Subordination, solidarity and the limits of popular agency in a Yorkshire valley, c.1596-1616

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Over the past ten years, social historians of early modern England have become increasingly interested in politics. Unlike earlier approaches to popular politics, which focused upon unitary processes of 'politicisation', or sought to assess the allegiances of 'the people' within a predetermined, top-down view of politics, this new social history of politics has developed a broader sense of the political centred on power relations, agency, resistance, and the limits of subordination. Most notably, this work has questioned the validity of traditional approaches to politics, which hitherto tended to present early modern society as an organic, hierarchical entity, defined by shared, traditional notions of authority and deference. Thus, Mark Kishlansky's assumption that 'in early modern England, political activity took place within the context of a hierarchical social structure and theocentric universe', and that 'social relations' were defined by 'complex notions of honor [sic], standing, and deference... [which] helped to regulate and absorb conflict between and within loosely defined status groups' has in recent years been rendered invalid. Whereas Kishlansky believed that early modern society was defined by 'symbiotic relationships', the new social historians of politics have emphasised the fluidity of power relations, the contingent nature of deference, and the contested nature relationship between governor and governed.[1] While retaining the early modern historian's characteristic caution towards class-based categories, social historians have been drawn towards James Scott's theorisation of domination and resistance.[2] In his comparative history of rural power relations, Scott argues that elites seek to rule through the deliberate and theatrical exercise of cultural power within the public sphere of everyday life. In response, subordinates mask their true feelings of resentment and hostility towards their rulers. Taken together, this combination of elite power and apparent plebeian deference constitutes, for Scott, the 'public transcript' within which the overt practice of social relations takes place. However, he argues that the 'public transcript' is constantly undermined by the 'hidden transcript' of popular resistance. Articulated in semi-secret locations such as peasant alehouses, working-class cafes and slave hush arbors, this 'hidden transcript' inhibits elite authority, establishing a binding thread that links moments of public resistance, such as riots or rebellions, to a deeper political culture. Hence, for Scott, everyday life represents a site of political contestation and resistance.[3] Early modern social historians have lacked eagerly upon this formulation. The editors of one important collection of essays, for instance, consciously apply Scott's model of social relations to the early modern past. In quite properly

[1] M.A.Kishlansky, Parliamentary selection: social and political choice in early modern England (Cambridge, 1986), ix, 12, 14.
[2] P. Griffiths, A. Fox and S. Hindle 'Introduction', in P. Griffiths, A. Fox and S. Hindle (eds.), The experience of authority in early modern England (Basingstoke, 1996), 6; M.J. Braddick and J. Walter 'Introduction. Grids of power: order, hierarchy and subordination in early modern society', in M.J. Braddick and J. Walter (eds.), Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland (Cambridge, 2001).
[3] J.C. Scott, Domination and the arts of resistance: hidden transcripts (New Haven 1990).

emphasising how 'the majority of the people were not merely the passive recipients of social and political control but possessed some degree of agency in constructing the terms of their inferiority', the editors than go on to develop an assessment of plebeian deference as simply a disguise: 'To a large extent subversive reactions remained essentially hidden, passing unnoticed by those in authority. Behind the mask of outward deference always lay the face of inner feeling. On occasion, the thin veneer of obeisance was ripped away to reveal an underside of resentment and distrust'.[4]

Early modern social historians' renewed interest in the politics of everyday power relations has been underwritten by a hard-headed attention to local conflicts over scant resources, considering such issues as land rights, parochial relief, communal obligations, seigneurial relations and enclosure.[5] Despite the non-Marxist origins of early modern social history, a somewhat materialist formulation has predominated, focusing upon conflicts over exploitation, production, resources and space, coupled with an attention to processes of legitimation and resistance. Lifting one of James Scott's characteristic terms, we might identify this new historiographical approach as 'micro-political': that is, 'micro' in the precision of its temporal and spatial focus; and 'political' in the rapt attention it gives to plebeian agency and resistance. Again, ironically, given the avowedly non-Marxist agenda of the new social history, much of this work demands answers to the same questions as pressed upon Antonio Gramsci in his theorisation of cultural hegemony in the 1920s and 1930s.[6]

Yet explicit to the political turn of early modern social history has been the avoidance of a central dilemma in both Marxian and classical social theory: the relationship between agency (that is, the capacity to assert meaningful control over the circumstances of one's life) and structure (the means by which social structures exert prior material and political inhibitions upon agency).[7] Whereas the new social historians of politics have painstakingly scrutinised the subtleties of plebeian agency, they have given less attention to the dominating power relations that structured, coloured and limited that agency. This understatement of the hugely unequal distribution of power in early modern society has been smoothed over through reference to the 'negotiated' nature of authority: that is to say, the processes by which subordinates limited the practical exercise of power by rulers. This attention to the negotiation of authority must be welcomed, highlighting as it does the contingent nature of elite power, and drawing attention to the highly political nature of social relations. In this respect, social historians' interest in the negotiation of power further strengthens the growing redefinition of the 'political' in the early modern period.[8]

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[4] Griffiths, Fox and Hindle, 'Introduction', 5, 6.

[5] Adrian Leftwich's Redefining politics: people, resources and power (London, 1983) has exerted some influence here.

[6] for more on this, see D. Rollison, ‘Marxism’ in G. Walker (ed.), Rethinking early modern history, forthcoming..

[7] The theoretical literature on this subject is vast, but see most importantly, Anthony Giddens work on structuration. theory. For two historians' stated interest in the question of 'structuration', see D. Levine and K. Wrightson, The making of an industrial society: Whickham, 1560-1765 (Oxford, 1991).

[8] social historians' broad sense of the political stems in particular from the influence of K. Wrightson, ‘The politics of the parish in early modern England’, in Griffiths et. al. (eds.), Experience of authority, and P.

The emphasis upon negotiation has entailed the rejection of what often described as 'simple' polarities between 'elite' and 'popular'.[9] However, the refusal to think in terms of polarities, which can liberate the historian from crude and limiting dualities such as 'high' and 'low' culture, has in this case both understated fundamental disparities in the social distribution of power and exaggerated the agency of labouring people within early modern England. One unintended consequence of this otherwise very rich and imaginative work has been to deepen social historians' unwillingness to engage with what H.N. Brailsford once called 'the fact of class' in early modern England.[10] This understandable desire to escape from simplistic polarities runs risks losing sight of the social inequalities that structured resistance, domination and subordination. An early indicator of such a retrograde development might be found in the recent quarrying of the last 30 years of social-historical research by one historian of political thought, who has extracted from that rich deposit the apparent truth that 'hegemony' is no longer applicable to the study of early modern social relations. Referring to 'the inappositeness of viewing early modern England as a bipolar society of rulers and ruled', Mark Goldie goes on: 'the tendency of recent, post-Marxian historiography has been to abandon the interpretive vocabulary of hegemony and social control, in favour of the vocabulary of agency, reciprocity, mediation, participation and negotiation.' [11]

This essay seeks to restore some balance to recent approaches to agency and structure. In particular, I will argue that concepts of cultural hegemony should occupy the centre of historical understandings of social relations. I shall therefore challenge two characteristics of James Scott's work: his rejection of the concept of hegemony, and his overdrawn distinction between domination and resistance.[12] These two failings are linked. In rejecting Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony, in which subordinates' resistance is seen as coloured by the experience of domination, it will be argued here that Scott both romanticises popular politics and overstates the consistency with which

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Collinson, De Republica Anglorum: or, history with the politics put back in (Cambridge, 1990), and is surveyed in A. Wood, Riot, rebellion and popular politics in early modern England (Basingstoke, 2002).)

[9] for the rejection of 'simple' polarities, see T. Harris, 'Problematising popular culture' in T. Harris, (ed.), Popular culture in England, c.1500-1850 (Basingstoke, 1994), 16.; Braddick and Walter, 'Introduction', 3, 5.

[10] H.N. Brailsford, The Levellers and the English Revolution (London, 1961), 6. For my earlier critique of early modern historians' embarrassment concerning class, see my The politics of social conflict: the Peak Country, 1520-1770 (Cambridge, 1999), ch.1.

[11] M. Goldie, 'The unacknowledged republic: officeholding in early modern England ' in T.Harris (ed.) The politics of the excluded, c. 1500-1850 (Basingstoke, 2001), 155. Goldie's essay focuses upon officeholding and popular participation in the law. These are not new areas. For the rather earlier recognition of the social depths of officeholding, and the legal-mindedness of English popular culture, see K. Wrightson, 'Two concepts of order: Justices, Constables and Jurymen in seventeenth-century England' in J. Brewer and J. Styles (eds.), An Ungovernable People: the English and their law in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (London, 1980) and J.A. Sharpe, 'The people and the law', in B. Reay (ed.), Popular culture in seventeenth-century England (London, 1985).)

[12] for Scott's rejection of hegemony, see his Weapons of the weak (New Haven, 1985), ch. 8. For the usefulness of the concept of hegemony in the study of power relations, see, for instance, R. O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the subject: subaltern studies and the histories of resistance in colonial South Asia', Modern Asian Studies, 22 (1988); T.J. Jackson Lears, 'The concept of cultural hegemony: problems and possibilities', American Historical Review, 90 (1985), 567-93.

labouring people escaped dominating ideologies. Moreover, in presenting popular deference as inauthentic, constituting a deliberate mask behind which subordinates cynically concealed a 'true' sense of self, agency, and subjectivity, we lose sense of the hidden injuries of class in early modern England: the means by which the experience of subordination impaired workers' senses of themselves, and could thereby undermine collective agency.[13]

In place of Scott's interpretive duality between domination and resistance, I will argue that forms of subordination and defiance are intertwined with one another, the one producing the characteristics of the other. Thus, as Scott's critics in South Asian studies have suggested, 'neither domination nor resistance is autonomous; the two are so entangled that it becomes difficult to analyse one without discussing the other.'[14] For many years, distinctions between 'deference' and 'defiance' have defined approaches to early modern social relations, helping to reproduce conventional dichotomies between 'vertical' social hierarchies built upon elite patronage and passive plebeian deference and 'horizontal', class-based solidarities. Characteristically, social historians have weighed evidence of social conflict - typically, in reported seditious speech, or in outbreaks of rebellious crowd action - against less specific evidence of popular deference.[15] 'Deference' is thereby set in opposition to 'defiance', and any sense of how these two extremes of social relations might be manifest within the same society, community, or even within the same individual, is obscured. This unrecognised convention flows, at least in part, from the highly unequal quantity of research that has been conducted into 'deference' and 'defiance': bluntly stated, social historians (myself included) have preferred to study popular resistance at the expense of subordination and deference.

The endurance of the duality between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' allegiances also owes something to the very different methodologies employed in studies of resistance and subordination. Whereas episodes of popular riot, demonstration, collective litigation, rebellion, and other forms of resistance have been subject to deeply contextualised, micro-historical scrutiny, research into deference and subordination has been much more broad-brush, anecdotal and uncontextualised.[16] In consequence, understandings of social

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[13] I lift the term from R. Sennett and J. Cobb, The hidden injuries of class (New York, 1972).

[14] D. Haynes and G. Prakash, 'Introduction: the entanglement of power and resistance', in D. Haynes and G. Prakash (eds.), Contesting power: resistance and everyday social relations in South Asia (Berkeley, CA, 1991),3.)

[15] The two main surveys of early modern social history approach social relations through this dichotomy: see K. Wrightson, English society 1580-1680 (London, 1982); J.A. Sharpe, Early modern England: a social history, 1550-1760 (1987; 2nd. ed., London, 1997). For a similar opposition between 'class' and 'deference', see D. Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England, 1603-1660 (Oxford, 1985), 5, 115, 121-2.)

[16] John Walter has written two of the classic studies of open social conflict: '"A rising of the people": The Oxfordshire rising of 1596' P&P 107 (1985) and 'Grain riots and popular attitudes to the law: Maldon and the crisis of 1629' in Brewer and Styles (eds.), An Ungovernable people. For my own contribution to studies of overt conflict, see my Politics of social conflict. For very recent studies see S. Hindle, 'Persuasion and protest in the Caddington common enclosure dispute, 1635-1639', P&P, 158 (1998); S. Hipkin, 'Sitting on his Penny Rent: Conflict and Right of Common in Faversham Blean, 1596-1610', Rural History 11:1 (2000), pp. 1-35. For studies of plebeian deference, see A.Wood, 'Poore men woll speke one daye': plebeian languages of deference and defiance in England, c.1520-1640', in Harris (ed.), The politics

relations have become lopsided: in comparison with the many micro-histories of 'defiance', studies of 'deference' seem less sensitive to historical context. In contrast, this essay maintains a close focus upon the mechanics of social subordination, and the possibilities for plebeian solidarity, within a specific locality: the Yorkshire valley of Nidderdale. The key archival sources are drawn from the substantial records of litigation at the Court of Star Chamber generated by a vicious and protracted feud within the valley in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In order to understand both this feud, and the pattern of social relations within the valley, it is essential to appreciate the prior history, ecology and economy of Nidderdale.

The narrow, steep valley of Nidderdale rested on the boundaries of the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire. In the early modern period, the valley itself was known as 'Netherdale', and its mouth (mostly coterminus with the manor of Kirby Malzeard) was called the 'Country of Kirkbyshire'. Most population was concentrated at the foot and neck of the valley, together with a scatter of isolated hamlets and farmsteads up towards the head. Bounded on three sides by gritstone moors, the soil of the valley was thin. Pastoral farming predominated, supplemented by some weaving, quarrying, and lead and coal mining. In the early sixteenth century, the economy and politics of the valley had been dominated by the Fountains Abbey. After the dissolution of Fountains, the manorial titles within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire passed to a small number of powerful gentry families. Chief amongst the local gentry were three families: the Yorkes of Goulthwaite, the Inglebys of Ripley, and the Mallorys of Studeley. By the end of the sixteenth century, these families had established a reputation for religious conservatism: some family members were outright recusants, and the heads of all three households were known to protect Jesuit missionaries. Many of the tenants of the three conservative gentry households were recusant catholics; in contrast, godly protestants had a difficult time in the valley. The dominant local culture of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire therefore favoured the old religion. In 1536, the people of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire had joined the Pilgrimage of Grace; early in 1537, they were primed for a second rising; in 1569, the locality supported the Northern Earls' Rebellion. [17]

In 1597, a godly gentleman named Stephen Proctor bought the lease of Fountains Abbey, together with the manorial titles to much of Kirkbyshire and Nidderdale. Knighted in 1604, Proctor was a vigorous proponent of protestantism within the valley and, as a Justice of the Peace in both the North and West Ridings, was soon involved in prosecuting recusants and hunting down Jesuit priests. In total, he was responsible for the execution of two Jesuit priests, both of whom he caught on the estates of the local conservative gentry. He also set about enclosing large sections of the extensive commons within the valley, incurring the wrath of the plebeian population. Unsurprisingly, Proctor encountered substantial opposition: the tenants and commoners of Kirkbyshire and Nidderdale engaged in constant, small-scale rioting, with massive outbreaks of near-

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of the excluded; J. Walter, 'Public Transcripts, Popular Agency and the Politics of Subsistence in Early Modern England' in Braddick and Walter (eds.), Negotiating Power (Cambridge, 2001).

[17] I intend to write more fully about these issues in a future article which will deal with migration patterns, customary law, and local culture in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire, to be published as an outcome of my AHRB-funded research project on custom and popular senses of the past, 1500-1750.

rebellion in 1597, 1600 and 1607. Much of this crowd action focused on his attempts to enclose Thorpe Moor, a large area intercommoned by a series of different settlements. Moreover, the indigenous gentry sponsored a series of assassination attempts, including one attempt to murder Proctor through the agency of the local sorcerer. None of this put Proctor off: he continued to construct a magnificent mansion house beside the site of Fountains Abbey and to develop his own network of protestant clients, including local gentry, clergy and yeomanry. He came close to bring down one of his leading opponents, Sir John Yorke, after Yorke staged an anti-protestant drama in his house at Goulthwaite; but although Yorke was imprisoned and heavily fined by the Star Chamber, it was Proctor who was eventually destroyed by the long-standing conflict. In 1610, at the instigation of Sir John Mallory, Proctor was impeached and imprisoned by the House of Commons for corruption and exceeding his authority; by 1615, in debt from his various transactions, and financially exhausted by his constant litigation, he had withdrawn from the conflict. Proctor died, intestate, in 1620.[18]

Sir Stephen Proctor presented himself as God's agent within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. He survived assassination attempts, he claimed, 'only through god his providence'.[19] Comparing his magisterial rectitude to the abuse of magisterial and seigneurial authority by the conservative gentry, he described their 'absolute power' and 'sole government' within the valley. In contrast, Proctor saw himself leading the 'greate reformacon' of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. Whereas the conservative gentry had fostered treason and recusancy, Proctor saw himself as a godly magistrate, seeking out 'prophanors and p[er]vertors' of 'godes true religion and publique Justice' in this 'moste evill affected place', given both recusancy and to rebellion: as he reminded the Star Chamber, Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire were places 'where authoritie and justice is held in no great estymacon and the people moste easelie stirred up by smale occasion to tumultes and uprore.' [20]All of this, as one of Proctor's yeoman clients put it, set him on the side of 'the Religion of the Protestants & ag[ains]t the Papists'. His 'Reformation' won him rather more friends outside the valley, however: in 1614, Lord Sheffield, the President of the Council of the North, praised Proctor's magistracy, his 'Reformacon' of church buildings, and his 'p[er]petuall s[er]vice of God in that p[ar]te of the Contrie, where manie of the people had bene longe most backward and ireligious.'[21] In contrast, his opponents were said to have felt that Proctor's 'better advancem[en]t of Religion' and his imposition of 'grave preachers' upon the parishes had 'brought Antichrist into Netherdale'.[22] Yet, Proctor's 'reformation' brought few protestant converts.[23] Instead, his clientage network was built upon his power as a magistrate, an employer, and a landlord.

Proctor's reformation was both material and spiritual. Just as he hoped to reform the manners and religion of its plebeian population, so he reordered the landscapes they

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[18] A brief account of the conflict is to be found in C. Howard, Sir John Yorke of Nidderdale, 1565 -1634 (London, 1939).)
[19] PRO, STAC8/227/5.
[20] PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC8/227/1; PRO, STAC8/18/1; PRO, STAC8/ 184/33.
[21] PRO, STAC8/18/1.46, 100-1.
[22] PRO, STAC8/19/10.22.
[23] for an example of one 'duetyfull goer to the Churche', see PRO, STAC8/19/10.20; for a godly tenant of Sir John Yorke, see PRO, STAC8/19/10.27.

inhabited and sought to regulate their working lives. As his enclosures progressed, so he established commercial quarrying, expanded the lead and coal mining industries, and developed foresting. This economic base enabled him to develop clientage networks of his own, built upon his capacity to offer mineral and land leases to local gentlemen and farmers, and to offer protection and employment to the poorest sort. Significantly, many of the labourers within Proctor's new enterprises came from outside the valley. [24]Social divisions, coupled with a fierce sense of local identity, fragmented popular solidarity within the valley. The established tenants' attempts to expel the poor newcomers employed in Proctor's enterprises, coupled with some tenants' resentment of the coercion exercised by the traditional gentry's authority, allowed Proctor to push his clientage networks further down the social scale. On various occasions, he presented himself to the Star Chamber as a graciously paternalistic gentlemen, protecting powerless poor folk from the indigenous gentry. On one occasion he spoke of his defence of 'a poore man' and his 'five poore children' whose cattle had been impounded by Sir William Ingleby. Later, he described how he had protected 'div[e]rs poore people' from the depredations of Ingleby's manorial officers. Ingleby's retainers, Proctor complained, tormented the poorer villagers of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire with suits at the Westminster courts, the manor court, and at the Council of the North.[25] In contrast, Proctor publicly advertised his willingness to defend the poorest sort within the valley: the Earl of Cumberland alleged that one of Proctor's men had sounded a trumpet in the village of Kilnsay and announced that Proctor would protect the inhabitants against the Earl.[26] Where patronage did not work, Proctor fell back upon blunt intimidation. His plebeian opponents presented Proctor's authority as grounded in material and political power: for the was 'a man of greate countenance in [the]...Country', his power made apparent in his 'great menaces & threateninges'.[27] One lower class opponent of Proctor, for instance, explained how he and his neighbours were 'not... able to wage lawe w[i]th... S[i]r Steven Procktor being a greate man and haveing occasions to lye much att London'.[28] In contrast, Proctor offered his supporters the fruits of his power and wealth. He was alleged to have manipulated his magisterial authority in order to protect his clients; his local supporters offered bribes of cash, employment or land to those willing to testify against the indigenous gentry.[29] In consequence, whereas the native gentry knew that they could depend upon many of the established tenants within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire, Proctor hoped to call upon the loyalty of some of the poorest sort. Certainly, this was the way in which his opponents presented the social basis of his support, emphasising the power he held over 'the meaner sorte of people in...[the] countrie', and contrasting their capacity to muster 'many of Netherdaile of good worth' as witnesses, whereas Proctor witnesses were merely 'poore men'. Through such means, Proctor built an alternative clientage network comprised of his own 'favorers'and 'Instr[u]m[en]ts', otherwise identified as 'S[i]r Steven proctors people'. Many of the methods by which Proctor developed this network were identical to

[24] for quarrying, see PRO, STAC8/227/7; for leases of mining rights, and Proctor's retention of the manorial tolls, see PRO, STAC8/227/6.14-15; PRO, STAC8/227/35.31. For the complexity of Proctor's purchases of leases and manorial titles, see PRO, STAC8/227/6, answer of John Armitage

[25] PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC8/256/18; PRO, STAC8/4/3.18. Get exact quote.)

[26] PRO, STAC5/C50/18.

[27] PRO, STAC5/W38/33; PRO, STAC8/184/4.

[28] PRO, STAC8/227/4.30.

[29] PRO, STAC8/19/10.35; PRO, STAC5/C25/20; PRO, STAC5/W38/33.

those favoured by his opponents: calculated patronage; bribery; the abuse of magisterial power; threats of litigation, expulsion or physical violence. Finally, Proctor copied his opponents' mafia-style habit of maintaining a retinue of armed and mounted kinsman, gentlemen and tenants.[30]

Despite all of this, Proctor persisted in his pious claims to embody 'Reformation'. The spirit of Proctor's reforming enterprise communicated itself to his gentry supporters: one explained how pasture and moorland had been enclosed, improved, and cottages and barns constructed 'for placeinge laboringe men in for the good of the comon welth'.[31] This tone of improvement also coloured Proctor's own accounts of his activities: in enclosing the moors, he emphasised how he had provided employment to 'a greate nomber of workemen'.[32] In expanding the lead mining industry, Proctor emphasised that his mining operations were 'a greate reliefe to the poore Inhabitants of that vaste and mountenous countrey'.[33] Attracted by the profits to be made from lead mining, Proctor established himself as chief lord of the mines, inventing laws for the governance of the industry that gave him the power to appoint overseers and to extract manorial tolls upon the industry. All of this, he explained, was 'according to the Custome of workemen there'.[34] Proctor's local 'Reformation' entailed, therefore, both the expropriation of the material resources of the valley and the transformation of its culture. Proctor connected the dangerous religious culture of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire with its threatening geography: his protege, William Stubbes, the minister of Pateley Bridge, articulated this connection with the greatest clarity. Stubbes described the valley as 'one of the most obscure p[art]es' of Yorkshire. Far from established authority, it was a 'fitt place for secrett' activities, closed off from the rest of the country by high moors and 'great wastes'. Stubbes felt that the conservative gentry's great houses dominated the valley: at 'the heade of the Dale' stood Sir John Yorke's mansion house of Goulthwaite; at the entrance to the valley lay Sir William Ingleby's residence at Ripley. As 'a Minister & Preacher', Stubbes placed special emphasis upon the conservative religious culture of the valley: 'a great nomber' of the people were 'evillye affected to the true religion established', and moreover were 'increasinge daylie in their irreligious courses'.[35]

In contrast to Proctor's strident entrepreneurialism, Yorke, Mallory and Ingleby identified themselves as the paternalist upholders of traditional gentry values. The dominant values of the conservative gentry seemed strangely anachronistic, almost reminiscent of bastard feudalism: giving visual expression to their loyalties, for instance, Mallory's bailiffs wore his livery.[36] Sir William Ingleby's retinue included soldiers bearing rapiers and daggers.[37] In 1604, when Proctor was entertaining the young Prince Charles on his journey from Scotland, Sir John Yorke turned up at Proctor's mansion at Fountains and insulted him, giving Proctor 'very Malicious and hard words so farre as might extend to a challendge ...

[30] PRO, STAC8/19/10.73; PRO, STAC8/227/1.75;PRO, STAC5/C72/20.
[31] PRO, STAC8/181/9.
[32] PRO, STAC8/227/4.17-19.
[33] PRO, C21/P40/14.
[34] PRO, STAC8/184/4.
[35] PRO, STAC8/ 184/33.
[36] PRO, STAC5/D23/33.
[37] PRO, STAC8/227/6.14-5.

Instantly to fight or els[e] to be beaten and disgraced'.[38] The conduct, bearing and speech of leading members of the indigenous gentry households expressed their martial, hierarchical values. Anticipating the success of the Gunpowder Plot, Richard Yorke articulated the militarist norms of his household: 'we shall have a merrie world one of these daies, a good horse a sworde & a dagger wilbe worth a [£100] a yeare land.' [39]

The dominant values of the early modern gentry included not only a swaggering militarism, but also displays of paternalism and good lordship. In discussing his seigneurial policies, Sir William Ingleby presented himself as an ideal paternalist: he explained how, on one occasion, he had granted a cottage to John Fawcett because he was 'of a hundred yeares of age'; on another occasion, he granted a yearly pension to John Moorhouse 'out of the pettie and love w[h]ich he did beare towards the poore aged man who had served in the warres where he had Received a grevous hurt, And also for th[a]t he had served [Ingleby's]...father, when [Ingleby]... was but verie younge'.[40] The ostentatious paternalism displayed by the indigenous gentry towards their social inferiors enabled them to maintain a stranglehold over those 'verye poore people...some of w[hi]ch lyved upon almes in & about Netherdale', who were much 'relieved' by the gentry's retainers.[41] Similarly, Sir John Mallory's mansion at Studeley was the location of a gathering of Kirby Malzeard inhabitants who had come for 'a drinkinge to helpe & give some monies towards the relief of a poore man'.[42] The notorious anti-protestant drama performed at Goulthwaite represented not only an attempt to propagandise Yorke's tenants (those who saw the play were said to have 'affirmed to some other of their neighbours who had not seene the same, that if they had seene the... Play...they would never care for the new lawe or for goinge to the Churche more;'); it was also an exercise in traditional good lordship, allowing Yorke to display the munificence of his hospitality.[43] The content of the play connected with hedonistic, fun-poking popular reactions to protestantism. One exhausted godly preacher, Mr Mawson, explained how he had dispatched the churchwarden to instruct the people of the parish to come to church and pray, but they replied 'that it woulde hinder the Ayle wiffe'. Thereafter, all those who were 'popishly affected' left for the alehouse, and the few parishioners who were 'better affected' went into the church. Mawson complained of how, although his chapelry comprised 500 individuals, he frequently found himself saying prayers to only two or three people. On another occasion, Mawson entered the parish church to find that his pulp it was occupied by a stuffed dummy, dressed as a protestant preacher. When Mawson went to Goulthwaite to complain about the behaviour of Yorke's tenants, the household servants carried him to an alehouse and tried to make him drunk.[44] This coincidence between the popular culture of the valley and that of the indigenous gentry was more than accidental. Instead, the espousal of paternalism and good lordship, for its partial and conditional nature, enabled the conservative gentry to maintain a hold over their tenants

[38] PRO, STAC8/19/10.43.
[39] PRO, STAC8/19/10.16.
[40] PRO, STAC8/227/6.18-19.
[41] PRO, STAC8/184/33, deposition of James Hardcastle
[42] PRO, STAC8/227/1.99-105.
[43] PRO, STAC8/19/10.18.
[44] PRO, STAC8/19/10.40, 41. It seems from his later testimony that Mawson was eventually ground down by the people of Nidderdale: see his deposition in….also, get ref for dummy…..

at a time of intense local conflict. The relative success of this exercise in cultural hegemony was apparent in Mallory, Yorke and Ingleby's claims to embody the interests of the 'Country'.

One of the organising concepts with early modern popular culture was that of the 'Country'. This usually referred to a radius of roughly 10-20 miles (as constricted by geography) around a given locale, and in this case, was taken to refer to the neck and valley of Nidderdale. Within popular culture, the 'Country' was that area within which an individual's reputation was known, formed the approximate limits of many economic transactions, and often defined kinship links and migration patterns. As one Nidderdale man put it in 1574, 'Cuntrey' was where 'he... Inhabiteth... amongest other his kin[d]red, Frends and acquyntance'.[45] Significantly, the 'Country' was often seen as synonymous with local plebeian interests and was frequently imagined as possessing a voice, a memory and a unitary identity.[46] Thus, plebeian opponents within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire spoke of 'the comon voyce of the Countrye', or 'the newes in the Countrye'.[47] Like the rest of his class, Sir Stephen Proctor knew that social and political stability depended upon control of, and knowledge about, 'comon rumor': he recognised, for instance, that the free flow of plebeian speech had been a central organising force in the large-scale riots he faced on Thorpe Moor in 1603.[48] Proctor was therefore notably sensitive to the tone of the 'comon voyce of the Countrye': he understood the subversive power of the rumour which identified him as responsible for a recent levy on alehouses, a rumour which led to local alehouse doors carrying depictions of Proctor accompanied with 'a paire of Gallowes'.[49] In all these respects, the idea of 'Country' was central not only to social practice, but also to the formation of plebeian collective identities, and to the practice of popular politics. It is therefore important that in Nidderdale and the Kirkbyshire the interests of the conservative gentry were presented as synonymous with those of the 'Country': hence, Lady Jolyan Yorke was said to have remarked that 'Sr Steven had undone all th[e] country'. As elsewhere, the 'Country' was personified as a collective plebeian entity: in persuading the people of the valley to break Proctor's enclosures, the gentry were said to have communicated with 'the Countrey'.[50] Typically, labouring people in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire described the authority of the indigenous gentry as operative within the 'Country'; only occasionally, within Yorkshire; but never (unlike that of Sir Stephen Proctor) within the institutions of the central state. Plebeian deponents described Mallory, Ingleby and Yorke as 'men of worthe and of great power in the Country', or as those 'greate in the Contrye'; the yeoman William Hardcastle was warned that it was best not to cross Ingleby, Yorke and Mallory, since they 'were greate men in the County of Yorke and that they had many freinds of great countenance in those p[ar]ts about them it was no livinge for [people]... there unless they would leane to that

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[45] PRO, STAC5/B69/8.
[46] For more on this, see Wood, 'Migration and plebeian identity in rural England, 1500-1750', forthcoming
[47] PRO, STAC8/18/1.56-7; PRO, STAC8/ 1 84/33.7; PRO, STAC8/19/10.16; PRO, STAC8/ 227/35.3-4.
[48] for more on elite anxieties about 'comon rumour', see A. Wood, The 1549 rebellions and the making of early modern England (Cambridge, forthcoming), ch. 3.
[49] PRO, STAC5/A57/5, interrogatory. For Proctor's concerns regarding the 'common voice' in Kirkbyshire and Nidderdale, see PRO, STAC8/227/37.6; PRO, STAC8/227/1, complaint of Sir Stephen Proctor; PRO, STAC8/227/37.6.
[50] PRO, STAC8/18/1.101-2; PRO, STAC8/227/4.9.

syde (meaning unless they would inclyne to the papists ag[ains]t the p[ro]testants'.[51] The fact that Sir William Ingleby's bailiffs were 'called among simple people the Justices of Kirkbyshire' says much for the association between local identity and the authority of the conservative gentry. It was on the basis of such local power that Ingleby was described in the Attorney General's complaint of 1600 as 'a very poupular man'. This was no compliment, but was instead intended to damn Ingleby's association with popular politics.[52] For the conservative gentry to claim that they stood for the interests of the 'Country' was therefore to make an ambitious claim upon popular loyalties; possessed of a powerful normative force within early modern popular culture, the language of 'Country' was mobilised in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire in order to identify the interests of the indigenous gentry alongside those of the 'common people', and to isolate and stereotype Proctor as an enemy of all that the 'Country' represented: the traditional values of continuity, custom, hospitality, reciprocity and social duty. [53]

Yet the real authority of Mallory, Ingleby and Yorke over the valley's labouring people originated not in the unthinking deference of 'simple people' but rather from the coercion and contingency. Faced by the alarming figure of Sir Stephen Proctor, many tenants made common cause with the indigenous gentry in order to defend their religion and their common land; as we shall see, once Proctor was removed as a threat to the culture and the economy of the valley, its plebeian inhabitants developed a rather sudden capacity for autonomous action. Perhaps more importantly, the conservative gentry maintained their hold over their social inferiors through both patronage and coercion. In this respect, their actions were not fundamentally different from those of Sir Stephen Proctor; but Mallory, Ingleby and Yorke proved rather more effective as mafiosi than their opponent. The people of the valley were well aware of how the withdrawal of their lords' favour could damage an individual's standing: after William Gale declined to support Sir John Mallory against Proctor, he ran into Mallory; finding that Mallory ignored him, 'not respectyng this depo[nen]t his poore kynsman', Gale recognised that he had been symbolically excluded from Mallory's favour.[54] It was widely recognised that the clients of the conservative gentry's were rewarded with favourable leases, cash payments, and gifts. The wife of the minister of Pateley Bridge, later to become one of Proctor's supporters, was told that her husband would be given a living worth £100 per year, and that she 'should have a new calven cowe to put into a pasture' if they denounced Proctor. Her husband later described how it had been explained to him that the indigenous gentry were 'men of worthe and of great power in the Country, and suche as might doe [him]... good'. The husbandman James Hardcastle was likewise offered a copyhold of inheritance if he withdrew his testimony against Sir John Yorke; Edmund Wood was offered an enclosure on Kirkby Malzeard moor; the old husbandman Leonard Payler was assured that he would 'be used as well as any of Sr John his other Te[nants]' so long as he continued to support Yorke; the labourer David Paley was offered £40, or a horse, and a guarantee of

[51] PRO, STAC8/ 18/1.56-7; PRO, STAC8/ 227/35.2; PRO, STAC8/ 18/1.101-2.
[52] PRO, STAC5/A57/5; PRO, STAC8/4/3; for a second copy of the complaint, see PRO, STAC7/1/7.
[53] For a very different, but equally politicised, use of the language of 'Country', see R. Cust, 'Politics and the electorate in the 1620s', in R. Cust and A. Hughes (eds.), Conflict in early Stuart England: studies in religion and politics, 1603-1642 (Harlow, 1989), 148, 150, 154-5.
[54] PRO, STAC8/227/35.27-8

'Sr John Mallorys favor and [that of] other greate [men] in the Contrye'.[55] Paley later explained how one of Mallory's retainers even personified his master as money, describing how the man clapped his hand 'on his pockett... wherein hee seemed by the gingling to have good stoare of monye', and told Paley 'in faith I have Sr John heer in my pockett and yf theie wilt doe it [that is, betray Proctor], I warrant thee, thowe and thy wyef shall have cowes enoughe'.[56] Proctor may have exaggerated only slightly when he accused Mallory, Ingleby and Yorke of having kept 'the contrye in suche awe and subjection unto them as they are at [the gentry's] sole disposicone.'[57]

Like Proctor, the indigenous gentry also deployed their magisterial power over the labouring people of Kirkbyshire and Nidderdale. Local witnesses showed that Proctor's hyperbolic accounts of the depradations of Ingleby's bailiffs were far from baseless: they intimidated 'poore people', warning that they would 'burne their houses, breake their fences, caste forth their wives and children...pull up their trees by the rootes, leave their howses desolate, and banishe them [from] the countrey'.[58] The weaver William Brown described how Sir John Yorke's bailiff warned Brown's wife that 'he would pull her house downe ov[er] over her head & burne it & that [Brown] would nev[er] come into the Daile againe, but that he would be hanged'. Still more bluntly, another of Yorke's retainers exclaimed that 'whoe soe dealeth against Sr John Yorke in his busines, I will...cutt him of by the midle w[i]th my sworde, and take his farmehold ov[er] his head.'[59] Local people who refused to testify against Proctor had their goods distrained upon legal warrants. Sir John Yorke arrested Proctor's supporters under allegations of poaching. Sir John Mallory had charges of theft against one of Proctor's servants dropped, and took the man into his household, in return for his testimony against his former master. Mallory had earlier threatened to have the man executed if he refused to testify against Proctor. Mallory also dragged poor men before the Council of the North, on which he sat.[60] The Crown's need for troops, caused by the emergency in Ireland, gave the conservative gentry new opportunities for coercion. Sir William Mallory squeezed money from local inhabitants under threat of being drafted to the army in Ireland; when one of his retainers fell from his favour, Mallory threatened the man with being sent to Ireland; on another occasion, Mallory drafted William Smith to Ireland because he suspected the man of poaching his game. [61]Local people knew that it was dangerous to incur the 'splene and mallice' of the indigenous gentry: one plebeian critic of Proctor, Mallory and Ingleby was arrested upon a warrant that stated that he had become 'a distracted man'; after she saw an illicit catholic mass being performed at Goulthwaite, Sir John Yorke accused Elizabeth Browne of bewitching his servants. (FOOTNOTE: PRO, STAC8/184/33; PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC8/19/10.21.) The extravagant pretence of the conservative gentry to uphold a hierarchical, paternal society of orders seems therefore to have been upon nothing more than an ugly, crude and brutal protection racket.

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[55] PRO, STAC8/18/1.56-7; PRO, STAC8/19/10; PRO, STAC8/227/35.2, 82.
[56] PRO, STAC8/227/35.42.
[57] PRO, STAC5/P14/21.
[58] PRO, STAC5/P14/21.
[59] PRO, STAC8/ 19/10.13-14.
[60] PRO, STAC8/227/35.1, 33-5; PRO, STAC8/19/10.35; PRO, STAC5/P14/21.
[61] PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC8/227/35.39-43; PRO, STAC8/227/35.17.

In many cases, the combined economic and political force that Mallory, Yorke and Ingleby brought to bear upon the population of the valley was sufficient to ensure popular compliance. Since Sir John Yorke was notorious for his mistreatment of his protestant tenants, it was obvious to local people that the 'greatest p[ar]te' of Yorke's tenants were recusants. (FOOTNOTE: PRO, STAC8/ 19/10.7, 43.) The neighbours of Robert Joy advised him to fabricate evidence against Proctor, warning him that if he failed to do so, Sir William Ingleby would see that 'he should be undone & put [out] of his farme'. Pressure was also placed upon Joy's wife: she was told by Yorke's retainers that if her husband denounced Proctor, 'he should nev[er] want soe longe as he lived.' His wife being 'then great w[i]th childe', Joy gave way. Such clients were all the more useful when they held greater wealth or power over other labouring people. William Preston fell into furious argument with the 84 year-old pauper Richard Knowles after the old man refused to give evidence against Proctor, Preston instructing his mother, wife and servants 'to give [Knowles] nothinge & willed him to go to go to Mr Procter to be kept.'[62] The conservative gentry's influence over many established tenants drew from their shared hostility to the proletarian labourers who worked in Proctor's enterprises. Such divisions between rich and poor, and between established tenant and recent migrant, helped to define the plebeian contribution to the conflict in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. As such, it helps to confirm recent work on the politics of poor relief and settlement in early modern rural communities.

The substantial body of work published by Steve Hindle has deepened social historians' appreciation of the micro-politics of entitlement and residence within early modern rural communities.[63] In particular, Hindle has argued that local social relations were structured by the institutional authority held by richer villagers over their poorer neighbours. This seems confirmed by the evidence of the conflict in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. Despite the tendency of both elite and plebeian inhabitants to present the local social order as polarised between the gentry and the 'comon sorte of people', within the villages of Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire, there were deep divisions between rich and poor, and between established villager and newcomer.[64] Certainly, the record of litigation at the Court of Star Chamber points towards the capacity of established tenants to coerce the local poor into joining the confrontation with Proctor. In the major riots of 1600, the wealthier villagers of Kirkby Malzeard were accused of having forced 'poore beggar women and Cottagers' to break Proctor's enclosures on Thorpe Moor. Proctor alleged that the established tenants pushed the village poor into the riots 'by threates to pull them owt of the Townes end, and...that they should nev[e]r have almes at their dores, nor any relief in the Towne... unless they assented'. [65]Moreover, at no time in the early modern period were concerns over the settlement rights of the poor of greater concern to their established neighbours than in the near-starvation years of the 1590s. The beginning of

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[62] PRO, STAC5/W38/33.

[63] See in particular S. Hindle, 'Power, Poor Relief and Social Relations in Holland Fen, c.1600-1800', Historical Journal 41:1 (March 1998), pp. 67-96; S. Hindle, 'Exclusion crises: poverty, migration and parochial responsibility in English rural communities, c.1560-1660', Rural History, 7, 2 (1996).

[64] Such homogeneous formulations referred to 'the comon people'; 'the people' and 'the comon sorte'. See, for instance, PRO, STAC8/184/33, deposition of James Hardcastle; PRO, STAC8/19/10.12; PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC5/A57/5, deposition of Henry Atkinson; PRO, STAC5/C25/20.

[65] PRO, STAC8/227/3.4

Proctor's 'Reformation' in 1597 coincided both with high food prices and anxieties amongst settled tenants over the establishment of cottages and encroachments upon Thorpe Moor. Already established as a prior field of conflict between rich and poor villagers, this was the area that Proctor sought to enclose.[66] Participants in both the large-scale riots against Proctor's enclosures, and in the routine, everyday intimidation of Proctor's labourers, were therefore able to present their activities as legitimate attempts to expel illegal squatters from their commons.By the standards of early modern English rural protest, the attacks on Proctor's workforce were unusually violent. On one occasion in 1610, one of Proctor's lead miners died after being beaten by an armed crowd. [67]Some miners and cottagers gave graphic descriptions of the terror they suffered at the hands of the Kirkbyshire and Nidderdale tenants. One woman explained how, during a night-time attack by an armed crowd, she and her children were beaten and expelled from their cottage on Thorpe Moor.[68] Another poor woman nearly died when she gave premature birth following a similar attack by a crowd of masked men.[69] Such events allowed Procter to pose as the defender of the 'poore', explaining to the Star Chamber how the Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire tenants had assaulted 'their poore neighbors' in an attempt to 'make them flye their countrye'. [70]Nonetheless, the indigenous gentry and their tenants' campaign of intimidation against Proctor's workforce seems to have yielded results: following the attacks on Thorpe Moor, Proctor complained that he was unable to recruit workers.[71]

The conservative gentry benefited from the established tenants' hostility towards both the local poor and to the proletarian incomers: Sir John Mallory defended himself against Proctor's allegation that he had organised a mass riotous meeting of parishioners in Kirby Malzeard church on the grounds that he was present in order to discuss the removal of illegal cottages on the moors, and to answer popular concerns about 'sondry disordered p[er]sons that wandered and lurked in the townes neere... Kirby'. He explained how, at the meeting, he invoked his magisterial authority to instruct the constables to ensure that no 'ydle p[er]sons' be allowed 'to live amongst them'. The Kirkby Malzeard tenants were worried by the exploitation of their commons by the poor inhabitants of Auldfield, and once again Mallory was able to exploit such concerns against Proctor. It was on the basis of Mallory's magisterial authority that the attacks on Proctor's workers and their families were justified.[72]Through their involvement in such village conflicts, the indigenous gentry captured popular concerns over in-migration and encroachments on the commons, and were able to characterise Proctor's 'Reformation' as responsible for an increase of the disorderly poor within the valley.

None of this should be taken to indicate that there were not autonomous traditions of popular protest within the valley. Rather, the large-scale riots faced by Proctor or distinct

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[66] PRO, STAC5/D23/29, deposition of Thomas Wood.
[67] For attacks on Proctor's coal and lead miners, see PRO, STAC8/227/1; PRO, STAC8/184/4; PRO, C21/P4/19.
[68] For this account, see PRO, STAC8/4/3.3. For her husband's account of this attack, see PRO, STAC5/A57/5, deposition of Christopher Outhwaite.
[69] PRO, STAC8/181/9.
[70] PRO, STAC5/P14/21; PRO, STAC5/A57/5, Interrogatory.
[71] PRO, STAC8/227/3.4.
[72] PRO, STAC8/227/4.32, and answer of Sir John Mallory.

similarities to the forms of organisation within the region in the 1536 and 1569 rebellions. Captains were appointed, parish churches used for mass meetings, parochial officers organised 'common purses' in order to finance the villagers' legal defence against Proctor's constant lawsuits, crowds were gathered together by secret watchwords. The collective litigiousness of the Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire tenants to upon the deep knowledge both of local customary law, and of the common law. Thus, for instance, Proctor's enclosures were sometimes destroyed by a couple of tenants in order to avoid prosecution for riot (which required gatherings to number three or more). In contrast, one other occasions, the crowds mustered against Proctor were extremely large. The size of the crowds was both the consequence of the widespread threat represented by Proctor, and the unifiying nature of customary law within the valley. The forms of local customary law - built upon intercommoning between settlements, and the mutual dependence of richer and poorer villagers upon the commons - allowed for the occasional transcendence of local and social divisions. As elsewhere, these notions of custom drew upon deeply shared local memories of early conflicts, including direct memories of participation in the 1569 rebellions, and women's collective memory of the role of the 'wyves of Thorpe' in the destruction of the Earl of Derby's enclosures in 1549. [73]

In helping to organise and lead popular resistance to Proctor, the conservative gentry is not conjure forth a passive, deferential response from their tenants, but rather keyed into a preexistent, semi-autonomous popular political culture within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. It was upon the basis of this creative, dynamic, and sometimes conflictual relationship between the indigenous plebeian politics of the valley, and that of the established gentry households, that the wall of opposition to Proctor was constructed. An initial reading of the Star Chamber material, however, fails to illuminate this complex relationship: albeit for different reasons, both Sir Stephen Proctor and the conservative gentry presented the York, Mallory and Ingleby households as the source of popular protest within the valley. Sir John Mallory, for instance, explained his leading role in the opposition to Proctor in 1608, explaining how, when he entered the parish church of Kirkby Malzeard to discuss vagrancy and illegal encroachments in the parish, he 'p[er]ceaved a greate murmuringe and discontentm[en]t amongest some of the... company for the inclosing of the comon grounds'. Noting that the parishioners 'did... desire the advise, direccon and assistance of [himself]... and... Sir John Yorke', he therefore advised them either to petition the Lord Treasurer or the Earl of Derby, and said that he would get an injunction from the Council of the North to prevent Proctor's enclosure of Thorpe Moor. [74]Ironically, given the long history of conflicts between the Earls of Derby and the tenants of Kirkbyshire, the inhabitants sometimes claimed Derby's authority in legitimation of their riotous actions. In 1606, one of Proctor's servants described how he saw 'great troupes' of armed people gathering in Kirkby Malzeard; when he questioned them as to their authority, they replied that they were thereby the sanction of the Earl of Derby and Sir William Ingleby 'who wolde beare them owte in that matter'.[75] The conservative gentry also helped to organise the tenants' legal cases against Proctor, and

[73] The popular political culture of the valley will be dealt with more fully my future work on migration patterns, customary law and popular culture in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire.
[74] PRO, STAC8/ 227/4, Answer of Sir John Mallory.
[75] PRO, STAC8/4/3.2.

on more than one occasion tried to persuade Proctor to seize his programme of enclosures.[76] The public form of plebeian requests for gentry leadership could take highly deferential forms: the 'wyves' of Mallory's tenants brought him 100 capons in one day as a gift 'in regarde hee should stande to them in [their]... suite'; Mallory pointed out that not all of their husbands had contributed to the legal fund for the defence of the common 'but upon submission and kneelinge on theire knees', he gave into the women's request.[77]

Within the model of domination and resistance presented by James Scott, we should interpret such ritual moments as knowingly cynical, tactical exercises in the negotiation of power relations between ruler and ruled, which left the consciousness of the subordinate untouched. While there was undoubtedly a tactical aim to such rituals of humiliation, it will be argued here that the self-respective individual labouring people, and the broader political culture that they participated in, was indeed coloured by such power-laden exchanges. Why should we assume that when the women of Kirby Malzeard 'made humble suite' for their commons to Proctor, 'the most p[ar]te of them kneelinge upon their knees', or when David Paley went 'kneelinge and asking forgivenes of [Proctor]... and prayinge him to be good unto him', they were untouched by such public moments of humiliation? [78]These were indeed powerful examples of the negotiation of power relationships such as recent social historians have concentrated upon; but they were conducted within a vast disparity of social power. Here, forms of resistance and plebeian political autonomy were heavily coloured by the continuing experience of subordination. Indeed, the language within which local inhabitants' identified power relations was heavily inflected with the experience of having been caught within in complex webs of clientage and dependency. The ways in which people identified one another within Nidderdale hint at peculiarly strong identifications with local clientage networks. For instance, Thomas Hill, known to be 'a very knave', was identified by his neighbours as 'Sr Wm Inglebyes man'. [79]In a peculiarly feudal throwback, the retainers of both the conservative gentry and those of Sir Stephen Proctor wore the badges and 'clothe' of the households to which they claimed allegiance.[80] Similarly, Sir William Ingleby talked easily of his clientage network, which extended amongst what he called his 'kynesmen and frends'; one yeoman reflexively identified himself as a 'Retayner'of Sir John Mallory.[81] References by labouring men to one gentlemen or another as 'Maister' points towards the way in which everyday language was inflected with domination and subordination.[82]

Whether to be taken at face value or not, local plebeian deponents were surprisingly willing to identify their subordination and lack of agency. One yeoman, for instance, explained that 'he be a playne Countrye fellowe & of no suche understandinge in respecte of his bringinge upp as many are.' Sometimes, such formulations flew in the face of the evidence: one aged poor man (despite his detailed testimony concerning the manorial

[76] PRO, STAC8/4/3.27, 18; PRO, STAC8/227/4.17-19.
[77] PRO, STAC8/227/35.33-5
[78] PRO, STAC8/227/35.13.. PRO, STAC8/227/3.6, 8.
[79] PRO, STAC8/18/1.64
[80] PRO, STAC8/19/10.44.
[81] PRO, STAC8/184/33.7; PRO, STAC8/227/35.39-43
[82] For example, see PRO, STAC8/ 19/10.35.

boundaries on the tops of the moors) declared himself to the 'Ignorant in words in the Lawe'.[83] Such diminished senses of the self arose from the structural lack of power that labouring people felt within the valley. Another old man, for instance, explained how his mother's household had been dependent for their supply of fuel upon the goodwill of the Earl of Derby's steward: she had only been allowed to take firewood from the local forests under his permission. [84]This perceived lack of agency heavily conditioned many labouring people's attitudes to the intense political conflict within their valley. James Hardcastle explained how he was scared by overhearing evidence concerning the complicity of members of the Ingleby and Yorke households in the Gunpowder Plot. Not knowing what to do, he justified his lack of action on the basis of his ignorance, explaining that he 'had... then bene at any tyme above... twenty miles from his owne house or thereabouts in all his life tyme'. Hardcastle's evidence went on to illuminate the fear that the gentry families conjured up in many plebeians. He explained how, when he returned home, he 'toulde his wife what he had hearde & seene [concerning the Gunpowder Plot] at Sr John York's house, who beinge likewise afraide as well as this depon[en]t was he also much fearinge that his life woulde have bene attempted by the practize of some of these kynde of people or their favorers'. [85]

One way of understanding the practice of power relations in profoundly unequal societies is in terms of emotion: the evidence suggests that the exercise of elite authority in Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire, rather than inducing loyalty, affection, respect and deference amongst the plebeian population, instead conjured up a dangerous brew of repression, fear, anxiety, anger and hatred. Thomas Thompson gave an account of how one of his neighbours came to him after being threatened by retainers of the conservative gentry 'for speaking his conscience' in his testimony '& at that tyme he wept bitterlie'.[86] Yet the assertion of elite power engendered popular resistance. Upon his deathbed, Leonard Browne explained to his neighbour Philip Shaw how Sir John Yorke's oppressions had 'broken his heart'; the same man told another of his neighbours that he wished he could have been revenged upon Sir John Yorke, but he feared losing the tenure of his farm. Philip Shaw had also been the audience for David Paley's hate-filled words: 'come now if yow wilt help to hang Sr John York thou mayest come to have thy lyving [that is, the tenure of his farm] layd togeather agayne w[hi]ch he hath taken from thee for sayeth hee wee have Reared the ladder if thow wilt but help to putt the halter about his neck'.[87] Indeed, the intense intra-gentry conflict within the valley meant that both Proctor and the conservative gentry had, on occasion, to depend (sometimes, for their very lives) upon the testimony and goodwill of their tenants. Here, there was a kind of popular agency at work; and the labouring people of the valley knew it. When the ill and 'solitary' Christopher Bland, asked the David Paley 'howe shall I amend' his loss of employment in Sir John Yorke's household, Paley explained the reasons for his joining Sir Stephen Proctor's network: he told Bland that after witnessing his neighbours (whom he called

[83] PRO, STAC8/184/33; PRO, STAC8/227/7, deposition of Thomas Gowtham. Alex Shepard is currently working on on plebeian senses of self-worth and credit.
[84] PRO, STAC5/D40/9, deposition of George Atkinson.
[85] PRO, STAC8/184/33, deposition of James Hardcastle
[86] PRO, STAC5/W38/33, depositions, 4 July 1603.
[87] PRO, STAC8/19/10.63. [EXACT PHRASE?] For other examples of plebeian hatred of Sir John Yorke, see PRO, STAC8/19/10.38-9.

'my brother Browne and my brother Payley') lose their farms as a result of giving offence to Sir John Yorke, he decided to join Proctor's factgion, hoping that he might 'hange him (meanyng... Sr John Yorke).' One another occasion, Paley told his neighbour John Wilson, while drinking in an alehouse, that he rejoiced at Sir John Yorke's troubles, saying that he was a bad landlord, and wished that Yorke would never enter the country again.[88] The assertion of seigneurial power over some tenants, therefore, could be a dangerous business in the heated circumstances in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire; for a lord to push the labouring man to farm might result in the denunciation of that gentlemen to his opponent in the valley. Certainly, the vast body of depositional evidence presented in support of both sides by the plebeian inhabitants of the valley to the Star Chamber testify to the importance of the gentry maintaining a basis of popular support.

Some Nidderdale people, therefore decided upon a strategy of revenging themselves upon oppressive landlords through denunciations. Others sought simply to escape the conflict. The wide, open moors above the valley offered an opportunity for those who wished to hide from their superiors. Initially, David Paley took this approach. After being offered 'Sr John Mallory's favor' if he testified against Proctor, Paley fled his home '& long remayned in desolat and obscure plac[e]s and in the open feilds in exceadinge greate miserye... being almost famished'. A friend of his explained how 'the honest neighbors' much lamented this. Eventually, Mallory sent his gamekeeper to remind Paley that if he denounced Proctor, he would receive his favour, but still Paley would not return to the valley. Finally, as we have seen, Paley defected to Proctor. Such actions are reminiscent of what researchers in subaltern studies have labelled 'avoidance protest', whereby subordinates express their discontent through flights, withdrawal, 'or other activities that minimise challenges to or clashes with those whom they view as oppressors.'[89] When Christopher Bland learnt that Proctor intended to squeeze testimony from him against the conservative gentry, Bland told his brother that 'he would not goe, for he would not enter into those busynesses... because they were nought'. He, too, sought refuge in the hills: 'being desirous to live in peace [he] did absent himself in a certen tyme on the moores at or about Ramsgill w[i]th a setting dogge.' Here, Bland was arrested by the constable upon the order of Sir John Yorke for hunting on the moors, and was required to give an undertaking not to hunt for any more, or to be imprisoned in Yorke Castle. After this, another of Proctor's clients came to him and encouraged him to testify against the conservative gentry, to which he replied 'god forbidd that he should enter into any such matters'. [90]A similar sense of distance from the whole conflict pervades Mungo Simpson's testimony. Between 1597 and 1603, Simpson had been employed by Proctor as a coal miner. When Ingleby's retainers drove him and his workmates from their mines, he helped to destroy the mine workings in return for the payment of the remains of his wages by Ingleby's factor. A similar sense of its engagement from the struggle between Proctor and the conservative gentry emerges from France's Theakston's account of his meeting with his neighbour Richard Hanley in London. Hanley had come to London to

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[88] PRO, STAC8/19/10.35, 65. [EXACT PHRASE?]

[89] M. Adas, 'From avoidance to confrontation: peasant protest in precolonial & colonial Southeast Asia', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 23 (1981), 217.

[90] PRO, STAC8/227/35.2, 33-5; PRO, STAC8/19/10.35.

testify on Sir John Mallory's behalf against Proctor, but complained that although Mallory had bribed him with 'a cowe not worth past seaven nobles', his testimony had cost him more than this.[91]

Finally, something of the potential autonomy of popular politics within the valley can be gleaned from the conclusion of the dispute. After Proctor's withdrawal from active conflict with his gentry neighbours, following his fall from political power and his financial ruin, in November 1614 the Countess of Derby enclosed a large section of common land within Kirkbyshire. Prior to Proctor's arrival in the valley, the Derbys had been the main opponents of the people of Kirkbyshire (they appear to have had no involvement in Nidderdale). In 1549, following riots by the women of Kirby Malzeard, the Earl of Derby had agreed to leave Thorpe Moor unenclosed. In 1594, there had been large-scale riots against his descendant's latest attempt to carry out enclosures on the Moor.[92] But in October 1606, facing the new threat of Sir Stephen Proctor, commoners, freeholders and tenants of Kirkby Malzeard petitioned the Countess of Derby to regain her title over the commons, free the rioters from Star Chamber, and to be rid of Proctor 'whom they much feared'. In return, the people of Kirkbyshire agreed to the enclosure of one-third of the commons. This deal was negotiated by Sir John Mallory. Following an appeal from the Countess, Proctor agreed to cease his action at Star Chamber on the condition that, on the behalf of the tenants, the Countess compound with him for £500 for commons. Thereafter, the Countess tried to enclose her one-third of the commons, but the tenants both refused to repay her £500, and refused to allow the enclosures to go ahead.[93] In November 1614, the Countess enclosed part of the common. One Mayday 1615, the Kirkbyshire tenants and commoners, guided by a watchword, broke down her fences allegedly saying that they ruled by 'Clubb lawe'. Since then, the Countess complained in 1616, they have maimed her cattle, and had broken down still more enclosures. In answer, the tenants repeated the case which they had developed against the by-now defeated Sir Stephen Proctor: that the Derbys did indeed hold the manor of Kirby Malzeard, but the commons were theirs; that the commons maintained the bulk of the population of the manor, both rich and poor; and that many other communities into commons thereon. Importantly, there is no evidence that on this occasion the indigenous gentry of the valley had any role in organising the people of Kirkbyshire. Instead, leadership came from the wealthier tenants, those 'men of great wealth and abyllety' whom Proctor had perceived at the heart of the large-scale riots of May 1607; presumably, they were also numbered amongst the 'principall men' of the 'Comoners' who were offered portions of the enclosed land on Thorpe Moor by the Earl of Derby's commissioners in 1606, but who declined the opportunity.[94] Prominent amongst these men was Richard Dawson, a wealthy yeoman who took a leading part in the enclosure riots against the Countess of Derby in May 1615. His wife, Dorothy, had led the women's riots on Thorpe Moor in 1607; two years later, Sir Stephen Proctor had explained to the Star Chamber that she was 'termed and comonly called for her bould and audacious attemptes *Captain Dorrothie*'. Like her husband seven years later, Dorothy Dawson

[91] PRO, STAC8/227/35.25; PRO, STAC8/227/1.6
[92] PRO, STAC8/4/3.27, 18.
[93] PRO, STAC8/20/23.
[94] PRO, STAC8/227/3.4

answered Proctor's charges of enclosure riots in 1609 by stressing the common interest that both the rich and poor inhabitants of Kirkbyshire had in the protection of common rights on Thorpe Moor.[95] In 1607, Dorothy Dawson had been joined in the leadership of the enclosure riots by Alice Bayne; eight years later, Roger Bayne, Alice's husband, joined Dorothy Dawson's husband in organising the enclosure riots against the Countess of Derby.

Towards the end of our story, then, the semi-submerged autonomous tradition of popular political action resurfaced in Kirkbyshire. We might interpret the movement from partial subordination to open defiance, therefore, as episodic and cyclical rather than unitary. Moreover, as we have seen, forms of defiance were closely tied up with patterns of deference and subordination. As with Haynes and Prakash, and as in John Walter's recent study of the politics of subsistence, the study of the intense dispute within Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire renders problematic 'a view of both power and resistance as occupying autonomous spaces until they collide in dramatic confrontations.' [96]Much of my earlier work, like that of other early modern social historians, has highlighted the breadth and strength of popular agency. In contrast, this essay has developed a rather darker, more pessimistic analysis of popular politics. It has highlighted the manifold ways in which class structures limited popular agency; suggested that social divisions undercut plebeian politics; and emphasized how difficult, dangerous and humiliating it could be for subordinates to 'negotiate' the terms of their subordination. All of this should not be taken as reinstating conservative views of popular politics. Instead, a fuller recognition of the inhibiting structures of social inequality, and deeper awareness of the hidden injuries of class in early modern England, ought to lead social historians to a closer appreciation of those moments at which labouring people could unite and defeat their social betters. With the significant exception of the events of May 1615, this did not happen in late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century Nidderdale and Kirkbyshire. But in other times, and in other places, it could and did. In this respect, the historical experience of the people of this Yorkshire valley suggests that popular politics was not something given within an open system of power relations, but should instead be recognised as an *achievement*: something won from the teeth of a profoundly unequal, and often cruel, class structure.

[95] PRO, STAC8/227/3.8.
[96] Haynes and Prakash 'Introduction', 19; Walter, 'Public transcripts'.