concept of a homogenous national identity” and aims to create a unified narrative (103). This kind of homogenous narrative is advantageous for nation-making which, like Anderson (1991) argues, requires “horizontal comradeship” that obfuscates the diversity and/or inequality of reality. Contestation arises when these unifying narratives are challenged.

In Tintagel, the contestation involves the fight for the influence of regional identities over national ones. In her study of the representation and interpretation of Cornish heritage, Amy Hale (2001) states, “Cornwall is a contested territory; as a result of a number of economic, linguistic, religious and political features, Cornwall has continually asserted a sense of difference from England” (186). Hale (2001) goes on to explain the tension between Cornwall and institutions like the National Trust and English Heritage. While the Cornish often identify as British, they do not identify as English. Therefore, the role of the National Trust in preserving a number of manor houses as well as much of Cornwall’s coastline, including the portions in Tintagel, has been largely uncontested. However, when the British government established English Heritage in 1984, they encountered significant resistance from the Cornish (Hale 2001, 189). “Protestors argue that English Heritage interpretations are not ‘authentic’: that they do not include or promote education about Cornish history of culture, and that the sites are monarchist, centralist and assimilationist in the narratives they present to the public” (Hale 2001, 190). Hale’s observations align with the arguments of both Anderson (1991) and Drengwitz et al. (2014), who observe the past as being manipulated to create homogenous narratives. While Hale made her observations at the start of the 21st century, the tension between the Cornish people and English cultural hegemony is still evident today.
My own observations confirm what Hale observed then; that, “groups and individuals are not only challenging the hegemony of national heritage agencies operating in the territory, they are in fact using the ‘tourist gaze’ to help assert an alternative narrative of Cornish culture ‘difference,’ at both a visual and cultural level” (2001, 186). I observed this strong sense of Cornishness at St. Nectan’s Glen and the Arthurian Centre. The managers of both sites emphasized how their sites relate to the history of Cornwall and represent something uniquely Cornish, rather than British, or English. However, the hegemony of English Heritage’s management of Tintagel Castle is such that they are still creating national narratives, rather than regional, Cornish ones.

In Glastonbury, the historical link between the Church of England and the nation-state cannot be understated. Glastonbury Abbey, as an extension of the nation’s official religion, continues to perpetuate the narratives most advantageous for the Church of England; in this case, the interpretation of early Christian history at the site. Alternative interpretations and/or uses of the site are, at best, tolerated, but certainly not condoned or promoted. Staff at the Abbey shared with me their frustrations regarding the multiple uses of the site. To some it is a sacred, Christian landscape, to others a sacred pagan landscape, and to others still it is simply a community green-space, perfect for a Sunday picnic. But the staff recognizes that they need visitor numbers to financially sustain the Abbey and its preservation. Like in Tintagel, there is a reliance on tourism which brings the economic dimension into the discussion.

Another critical component to the political economy approach in this research context is the exploration of how culture and the past become commodified. The commodification of the past necessarily raises issues of ownership and identity. Who has the right to profit from a particular heritage or interpretation of the past? Who has the authority to make those decisions?
There is a well-documented hesitancy among people considering the commodification of heritage, due to the potential for cultural loss (Greenwood 1989). Hale (2001) documented this in Cornwall in 2001, and my observations in Tintagel and Glastonbury in 2017 continue to align with her claims.

Naturally, as in other areas which have generated cultural and heritage tourism, there were fears that a commodified Cornish culture would irreparably damage the ‘real’ culture (Hale 2001, 188).

This same fear still persists, as evidenced in the repeated use of terms like “Disneyfication” in the interviews I conducted with people in Tintagel. In Glastonbury, the Disneyfication may not be as obvious, as it is hidden within and among the many New Age/hippie subcultures that have focused on supernatural folklore and fantasy, but there is a just as much commodification of heritage happening. In Tintagel, the ownership or power over the means to produce heritage for consumption appear more one-dimensional. English Heritage’s authorized narratives influence how and what is commodified within Tintagel for consumption due to the influence those narratives have had on consumer expectations. In Glastonbury, the ownership over the means to produce heritage for consumption appears more diverse, as counter-narratives and alternative interpretations of heritage have gained clout within the community.

In addition to considering the influences of hegemonic powers and the processes of commodification, a political economy approach requires historical contextualization. This research also relies on archival research to reveal the ways in which both Tintagel and Glastonbury were interpreted, marketed and presented in the past. This allows for a comparison of then and now, and a better understanding of how processes may have changed over time. In both cases, Tintagel and Glastonbury were historically presented as nationally important sites. However, while Glastonbury was marketed as both the location of earliest Christian church and
King Arthur’s burial site, Tintagel was historically marketed purely for its Arthurian connection and beautiful landscape. The pigeon-holing of Tintagel as King Arthur’s birthplace so early on has made it more difficult to detach it from that association today. Meanwhile, Glastonbury’s Arthurian connections, though still relevant, are not as strong.

In this research, I observed how the cultural hegemony of the narratives in places like Glastonbury Abbey and Tintagel Castle are challenged by alternate interpretations based on different regional and religious identifications, creating contestation about the past. Additionally, I observed how economic pressures make the commodification of the past advantageous and in some cases even necessary. Rather than understanding the (re)production of heritage narratives as simply the result of hegemonic nationalistic forces, my observations revealed that the reality is a more nuanced combination of the “valorization” and “valuation” of the past and heritage. So what does this mean in the wider context of post-Brexit Britain? What role can/does heritage play in a time when the idea of a “nation-state” based on a clear, unified identity is becoming more ambiguous?

**Heritage in post-Brexit England**

As introduced in Chapter One, in one of his 2006 speeches to Parliament, David Cameron stated:

…if we are to bring our society together, then schools - all schools – must teach children that wherever they are from, if they are British citizens, they are inheritors of the British birthright … and every child in our country, wherever they come from must know and deeply understand what it means to be British. The components of our identity – our institutions, our language and our history (Political Speech 2006).

In this short excerpt, Cameron touches on several issues covered in this dissertation. In his view, the unification of British society requires a unified, homogenous, view of Britishness. This
unified view is characterized by “our institutions” and “our history.” He refers here to the kind of “imagined communities” that organizations like the Church of England and English Heritage aim to create through their authorized heritage narratives. Indeed, it seems as if for Cameron, there is only one specific “history” to be learned and “deeply understood” by anyone claiming to identify as British. This echoes what Trouillot (1995) explained about power and the creation of silences throughout history. Hale (2001) touches on this as well, stating:

Although heritage itself may be polyvocal and experienced by a multiplicity of actors at any one time, the ways in which heritage is presented to the public for consumption generally does not reflect that polyvocality (Hale 2001, 194).

The kind of “imagined community” envisioned by Cameron is not as feasible as it once was. The forces of neoliberal economics and globalization have made the conceptualization of nation-states more difficult to achieve. The intense degree of movement of people and goods across the globe precludes the existence of a homogenous Britain. Recent political developments, like the Brexit vote, appear to reflect the identity crisis currently facing the British people. The results of the Brexit vote sent the message that the British perhaps do not consider themselves a part of the European Union and perhaps by default, Europe as a whole. What does this say about British identity?

Cameron’s speech was given 11 years before the fateful Brexit vote. In the decade since, it appears that the discussion about national identity and Britishness ramped up extensively. The same kind of nationalistic “us-first” fervor was stoked in the United States. The line between patriotism and xenophobia has become blurred and unclear. So what role does heritage play in all of this? Why does this kind of research matter in the greater context of current British politics? The heritage presented throughout Britain, but especially in England, is a reflection of nostalgic attitudes toward nation-making and “imagined communities” and does not reflect the
multicultural reality of contemporary Britain. In the case of Tintagel and Glastonbury, the narratives do not account for or incorporate diversity in regional and religious identities, respectively. As a result, authorized narratives are consistently and effectively challenged, undermining the authority of hegemonic institutions. I believe that we are encountering a crossroads for work in the heritage sector. Archaeological heritage sites and museum alike will continue to be faced with the same identity crisis currently facing government officials – who are we? And this will have significant implications on the future of heritage work and heritage research.

*Suggestions for Heritage Management*

Although the interpretation and production of heritage sites is a reflection of present-centered motivations, the actual speed with which heritage sites like Tintagel Castle and Glastonbury Abbey appear to change is quite slow. This is reflected in the multiple layers of aging interpretation that can be found at both sites. On the Abbey grounds, the brown signs that were installed in the 1960s have nearly become museum objects in their own right, as symbols of a nostalgic past. In today’s world of rapid technological change, the pace at which heritage sites adapt to “present-centered” needs is slow. Limiting factors in these situations are primarily financial. The heritage sector simply does not have the funding or human resources to make changes quickly. Further, when changes are made, they are done so with the understanding that they will be in place for some time.

In some cases, returning visitors are perplexed by changes. During my interview with Dorothy at Tintagel Castle, she remarked that while many people like the new exhibition, several have asked if the previous video would be coming back. The video I’m told, explained the
history of Tintagel, and had become a fixture of the site itself and part of the value of the visitor experience, especially for those who had come in their younger years and were returning with their own children. I believe that evidence like this warrants further research into the true “present-centered” nature of heritage in today’s high-paced society.

As mentioned earlier, the Brexit context sheds light on what can be considered an identity crisis in Britain. And while some heritage work, like the decolonization of museums, aims to diversify narratives, I do not believe that same work can happen as proactively at sites like this, which move too slowly and which are too entrenched in specific visitors’ experience expectations. The economic pressures of tourism act as limiting factors which require stakeholders to present simplified, packaged narratives for tourist consumption – preferably narratives that make “good stories.”

The results presented here support the notion that heritage work does attempt to reinforce monolithic, homogenous conceptualizations of identity, rather than England’s multicultural reality. Given how slowly heritage work moves, and the pressures of commodification for tourism, I do not believe that these spaces are best suited for attempts to change perceptions of national identity. Nevertheless, despite the challenges heritage work faces in being socially and politically proactive, there are ways in which the heritage sector can diversify its discourses and narratives to reflect a more multicultural England.

First, I believe that the work English Heritage has done to incorporate the Cornish language is a step in the right direction. This type of nod to local identity provides necessary contextual information about the site that would otherwise get lost in a homogenous national narrative of pure “Englishness.” I believe more work like this could be done and I was given the impression by the current manager of Tintagel Castle that efforts are underway to further involve
the Cornwall Heritage Trust in the work of English Heritage. Further, additional interpretation at Tintagel Castle could strengthen the site’s historical connection to a global trading network. The archaeological data are available – the connection just needs to be made more clearly and precisely for visitors. By illustrating that sites like Tintagel Castle were not historically isolated, but connected, this type of narrative challenges the isolationist sentiments of Brexit and fosters a more diverse understanding of the site’s past. The challenge for Tintagel Castle remains how to continue down the path toward “good stories” and visitor experiences without “Disneyfying” the space so much that the history is lost in favor of entertainment.

In my interview with the current director of Glastonbury Abbey it was revealed that a new exhibition is in the early planning stages. I hope that this exhibition will aim to further humanize the incredible history of the abbey. For example, I think it would make a “good story” to explore the trauma of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The physicality of the ruins today, sitting seemingly peacefully amongst the freshly cut grass where children play with wooden swords while their parents drink a cup of tea does not communicate the social consequences of the actions of Henry VIII. The Dissolution marked a critical turning point in the religious history of the United Kingdom and this could be an opportunity to explore the real human ramifications of that event for people of varying classes, not just the nobility and the clergy.

On a larger scale, the heritage sector could diversify by making sure the interpretive and curatorial staff employed to (re)produce heritage at these sites represent a more diverse population. If, like Byrne (2007) suggests, Englishness is really about race and class, then having a better representation across all classes and races within the sector could help lay the foundation for a more British and multicultural story of England.
Heritage Studies and Anthropology

This research project also works to confirm that anthropologists are uniquely positioned to study heritage production through the investigation of the social practices surrounding heritage by rejecting the view that heritage can be understood as a static entity. In the case of this research project, that included gaining a deeper, ethnographic understanding of the role of community members in both Tintagel and Glastonbury. Their everyday discourses and actions as employees in heritage organizations, owners of businesses related to tourism, and simply as vocal locals, revealed important information about how and why heritage is (re)produced in both Tintagel and Glastonbury. Also, by focusing this study on the producers of heritage, rather than the consumers, this research offers a slightly different perspective on heritage tourism.

By acknowledging that heritage is a present-centered social process, we also acknowledge that even though heritage organizations may aim to present a single authorized heritage narrative, heritage is ultimately “about negotiation” (Smith 2006) and as Meskell states, “all heritage work essentially starts from the premise that the past is contested, conflictual and multiply constituted” (2012, 1). As discussed above, this study aimed to gain a nuanced understanding of how issues of heritage, identity and tourism play out under specific social, political and economic contexts. Bruner (2005) put it this way:

Society and its agents of power may aim for a monolithic view, but it is something strived for rather than finalized or achieved. There are always dissident voices and challenging readings, and indeed, much of the scholarly literature on public history and cultural displays may be seen as a critique of authoritative viewpoints (Bruner 2005, 127).

In the case of this research, the agents of power, including institutions like English Heritage and the Church of England, attempt to create homogenous narratives. However, like Bruner asserts, there are “dissident voices and challenging readings” happening in both Tintagel and
Glastonbury. In Tintagel, a strong Cornish regional identity has come up against the centrist hegemony of English Heritage. In Glastonbury, the primacy of the Christianity promoted by the Church of England is challenged by New Age and pagan interpretations of the past. And, in accordance with Bruner, this research is a critique of authoritative viewpoints. However, it aims to offer the nuanced, particularistic understanding of those authoritative viewpoints in Tintagel and Glastonbury in a way that only qualitative, ethnographic research can offer. This research contributes to the growing literature on heritage studies by confirming that the study of heritage must be nuanced and contextualized and that generalizations should be avoided in favor of the particularistic revelations that can be gained through a thorough ethnographic study.

**Contributions**

*Applied Dimensions*

As an applied anthropologist, it is my goal to make my research relevant and useful. The primary way in which this research could be useful is in the hands of those managing the heritage sites I studied. For example, George, one of the National Trust rangers who participated in this research, explained to me that the Trust is currently developing what is called a “Spirit of Place” strategy, in which they conduct research to understand what brings visitors to specific National Trust properties. The Glastonbury results presented in this study could be useful to George and others who are currently working on developing the “Spirit of Place” for Glastonbury Tor.

Similarly, as those in management at Glastonbury Abbey continue to work toward a new interpretive strategy that will include an updated exhibit in their visitor center, some of the comments regarding the Abbey which are presented here could be taken into consideration
during their planning. While those at higher levels of management, like Lucy, seem to be aware of their role in perpetuating one authorized heritage narrative, this information could still potentially be useful for them in understanding how to possibly diversify their interpretation in a way that creates a closer link between the Abbey and the Glastonbury community without compromising their loyalty to the values of the Church of England. Similarly, the information presented here could form a foundation for future evaluation of the new interpretation and art installations at Tintagel Castle. With this in mind, I plan to generate a more casual report of the results for the representatives of each of the heritage sites that I studied for this project.

Future Research

In addition to practical applied contributions that this research can make to heritage management, this research could potentially act as a foundation for future research on how heritage in England can evolve to better reflect the multicultural and diverse reality of England’s contemporary populations. I would argue that there is something unique happening in Glastonbury that warrants further investigation and exploration. If that many spiritual and historical interpretations of a site like Glastonbury Abbey can seemingly peacefully coexist, could this be possible in other contexts? Could a more multicultural heritage help promote an understanding of diversity to resist the trends of xenophobia and populism stoked by the Brexit campaign? Timothy remains skeptical of this:

I think we’re all part of an experiment in how may it work, here in Glastonbury, but like I said, in practice, the differences between people’s beliefs, ideologies and economic operations, means that you know, it’s more like silos and pretending each other doesn’t exist. – Timothy

Future research could take a more in-depth look into the relationships between different spiritual groups within Glastonbury to understand their dynamics in more detail. Are they really
coexisting? Or are they, as Timothy suggests, simply coexisting by ignoring each other?

Similarly, the question remains whether this would be possible in sites that would be characterized as have more serious or “hard” contestations.

A second area of this research that needs further investigation is the relationship between national heritage management organizations (like English Heritage and National Trust) and more localized or regionalized heritage management organizations. I am speaking here specifically of the relationship between English Heritage and local Cornish heritage organizations in Cornwall. What are the continuing ramifications of England’s historical treatment of Cornwall and its people? Do the observations and conclusions made by Hale (2001) still hold true throughout Cornwall? As Oliver mentioned in his interview:

The story of north Cornwall, even up until relatively recently, was one of loss. Loss of significant numbers of young people. Loss of local councils, that kind of thing. Things have sort of broadened out and broadened out. The loss of the railways. All of those kind of things…And I think the English have no sense of how the Scots, the Welsh, the Irish and the Cornish by a sort of continuation of that argument … they have no sense that they are seen as patronizers…That they … they come across all the time … they don’t ask people what they want, they just come and do it. And there’s a regular phrase in Cornwall that we have things done to us. – Oliver, English Heritage Employee

I would be interested conducting an updated investigation into this tension between Cornish regional identity and the authority of “English” Heritage. This is echoed in this statement from Preziosi (2012) below:

The fabrication of any identity or social reality is a function of its imagined relationships to alternative identities, and so may rightly be understood as a function or artifact of its imagined otherness. Creating an identity simultaneously erases others, and consequently each coexists as a kind of artifact or effect of its other (84).

In a time when national identities are becoming ambiguous and more difficult to define, are regional identities going to gain more traction? As Preziosi states, the function of an “imagined community” is to make other imagined communities and identities negligible. What role can
regional identities play then, in post-Brexit Britain? So, in addition to understanding further the ways in which heritage can promote multiculturalism in a setting like Glastonbury under post-Brexit circumstances, I would be interested in further investigating how regional identities play a role in the heritage of areas that do not identify with a particular national identity.

**Limitations of the Study**

The most obvious limitation of this study is simply time. This research project, which included the study of two separate towns, was completed within the span of three months. Regardless though, the results of this research can serve as a useful foundation for future research in several areas, the results themselves cannot serve to make any generalizations or broad conclusions about heritage in either Tintagel or Glastonbury. And they confirm that a nuanced and contextualized understanding of heritage as a present-centered social process can reveal interesting and useful information regarding the (re)production of heritage in England. Secondly, another consequence of the time limitation was a small sample size. This research included only 25 interviews. If given more time, additional interviews, or even follow-up interviews, could have been conducted to create a more representative sample.

**Conclusion**

This research project set out to problematize national heritage in England and reveal the ways in which authorized heritage narratives, as well as unauthorized heritage narratives, compete with each other in a tourist setting. The study was guided by four primary research questions anchored in basic assumptions about the nature of heritage, its relationship with national identity, and its ability to be studied anthropologically.
This study found that in both the cases of Tintagel and Glastonbury, heritage (re)production is the result of several nuanced and contextualized factors and cannot be simply understood as the result of one monolithic, hegemonic force. Rather, heritage (re)production is the result of particularistic circumstances of soft contestation and commodification which work in a feedback loop of “valorization” and “valuation” which are unique to each site based on particular social, historical, political and economic factors. The limitations of this study mean that the results presented here serve primarily as an updated confirmation of theories set forth by other scholars, including Bruner (2005), Hale (2001), Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (2006) and Trouillot (1995). This research also serves as a foundation for future research, particularly that which explores how national heritage works in contemporary social contexts. What the results of this study confirm is perhaps best summarized by words that are not my own, but those of one of my participants:

Heritage comes alive. And when the facts are lacking, imagination or fantasy will plug the gaps. – Timothy

Heritage comes alive because it is a present-centered, social process that can be anthropologically studied. Most importantly however, what this research demonstrates is that heritage is about debate and negotiation. And, like Timothy asserts, when the historical “facts” do not do make “good stories,” the fantasy and imagination of visitors can fill the gaps.

The old Imagined Englishness based on colonial nostalgia and denial of mobile, global realities is, I believe, a thing of the past. The power and influence of centralized heritage management organizations is, rightfully, being challenged and questioned. What was imagined as English in the past, will not be the Englishness imagined tomorrow. In a post-Brexit Britain, it will be interesting to track the evolution and change of national heritage narratives as the social
consequences of Brexit begin to trickle down from the government into the everyday lives of citizens.

This is the nature of heritage. Heritage is malleable and it is flexible. Like the legend of King Arthur, heritage is passed down and recoded over and over again, to meet the needs of its present-day audiences. It can travel through time and space, retaining its importance while also adapting to the ways in which it can be useful in the present.
REFERENCES


Cornish language funding stopped by government. 2016. BBC, April 21, 2016.


209


Willett, Joanie. 2014. Cornwall's new status shows how regionalism is changing nations everywhere The Conversation.


Woodcock, Pete. 2015. Cornwall and Yorkshire show regional identities run deep in England, too The Conversation.


APPENDIX A:

IRB Informed Consent and Approved Instruments

March 9, 2017

Vivian Gornik
Anthropology
Tampa, FL 33612

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00029536
Title: Imagined Englishness: National Heritage Production and the Formation of National Identity at Two English Heritage Sites

Study Approval Period: 3/8/2017 to 3/8/2018

Dear Ms. Gornik:

On 3/8/2017, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Gornik - English National Heritage - IRB Protocol - Version 1.1

Consent/Assent Document(s)*:
Gornik - English National Heritage - IRB Informed Consent Form.pdf

*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent documents are valid until the consent document is amended and approved. The Verbal consent form is not stamped.

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

John Schinka, Ph.D., Chairperson
USF Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent to Participate in Research Involving Minimal Risk
Pro # 00029536

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Research studies include only people who choose to take part. This document is called an informed consent form. Please read this information carefully and take your time making your decision. Ask the researcher or study staff to discuss this consent form with you, please ask him/her to explain any words or information you do not clearly understand. The nature of the study, risks, inconveniences, discomforts, and other important information about the study are listed below.

We are asking you to take part in a research study called:

**Imagined Englishness: National Heritage Production and the Formation of National Identity at Two English Heritage Sites**

The person who is in charge of this research study is Vivian Gornik. This person is called the Principal Investigator. However, other research staff may be involved and can act on behalf of the person in charge. She is being guided in this research by Dr. Elizabeth Bird.

The research will be conducted at the University of Exeter and surrounding heritage sites. This research is being sponsored by USF World and the University of Exeter College of Humanities.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to better understand how national heritage informs and influences national identity. Concepts such as Englishness and Britishness will be explored.

**Why are you being asked to take part?**

We are asking you to take part in this research study because you are a British citizen fitting one or more of the following criteria: (1) You are a visitor to a national heritage site. (2) You are an employee at a national heritage site or heritage management institution. (3) You are a resident the town or village where the heritage site is located.

**Study Procedures:**

If you take part in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in semi-structured or formal interviews with the Principal Investigator (PI), Vivian Gornik.
Questions will be based on the results of prior informal interviews, but will ask you about your understanding of national heritage and national identity in England and Britain.

You may also be asked to complete pile sort or photo-elicitation activities. For the pile-sort, you will be given a set of cards with terms or concepts related to national heritage written on them. You will be asked to sort them into successive groups. For photo elicitation, you will be asked to select photographs that to you represent national heritage. The PI will then ask you to explain your choices and the photographs further.

The semi-structured and formal interviews are expected to take 60-90 minutes.

The research will take place at a time and place of the participant’s choice and convenience.

With their permission to record them, interviewees will be recorded on a voice recorder and later transcribed. Only the PI and Faculty Advisor for this study will have access to these recordings. The recordings and their transcriptions will be kept on a password-protected computer for a minimum of five years. Your information will be not be identifiable.

Total Number of Participants
A total of 125 individuals will take part in this study at all sites, including the University of Exeter and surrounding heritage sites.

Alternatives / Voluntary Participation / Withdrawal
You do not have to participate in this research study.

You should only take part in this study if you want to volunteer. You should not feel that there is any pressure to take part in the study. You are free to participate in this research or withdraw at any time. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits you are entitled to receive if you stop taking part in this study. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your job status, employment record, employee evaluations or advancement opportunities.

Benefits
The potential benefits of participating in this research study include:
An increased sense of national identity or engagement with your national heritage.

Risks or Discomfort
This research is considered to be minimal risk. That means that the risks associated with this study are the same as what you face every day. There are no known additional risks to those who take part in this study.

Compensation
You will receive no payment or other compensation for taking part in this study.

Costs
It will not cost you anything to take part in this study.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We will keep your study records private and confidential. Certain people may need to see your study records.
records. Anyone who looks at your records must keep them confidential. These individuals include:

- The research team, including the Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor
- Certain government and university people who need to know more about the study, and individuals who provide oversight to ensure that we are doing the study in the right way.
- Any agency of the federal, state, or local government that regulates this research.
- The USF Institutional Review Board (IRB) and related staff who have oversight responsibilities for this study, including staff in USF Research Integrity and Compliance.
- The sponsors of this study and contract research organization

We may publish what we learn from this study. If we do, we will not include your name. We will not publish anything that would let people know who you are.

**You can get the answers to your questions, concerns, or complaints**

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this study, or experience an unanticipated problem, call Vivian Gornik at +1 407-340-6372.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or have complaints, concerns or issues you want to discuss with someone outside the research, call the USF IRB at (813) 974-5638 or contact by email at RSCH-IRB@usf.edu.

**Consent to Take Part in this Research Study**

I freely give my consent to take part in this study. I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to take part in research. I have received a copy of this form to take with me.

__________________________
Signature of Person Taking Part in Study

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Printed Name of Person Taking Part in Study

**Statement of Person Obtaining Informed Consent**

I have carefully explained to the person taking part in the study what he or she can expect from their participation. I confirm that this research subject speaks the language that was used to explain this research and is receiving an informed consent form in their primary language. This research subject has provided legally effective informed consent.

__________________________
Signature of Person obtaining Informed Consent

__________________________
Date

__________________________
Printed Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Social Behavioral

Version # 1

Version Date: 2/9/17

Page 3 of 3
Imagined Englishness: National Heritage Production and the Formation of National Identity at Two English Heritage Sites
USF IRB Pro # 00029536
Principal Investigator: Vivian Gornik, MA (University of South Florida)

Project Description:
The purpose of this study is to better understand how national heritage informs and influences national identity by using ethnographic anthropological research methods, including informal and semi-structured interviews.

As a working member of the English heritage sector, your experiences and opinions are valuable to this study. Interviews would take no more than 60 minutes and can be scheduled for a date, time and location convenient for both you and the Principal Investigator, Vivian Gornik.

During the interviews you would be asked your opinions on and perceptions of specific concepts which are broken up into themes:

- **Heritage**: What is heritage? Why is it important?
- **Britishness and Englishness**: What is Englishness and/or Britishness? Are they the same or different?
- **Glastonbury**: Do the heritage sites in Glastonbury reflect national heritage or something else? Do they reflect Englishness, Britishness, both or neither?
- **Arthurian Legend**: What role does the Arthurian legend/myth play in the heritage of Glastonbury?
- **Society**: What is the role of multiculturalism and nationalism in England broadly and in the heritage sector specifically?
- **National Identity**: What is the role of national heritage in forming a national identity in England?
- **About You**: Includes basic questions about the person being interviewed, like age, education level, experience in the heritage sector, political affiliation, religious affiliation, etc.

You may also be asked to complete a “pile sort.” For that activity you would be given a set of cards with terms or concepts related to national heritage written on them. You would then be asked to sort them into successive groups.

Similarly, you may be asked to prepare a set of photographs prior to the interview for a “photo elicitation” activity. For photo elicitation, you will be asked to select photographs that to you represent national heritage. The PI will then ask you to explain your choices and the photographs further.

If you, or someone else you know of, would be interested in participating in this research study please contact Vivian Gornik as soon as possible (vgornik@mail.usf.edu).
APPENDIX B:

THE LEGEND OF KING ARTHUR

The legend of King Arthur likely began as part of an oral tradition of storytelling in the geographic region we today call the Britain. The oral tradition was first set down in writing by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century in his work *The History of the Kings of Britain*. His work is particularly important because he was the first to authoritatively connect the legend to specific places within Britain.

For example, it was Geoffrey of Monmouth who wrote that Arthur was conceived and born in Tintagel, and after being wounded in battle, carried to and buried in Glastonbury. Geoffrey of Monmouth’s version of the story also incorporated many of the supernatural elements that became familiar parts of the legend, including the wizard Merlin and the faery Morgan le Fay.

Authors then took up the groundwork laid down by Geoffrey of Monmouth in subsequent centuries and each retelling was molded and/or coded to the needs and circumstances of the time in which they were written. It is worth noting that these stories were likely written with the elite classes in mind, since literacy would have been limited to those able to afford an education. Later Medieval versions of the Arthurian legend include *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (late 14th century), the author of which is unknown, and Sir Thomas Malory’s *Le Morte d'Arthur* (15th century). While the medieval writers relied heavily on Geoffrey of Monmouth as source material, most modern interpretations of the Arthurian legend rely on Malory’s version.
Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote *The Idylls of the King* in the late 19th century and is said to have traveled to many of the locations throughout Britain that had been linked with Arthur, including sites in Tintagel and Glastonbury. Satirical interpretations of the legend include Mark Twain’s 1889 novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. More recent takes on the story include *The Once and Future King* by T.H. White published in 1958 and *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley published in 1983. The latter, retells the story from the perspective of female characters and is partially credited with the resurgence of the feminist Goddess movement in New Age cultures throughout Britain, including in Glastonbury.


Throughout its long history, the legend of King Arthur has retained some fairly consistent characters, objects and locations. Common characters include, Uther Pendragon (Arthur’s father), Guinevere (Arthur’s wife) and Mordred (Arthur’s enemy and heir). Excalibur is Arthur’s magic sword. However, there are several variations on how he came to possess it. According to some versions of the legend, Arthur pulled the sword from the stone to prove he is the true king of Britain. In other versions, the mysterious sorceress, the Lady of the Lake, known by many names (including Nimue and Vivien), gives the sword to Arthur. The Round Table is
considered a symbol of equality because there is no head of the table. This among other chivalric virtues became associated with King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table.

The full range of Arthuriana cannot be covered in this or any appendix, given that entire dissertations, even entire academic degrees and university departments, have been dedicated to this subject and its study. But what I hope to have demonstrated here is both the timelessness of this legend as well as its malleability. The story of King Arthur has remained a staple of British culture because each retelling has recoded the themes for the audience of its time. The story of Arthur represents a set of ideals for the morals and behavior of the leaders of Britain. As Raluca Radulescu (2017) puts it in an article for *Newsweek*:

In this confusing and sometimes frightening world, audiences seek reassurance in the models of the past. They want a standard of moral integrity and visionary leadership that is inspirational and transformational in equal measure. One that they cannot find in the world around them, but will discover in the stories of King Arthur (Radulescu 2017, 1).

King Arthur is permanently embedded in British cultural consciousness and is a piece of national heritage.