ABSTRACT

BOULDIN, ELIZABETH. “Dying Men’s Wordes:” Treason, Heresy, and Scaffold Performances in Sixteenth-Century England. (Under the direction of Dr. Charles Carlton)

Between 1535 and 1603, hundreds of people in Tudor England were executed as political traitors, religious traitors, or heretics. Most of these executions were public, and the state almost always gave its victims the opportunity to say a few last words. These scaffold speeches became popular during the sixteenth-century and were often printed in “chapbook” or pamphlet form for those unable to attend the actual execution.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how scaffold performances evolved during the course of the sixteenth-century in response to legal, cultural, and religious changes. In forming their last speeches, convicted traitors and heretics projected an identity to the crowd and the scaffold authorities; they died either as repentant political traitors, Protestant martyrs, or Catholic martyrs. Those who died for crimes against the state came to give fundamentally different speeches from those who died for crimes against the state religion. Religious traitors and heretics also developed two distinct formulas for their scaffold performances depending on whether they were Catholic or Protestant. Only the crowd remained consistent in how it approached the scaffold; spectators continued to respond to individual performances rather than to ideologies.

"DYING MEN'S WORDES:" TREASON, HERESY, AND SCAFFOLD PERFORMANCES IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

by

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Approved by:

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DEDICATION

To my parents,

For their love and support

BIOGRAPHY

Elizabeth Jane Bouldin spent her childhood in Chapel Hill, NC. She was a Tar Heel born and bred, but she will not be a Tar Heel dead because she became a Wolfpack fan at age 18. Elizabeth attended NC State, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude as a French major in May of 2002. After working for two years, Elizabeth returned to her alma mater to pursue the M. A. in history.

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On a more personal level, many thanks to Todd Miller for first introducing me to the field of early modern British history. His passion for this time period is infectious and his friendship much valued. Finally, I am especially grateful for my family and all the support they have given me.

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INTRODUCTION

"Nothing became him in his life like the leaving of it," says Malcolm in the opening act of *Macbeth*, as he relates the traitor Cawdor's execution to King Duncan. Cawdor "confess'd his treasons, implored your highness' pardon and set forth a deep repentance. . . He died as one that had been studied in his death" (I, iv, 6-10). Had Cawdor lived in Shakespeare's England, he would have been quite "studied" in how to die a traitor's death. Almost all sixteenth-century traitors gave a speech on the scaffold; the crowd of spectators expected no less. Although scaffold speeches followed a fairly set pattern, not all traitors "set forth a deep repentance."

The words of traitors had much to do with the crimes that had brought them there, and this list of crimes expanded during the sixteenth-century with the changing needs of the state. In 1534, Henry broke with the Roman Catholic Church, which prompted new treason laws to protect Henry's anti-papal policy, his attack on church liberties, and his divorce and remarriage.[1] As the king and Parliament attempted to regulate England's new state religion through legislation, the distinction between heresy and treason blurred. Religious dissenters who refused to acknowledge the state religion committed a crime against the sovereign, and they could be tried as traitors. The approximation of political and religious treason continued throughout the century, as the state religion vacillated between Protestantism and Catholicism.

Several historians have studied treason and the scaffold speech in early modern England. John Bellamy's *Tudor Law of Treason* traces the numerous changes in treason law

[1] John Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason: An Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 22.

in post-Reformation England, from the reign of Henry VIII to the end of the Tudor dynasty. Lacey Baldwin Smith addresses the paranoia that invaded Tudor political life, and how this obsession with order and stability shaped the "veritable graveyard of unsuccessful intrigues, machinations, complots, and conspiracies" of sixteenth-century England.[2] James Sharpe and Charles Carlton have both explored the traitor's scaffold speech as a genre, analyzing scaffold speeches for what they reveal about Tudor culture. Gerald Broce and Richard Wunderli have shed light on the importance of the final moment before death in Tudor England, and how this cultural understanding of death shaped men and women's last dying words. Most recently, Sarah Covington, Michael Questier, and Peter Lake have considered the scaffold as a battleground for competing ideologies in post-Reformation England.

In this thesis, I examine the crossroads between Tudor treason law and the human response to it as revealed in sixteenth-century scaffold performances. Chapter One analyzes the two core influences on the scaffold speech. The first was an understanding of the scaffold speech as a compromise between the state and the offending party. The second was an understanding of the scaffold as a theatrical stage. Almost all who gave scaffold speeches constructed their last words within the framework of these two influences.

Chapter Two compares the speeches of political and religious traitors. Did convicted traitors, like the state, acknowledge little difference between political and religious rebellion? Their scaffold speeches suggest otherwise: although continuities exist, the structure and content of scaffold speeches changed considerably between 1534 and 1603. Thus, I contend that as sixteenth-century treason law evolved to meet the needs of the state, convicted traitors redefined and expanded their own understanding of treason in response to the new legislation.

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[2] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986), 1.

Chapter Three focuses specifically on religious traitors and heretics. It studies the differences between the scaffold performances of Protestant heretics and Roman Catholic traitors. As in the previous chapter, I consider how their last words and actions evolved in response to political and cultural changes. Although Protestants and Catholics both defined their executions as martyrdoms, their respective ideologies had significant influence on what happened on the scaffold.

Lastly, Chapter Four examines the crowds at public executions. Crowds played an active role in the theater of public execution, and their unpredictable reactions reveal the complexity and instability of the scaffold in post-Reformation England. Like the previous three chapters, this chapter considers how the many political, religious, and legal changes of the sixteenth-century affected scaffold performances.

Chapter 1: Negotiating a Good End on a Public Stage

In 1534, Henry VIII simultaneously divorced Catherine of Aragon and the pope, making himself the new husband of Anne Boleyn and the new supreme head of the Church of England. These proceedings required drastic measures to insure stability. The king, like his predecessor Edward III in 1352, turned to treason legislation to increase control over the thoughts as well as the actions of his subjects.[1] On March 23, 1534, Parliament passed the first Act of Succession. This act extended the punishment for treason to verbal offenders. Imperiling the king's person through words and prejudicing or slandering his recent marriage could both send someone to a traitor's death. Lacey Baldwin Smith writes that "the statutes regulating the nature of treason were so vague that they could be construed to include almost any word, expression, wish or deed."[2] Treason came to mean something new; the state could now charge anyone who expressed threatening thoughts or beliefs with treason.

It was under this new legislation, where words held great power, that the scaffold speech took form and flourished. What one said on the scaffold came to hold as much weight as how one acted. Scaffold speeches quickly became the centerpiece of Tudor executions, and almost every traitor or heretic found himself facing a crowd of eager listeners. Not surprisingly, cultural norms and pressures greatly shaped the words of traitors and heretics in Tudor England. In particular, two factors influenced what they said. The first was an understanding of the scaffold speech as a bargain between the state and the convicted. The

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[1] Karen Cunningham, *Imaginary Betrayals: Subjectivity and the Discourses of Treason in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 7.
[2] Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth-Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15, no. 4 (1954): 472.

second was an understanding of the scaffold as a theatrical performance in which the convicted had a scripted role to play.

Speeches as bargains

In Tudor England, scaffold speeches signified a negotiation similar to that of the modern day plea bargain. Charles Carlton explains that "because the crown could prevent a prisoner from making a speech by having him executed privately within the confines of the Tower, or even hustled to the block, his last words represented a compromise between his own needs, and those of the state."[3] By no means did officials grant every traitor the opportunity to speak. Thomas More, convicted of heresy in 1535, learned from his friend and negotiator, Thomas Pope, that "at your execution you shall not use many words."[4] More had to relinquish the privilege of a scaffold speech for another compromise: permission for his family to take his body away for burial.[5]

For those allowed to make a speech, inherent in the compromise was the understanding that they would in no way criticize the state. In 1595, for example, when Robert Southwell requested the under-sheriff's permission to address the crowd, he promised to "speak nothing against the state."[6] Even after a convicted traitor or heretic began to speak, officials did not hesitate to stop a threatening speech. At the 1555 execution of Nicholas Ridley, "the bailiffs and Dr. Marshall, vice-chancellor, ran hastily unto him, and with their

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[3] Charles Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death: Scaffold Confessions in Early Modern England," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 49 (Fall 1983): 67.
[4] Thomas More, qtd. in William Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, c. 1556, *Modern History Sourcebook*, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/16Croper-more.html.
[5] John Guy, *Thomas More* (London: Arnold Publishing, 2000), 210.
[6] J. H. Pollen, ed., *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs, vol. 1, 1584-1603* (Leeds: Whitehead and Son, 1908), 336.

hands stopped his mouth."[7] Thirty years later, William Dean, a Roman Catholic priest, "was beginning to speak of the cause for which he and his companions were condemned to die, but his mouth was stopped by some that were in the cart, in such a violent manner, that they were like to have prevented the hangman of his wages."[8] In 1586, the ministers presiding over William Lacy's execution found a sure-fire means of quieting him: "the ministers apprehending that the cause of their religion would suffer by such discourses, procured to have his mouth effectually stopped by hastening the hangman to fling him off the ladder."[9]

Usually, though, the state allowed the convicted person to speak because these dying words served as an effective warning against treason. Sometimes, repentant traitors helped out the state by asking the crowd to take heed of their example. Chidiock Tichborne told the spectators at his 1586 execution, "Let me be a warning to all young gentlemen, especially *Generosis Adolescentulis*."[10] Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk, hoped to serve as a warning to more than just noble-born youths: "And I pray God that this my death may be an example to all men."[11]

Tichborne and Suffolk's "examples" reached many more than those present at the scaffold. After an execution, printers often published scaffold speeches as pamphlets. James Sharpe remarks that "this type of literature must have played a vital role in spreading official ideas about crime and punishment, and about the whole nature of authority and disorder, down to the lower orders."[12] Scaffold speeches could literally reach tens of thousands,[13] and,

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[7] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, vol. 7*, ed. George Townsend (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 548-550.
[8] Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1924), 135.
[9] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 68.
[10] William Cobbett and Thomas Howell, eds., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-1826), 1157-58.
[11] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 544-45.
[12] J.A. Sharpe, "'Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present* 107 (May 1985): 162.

combined with the gruesome spectacle of a traitor's death, they reinforced political stability and the power of the state.

However, the state did not dictate the traitor's dying words, and "scaffold speeches were not wrung from victims by crude pressures of torture."[14] Rather, each speaker had to decide for himself or herself what to say. Political traitors tended to follow a typical pattern in their speeches, with the overriding concern being political and social order.

After greeting the crowd, the traitor usually acknowledged the legality of his or her sentence. Anne Boleyn, for example, began her speech as follows: "Good Christian people I am come hither to die, for according to the law, and by the law I am judged to die, and therefore I will speak nothing against it."[15] The law had a sacred quality in Tudor England. It expressed not only the will of the sovereign, but also the voice of the nation. Thus, as L. B. Smith explains, "the will of the state legally expressed through the laws of the realm was infallible."[16] For those convicted in Tudor England, "if the law, administered as the will of the king, deemed them worthy to die, then the prisoners considered themselves guilty, deserving death as men no longer useful to society."[17] Even Anne Boleyn, executed under trumped up charges, considered herself guilty because the king and the law had deemed her so.

Wrongful convictions did not exist in Tudor England, and to suggest so slandered the state. If a convicted traitor denied his guilt, he defied the state and thus committed treason by

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[13] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death," 67.
[14] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death," 69.
[15] Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of York and Lancaster* (London: Rychard Grafton, Prynter to the Kynges Maiestye, 1550), page 228, *Schoenburg Center for Electronic Text and Image*, http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti.
[16] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 491.
[17] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 488.

his denial.[18] When Pope Pius excommunicated Queen Elizabeth in 1570, John Felton posted a copy of the papal bull to the Bishop of London's palace gates. Felton protested at his execution three months later that he "never meant hurt or harm or any treason toward my prince." No less than three of the authorities on the scaffold admonished him for such comments. A Mr. Young proclaimed, "Lo, will ye see how he would clear himself of the heinous treason by him committed?" A second official reminded Felton, "Thou hast been attainted of High Treason and found Guilty by the oath of 12 true and honest men." Finally, the sheriff chimed in: "Thou was justly condemned of High Treason, and surely so thou art the rankest traitor that I ever heard of."[19] Each of the three officials spoke under the assumption that anyone convicted under the law and by a jury must be guilty.

At some point in their speech, most political traitors also either prayed for or acknowledged the monarch. Thomas Cromwell, executed in 1540 for high treason and heresy, asked the crowd "to pray for the king's grace, that he may long live with you in health and prosperity. And after him his son, Prince Edward, that godly imp, may long reign over you."[20] Cromwell's recognition of the king points to a major theme in Tudor society: the concern with order. In the highly structured hierarchy of Tudor England, everyone had his or her place. Treason disrupted this fragile order. As Charles Carlton notes, treason "was a crime not just against the people, the state, or even the monarchy, but against God and the whole cosmic order summed up as a great chain of being."[21]

Traitors thus "reckoned with God as well as man."[22] This in part explains why so few protested their sentences. If God was the highest entity in the great chain of being, then "it

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[18] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death," 74.
[19] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1085-88.
[20] Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families*, 242-43.
[21] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death," 66-67.
[22] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986), 2.

was not the King or Parliament or even the laws of the nation that decreed a man to die, but God working his will through these early instruments."[23] Many traitors accepted their fate because they saw it as divine will. The Duke of Northumberland told the crowd, "Though my death be odious and horrible to the flesh, yet I pray you judge the best in God's works, for he doth all for the best."[24] If such acquiesence to death seems overly glib, Lacey Baldwin Smith reminds us that traitors "assumed that God was their prop and stay, and that the success of their plans was manifest proof of divine blessing. By the same standard, failure indicated that after all God had withheld his grace."[25] Convicted traitors believed their plans had been foiled because of divine ordination; their plans had lost favor.

In addition to recognizing the law, the monarch, and God, almost every speech expressed contrition. Scaffold confessions had a generic tone. Rarely did political traitors explicitly mention the word "treason" or confess to a specific crime. Rather, they confessed to "everyman's sins for which all men deserve to die."[26] For example, Lady Jane Grey stated, "I confess that when I did know the word of God I neglected the same, loved myself and the world; therefore this punishment is worthily happened unto me for my sins."[27] The Duke of Northumberland proclaimed, "And as for me, I am a wretched sinner, and have deserved to die." Death and sin were inextricably linked in Tudor culture. Regardless of their guilt or innocence, convicted traitors believed they deserved death merely because of their sinful natures.

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[23] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 497.
[24] Charles Mitchell, ed., "The Dying Speech of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland," *Tyburn Tree: Public Execution in Early Modern England*, Loyola College of Maryland, http://www.evergreen.loyola.edu/~cmitchell.
[25] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 495.
[26] Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 2 (1989): 272.
[27] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, ed. G.A. Williamson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 197.

Thus, references to sin and sinfulness dominated the rhetoric of scaffold speeches. Convicted traitors regretted having "offended the queen" or having committed an "infectious sin." Some claimed to have been tempted into their vice by others. Chidiock Tichborne referred to the well-known biblical story of temptation: "the regard of my friend [Babington] caused me to be a man in whom the old proverb was verified, 'I was silent, and so consented.'… I may justly compare my estate to that of Adam's, who could not abstain 'one thing forbidden,' to enjoy all other things the world could afford."[28] In Tudor England, treason was just one of many sins for which those who came to the scaffold believed they deserved to die. As the Earl of Essex proclaimed, his sins were "more in number than the hairs" of his head.[29]

Anyone who came to the scaffold unrepentant risked incurring the wrath of his contemporaries.[30] The crowd and the execution officials expected traitors to repent as a sign that order had been restored. Although many religious traitors defended themselves in the name of the "true religion," examples of political traitors who refused to repent are rare. Of the political traitors examined in this thesis, only John Felton, Henry Cuffe, and Robert Barnwell offered any sort of defense. Cuffe, executed in 1601 for his role in the Essex rebellion, claimed, "I was not in the least concerned therein, but was shut up that whole day within the house, where I spent the time in very melancholy reflections." The account notes in parentheses that "Here he was interrupted, advised not to disguise the truth by distinctions, nor palliate his crime by specious pretences."[31]

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[28] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1157-58.
[29] Smith, Treason in Tudor England, 272-73.
[30] Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches," 154.
[31] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1412-13.

Taken as a whole, the typical political traitor's scaffold speech reflected a dual concern with order and divine ordinance. Speeches acknowledged the law, the king, and God using contrite and humble language. With their last words, political traitors concentrated on their place in the great chain of being, and they "set forth a deep repentance."

Clearly the state benefited from such performances. What did the traitor gain from making a scaffold speech? He or she received the opportunity to die a "good death." In Tudor England, dying was an art form. Literature on the art of dying was very popular, and these *ars moriendi* treatises focused on the final moment before death as crucial to the soul's salvation.[32] Contemporary belief assigned particular importance to a dying person's last words and actions. Even if one had committed crimes such as treason or murder, a good final moment could overcome these trespasses. One version of the *Book of the Craft of Dying* stated:

> The death, doubtless, of all sinful men: how long, and how wicked, and how cursed they have been all their life before, unto their last end that they die in—if they die in the state of a very repentance and contrition, and in the very faith, and virtue, and charity of Holy Church—is acceptable and precious in the sight of God.[33]

The scaffold speech thus allowed the traitor to assure for himself an "acceptable and precious" death, one filled with repentance and contrition. If a person were to die suddenly, without the chance to "make a good end," his or her soul was believed to be in jeopardy. This explains why the Duke of Somerset gave "hearty thanks unto God that hath given me this time of repentance, who might through sudden death have taken away my life, that neither I should have acknowledged him nor myself."[34]

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[32] Broce and Wunderli, "The Final Moment," 260, 263.
[33] Frances Comper, ed., *The Book of the Craft of Dying and Other Early English Tracts Concerning Death* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 5-6.
[34] Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, 187-88.

A scaffold speech also allowed a person to bring closure to the temporal matters of life. Philippe Ariès has noted that "the disposition of one's property, not only *ad pias cauas* but among one's heirs, became a duty, a matter of conscience" in early modern Europe.[35] For example, the *Book of the Craft of Dying* specified that for a dying person to make peace with God required "lawfully disposing for his household, and other needs, if he hath any to dispose for."[36] Therefore, several traitors used their scaffold speeches to create a sort of verbal last will and testament, in which they settled financial or family matters.

Edward Jones, executed for taking part in the Babington plot, spoke at length about the state of his finances:

> There is one thing wherein I am to move you, concerning my Debts: I have set them down so near as I could what they are: good Sir Frances Knowles, I shall entreat you to be a mean to her majesty, that there may be some care had of my creditors and debtors. The debts which I owe do amount, in the whole, to £980. The debts which are owing me are £1600. But who shall look into my compting-house shall find many of £100, £200, or £300 lb, whereof all is discharged, except some £50 and some £40 and such like, without any defeasance, and lie only in my credit; so that unless some man of conscience enter into the action of my compting-house, it is like to be the utter undoing of a number.[37]

Anthony Babington also wished to settle a variety of concerns, particularly those relating to the fate of his family and servant. He appealed both to the queen and to several people in attendance at his execution:

> He would gladly also have been resolved whether his lands should have been confiscate to her majesty, or whether they should descend to his brother; but howsoever, his request was to the lords and others the commissioners there present, that consideration might be had of one whose money he had received for lands, which he had passed no fines for, for which the conveyance was void in law. He requested also that consideration might be had of a certain servant of his, whom he had sent for certain merchandise into the East

[35] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 196.
[36] Comper, *Book of the Craft of Dying*, 33.
[37] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1159-60.

> Countries, who by his means was greatly impoverished. For his wife, he said, she had good friends, to whose consideration he would leave her.[38]

A conviction of treason often affected one's entire family, bringing not only shame but also poverty. According to Lacey Baldwin Smith, "All the property of a traitor was automatically forfeited to the crown, thus leaving his family impoverished but at the same time liable for the condemned man's debts."[39] For a traitor with a wife and multiple young children, confiscation of land could destroy the entire family. They remained at the mercy of the monarch, who sometimes allowed the family to retain its estate.[40] This explains Babington's concern over the future of his property.

One of the more interesting examples of a scaffold speech resembling a last will and testament occurred in 1570. In May of this year, Christopher Norton and his uncle, Thomas Norton, were executed for having participated in the Northern Rebellion of 1569. Christopher addressed the crowd for a while before making this last confession:

> I, Christopher Norton, who am come hither to take my death, being justly condemned, by the laws of the realm, being sound of body, and of a perfect remembrance, do here acknowledge and confess, my good Lord and Saviour, before the Throne of thy majesty, my heinous offence; by me committed between God and my prince.[41]

Norton structured his speech like the opening lines of a will: he stated his name, he stressed the soundness of his mind and body, and he confessed his faith and sins.[42] By using the rhetoric of a last will and testament, he could "make an end" in a familiar, structured way.

In addition to addressing financial or family matters, some used their final moment either to absolve or implicate others. Perhaps the most famous example of this is Sir Thomas

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[38] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1156.
[39] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 484-85.
[40] Smith, "English Treason Trials," 485.
[41] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1083.
[42] For the structure of last wills and testaments see Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, 189.

Wyatt, who cleared the Princess Elizabeth of any wrongdoing in the 1554 rebellion that bore his name:

> But here by the way is to be noted, that he being on the Scaffold ready to suffer, he declared that the Lady Elizabeth and Sir Edward Courtney Earl of Devonshire whom he had accused before (as it seemed) were never privy to his doings so far as he knew, or was able to charge them. And when Doctor Weston being then his confessor told him that he had confessed the contrary unto the counsel: he answered thus, "that I said then I said: But that which I say now, is true."[43]

Wyatt's scaffold testimony may have saved Elizabeth's life.[44] Words spoken on the scaffold had great power because listeners assumed the traitor spoke the truth. In the final moment before death, no one would dare to speak a falsehood for fear of the eternal consequences. As Anthony Munday reminded the religious traitor Luke Kirby, "this is not a place to report an untruth."[45]

Although several scaffold speakers tried to exculpate others, convicted traitors almost never used the scaffold speech to name names.[46] Instead, they implied that they were not fully responsible for their actions. Although Edward Jones repented for having offended the queen, he placed most of the blame for the Babington plot on "the haughty and ambitious mind of Anthony Babington."[47] The Duke of Northumberland said of his crime, "I was, I say, induced thereunto by other, howbeit, God forbid that I should name any man unto you. I will name no man unto you, and therefore I beseech you look not for it."[48]

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[43] Richard Grafton, *A chronicle at large and meere history of the affayres of Englande and kinges of the same deduced from the Creation of the vvorlde, vnto the first habitation of thys islande: and so by contynuance vnto the first yere of the reigne of our most deere and souereigne Lady Queene Elizabeth*, (London: Denham, 1569), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[44] Richard Rex, *Elizabeth I: Fortune's Bastard* (Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2003), 35-39.
[45] Anthony Munday, "A breefe and true reporte, of the execution of certaine traytours at Tiborne, the xxviii. and xxx. dayes of Maye 1582," (London: Charlewood, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[46] One exception was Christopher Norton, who implicated Philip Shurley.
[47] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1159-60.
[48] Mitchell, "The Dying Speech of…Northumberland," http://www.evergreen.loyola.edu/~cmitchell.

Whatever measures of torture authorities employed to extract names from a prisoner before the execution, they generally did not press traitors to implicate others on the scaffold. Nonetheless, there were always exceptions. At the execution of the religious traitor John Rigby, the presiding deputy asked him:

> What traitors dost thou know in England?" "God is my witness, said [Rigby], I know none." "What!" saith the deputy again, "if he will confess nothing, drive away the cart"—which was done so suddenly that he had no time to say anything more, or recommend his soul again to God, as he was about to do.[49]

As the account shows, the deputy obstructed Rigby's "final moment." Usually, though, authorities at executions respected the dying person's wish for a good end.[50] Unless the convicted started to speak against the state, authorities tended not to interrupt a speech or force a confession. Concern for the final moment took precedence at executions.

However, long speeches could frustrate those officiating an execution. At the Duke of Norfolk's execution, "Mr. Sheriff Branch, standing by the Duke, desired him very courteously to make an end as short as might be, for the time did spend."[51] Likewise, the sheriff at Christopher Blunt's execution told him to "hurry up." Interestingly, this sheriff received a reprimand. The account of the execution relates that "my lord Grey and Sir Walter Raleigh captain of the guard, called to the sheriff, and required him not to interrupt him."[52] They evidently wanted Blunt to have the opportunity to make a good end, especially since that involved confessing his treason.

Blunt was executed along with two other men, Giles Merrick and Henry Cuffe, for having taken part in the Essex Rebellion. According to the account of their deaths, Blunt was

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[49] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 244-45.
[50] Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 189.
[51] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1035-38.
[52] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1414-16.

not the only one of the three men to have his speech interrupted. Giles Merrick himself chimed in during Henry Cuffe's rather lengthy monologue: "As if he were weary of living longer, [Merrick] once or twice interrupted Cuffe, and advised him to spare a discourse." The speech's documenter offers the opinion that such an act, "however rationable, was not very seasonable when he was taking leave of the world."[53] This comment, written in 1601, reveals just how inured the belief in the "final moment" had become. Not even the rapid succession of changes to the state religion could diminish the importance of the final moment before death in Tudor England. The "cultural trait concerning the final moment before death had a much more tenacious holding power than changes in theology."[54]

Some people had more matters to resolve than others, so scaffold speeches varied considerably in length. Some, like Merrick, did not want to prolong their execution; others spoke for quite awhile. John Jones, a Catholic priest executed in 1598, "stood there for about an hour (for it seems the hangman had forgot to bring the rope with him), sometimes speaking to God in prayer, sometimes preaching to the people."[55] Most traitors never knew when they would be cut off from speaking, though, so they tended not to ramble in order to cover all they needed to say. They knew that their final words and actions could "make irrelevant life's virtues and sins," [56] so they tended to speak purposefully and not waste words.

We see, then, how the cultural understanding of the final moment before death shaped Tudor scaffold speeches. The words spoken on the scaffold were purposeful words aimed at

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[53] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1413-14.
[54] Broce and Wunderli, "The Final Moment," 266.
[55] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 234-35.
[56] Broce and Wunderli, "The Final Moment," 275.

preparing one's body and soul for death. Due to the importance of "making a good end," a convicted traitor gained as much from giving a scaffold speech as the state did by allowing it.

The Scaffold as Theater

An equally important influence on scaffold speeches was the understanding of the scaffold as a stage. Shakespeare himself linked the scaffold with theater when he wrote that the Thane of Cawdor "died as one that had been studied in his death." One commentary on *Macbeth* translates this line as "he learned his part in the play."[57] Fifty years later, the poet Andrew Marvell employed the same metaphor to describe the execution of Charles I: "That thence the Royal Actor born/The Tragic Scaffold might adorn."[58] Almost every historian who has studied scaffold speeches has mentioned, at least in passing, the "essentially theatrical way" the state chose to dispatch its enemies.[59] Charles Carlton writes that "in a very real sense confessions were pieces of public theater, which to be effective required the cooperation of all involved—the people as the audience, the traitor in the leading role, and the state as the director."[60] Everyone had a role to play, with the most difficult part being that of the traitor, who had to give an extemporized monologue in the face of death.

The scripted element of scaffold performances benefited all involved in the execution. According to Sarah Covington, "the speech, if it took place, was a firm part of the script as it was written by the state."[61] This assured the state that the convicted person would not make an incendiary speech. As for the convicted, working from a script alleviated the tremendous

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[57] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, G.K. Hunter, ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 144.
[58] Andrew Marvell, *Poems and Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 88.
[59] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 230.
[60] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death," 69.
[61] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 187.

pressures associated with making a good end in front of a crowd of people. Following the example of previous scaffold speeches provided structure and familiarity to the dying person.

Moreover, working from a script allowed the convicted to disguise his emotions by acting out a part. Literature on the art of dying decreed that when death "shall come to the person, that he be found ready; and that he receive it…joyfully, as he should abide the coming of his good friend."[62] Most convicted traitors and heretics tried to follow this advice, hiding their fear of death the best they could. John Fisher, convicted of heresy under Henry VIII, told the crowd, "I thank God hitherto my stomack hath served me very well thereunto, so that yet I have not feared death."[63] Accounts aimed at martyrology often emphasized the complacency with which the martyr died. John Foxe writes that Laurence Saunders went "with a merry courage towards the fire. He fell to the ground, and prayed: he rose up again, and took the stake to which he should be chained, in his arms, and kissed it, saying, 'Welcome the cross of Christ! Welcome everlasting life!'"[64]

Despite such performances, overcoming one's natural fear of death was not easy. According to Sarah Covington, "contrary to the picture often presented of individuals facing the prospect of their martyrdoms with a fully accepting serenity of spirit, approaching death was thus laden with doubt and fear."[65] By hiding behind the theatricality of the scaffold, the convicted could exhibit courage even if he lacked it. As Latimer famously told Ridley at their burning, "Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man."[66]

"Play the man" was a popular phrase in Tudor England, where "no metaphor was so

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[62] Comper, *Book of the Craft of Dying,* 58.
[63] Cobbett, *State Trials,* 406-07.
[64] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6,* 628.
[65] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom,* 182.
[66] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 7,* 550.

common…as 'all the world's a stage.' "[67] Stephen Greenblatt has argued that in the sixteenth-century, there occurred an "increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of identity as an artful process."[68] In other words, a person could construct his own identity by adapting his words and actions to the situation at hand. According to Lacey Baldwin Smith, such "artistry, acting, decorum, [and] role playing…were the means by which society sought to restrict autonomy and increase behavioural predictability while at the same time permitting freedom of action, self-expression, and self-fulfillment."[69] Naturally, role-playing and self-fashioning thrived at public executions; the whole premise of scaffold speeches was to allow for self-expression within the parameters set by the state and society.

One's role on the scaffold depended on his or her crime. Political traitors played the parts of repentant citizens. Religious traitors and heretics, on the other hand, performed as martyrs. They tended to work from a script based on biblical and early church precedent, speaking phrases such as "Misere Mei" and giving away alms to the poor during their procession to the scaffold. Protestants and Catholics both knew that this "act of martyrdom…was a deeply public one."[70] No matter how good the actor, his performance amounted to nothing if it failed to reach the spectators. Edmund Campion, for example, "was conscious of one enormous obligation: for a martyr's death not to be a private matter alone, but one which fulfilled the expectations of his audience."[71]

An important part of role-playing, then, entailed adapting one's speech to the audience. According to Virginia Cox, essential to early modern rhetoric "was the skill of

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[67] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 89.
[68] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 1-2.
[69] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 93.
[70] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 180-81.
[71] Alison Shell, " 'We are Made a Spectacle': Campion's Dramas," *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early Jesuits*, Thomas McCoog, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 112-113.

'accomodating' one's language to appeal to a particular audience."[72] Entire books were devoted to rhetoric and role-playing. One of the more famous, *The Book of the Courtier*, was written by Baldassare Castiglione in 1528. Although Thomas Hoby translated the book into English in 1561, those who read Italian had long since digested its message. Lacey Baldwin Smith describes *The Book of the Courtier* as "standard reading."[73] Edmund Bonner, for example, wrote to Thomas Cromwell in 1530, asking to borrow "the book called *Cortegiano* in Ytalian."[74] In sixteenth-century England, the *Book of the Courtier* and other similar treatises served as essential "handbooks for actors, practical guides for a society whose members were nearly always on stage."[75]

Thus, when a convicted person came to the scaffold, the ultimate stage, he knew the audience expected a good speech. Chidiock Tichborne, one of the Babington conspirators, told the crowd, "Countrymen and my dear friends, you expect I should speak something; I am a bad orator, and my Text is worse." Nonetheless, he gave a lengthy address that ended as follows:

> My dear countrymen, my sorrows may be your joy, yet mix your smiles with tears, and pity my case; I am descended from an house, from 200 years before the Conquest, never stained till this my misfortune. I have a wife and one child; my wife Agnes, my dear wife, and there is my grief, and six sisters left on my hand… I expected some favour, though I deserved nothing less, that the remainder of my years might in some sort have recompensed my former guilt: which seeing I have missed, let me now meditate upon the joys I hope to enjoy.[76]

Evidently, Tichborne, who composed a well-known poem while in the Tower, belittled his oratory skills merely to juxtapose the subsequent eloquence of his speech. Another person

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[72] Virginia Cox, "Castiglione's Cortegiano: The Dialogue as a Drama of Doubt," *The Book of the Courtier*, Daniel Javitch, ed. (New York: Norton and Co., 2002), 317-18.
[73] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 51.
[74] Peter Burke, "The Courtier Abroad: Or, the Uses of Italy," *The Book of the Courtier*, Daniel Javitch, ed. (New York: Norton and Co., 2002), 391.
[75] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 90-91.
[76] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1157-58.

who apologized for his "imperfection of speech" was Christopher Blunt, executed for his role in the Essex Rebellion. He told the spectators:

> My lords, and you that be present, although I must confess that it were better fitting the little time I have to breathe, to bestow the same in asking God forgiveness for my manifold and abominable sins, than to use any other discourse, especially having both an imperfection of speech, and God knows, a weak memory, by reason of my late grievous wound: yet to satisfy all those that are present what course hath been held by me in this late enterprise… I will truly and upon peril of my soul, speak the truth.[77]

Blunt's speech underlines the importance of speaking well on the scaffold: he risked using his last words to "satisfy all those that are present."

His speech also reveals the tension between speaking well and dying well. Speaking well focused on the external, while dying well dealt with one's internal state. Those who wanted to discredit a scaffold performance sometimes made note of this distinction, accusing the convicted of hypocrisy. This was especially true of Protestants at Catholic executions. According to Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "The Protestants' focus was almost entirely internal and spiritual. They sought to deduce the inward errors of the condemned from their external actions and speeches."[78] Lake and Questier give the example of John Sherte, who made the mistake of grabbing the rope as he was flung off the ladder. The anti-Catholic account of his execution states, "But then to manifest that his former boldness was but mere dissembling, and hypocrisy: he lifted up his hands, and caught hold on the halter, so that everyone perceived his fair outward show, and his foul inward disfigured nature, also how loath he was and unwilling to die."[79]

The Catholic response to such scaffold mishaps was, "The devil made me do it." According to a sympathetic account of Roman Catholic Alexander Crow's execution,

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[77] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1414-16.
[78] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 245.
[79] Munday, "A breefe and true reporte," *EEBO*.

> The devil, envying the happiness with which God rewarded His servant, and the consolation that He gave him in prayer, flung him down off the ladder… This gave occasion to the heretics that were there to cry out, "That the Papist was in despair, and that he wanted to kill himself." But the Father mounted the ladder again, and told them with a great serenity of countenance and of heart, smiling, "It is not as you think, my brethren, that I had a mind to kill myself, but it was the enemy who wanted to rob me of this glorious death, and out of envy flung me off the ladder, and this is not the first time that he has sought to deprive me of what he has done in your presence that you might know how little he is able to do."[80]

As Crow's example demonstrates, no one wanted to die with "hypocritical outward boldness, but an inward fainting fear." Those who gave scaffold performances hoped to reach the audience, and they took advantage of the theatrical aspect of the stage on which they died. At the same time, they wanted to die a good death. Thus, the ideal performance on the scaffold reconciled the "internal" with the "external," creating speeches that were highly scripted yet sincere.

Conclusion

As we will see in the next chapter, the new laws and developing ideologies of the sixteenth-century brought many changes to the scaffold speech. However, the fundamental understanding of the scaffold speech as a compromise between the state and its offender remained constant. When a late sixteenth-century religious traitor attempted to give a scaffold speech, he did so in the same manner as a political traitor: with the understanding that his words represented a bargain. Likewise, convicted traitors and heretics continued to view the scaffold as a theatrical stage and themselves as actors. Indeed, by the end of the century, religious traitors so appropriated the theater of the scaffold that their performances often seemed worthy of Golgotha. When considering the evolution of treason and the

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[80] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 128-29.

scaffold speech in sixteenth-century England, one must do so with the knowledge that the scaffold's elements of compromise and theater were constant structures within which all change took place.

Chapter 2: "The King's Good Servant but God's First"

In 1534, when Henry broke with Rome, he turned to parliamentary legislation to secure his actions. He set a precedent that Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth all followed when implementing their own changes to the state religion. The result, according to John Bellamy's calculation, was that "between 1485 and 1603…there were no fewer than sixty-eight treason statutes enacted."[1] This rapid succession of statutes erased the legal distinction between political and religious treason. However, those who were executed under the new laws did make a distinction between political and religious treason. During the course of the sixteenth-century, traitors' scaffold speeches came to follow two formulas: one for political offenders and one for religious offenders.

Thomas More and John Fisher became two of the first convicted under the new treason legislation. They died under the Treason Act of 1534, which recognized as traitors anyone who refused to acknowledge the Act of Supremacy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thomas More was not allowed to speak at his execution, aside from a few words to the executioner and the customary final prayers. John Fisher, executed two weeks earlier, did have the opportunity to address the crowd. His brief speech resembled the typical political traitor's speech. He asked the people to pray for him, "that at the very point and instant of death's stroke, I may in that moment stand steadfast, without fainting in any one point of the Catholic faith, free from any fear." He also prayed for God "to save the king and this realm," asking in particular that God send the king "good counsel." The only novelty in Fisher's

[1] John Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason: An Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 13.

speech was his insistence that he died "for the faith of Christ's holy Catholic Church,"[2] rather than for having offended the king.

Fisher had no previous examples to turn to when composing his speech. He was certainly not a traitor in the sense that the word had been defined since the beginnings of English law. As William Monter has noted, "No Protestant state, and no European ruler except the Anglo-Catholic 'Defender of the Faith' ever threatened to behead his subjects for defending the Pope's claim to be head of the church."[3] And, although heretics gave speeches throughout the sixteenth-century, Fisher was a Roman Catholic and would never have considered himself a heretic. In 1535, the only people executed for heresy were those who dissented from Rome. It is hardly surprising, then, that Fisher centered his speech around "making a good end" rather than addressing his offenses; it would take several decades for religious traitors to develop a uniform response to the new laws that convicted them.

After Henry's death in 1547, his young son Edward inherited the throne under the protectorate of the Duke of Somerset. For the next six years, the government moved the state religion decisively towards Protestantism, imprisoning conservative clergymen who got in the way of the reforms. Anabaptists fared even worse: Joan Bocher and George van Parris were executed as heretics.[4] John Foxe comments that aside from these two, who "died for articles not much necessary here to be rehearsed…neither in Smithfield nor any other quarter of this realm any was heard to suffer for religion, either Papist or Protestant" during Edward's reign.[5]

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[2] William Cobbett and Thomas Howell, eds., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-1826), 406-07.
[3] William Monter, *Judging the French Reformation: Heresy Trial by Sixteenth-Century Parlements* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 47.
[4] John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), 80.
[5] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, ed. G.A. Williamson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 171.

Edward's Catholic sister, Mary, proved to be less tolerant when she ascended the throne in 1553. The new queen continued as high a level of church and state integration as her predecessors. Diarmaid MacCulloch writes that "the new regime was triumphalist in its Catholicism, indeed consciously used the word 'Catholic' as a party term."[6] Unlike her father and sister, though, Mary executed religious dissenters for heresy, not treason. In 1554, after much debate and compromise, Parliament had revived the heresy laws abolished under Edward.[7] Technically this meant that Marian dissenters died for their faith and not for the threat they posed to the state. However, there still existed the strong undercurrent of political and ideological paranoia that characterized the entire Tudor period.[8] Politics and religion were never separate entities in Tudor England, and a crime against one was a crime against the other. Mary, in particular, had a "natural inclination to think of treason and heresy as synonymous."[9]

It was during the mid-Tudor era that marked differences first began to emerge in the speeches of religious traitors and those of political traitors. The speeches of the Duke of Northumberland and Cranmer serve as good examples of how speeches began to change. Northumberland died in 1553 after he unsuccessfully attempted to enthrone his daughter in-law, Lady Jane Grey, upon the death of Edward VI. The day before his execution, Northumberland gave an oration to a "distinguished audience of dignitaries and citizens of London" in the chapel of the Tower.[10] His speech was typical of the political traitor's

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[6] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 554.
[7] Geoffrey R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation, 1509-1558* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 383-84.
[8] For an analysis of the culture of political fear and unease, see L.B. Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).
[9] David Loades, *The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government, and Religion in England, 1553-1558* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 160.
[10] David Loades, *John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, 1504-1553* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 268.

scaffold speech. He acknowledged the law that condemned him, he paid homage to Queen Mary, and he confessed his sins.

The chief portion of Northumberland's speech, though, was his exhortation to the audience regarding the Catholic faith. Since 1536, Northumberland had promoted Henry's schism with Rome. Now, at the hour of his death, he reversed his position:

> And one thing more good people I have to say unto you, which I am chiefly moved to do for discharge of my conscience, and that is to warn you and exhort you to beware of these seditious preachers, and teachers of new doctrine, which pretend to preach God's word…Take heed how you enter into strange opinions or new doctrine, which hath done no small hurt in this realm, and hath justly procured the ire and wrath of God upon us, as well may appear who so list to call to remembrance the manifold plagues that this realm hath been touched with all since we dissevered ourselves from the Catholic church of Christ…And if this be not able to move you, then look upon Germany, which since it is fallen into this schism and disunion from the unity of the catholic church, is by continual dissention and discord, brought almost to utter ruin & decay.[11]

Then, lest the crowd wonder whether the new Catholic regime had forced such a recantation, Northumberland added "that this which I have spoken is of myself, not being required nor moved thereunto by any man, nor for any flattery, or hope of life." What led Northumberland to make such a statement? David Loades offers a couple of suggestions: "Perhaps Northumberland expected to buy his life with such a submission, or perhaps he genuinely believed that the death of the young king and the failure of his own plans were a divine judgment upon a heretical people." Ultimately, though, Loades concludes that "we cannot get beyond his words."[12]

Whatever Northumberland's intentions, his speech differed from the intransigent scaffold speeches of future religious traitors, who would place personal beliefs over concern

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[11] Charles Mitchell, ed., "The Dying Speech of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland," *Tyburn Tree: Public Execution in Early Modern England*, Loyola College of Maryland, http://www.evergreen.loyola.edu/~cmitchell.
[12] Loades, *Northumberland*, 268.

for the state religion. Northumberland, like many in early modern England, valued the state as "the be-all end-all of human existence."[13] He followed the political tide of Marian Catholicism, paying homage above all else to the divinely ordained monarch, law, and state. His speech no doubt reminded the state why it permitted scaffold speeches. The imperial ambassador to England, Simon Renard, declared that Northumberland's speech "edified the people more than a month of sermons."[14]

Northumberland's penitent words formed a stark contrast to the speech of Thomas Cranmer, who died less than three years later. The Protestant archbishop Thomas Cranmer posed a threat to Marian Catholicism, but Mary could not decide whether to execute him for heresy or treason. In September of 1553, the Acts of the Privy Council recorded Cranmer's arrest for charges of treason "against the Quene's highness," due to his role in the Northumberland campaign. Eight months later the Privy Council referred to Cranmer as an "obstinate heretike."[15] John Foxe claims that Mary pardoned Cranmer of his treason so he could be tried for heresy, but Diarmaid MacCulloch doubts "whether she could reverse an attainder in this manner."[16] At any rate, treason and heresy had become one and the same by this time and both punishable by death. On March 21, 1556, Thomas Cranmer gave a final speech in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, minutes before his execution.

The supervising authorities allowed Cranmer to speak before his execution because they expected he would, like most traitors, give a penitent speech in support of the state religion. Indeed, he had signed a recantation at the time of his trial. Cranmer, speaking from

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[13] Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth-Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15, no. 4 (1954): 488.
[14] Loades, *Northumberland*, 268.
[15] Dasent, J. R., ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England, vol. 5* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1974), 347; *Acts of the Privy Council, vol. 6*, 17.
[16] MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 558.

the pulpit of St. Mary's Church, Oxford, opened his speech by seeking forgiveness for his sins and exhorting the crowd on several matters concerning God and the Crown. Then he spoke of "one offence which most of all at this time doth vex and trouble me." Rather than his expected endorsement of the state and its religion, what followed in Cranmer's speech was far from the expected recantation:

> And now I come to the great thing that so troubleth my conscience, more than anything that ever I did or said in my whole life, and that is the setting abroad of a writing contrary to the truth, which now here I renounce and refuse…And forasmuch as my hand offended, writing contrary to my heart, my hand shall first be punished therefore; for, may I come to the fire, it shall be burned. And as for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine. And as for the sacrament, I believe as I have taught in my book against the Bishop of Winchester, the which my book teacheth so true a doctrine of the sacrament that it shall stand at the last day before the judgment of God, where the Papistical doctrine contrary thereto shall be ashamed to show her face.[17]

By the time he was pulled down from the platform, Cranmer had communicated a message quite contrary to that of the typical Tudor execution speech. He had committed treason with his last words by denouncing the state religion. And yet, Cranmer had exhorted the crowd to "obey your king and queen willingly and gladly…knowing that they be God's ministers, appointed by God to rule and govern you." He expressed loyalty to the Crown, but he did not extend that loyalty to the state religion. For Cranmer, "that which so troubleth my conscience" had not to do with his transgression of Tudor order, but with his recantation.

How did Cranmer come to give a speech that differed so considerably from the "ideal" repentant traitor's last words? Cranmer redefined his understanding of treason as he struggled with how to respond to the new state religion. He posed the question that all sixteenth-century persecuted religious minorities asked themselves: "Was the political regime of the sovereign to be recognized and were his commands to be obeyed; or might

[17] Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, 353-56.

disobedience, even rebellion, be lawful?"[18] Cranmer first thought obedience to be the answer. He reconverted to Catholicism "in order to do what is best and take thought for my own conscience, and at the same time for that of others."[19] He also indicated his obedience in a 1554 letter to the queen: "If I have uttered, I say, my mind unto your majesty, then I shall think myself discharged…To private subjects it appertaineth not to reform things, but quietly to suffer that they cannot amend."[20]

However, Cranmer's last-minute denunciation of Catholicism suggests that he came to a different conclusion by the time of his execution. Condemned traitors all sought forgiveness with their last words. For Cranmer, this forgiveness needed to take a different form, one "which would make sense of his public career and rebuild his personal integrity."[21] Committing treason by espousing a heretical religion seemed a lesser offense to his conscience than did reconverting to a religion "contrary to the truth" and of "false doctrine." His last speech thus demonstrates how some convicted traitors began to change their understanding of treason in the aftermath of the English Reformation.

In addition to the high profile clerics immortalized in Foxe's martyrologies, a fair number of lay Protestants also faced charges under Mary's reign. Executed in 1555, beer brewer Dirick Carver received the death penalty under the recently enacted heresy laws of April 1554. At his execution, Carver gave a speech that showed little concern for dying reconciled to the state. Like Cranmer, he denounced the pope: "As many of you as believe upon the Pope of Rome, you believe to your utter condemnation."[22] Carver never mentioned

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[18] Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 2.
[19] Peter Newman Brooks, ed., *Cranmer in Context: Documents from the English Reformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 113.
[20] MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 559.
[21] MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 605.
[22] Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, 274-75.

the queen. Most religious traitors and heretics either praised the queen or did not address her, but they never criticized the monarch. Cranmer, for example, even went so far as to express belief in King Philip and Queen Mary's divine appointment.

We see, then, that religious traitors and heretics did not completely reject the scaffold speech tradition of political traitors. They continued to express respect for the king or queen, to ask forgiveness of God and neighbor, and to strive for an ideal final moment. The difference lay in their understanding of a good final moment. Peter Holmes explains: "human law was essentially conditional and depended for its validation on divine law. If human law conflicted with divine law, it was necessary to obey God, not man."[23] For religious traitors and heretics, a good final moment consisted in confessing belief in the "true religion" rather than the state religion.

When Mary died in 1558, the state reinstituted Protestantism as its religion. But in comparison to the many political and religious upheavals of the 1550s, the 1560s were an exceptionally quiet time for treason convictions. From Elizabeth's uneventful accession in November 1558 to the Northern Rebellion of 1569, there were no attempts to overthrow the queen. As for religious treason and heresy, "the early years of Elizabeth's rule witnessed a low-level persecution of Catholics, since the queen's method was to proceed with caution."[24] Not until 1569 did the situation erupt. First, Catholics in the North led an uprising to rid Elizabeth of her "evil councilors;" to free Mary, Queen of Scots; and to return England to the "true religion." The rebellion, when suppressed, cost hundreds of men their lives; they were hanged as traitors. Then, a few months later, Pope Pius V declared the queen a heretic, excommunicating her by papal bull:

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[23] Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise*, 81.
[24] Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 12.

> Therefore, resting upon the authority of Him whose pleasure it was to place us (though unequal to such a burden) upon this supreme justice-seat, we do out of the fullness of our apostolic power declare the foresaid Elizabeth to be a heretic and favorer of heretics, and her adherents in the matters aforesaid to have incurred the sentence of excommunication and to be cut off from the unity of the body of Christ.[25]

This deposition put English Catholics in the intolerable position of having to choose between conflicting loyalties. Would they obey the pope or the queen? Some responded by obeying the queen in temporal matters but not in spiritual matters. Others believed that "there might be lawful resistance to a ruler who persecuted the true religion or who misused his power."[26] Regardless, English Catholics either had to violate the Act of Recusancy, which considered allegiance to the pope an act of treason, or the Regnans in Excelsis, which excommunicated any "adherent" of Elizabeth I. Inevitably, the relationship between the Crown and Catholics disintegrated in the years after Elizabeth's excommunication, as the cycle of recusancy and persecution continued.

But when Catholics sought to blame someone for their persecution, they did not accuse the queen. Like Cranmer and Carver, who attacked the pope rather than Mary, Catholics also directed their invectives away from Elizabeth and towards her advisors. This widespread phenomenon of blaming the "evil councilor" pervaded Tudor and Stuart culture. Lacey Baldwin Smith explains why: "If kings as God's deputies on earth could do no wrong, and if the system of society was divinely ordained and governed, then responsibility for the mishaps and mistakes of government by a process of elimination had to rest with ministers bent on subverting public good to private interest." [27] Cranmer, for example, wrote to Mary that "those which should have informed your grace thoroughly" had "deceived" the queen

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[25] Pope Pius V, "Regnans in Excelsis," 1570, *Primary Source Documents*, http://tudorhistory.org/primary/papalbull.html.
[26] Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise*, 3.
[27] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 174.

into taking an oath to the pope.[28] Elizabeth also attributed her sister's disastrous reign to the Catholic prelates and advisors.[29] In an age where public and religious affairs intertwined, the evil councilor motif knew no boundaries. When Protestants attacked the pope or prelates rather than Mary, and when Catholics criticized the Protestant councilors instead of Elizabeth, they were engaging in the Tudor practice of blaming the "evil minister."

Catholics also had the added burden of justifying their loyalty to the state. As it had done under Henry, the state began once again to execute Catholics for treason. For the first time, religious traitors started to address the specific charges that brought them to the scaffold. Whereas political traitors rarely mentioned the word "traitor," instead focusing on a confession of general sins, many religious traitors after 1570 adamantly denied having committed any act of treason. William Freeman, a Catholic priest, stated at his execution: "I protest I am guilty of no external act of treason…I am come to die for my faith."[30] Another priest, Thomas Ford, insisted, "I have not offended her Majesty, but if I have I ask her forgiveness and all the world, and in no other treason have I offended than my religion, which is the Catholic faith." [31] Almost every Catholic traitor in Elizabethan England made the point that they died for religion and not for treason. According to Peter Holmes, "Catholics in England were imprisoned and executed not for religious reasons, the government said, but to protect the state from political intrigues. Catholics replied to this accusation by denying that they were guilty of treason and by affirming the religious nature

[28] Brooks, *Cranmer in Context*, 108.
[29] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 174.
[30] Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 358.
[31] Anthony Munday, "A breefe and true reporte, of the execution of certaine traytours at Tiborne, the xxviii. and xxx. dayes of Maye 1582," (London: Charlewood, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.

of the oppression they suffered."[32] They insisted on making a distinction between political and religious acts against the state.

In 1585, the Elizabethan Parliament added harboring or aiding Catholic priests to the growing list of treasonous crimes. Unlike previous legislation targeting priests, this law aimed at eradicating Catholicism among the laity. The expanding legislation against any form of Catholic promotion suggests that the government felt increasingly uneasy about Catholic revival in England. Perhaps it was worried that the Jesuits' campaign to train priests on the continent and send them to England as missionaries had been successful.

The new legislation resulted in an increase in lay Catholics accused of treason. In 1601, two years before the end of Elizabeth's reign, Anne Line received the death penalty for harboring a priest. A contemporary account of her hanging relates that "there was executed also Mistriss Lynde [Anne Line], condemned at the Sessions house the 26th day of February for the escape of a supposed priest."[33] She became one of the only women executed for religious treason. With her last words, Line, like so many other Catholic traitors, refused to repent: "I am sentenced to die for harboring a Catholic priest, and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish, with all my soul, that where I have entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand."[34] She clearly did not feel the need to repent in order to die a good death. Her words had a grim, even defiant tone, a far cry from the submissive speeches of political traitors.

Meanwhile, conventional political conspiracies had not disappeared. Although the definition of treason had expanded over the century to include thoughts and beliefs, especially those of heterodox nature, there still existed the occasional blatant rebellion. Only

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[32] Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise,* 58.
[33] Alfred Marks, ed., *Tyburn Tree, its History and Annals* (London: Brown, Langham, and Co., 1988), 173.
[34] Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1924), 259.

two days before Anne Line's execution, Robert Dudley, Earl of Essex, had died for his role in an attempted coup. Essex had risen in court life to become the favorite of the queen. His star faded quickly, though, when Elizabeth feared he had become too haughty. She sent him to Ireland, where he failed miserably at his post as Lord Lieutenant. He returned to England to face trial, public humiliation, and banishment from court.

Shortly afterwards, Essex became convinced that Robert Cecil, the queen's closest advisor, was plotting a coup "to turn England over to the Catholics, and on Elizabeth's death to place the Infanta of Spain upon a throne that rightly belonged to James of Scotland."[35] Essex planned his own coup to rescue the queen from her evil councilor. Unfortunately for Essex, riding toward the queen with drawn sword through the streets of London hardly looked like an act of loyalty.

Although Essex gave a final speech only two days before Line, their last words could not have been more dissimilar. Essex fulfilled the expectations of the political traitor's scaffold speech. He made a vague confession without specifically mentioning the word "treason." He acknowledged himself to be "a most wretched sinner."[36] Most of all, he died repentant, recognizing that he had threatened the fragile Tudor order of God, sovereign, world:

> Not withstanding divers good motions inspired into me from the spirit of God, the good, which I would, I have not done, and the evil, which I would not, that have I done. For all which I humbly beseech my savior Christ to be a mediator to the eternal Majesty for my pardon; especially for this my last sin, this great, this bloody, this crying, this infectious sin, whereby so many have for love of me been drawn to offend God, to offend their sovereign, to offend the world.

Lacey Baldwin Smith writes of Essex's speech, "No man, according to the sixteenth-century formula, died 'more Christianly' than Essex. Although the devil had been victorious in

[35] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 261.
[36] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 272-73.

corrupting and enticing the Earl into treason, his achievement had been incomplete, for in the ultimate scheme of things, God had triumphed: Devereux had died repentant."[37] And yet, two days later on the other side of town, Anne Line would refuse to repent of her treason. These two responses show how scaffold speeches had changed in the 67 years since the Act of Succession. Scaffold speeches now followed two formulas, depending on whether the speaker had committed a crime against the state or a crime against the state religion.

Political traitors submitted to the state and reinforced political stability and order, while religious traitors took a defensive stance and died unrepentant of their rebellion. They, too, promoted the Crown in temporal matters, but they refused to recognize the state religion. They echoed in their speeches what John Lambert said to King Henry at his trial in 1538: "I commend my soul unto the hands of God, but my body I submit under your clemency."[38]

In effect, religious traitors conceived of hierarchy slightly differently from political traitors. Political traitors, whether guilty or innocent, placed a high priority on dying reconciled to the state. With their last words, they worked to preserve state order as they repented and exhorted the crowd toward obedience. They considered themselves beneath the monarch, beneath the law, beneath the state, and beneath God. There was one hierarchy, beginning with the lowliest forms of life and extending to God, and any entity above them was worthy of complete submission. Religious traitors and heretics also submitted to the law, the king and the state, but they believed that the state could become disordered through recognition of the "wrong" religion. In their scaffold speeches, they recognized two hierarchies: a human one and a divine one. The law, state, and king belonged to the human

[37] Smith, *Treason in Tudor England*, 273.
[38] Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, 136. Thomas More's apocryphal last words, "The king's good servant but God's first," express the same idea.

hierarchy, which was below God and the “true” religion and thus not worthy of the same level of submission.

Chapter 3: "Obstinate Heretikes" and "Vile Traitours"

Tudor England did not welcome religious dissidence. As John Coffey writes, "All Tudor governments were committed to a policy of religious uniformity, and few had qualms about employing some form of coercion against those who stepped out of line."[1] From 1535 to 1603, the state executed nearly 300 Protestants for heresy and 240 Catholics for religious treason.

Only recently have historians given specific attention to the scaffold performances of these religious traitors and heretics. Brad Gregory's *Salvation at Stake* offers a broad overview of sixteenth-century Protestant and Catholic martyrs in Europe, focusing in particular on models of faith and suffering. Peter Lake and Michael Questier's book, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, primarily deals with post-Tridentine Catholic traitors in England and their interactions with Protestants and Puritans. In *The Trail of Martyrdom*, Sarah Covington explores both Protestant and Catholic martyrs in sixteenth-century England, arguing that "for all their differences…and their deep religious distinctions, individuals about to die tended to work from the same script, which was based on biblical and early church precedent and utilized the same references and language."[2]

I agree with Covington in this point, as well as in her assertion that Catholic and Protestant martyrs both approached the scaffold as "the ultimate stage, allowing them to witness their faith before others and to fashion themselves in ways that circumvented the authorities' control."[3] As we have seen in Chapter One, a good final moment and an

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[1] John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), 81.
[2] Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 180.
[3] Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom*, 180.

emphasis on the theatrical characterized all Tudor scaffold performances. This was no less true for religious traitors and heretics, who hoped to die as martyrs by making a "good end" on a public stage. However, Catholic traitors and Protestant heretics were executed under different laws and circumstances that had direct influence on their scaffold performances. Moreover, one cannot ignore that Catholics and Protestants represented two distinctive religious traditions that both experienced dramatic change during the sixteenth century. In many ways, the scaffold became a microcosm of the English Reformation, as the many ideologies and beliefs of the time found expression in scaffold performances. This chapter, like the previous one, argues that scaffold speeches were far from a static genre; rather, they evolved in response to legal and religious circumstances. All religious traitors and heretics may have approached the scaffold as future martyrs, but there were two paths to martyrdom: a Catholic one and a Protestant one.

Scaffold Evangelism

In his book, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625*, Michael Questier calls the scaffold "an alternative pulpit."[4] His choice of words could not be more apt. All sixteenth-century English martyrs faced the same dilemma: how to reconcile the personal need for a good final moment with the religious obligation to reach the audience. To accomplish this feat, both Catholics and Protestants[5] took advantage of the theatrical aspect of public executions, using the stage on which they died to seek the "martyr's crown" and convince others that they died for the true faith.

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[4] Michael C. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 193.

[5] This paper uses the terms "Catholic" and Protestant" for convenience's sake and for lack of better terminology. It needs to be mentioned, however, that sixteenth-century English Catholicism and Protestantism were far from monolithic in nature. Moreover, Protestantism was still in the formative stages at this time.

From the moment of capture, martyrs worked to convert others. Through letter writing, debates, and conversations with fellow prisoners, Catholic traitors and Protestant heretics carried on evangelical work from their prison cells. In particular, fellow prisoners who had committed criminal offenses "were seen as ripe for evangelical outreach." [6] Their conversions served to provide especially good propaganda. The documenter of Thomas Pilchard's execution tells of one such conversion:

> Among those who were put to death with [Thomas Pilchard], there were some whom he converted to the faith. One of them was a young man of great bodily strength, who had been a notorious robber. Mr. Pilchard, the night before, reconciled him to the Church, and brought him to an excellent confession of his sins, and he fearlessly professed himself a Catholic on the scaffold.[7]

Common criminals who were about to die, such as the "notorious robber," possessed the heightened emotions on which prison and scaffold evangelism thrived.

Some convicted religious traitors and heretics remained in prison for years before being released or executed. John Coffey notes that of the 285 Catholic clergymen imprisoned during Elizabeth's reign, over thirty of them spent more than ten years in prison.[8] For those martyrs who did face execution, the pressure to share the "true faith" only increased. Once a martyr had a public stage on which to perform, evangelism extended past converting individual souls. The goal became to reach the masses. This was particularly true of late sixteenth-century Catholics, who "self-consciously deployed martyrdom as a tool of conversion" once they realized that a return to Rome was not imminent.[9] As Brad Gregory argues, "Behavior at the stake might affect rulers and communities for the good of the

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[6] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 93.
[7] J. H. Pollen, ed., *Acts of the English Martyrs Hitherto Unpublished* (London: 1891), 263-64.
[8] Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 88.
[9] Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 283.

Gospel. Martyrdom harbored public potential for proselytization and political influence."[10] Thus, instead of praying for the queen, a few Catholics began to pray for the queen's conversion. Margaret Clitherow prayed for "Elizabeth, Queen of England, that God turn her to the Catholic faith, and that after this mortal life she may receive the blessed joys of heaven. For I wish as much for my majesty's soul as for my own."[11] Some Catholics, like Ralph Sherwin, were even more daring:

> Then being willed to pray for the queen's Majesty, [he] answered, "I have and do." At which words the Lord Howard again asked which queen he meant, whether Elizabeth queen…Somewhat smiling [Sherwin] said, "Yea for Elizabeth queen. I now at this instant pray my Lord God to make her his servant in this life, and after this life coheir with Christ Jesus." When he had prayed to God he make her his servant, there were [those] which said openly that he meant to make her a Papist, to whom he boldly replied, "Else God forbid."[12]

Such words suggest evangelism aimed not only at the religious conversion of individuals, but also at the political and religious conversion of the state. Public executions, as Lake and Questier remark, became "highly charged, dangerously liminal, even potentially unstable occasions—ripe sites for conversion in every sense of the word."[13]

Among the martyr's coreligionists, conversions were a source of pride. Martyrologists often emphasized evangelical successes when writing their accounts of the martyr's death. According to one pamphlet, "the most wonderful event that followed Mr. Genings' death was the sudden conversion of [his] brother."[14] The author of Christopher Robinson's execution account describes how Robinson's demeanor "touched the hearts of

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[10] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 163.
[11] Mary Claridge, *Margaret Clitherow, 1556?-1586 (*New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 172-74.
[12] Thomas Alfield, "A true reporte of the death & martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and preiste, & M. Sherwin, & M. Bryan preistes, at Tiborne the first of December 1581" (London, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[13] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 279.
[14] Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1924), 176-78.

many of the spectators, and was the occasion of many conversions."[15] These were affirmations that the martyr had died well and had accomplished his purpose.

We see, then, that scaffold evangelism played a central role at the executions of Protestants and Catholics alike. Religious traitors and heretics used their martyrdoms to convince others of the "true faith." However, as the rest of this paper argues, it was the religious tradition behind this "true faith" that had the greatest influence on what happened on the scaffold.

Protestant Martyrdoms

Protestants, the first to face execution for religious reasons, also became the first to create a formula for martyrdom in Tudor England. Susannah Monta writes that "martyrs scripted their words and behavior, surely not insincerely, to persuade others (and perhaps even themselves) that they died for true religion's sake."[16] The difficulty, both for the martyr and the martyrologist, became how to render "interior constructs into discourse."[17] This problem was further complicated by the state's clampdown on stake-side speeches. Protestants were rarely allowed to give official speeches at their executions. At Rowland Taylor's execution, for example:

> The sheriff denied [license to speak] to him, and bad him remember his promise to the council. "Well, quoth Dr. Taylor, "promise must be kept." What this promise was, it is unknown: but the common fame was, that after he and others were condemned, the council sent for them, and threatened them they would cut their tongues out of their heads, except they would promise, that at their deaths they would keep silence, and not speak to the people.[18]

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[15] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 235.
[16] Susannah Brietz Monta, *Marytrdom and Literature in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.
[17] Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 13.
[18] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, vol. 6*, ed. George Townsend (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 697-99.

Although most Protestant heretics were not allowed to make a traditional scaffold speech, few went to their deaths without speaking at least a few words before the crowd. As Sarah Covington points out, marytrs were successful in being "able to subvert the authorities' intentions, which was to silence and obliterate them."[19] John Hooper, either through excessive piety or clever maneuvering, managed to speak for quite some time by framing his words in the form of a prayer. Among other things, he prayed, "Thou seest, Lord, that where I might live in wealth, to worship a false God: and to honor thine enemy, I choose rather the torments of my body, and the loss of this myself; and I have counted all things but vile dust and dung, that I might win thee."[20] Hooper's lengthy prayer reached the audience with the same message that he would have shared had he been allowed to give a final speech. But the state's representatives, quick to interrupt threatening speeches, would never dare to prevent a convicted person from praying in his final moment.

The last words of Protestant heretics, like all sixteenth-century martyrs, were predominantly comprised of biblical and martyrological rhetoric. Dirick Carver ended his speech as follows:

> "O Lord my God, thou hast written, He that will not forsake, wife, children, house, and all that he hath, and take up the cross and follow thee, is not worthy of thee." But thou, Lord, knowest that I have forsaken all to come unto thee: Lord have mercy upon me, for unto thee I commend my spirit, and my soul doth rejoice in thee."[21]

Nicholas Ridley replied to the Catholic Dr. Marshall, "so long as the breath is in my body, I

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[19] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 156.
[20] John Bradford, "The complaynt of veritie, made by Iohn Bradford…The saieng of maister Houper, that he wrote the night before he suffered, vppon a wall with a cole, in the newe In, at Gloceter, and his saiyng at his deathe" (London, 1559), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[21] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, ed. G.A. Williamson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 274-75.

will never deny my Lord Christ, and his known truth: God's will be done in me!"[22] Such dramatic utterances were an important part of the theater of martyrdom, especially for those Protestants not permitted to give a last dying speech.

The Marian heretics not only wanted to die as martyrs, but also as representatives of the Protestant movement. Several aspects of their speeches revealed the influence of their Reformed faith. For example, one important characteristic of Protestant speeches became the emphasis on the vernacular. Protestants advocated English instead of Latin as the official church language, "that the people might better understand."[23] Protestant martyrs often made a point of praying in English at the stake, much to the dismay of the authorities. John Foxe relates that at Rowland Taylor's execution, "Sir John Shelton there standing by, as Dr. Taylor was speaking, and saying the psalm 'Misere' in English, struck him on the lips: 'Ye knave,' said he, 'speak Latin: I will make thee.' "[24] Written accounts of executions also reveal an emphasis on English. Unlike the accounts of Catholic executions, which included numerous phrases and utterances in Latin, John Foxe's martyrs spoke almost exclusively in English. His martyrologies reflected most English printed works, in which "the use of Latin all but disappeared" over the course of the century.[25] Foxe, in a letter to the members of Magdalen College, explained why he wrote the *Acts and Monuments* in English: "I am only grieved that the book is not written in Latin, and so more pleasant to your reading: but the needs of the common people of our land drove me to the vernacular."[26]

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[22] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 7*, 548-50.
[23] William Cobbett and Thomas Howell, eds., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-1826), 1159-1160.
[24] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 697-99.
[25] Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding Their Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 173.
[26] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 187.

Another element in Protestants' speeches was the central importance of the Bible. Sixteenth-century Protestantism overthrew the pope, replacing him with the Scriptures as the highest authority in theological matters. As David Loades remarks, "The reformers were never in any doubt that kings and subjects alike were bound to obey the Word of God, and that the Word of God was set down plainly for all to see in the canonical scriptures."[27] In England, an emphasis on the Bible dated back to the 1530s and Thomas Cromwell. Geoffrey Elton writes that "Cromwell's sober faith took its shape from a sincere devotion to the Bible, a devotion he shared with such passionate reformers as Latimer, such genuine Protestants as Cranmer, and such Christian humanists as Erasmus and the Erasmians."[28] At one point, Cromwell may even have been involved in the illegal printing and smuggling in of an English Bible from France.[29] The Marian Protestants shared Cromwell's devotion. Taylor exclaimed to the crowd at his burning, "Good people! I have taught you nothing but God's holy word, and those lessons that I have taken out of God's blessed book, the holy Bible: and I am come hither this day to seal it with my blood."[30] Laurence Saunders told an official at his execution:

> It is not I, nor my fellow-preachers of God's truth, that have hurt the queen's realm, but it is yourself, and such as you are, which have always resisted God's holy word; it is you which have and do mar the queen's realm. I do hold no heresies; but the doctrine of God, the blessed gospel of Christ, that hold I; that believe I; that have I taught; and that will I never revoke.[31]

Predestination and a concern with election was another theme that made its way into Protestant speeches. The doctrine that some were "chosen" while others were destined for a

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[27] David M. Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs* (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), 63.
[28] Geoffrey R. Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England, 1509-1558* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 172.
[29] Charles Carlton, "Thomas Cromwell: A Study in Interrogation," *Albion* 5, no. 2 (1973): 126.
[30] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 697-99
[31] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 628.

less desirable afterlife could be unnerving to its adherents. According to Brad Gregory, "despite the unverifiability of predestination to eternal life," some people associated perseverance in the face of death as a sign of election.[32] Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce agree with Jones: "the Final Moment …guaranteed salvation by acting as a sign of election."[33] On the scaffold, Protestant martyrs assured the crowd (and themselves) that they belonged to the elect destined for heaven by acting with great calmness and confidence. John Hooper, for example, thanked God for counting "me worthy to drink of this cup amongst thine elect."[34]

Martyrologists carefully documented signs of election for the spiritual benefit of those unable to attend the actual martyrdom. According to Susannah Brietz Monta, such examples "show[ed] readers possible ways to wrest assured stability from the hard doctrine of predestination, articulated amid the sixteenth's religious turmoil."[35] John Foxe describes Laurence Saunders as having gone with a "merry courage toward the fire." As for John Rogers, the people rejoiced at his constancy.[36] These signs of election were intended both to convert those of other beliefs and to reassure those of the same faith.

Catholic Martyrdoms

Like Protestants, Catholics also adapted their scaffold speeches to their religion. Whereas English had been the language of choice for Protestant martyrs, Catholics insisted on praying in Latin. Peter Lake and Michael Questier consider the Catholic refusal to pray in

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[32] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 162.
[33] Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 2 (1989): 267.
[34] John Bradford, "The saieng of maister Houper," *EEBO*.
[35] Monta, *Martyrdom and Literature*, 21.
[36] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 628; Foxe, *Book of Martyrs*, 213.

English to have been a reaction against the "Protestants' pastoral efforts."[37] The appointed preacher and the other officiating authorities did not like these Latin prayers, which were in a language that most of the crowd could not understand. When Thomas Norton began to say the Lord's Prayer in Latin, the preacher interrupted him and "willed him to say it as God hath commanded, and as every true Christian ought to do (that is to say) in the vulgar tongue, that all the audience might bear witness how he died a true Christian."[38] Unsympathetic pamphleteers also voiced their dislike of Latin prayers. According to Anthony Munday, for example, the "impious and obstinate traitour" Thomas Forde died "refusing to pray in the English tongue, mumbling a few Latin prayers."[39]

Catholic martyrs considered praying in English to be a greater offense than their Protestant counterparts believed praying in Latin to be. At Luke Kirby's execution, "the preachers desired him to pray in English with them, and to say a prayer after them, wherein, if he could find any fault, he would be resolved thereof." Kirby replied, "you and I were not one in faith, therefore I think, I should offend God if should pray with you."[40] Mary, Queen of Scots, also refused to pray in English with her executors, "for prayer with them which are of a different Religion, were a scandal, and great sin."[41] Thus, Catholics not only insisted on praying in Latin, but they considered it a sin to pray in English with the crowd or officiating

[37] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 246.
[38] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1083.
[39] Anthony Munday, "A breefe and true reporte, of the execution of certaine traytours at Tiborne, the xxviii. and xxx. dayes of Maye. 1582. Gathered by A.M. who was there present" (London, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[40] Munday, "A breefe and true reporte," *EEBO*.
[41] William Camden, *Annales the True and Royall History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth Queene of England France and Ireland &c.* (London: Purslowe, Lownes, and Flesher, 1625), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.

authorities. They often requested that only those who were of the "household of faith"[42] pray with them.

Also prevalent at Catholic executions was an emphasis on relics. Whereas sixteenth-century English Protestantism emphasized the textual, Catholicism focused on the visual. Relics held great significance and were a popular souvenir of executions. At several executions, Protestant authorities clamped down on relic collecting, probably out of fear that the crowd might get out of hand. The following comes from an account of William Hart's death:

> And though the Lord Mayor and other magistrates, who were present at the execution, sought to hinder the Catholics from carrying home with them any relics of the confessor, yet some there were who, in spite of all their precautions and threats, carried off some of his blood, or fragments of his bones, or pieces of his clothes, which they kept as treasures.[43]

Even if Catholics could not get access to the body at the time of the execution, they found ways to obtain relics. A full year after Robert Sutton's execution, "the Catholics, wishing to have some relics from the holy body of the martyr, carried off one night by a pious theft a shoulder and arm."[44] In hagiographical accounts, relics sometimes took on miraculous qualities. The account of Edmund Genings' execution tells of a "devout virgin…who had a great desire to get, if possible, some little part of [Genings'] flesh or of his blood to keep as a relic:"

> …the hand and arm hung out over the sides of the basket; which the said virgin seeing, drew near to touch it, and laying hold of his anointed thumb, by a secret instinct gave it a little pull, only to shew her love and desire of having it, when, behold! To her great surprise, the thumb was instantly separated

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[42] Thomas Alfield, "A True Reporte of the Death & Martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and Preiste" (London: Rowlands or Verstegan, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[43] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 75-6.
[44] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 325-26.

> from the rest of the hand, and remained in her hand, which she carried off without being taken notice of by any one.[45]

Interestingly, Catholics were not the only ones to take an exalted view of martyrs' remains. Sarah Covington makes the valid argument that the "demand for relics was not unique to Catholics…with Protestants seizing remains of their own."[46] David Loades cites John Rogers' execution as one such example. Loades' source for this is the *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*.[47] The Protestant John Foxe conveniently fails to mention any collection of relics in his account of Rogers' death, as many sixteenth-century Protestants associated relics with "popish idolatry."

At least two Protestants had an interest in relics that extended past private collections. According to Christopher Marsh, two Suffolk Protestants reportedly exhibited the burnt bones of a Protestant martyr as relics. Marsh points to this example as "evidence of 'mixed' beliefs found in the heads of conformists and dissenters alike."[48] Some of these mixed beliefs about relics tended toward the superstitious. After John Cornelius' execution in 1594, "his head was nailed to the gallows, till it was removed at the desire of the town, apprehending the scourges of God upon them, as they had experience before on the like occasions."[49] The townspeople obviously had not lost their proclivity for superstition, even on the dawn of the seventeenth century.

Despite the interest in relics, late sixteenth-century English Protestants exhibited a marked dislike for what they termed "idolatry." J. J. Scarisbrick states that "Protestantism…took a shoulder to [Catholic piety and practice] and heaved it over,

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[45] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 176-78.
[46] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 178.
[47] Loades, *The Oxford Martyrs*, 161n.
[48] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, 192.
[49] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 201.

condemning it as idolatry, magic or irrelevance, as pagan or semi-pagan fantasy and clutter."[50] Even the ever-fickle crowd was quick to attack what they perceived to be idol-worship at John Amias and Robert Dalby's execution in 1589:

> One, who appeared to me to be a gentlewoman, going up to the place where their bodies were in quartering, and not without difficulty making her way through the crowd, fell down upon her knees before the multitude, and, with her hands joined and eyes lifted up to heaven, declared an extraordinary motion and affection of soul…Immediately a clamour was raised against her as an idolatress, and she was drove away; and whether or no she was carried to prison, I could not certainly understand.[51]

Such sentiments did not stop Catholics on the scaffold from attempting to express their faith, even in the face of scathing criticism. Anthony Munday, a spy against the Jesuits, wrote the following account of John Sherte's execution:

> John Sherte was brought from off the hurdle to the gallows, where seeing [Thomas] Forde hanging, he began with holding up his hands, as the Papists are wont to do before their Images, "O Sweet Tom, O happy Tom, O blessed Tom."… he fell down on his knees, and held up his hands to it, saying again, "O happy Tom, O blessed Tom, thy sweet soul pray for me. O dear Tom, thy blessed soul pray for me."… Master Sheriff upon this said unto him: "Is this the fruits of your Religion, to kneel to the dead body of thy fellow, and to desire his soul to pray for thee? Alas, what can it either profit thee, or hinder thee: pray thou to God and he will help thee."[52]

Sherte's response was typical of sixteenth-century martyrs: "this is the true Catholic Religion, and whosever is not of it, is damned."

This particular account, in addition to pointing to the Protestant dislike of Catholic "idolatry," reveals another prominent theme at Catholic executions: heckling. Protestant authorities often subjected Catholic martyrs to grueling debates on the scaffold. According to Peter Lake and Michael Questier, the purpose of this "Protestant tactic was to disrupt the settled martyrological resonances of the Catholic performance by engaging them in

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[50] J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 162.
[51] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 152-53.
[52] Munday, "A breefe and true reporte," *EEBO*.

acrimonious exchanges designed to tear aside their mask of martyrdom."[53] Luke Kirby's execution account, written by Anthony Munday, includes a six-page dialogue between Kirby, the sheriff, Munday, and two preachers. The sheriff called Munday as a witness after Kirby stated "that his adversary, Sled, nor Munday, could not upbraid him with anything." The sheriff announced that Munday was present and asked if Kirby would like to speak with him. Kirby answered, "I see him yonder, and let him say what he can against me." Thus began a lengthy debate that, according to Munday, "was not sufficient to mollify the obstinate mind of Kirby, but he would persist still in this devillish imagination."[54]

The debate at Kirby's execution was typical of most exchanges between Protestant authorities and Catholic martyrs: the more Protestants badgered Catholics, the more the Catholics resisted. The debate tactics did not produce any recantations, at least not among the 57 Catholic speeches examined in this study.[55] Usually, Catholics fielded questions calmly, for a lost temper was not becoming to a would-be martyr. However, in 1591, Swithin Wells' patience was no match for Sheriff Topcliffe's invectives. James Young, the priest who documented Wells' execution, described the encounter:

> "Dog-bolt Papists!" said Topcliffe, "you follow the Pope and his Bulls; believe me, I think some bulls begot you all." Herewith Mr. Wells was somewhat moved, and replied, "If we have bulls to our fathers, thou hast a cow to thy mother." And anon he corrected himself saying, "Good sir, forgive me. I request all Catholics here to pray for me. At this time, Mr. Topcliffe, you should not use such speeches to drive me to impatience. God pardon you and make you of a Saul a Paul, of a bloody persecutor one of the Catholic Church's children."

By the end of his speech, Wells was able to recover the upper hand, telling Topcliffe that "by your malice I am thus to be executed, but you have done me the greatest benefit that ever I

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[53] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 246.
[54] Munday, "A breefe and true reporte," *EEBO*.
[55] Lake and Questier's *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat* discusses scaffold conversions, but these took place in the seventeenth century and were not direct consequences of debates.

could have had. I heartily forgive you."[56] However, Topcliffe nearly destroyed Wells' attempt at martyrdom.

Scaffold debates thus became a sort of competition between Protestants and Catholics, with each group trying to reach the crowd. Protestants hoped to defend their persecution of Catholics by associating the religion with treason, while Catholics tried to convince the crowd that they died as martyrs. The crowd, as we will see in the next chapter, was unpredictable. By no means did they always agree with the state. Like in any debate, the best rhetorician usually determined the outcome. Brian Lacey's speech provides a good example of how clever Catholic martyrs could foil the Protestant state's intentions:

> Lacey, now having the rope about his neck, was willed by Topcliffe to confess his treason. "For," saith he, "there are none but traitors who are of thy religion." "Then," said Lacey, "answer me. You yourself in Queen Mary's days was a Papist, at least in show. Tell me, were you also a traitor?" At which all the people laughed aloud.

Lacey clearly outwitted Topcliffe, who could only manage to respond, "Well, I came not here to answer thy arguments. Thou art to answer me."[57]

Catholic executions, due to the questioning and heckling of the Protestant authorities, were much less scripted than Protestant heretics' burnings. Yet, all the debating gave the Catholics ample opportunities to present their faith and catechize the audience. Thus, although the Protestant state continually interrupted the "final moments" of Catholic martyrs, Catholics gained as much from the encounter as Protestants did.

Some Catholic scaffold speeches addressed one of the most contentious issues of the day: militant Catholicism. In the late sixteenth-century, an ongoing dialogue existed between Catholics who espoused loyalty to the state and those who advocated political rebellion. John

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[56] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 107-08.
[57] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 110.

Coffey notes that "William Allen and the Jesuit Robert Persons, in particular, were tireless in their efforts to prod the papacy and the Catholic powers toward military action against England's heretical government."[58] Allen and Parsons developed a political theory of militant Catholicism and "were deeply involved in efforts to overthrow Elizabeth and establish a Catholic regime in England."[59] However, Allen and Persons were writing from the safety and disengagement of life in exile. Most English Catholics, "who consisted of secular clergy, religious and laity who had to live and survive in England,"[60] naturally felt more inclined towards loyalty. Jesuit priests rarely referred to the debate in their scaffold speeches; the majority of priests maintained that their mission had nothing to do with politics.[61] Rather, the issue of militant Catholicism appeared only in the speeches of Catholics who attempted political coups, such as the Babington conspirators. Their speeches combined the rhetoric of Catholic martyrs with that of penitent political traitors. Thus, although these Catholics obviously had agreed with militant Catholicism when attempting rebellion, they repented on the scaffold and advocated loyalty to the queen.

Three of the Babington conspirators expressed disapproval of militant Catholicism at their executions in 1586. Edward Jones insisted that he "always advised [Salisbury] to beware, for though I was, and am a Catholic, yet I took it to be a most wicked act to offer violence to my natural prince."[62] Thomas Salisbury echoed Jones: "I desire all true Catholics to pray for me; and I desire them, as I beseech God they may, to endure with patience whatsoever shall be laid upon them, and never to enter into any action of violence for

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[58] Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 86.
[59] Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 9.
[60] Scarisbrick, *The Reformation of the English People*, 161.
[61] Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalism*, 9.
[62] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1159-60.

remedy."[63] A third conspirator, Henry Donn, "desired all Catholics to endure with patience, and never to attempt any thing against her majesty, under whose government he had lived quietly, until within these ten weeks."[64] Their pleas for Catholic loyalty are manifestations of yet another way that contemporary religious issues found expression on the scaffold.

Another distinguishing factor at Catholic executions was the emphasis on one's religious vocation. Authorities often made a distinction between laity and clergy, forcing laypersons to adapt their scaffold performances in accordance. The lay movement played a considerable role in sustaining Catholicism in England during Elizabeth's reign. As J. J. Scarisbrick comments, "The survival of the old faith would have been impossible without the country houses which acted as mass-centres, created communities of Catholics consisting of families, servants and dependants, and sheltered priests."[65] This fact was not lost on the state, which fined or imprisoned laypersons for recusancy and, after 1585, executed them for harboring priests.

At the scaffold, some authorities seem to have identified more with ordinary Catholic layfolk than they did with the foreign-trained Jesuit priests. This could prompt an attitude of leniency. At Robert Sutton's execution, a Mr. William Naylor wrote the following eyewitness account: "I saw one Mr. Sutton, a layman and a schoolmaster, put to death at Clerkenwell in London, to whom the Sheriff promised to procure his pardon if he would but pronounce absolutely the word 'all'; for he would that he should acknowledge the Queen to be supreme head in all causes without any restriction."[66] At other times, the authorities

[63] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1158-59.
[64] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1159.
[65] Scarisbrick, *The Reformation of the English People*, 149.
[66] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 151.

offered leniency while at the same time chastising the layperson for his or her obstinacy. Such was the case at Ralph Milner's execution:

> One named Milner was condemned…a poor honest farmer, having a wife and ten children. This man, being very zealous, had been an earnest and most diligent furtherer of God's service and helper of priests. When he was arraigned, the Judge said that he was worse than any Seminary priest, meaning that he did more good to the Catholics…When Milner, who suffered after Mr. Welby, was going up the ladder, the Justice said, "Come down, fool, and look to thy children." He thinking he had meant he should live, came down, and then the Sheriff told him that if he would go to church the Queen would spare him.[67]

Milner's execution account reveals how the state was annoyed with lay Catholics who, despite a lack of education and vocational calling, still managed to wield considerable influence. At least one Protestant minister implied that lay Catholics might not even know how their faith differed from that of the state religion. When Humphrey Pritchard was executed in 1589, "a minister that stood by told him he was a poor ignorant fellow, and did not know what it was to be a Catholic." Humphrey replied, "That he very well knew what it was to be a Catholic, though he could not, perhaps, explain it in the proper terms of divinity; that he knew what he was to believe, and for what he came there to die; and that he willingly died for so good a cause."[68] Scaffold authorities thus treated lay Catholics with a paradoxical mixture of leniency and disdain. Seen as "one of us," lay Catholics were often offered clemency; at the same time, they were held in contempt for having dissented from society's norm.

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[67] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 319-20.
[68] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 158-59.

Conclusion

Religious traitors and heretics, whether Catholic or Protestant, all aspired to a martyrdom that would convince others that they died for the true faith. However, they approached their martyrdoms differently. Protestants came to the stake as heretics, whereas Catholics had to defend themselves against charges of treason. Protestants were often barred from speaking; Catholics faced the heckling of scaffold authorities. Moreover, Protestant and Catholic martyrs tailored their performances to their respective religions. As religious traitors and heretics used the scaffold to catechize, enlighten, and inspire others, the significance of their speeches surpassed the effect produced on the crowd. By the end of the century, the scaffold had become an important arena for the expression of the many ideologies and beliefs of sixteenth-century England.

Chapter 4: "What meaneth it that so much people are gathered hither?"

The opening lines of most scaffold speeches invoked the "good people" who had come to witness the execution. Crowds at public executions included people from all walks of life,[1] giving us a glimpse of what historians so ambiguously term "popular" beliefs. The behavior of spectators at Protestant and Catholic martyrdoms is particularly enlightening; public response to these executions varied considerably during the years from 1534 to 1603. The unpredictable and often surprising reactions of scaffold spectators point to the complexity of the Reformation. Crowds remind us that the Reformation was a process, not an event.[2] Moreover, it was a process that interacted with people; the Reformation did not take place solely in the legal and ecclesiastical domains.

The active participation of crowds at Tudor executions also raises the question of who was in control. Did public executions double as exhibitions of the state's power? Foucault and his adherents argue yes. Recently, historians studying executions in Tudor and Stuart England have challenged this position. They see Tudor executions as a dialogue between the state, the convicted, and the crowd.[3] The behavior of crowds certainly reinforces this argument. Although the gruesome executions undoubtedly served as a deterrent to many of the spectators, crowds held considerable power. They interacted with the authorities and the victim, and the support of the crowd was highly sought after by both the executioners and the executed.

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[1] John Bellamy, *The Tudor Law of Treason: An Introduction* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 190.
[2] Rosemary O'Day, *The Debate on the English Reformation* (London: Methuen and Co., 1986), 1.
[3] Those who argue a more Foucauldian understanding of public executions include J.A. Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches," and Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials" and *Treason in Tudor England*. Only recently have historians begun to question this interpretation. Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, and Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Marytrdom*, explore the scaffold as an arena for political, religious, and ideological power struggles.

This chapter explores crowds at public executions: who came, how did they behave, and what does it all mean? I argue that scaffold spectators were not a monolithic entity; nor did they serve as passive receptacles to the scaffold speech. The behavior of the crowd suggests that Tudor executions were complicated, unpredictable events where conflicting ideologies struggled for power against the highly emotional backdrop of the drama of death.

The Audience

How many people attended executions? The number in attendance depended on whether the execution was a private one, a privilege reserved for the nobility and high-ranking officials, or a public one, open to all. In the case of the former, attendance was generally limited to a few officials, the executioner, and close family and friends. For public executions, crowds could number in the thousands or even tens of thousands. In some instances, entire communities might attend.[4] Pamphlet and chapbook writers delighted in relating attendance numbers, especially if the figures were considerable. James Young, the priest who documented Swithin Wells' last words in 1591, was fortunate to have "stood fast by the gibbet" considering that "many a hundred people were there present" in Grays Inn Fields. [5] The year before, "thousands…wondered at [the] gladsome countenance" of the Roman Catholic Anthony Middleton as he died for treason.[6]

Those in charge of executions found large crowds to be a mixed blessing. On the one hand, a sizeable turnout meant that more people witnessed how the state handled its adversaries. On the other hand, large numbers of spectators made officials uneasy, especially

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[4] Sarah Covington, *The Trail of Martyrdom: Persecution and Resistance in Sixteenth-Century England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 174.
[5] J. H. Pollen, ed., *Acts of the English Martyrs Hitherto Unpublished* (London: 1891), 107-08.
[6] J. H. Pollen, ed., *Unpublished Documents Relating to the English Martyrs, vol. 1, 1584-1603* (Leeds: Whitehead and Son, 1908), 185-86.

if the crowd had sympathy for the victim.[7] In such cases, the state worked hard to keep control, as Foxe demonstrates in his relation of John Bradford's execution:

> Now, whether it were a commandment from the queen and her council, or from Bonner and his adherents, or whether it were merely devised of the lord mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs of London, or no, I cannot tell; but a great noise there was overnight about the city by divers, that Bradford should be burnt the next day in Smithfeld, by four of the clock in the morning, before it should be greatly known to any… In which rumour, many heads had divers minds; some thinking the fear of the people to be the cause thereof: others thought nay, that it was rather because the papists judged his death would convert many to the truth, and give a great overthrow to their kingdom.[8]

As this account shows, officials scheduled the time and place of executions carefully. When these measures provided insufficient control over the situation, officials called in reinforcement. The author of Richard Thirkill's execution account could not hear the priest's scaffold speech because he could not get past the guards stationed at the gates. Not only did the Yorkshire officials provide guards, but the Lord Mayor also scheduled a town meeting for all general citizens at the same time as the execution.[9] The restricted attendance at Thirkill's execution is anomalous to most treason executions, though; it probably had to do with the execution being of a Roman Catholic in York, a Catholic stronghold.

Most executions were open to the public, and the public did not pass up the opportunity. As the high attendance numbers indicate, executions were a familiar part of life in Tudor England. The Duke of Norfolk made such an observation in the opening words of his scaffold speech: "It is not rare, good people, to see a man come to die."[10] Even in rural or sparsely populated communities, most inhabitants would witness the spectacle of punishment

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[7] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 176.
[8] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, vol. 7*, ed. George Townsend (New York: AMS Press, 1965), 148.
[9] Richard Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1924), 83.
[10] William Cobbett and Thomas Howell, eds., *Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-1826), 1032-1035.

at least once during their lifetime.[11] Many received their first introduction to the scaffold at an early age. Despite the grisliness of the traitor's death—hanging, drawing and quartering, castration, and beheading—children were not excluded from attendance. Peter Spierenburg links the presence of children at executions to contemporary attitudes toward childhood:

> Up into the sixteenth century at least, children were not handled as special persons. On the one hand they were subject to an almost absolute authority: social distance between parents and children was enormous. On the other hand, the latter learnt about the facts of life at an early age.[12]

Parents considered executions to be part of their offspring's moral education. Even the children of those being executed would attend. Ralph Milner, "a poor honest farmer, having a wife and ten children" faced treason charges for abetting priests in 1591. According to one account of his execution, "when he was on the ladder, his children asked him blessing. He desired God to bless them and to send them no worse death than their father, at which all the people laughed; but he thought it a high blessing to wish them to die Martyrs."[13] A quarter century earlier, the Protestant heretic John Rogers' "wife and children, eleven in number, ten able to go and one sucking at her breast, met him as he went toward Smithfield."[14] Although the twenty-first century mind finds traumatic the idea of children witnessing a parent's execution, people in Tudor England felt otherwise. They thought, as Milner did, that their children would gain much from the experience of witnessing a "good death." After all, how one behaved at the hour of death was the ultimate test of character in Tudor England.

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[11] Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering: Executions and the Evolution of Oppression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 87.
[12] Spierenburg, *Spectacle of Suffering*, 96.
[13] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 319-320.
[14] John Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, ed. G.A. Williamson (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 213.

Although one might think traitors and heretics would feel embarrassment and shame in front of the throng of spectators, the reverse was often the case. In a letter to Robert Persons relating the execution of Jesuit priest John Boste, John Cecil wrote that "more than 300 ladies and women of good position (all with black hoods, which with us is a sign of gentlewomen) set out to follow him." After mounting the scaffold, Boste made an attempt to preach to these women and the crowd. When the authorities stopped him, Boste replied, "At least…you will allow me to thank these ladies and gentlemen, who have done me the honour and kindness to accompany me to-day."[15] In general, traitors and heretics welcomed the audience, considering their presence an honor and speaking directly to them.

Those standing below the scaffold were not the only ones in attendance at executions. An equally importance presence were the sheriffs, bailiffs and other officials. These authorities represented the state, but their overriding concern was order. Sarah Covington writes that "this meant preventing any instability from breaking out at the execution site, especially if the victim chose to make a last, possibly incendiary speech before a riled crowd."[16] Officials, as execution accounts demonstrate, took their duties very seriously.

The role of the sheriff expanded in the 1580s with the advent of the Jesuit campaigns. As mentioned in the previous chapter, officials (usually sheriffs and ministers) would interrogate Roman Catholics on the scaffold in an attempt to thwart their martyr-like performances.[17] Sheriff Topcliffe, who appears in several execution accounts, acted in a particularly calumnious manner. At Oliver Palmer's execution in 1591, for example, he showed a relentless determination to prove Palmer a traitor. After Sir Walter Raleigh

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[15] Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 286.
[16] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 166..
[17] see Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 246.

attempted to stop the execution, finding that Palmer's scaffold prayer exhibited no signs of sedition, Topcliffe intervened. "I pray you," he begged, "suffer me to offer him one question, and anon you shall hear that I will convince him to be a traitor." After Topcliffe's first question failed to make evident Palmer's treason, he tried again: "dost thou think that the Queen hath any right to maintain this religion, and to forbid yours?" When Palmer answered no, Topcliffe finished his interrogation with the question, "Then thou thinkest not…to defend the Queen against the Pope, if he would come to establish thy religion?" When Palmer answered this question in the negative, the crowd became incensed and cried out. Raleigh had to step back and allow the execution.[18]

Perhaps Topcliffe's strategic questions were an attempt to gain the upper hand on Raleigh, or perhaps he asked these questions to provoke the crowd. The account of Palmer's execution offers no explanation. What is certain is that such scaffold interrogations, like the last dying speeches that followed them, had the power to sway the audience towards sympathy or antipathy for the victim. Crowds were highly responsive to scaffold performances. For this reason, Peter Lake and Michael Questier note, "the response of the crowd was clearly hard to predict and might well swing from one side to another."[19] Much depended on the traitor's performance on the scaffold.

Interactive Theater

The crowd behaved much like an audience at a theatrical production. They responded to the emotions played out on the stage, to the rhetoric of the speakers, and to the spectacle of suffering. Unlike at a play, though, the crowd at an execution had their own important role in

[18] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 111-114.
[19] Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 271.

the drama. As Foucault writes, "In the ceremonies of the public execution, the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance."[20]

In this interactive theatre, the person about to be executed could ask the crowd questions. Some scaffold speakers addressed the spectators as a whole. In 1570, Christopher Norton asked those who had come to witness his execution, "Whether any there did know one Philip Shurley, who now is captain in Scotland?" Several people in the crowd answered that they did know him. Norton "declared how he was the causer of his death, nevertheless, he did forgive him; and, morover, besought any who knew him, when the time would serve, to let him understand it."[21] Others spoke to individuals in the crowd. Christopher Blunt, executed in 1601, inquired, "Is Sir Walter Raleigh there?" Those on the scaffold answered that he was present. Blunt then proceeded to ask Raleigh to forgive him, which Raleigh did.[22]

Not all questions were so direct; traitors and heretics also might pose rhetorical questions for the purpose of making a point. The Catholic priest Christopher Bales, for example, wished to make certain his audience knew he was innocent of treason. He employed clever rhetoric, making assumptions of the crowd and answering his own questions:

> Good people, you are come hither to see a man die, but why or wherefore you know not. A traitor! But now wherein a traitor? In that I am a priest, and seek to reconcile souls unto the Almighty God according to my office and calling; but this word traitor is such that you cannot see into the cause. But I would that you might but see the soul and the change it makes, and then I doubt not but that this word traitor would take no effect.[23]

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[20] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977) 57.
[21] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1083.
[22] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1414-16.
[23] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 308.

When not bombarded with dialogue, the crowd had time to analyze the visual aspect of the event. In addition to scaffold speeches, dialogues and interrogations, the crowd also responded to the convicted person's actions and demeanor. Henry Cuffe, who took part in the Essex rebellion, recognized the visual effect of his death on others: "We are exposed here as sad spectacles and instances of human frailty; the death we are to undergo carries a frightful aspect."[24] Similarly to Cuffe, Edmund Campion opened his scaffold speech with the words, "I am here brought as a Spectacle, before the face of God, of Angels and of men."[25] Campion adapted his words from 1 Corinthians 4:9, which reads, "a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men."[26] Alison Shell defines the word "spectacle" as used in Campion's speech:

> The 'spectaculum,' or spectacle, has many exemplary nuances. Some are obvious: a public display, a sight, a means of seeing. Others are peculiarly applicable to martyrdom: a person or thing exhibited to the public as an object either of curiosity and contempt, or of wonder and admiration: a mirror, model, pattern and standard; or, figuratively, a means or medium through which something is regarded. Protestants might come to mock at Campion's shame, and Catholics to marvel.[27]

Although some people did come to mock or marvel, many spectators came to the execution with less strong convictions. As "spectacles," convicted traitors and heretics could sway the crowd with their demeanor as much as with their words. Rowland Taylor's "long, white beard" and "reverend and ancient face" inspired the crowd at his burning to an outpouring of tears and "godly wishes."[28] Likewise, "the standers by seemed to have [had] a more than ordinary compassion" for the young priest Richard Yaxley, "upon account of his

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[24] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1412-13.
[25] Anthony Munday, "A Discoverie of Edmund Campion," (London, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[26] Alison Shell, " 'We are Made a Spectacle': Campion's Dramas," *The Reckoned Expense: Edmund Campion and the Early Jesuits*, Thomas McCoog, ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 113.
[27] Shell, "Campion's Dramas," 113.
[28] Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, vol. 6*, 697-699.

youth, beauty, and sweet behavior, and the consideration of his family."[29] The crowd, however, did not respond well to John Felton, who "hung down his head, and said nothing, that either might be heard, or supposed by sight" after the Proclamation was read.[30]

The sights and sounds of the scaffold thus forced the crowd to stay engaged in the event, making them active participants in the ritual of execution. The Foucauldian interpretation considers scaffold performances as part of "a whole series of great rituals in which power is eclipsed and restored."[31] Tudor executions may have been a state-sponsored event, but those in attendance were not passive witnesses to the glorious power of the state. The crowd held the power to influence or even rewrite the script of the scaffold drama.

Crowd Reactions

People who attended executions expected a certain amount of entertainment, as they would at a theatrical performance. Executions were highly emotional events, and crowds eagerly anticipated the scaffold speech. At John Bradford's execution for heresy, the presiding sheriff told him, "Arise, and make an end; for the press of the people is great." And in 1586, Henry Donn asked, "Do the people expect I should say any thing?"[32] As if he anticipated the answer, he launched immediately into his speech.

Crowds usually brought with them a high level of energy, which added to the uncertain and frightful aspects of the scaffold. At the executions of both the Duke of Norfolk and the Duke of Somerset, the crowd had to be silenced so that the traitor could concentrate on his final prayers. In the case of Somerset, he had to remind the crowd, "Now I once again

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[29] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 158.
[30] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1085-88.
[31] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 48.
[32] Pollen, *Acts and Monuments*, 194; Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1158.

require you that you will keep yourselves quiet and still, lest through your tumult you might trouble me."[33] Crowds expressed themselves freely, loudly, and, most of the time, without reproof.

Depending on what the speaker said, the crowd might laugh, weep, or shout out in response. Some traitors made an attempt to be witty, perhaps to alleviate their fear of the imminent, painful death. Thomas More, executed before a crowd at Tower Hill, told his executioner, "Pray, Sir, see me safe up; and as to my coming down, let me shift for myself."[34] Another Catholic, layman John Bodey, expressed himself with similarly wry humor at his execution half a century later. Sir William Kingsmell tried to explain to Bodey (and the crowd) that "he died for high treason against her Majesty, whereof he had been sufficiently convicted." Bodey quipped back, "Indeed, I have been sufficiently convicted, for I have been condemned twice."[35]

Other speeches brought the listeners to tears. The Duke of Norfolk, executed for plotting against Elizabeth, elicited an overwhelmingly supportive response at his execution. Despite his treasonous actions, Norfolk won over the crowd with his words against "papists" and his praise for the queen. By the end of the speech, the Dean had to ask for the people's silence. Camden's account describes the scene as "a lamentable spectacle to the people, most mournfully shedding tears and sighing. It is almost incredible how dearly the people loved him and how by his natural benignity, and courteous actions, (qualities well becoming so great a Prince) he had gained the hearts of the Multitude."[36]

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[33] Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Families of York and Lancaster* (London : Rychard Grafton, 1550), Schoenburg Center for Electronic Text and Image, http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti.
[34] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 396.
[35] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 62-65.
[36] William Camden, *Annales the True and Royall History of the Famous Empresse Elizabeth Queene of England France and Ireland &c.* (London: Purslowe, Lownes, and Flesher, 1625), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.

Of course, not every scaffold performance garnered such sympathy. Even at Norfolk's execution, there were "divers of the wiser sort" who "passed their censures diversely, some from an apprehension they had of great fear and danger might have ensued, had he survived." At some executions, the "Multitude" shared such opinions. The citizens of Tudor England were, after all, raised from the cradle to view treason as "the most frightful crime that an Englishman could commit."[37] Crowds often shouted out "Away with the traitor!" or "Fie on the obstinate traitor!" at those who gave an unrepentant speech.

This was particularly the case at executions in the late sixteenth-century. As Sarah Covington has observed, "Spectators seem to have been especially enthusiastic in the time of Elizabeth…when a nascent nationalism began to color the tone of those who cried out "traitor" or "God save the queen" to the executed."[38] People exhibited great patriotism in 1570 at the execution of John Felton, who committed treason by posting the Bull of Pope Pius V that excommunicated Queen Elizabeth. His execution began with a reading of the proclamation against him, which ended with the words "God save the Queen." According to an account of Felton's death, at these words all the people "with one voice cried, 'God save the queen.' And, moreover, many wished all those who mean otherwise, might come to the same end."[39]

The sovereign benefited from these swells of patriotism; at times, so did the sovereign's offender. A patriotic speech, even by a traitor, could win the support of the crowd. William Freeman spoke eloquently at his execution for religious treason: "As for the Queen, her finger should not ache if my heart could help it. God bless the Queen, God bless

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[37] Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth-Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 15, no. 4 (1954): 472.
[38] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 175.
[39] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1085-88.

her honorable Council, God bless the whole realm."[40] The audience cried out, "That is well said." When Freeman died, none in the crowd made any clamor or spoke any word against him. Some even reviled the executioner, saying "it were no matter if he went in the other's case." Once again, we see crowds responding to individual performances rather than ideological positions.

By the 1580s, the Jesuit priests often found themselves shouted at when they denied the charges of treason against them. However, many of the people shouting in derision at the Jesuit priests may have done so for religious reasons as much as for patriotic ones, as religion and politics were closely linked. The crowd usually cried out after the traitor made reference to his faith, especially if he employed evangelism. For example, John Nelson ended his speech with the words, "I beseech God, and request you all to pray for the same, that it would please God, of His great mercy, to make you, and all others that are not such already, true Catholic men, and both to live and die in the unity of our holy mother the Catholic Roman Church." This elicited a chorus of "Away with thee and thy Catholic Romish faith!"[41] Christopher Haigh writes that in the 1580s, "England was fast becoming a Protestant nation."[42] The combined forces of patriotism and Protestantism could create highly unsympathetic crowds during this time.

Even in the most hostile of crowds, though, one could always find supporters of the victim. In addition to family members and friends, advocates of one's cause also would attend the execution. Thomas Alfield published his detailed description of Edmund Campion's execution based on the firsthand account of an anonymous priest:

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[40] Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 357-60.
[41] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 9-10.
[42] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 279.

> Many good catholic gentlemen desirous to be eyewitnesses of that which might happen in the speech, demeanor, and passage of those three rare patterns of piety, virtue and innocence, presented themselves at the place of execution, and my self a Catholic priest pressed to that bloody spectacle.[43]

This unidentified eyewitness, probably Alfield himself,[44] was not the only priest to attend the execution of fellow Roman Catholics. Catholic priests often came to document their own account of the executions, for fear that the Protestants might misconstrue the facts in their versions. The Catholics in attendance also lent spiritual support to the traitor through prayer. Although Catholics about to be executed did not desire the prayers of "heretical" Protestants, they often asked fellow Catholics to pray for them. Thomas Alfield and Thomas Webley, for example, "went to their deaths refusing to have any to pray with them but desiring all Catholics to say one Credo for them in the midst of their Agony."[45]

Most Catholic spectators likely prayed in silence, fearing the consequences of revealing their religious inclination. Some, however, struck by the emotional event of the martyrdom, reacted publicly to such entreaties. The account of Richard Leigh's execution in 1588 tells of one such man:

> who, at the place of execution, hearing one of the confessors earnestly requesting of all Catholics, if any were there present, to pray for him… and not thinking it enough to pray secretly in his heart, as others did, knelt down before all the multitude and prayed aloud for him, to the great encouragement of the confessor, and great mortification of the persecutors.[46]

The authorities promptly apprehended the man, along with a woman who exhorted Leigh and his fellow martyrs in a loud voice, pushing her way through the crowd to ask for their benediction. They were both sent to prison.

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[43] Thomas Alfield, "A True Reporte of the Death & Martyrdome of M. Campion Iesuite and Preiste" (London: Rowlands or Verstegan, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[44] Most scholars attribute the account either to Alfield or to Robert Parsons.
[45] Anonymous, "The life and end of Thomas Awfeeld a seminary preest and Thomas Webley a dyers seruant" (London, 1585), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[46] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 141.

Despite emotional outbursts such as these, crowds rarely got out of hand. Unlike other European countries where riots occurred at public executions, [47] Tudor crowds did not riot or form an uprising. Sarah Covington attributes this maintenance of order to the unique situation of sixteenth-century England:

> Throughout the century…England maintained a cohesiveness, if not a unity, and an attachment to crown power that prevented such charged events as executions from lapsing into general displays of religious violence or war. In many ways, England was also saved by its own religious confusion and policy changes or ambiguities; violence, after all, demands the drawing of hard partisan lines.[48]

Nonetheless, crowds would express marked displeasure when something went wrong. Again, this suggests how the sights and sounds of the scaffold influenced spectators to a high degree. At John Rigby's execution in 1600, the executioners did a particularly poor job of dispatching him. Afterwards, "the people, going away, complained very much of the barbarity of the execution; and generally all sorts bewailed his death."[49] As in the case of Rigby, the crowd blamed the executioner when they disliked an execution. No one ever faulted the state, and especially not the sovereign. When an overzealous hangman ripped Edmund Genings' heart from his still-alive body, he showed it to the crowd and shouted, "Thus God grant it may happen to all traitors! God save the Queen!" The account of Genings' death remarks that "scarce one voice was heard amongst all the people to say Amen." However, this in no way implied discontent with the state; rather, the crowd "wondered much who were the chief executors" that acted with such brutality.[50]

If sheriffs or other leading officials feared sympathetic reactions from the crowd, they often avoided a scene by letting the victim hang until he was dead. This happened frequently,

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[47] See Spierenburg, *Spectacle of the Scaffold*, 107-108; Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 63-68.
[48] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 179.
[49] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 244-45.
[50] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 108-09.

according to execution accounts. It represents another way the state bargained with its offenders, as explored in Chapter One. A good scaffold speech could secure someone this less painful death, as it did in the case of Robert Southwell. The poet's eloquent last words in praise of the state, along with his cheerful countenance, endeared him to the public. An eyewitness of Southwell's performance on the scaffold relates that after he had hanged awhile, the sheriff made a sign to the sergeants to cut the rope:

> At which there was a great confused cry in the company that he prayed for the Queen, "And therefore let him hang, till he be dead," said they. And so he was not cut down till he was senst, as far as could be perceived. A man might perceive by the countenance of the beholders that there was almost a general commiseration, none that railed against him, so far as I heard.[51]

Thus, executions were highly unpredictable events. When the state held a public execution, it gambled twice: first in how the convicted person would act, and secondly in how the crowd would react. Just as the scaffold speech was a bargain between the state and the convicted person, the presence of the crowd suggests a compromise between the state and its people. On the one hand, the state had the opportunity to flex its muscles; on the other hand, the spectators had an active role and unpredictable reactions. They, too, benefited from public executions because the state heard (and often heeded) the voice of the crowd.

What do the different reactions of crowds reveal? When they laughed, wept, prayed aloud, or cried out in derision, were they merely responding to the emotional power of the spectacle and the speeches? Was this a "group mentality," in which individuals lost identity and followed the crowd? Or do these responses carry deeper meanings, perhaps even shedding light on popular religion? Emotions and group mentality certainly played a tremendous role. The emotion of the event, the power of last dying words, and the human tendency to follow the crowd are all natural responses that cut across the ages. As for what

[51] Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 336.

the crowd's response tells us about popular beliefs in Tudor England, this answer is somewhat complicated.

Crowds were clearly more sympathetic at Protestant heretics' burnings than at Catholic traitors' hangings, as Sarah Covington has demonstrated.[52] However, the variables of comparison are not equal. First, the Marian state executed Protestants mainly for religious reasons, whereas by the time of Elizabeth, the state (and many of its citizens) viewed Catholicism as a political threat as well as a religious one. Secondly, many of the Catholics executed under Elizabeth were Jesuit priests coming in from Europe during a time of external political threat.[53] The political scene no doubt influenced the people's behavior at executions. Thirdly, Tudor life extended past the scaffold, and the influences of daily life and individual beliefs cannot stand in comparison to the emotional events of a public execution. For all the hangings and burnings of the sixteenth century, Christopher Marsh reminds us that "the vast majority of suspects were not executed, but were given plentiful opportunities to see, or to say they saw, the light."[54] Although both Mary and Elizabeth persecuted their religious adversaries, those who died at stakes or scaffolds usually had been given the opportunity to recant. One must take this into account when considering crowds' reactions at executions.

For reasons such as these, Sarah Covington, Peter Lake, and Michael Questier have come to the conclusion that "It was not a matter of the crowd being in itself either Romish-inclined or staunchly anti-popish…but of the condemned men appealing through ethical-rhetorical forms to a crowd that recognized and responded to these types of persuasion."[55] Crowds at scaffolds do not give us a timeline for the Reformation or a Gallup poll of how

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[52] see Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 176-77.
[53] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 197.
[54] Christopher Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England: Holding Their Peace* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 190.
[55] see Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 191; Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 271.

popular it was. Still, the mere fact that speeches and demeanors could so easily sway sixteenth-century crowds points to the Reformation as an unfinished process.

Crowd Diversity

As noted, there were a whole range of people in attendance at executions, from advocates to adversaries to authorities. The word "crowd," as a collective noun, may conjure up the image of a group of people responding in unison. Indeed, the voice of the crowd often did ring out in unison at these executions. However, this does not imply that everyone in the crowd thought in the same manner or reacted the same way. People saw and heard the same performance, but they interpreted it differently. As Sarah Covington writes, "In many ways, the execution crowd was not an audience so much as an ambiguous congregation of many faiths and confessions, standing before exhorting preachers and martyrs who battled it out for its favor."[56]

Some of the diversity in belief resulted from the continual changes in religious policy of the mid-sixteenth century. Although by the 1580s, crowds at executions referred to Roman Catholicism as "the other,"[57] there still did not exist a clear definition of "self" versus "other." At the 1584 execution of Roman Catholic George Haddock, for example, the crowd debated what the word "Catholic" meant. The speech's recorder, who heard everything because he "stood under the gibbet," wrote that Haddock "requested all Catholics to pray with him and for his country. Where upon said one of the standers-by, 'Here be no Catholics.' 'Yes,' said another, 'we be all Catholics.' Then said Mr. Haddock, 'I mean

[56] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 174.
[57] For example, see William Freeman's speech, qtd. in Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 357-60.

Catholics of the Catholic Roman Church.' "[58] Such a discussion serves as a reminder that although changes to the state religion occurred quickly through legislation, they took a while to trickle down and reach all citizens. Christopher Haigh thus conceives of England as having had "blundering Reformations, which most did not understand, which few wanted, and which no one knew had come to stay."[59] Religious traitors, with their exhortations to the crowd regarding 'the true religion," fostered even more uncertainty among the spectators.

The sense of confusion, combined with the emotion of the event and the high attendance numbers, created an ideal arena for ideological battles. This was especially the case at executions for religious treason. Peter Lake and Michael Questier emphasize that "every time a Catholic met his maker on the scaffold, the English Protestant state was forced to enter a religious and ideological arena that no one group could hope entirely to dominate or control."[60] Both the executioners and the executed tried, though. As we have seen in the previous chapter, evangelism played a central role in the scaffold performances of Protestant and Catholic martyrs.

Those who died for religious treason or heresy believed very strongly that their religion was the "true religion." These martyrs tended to be well educated on the fine points of their faith; many had even attended a seminary, such as the Jesuit priests from Douai. Their lives (and deaths) revolved around their religion. By contrast, the crowds at executions represented a wide range of "spiritual involvement and intensity."[61] Many of the people who comprised scaffold crowds probably spent their time thinking about subsistence, not transubstantiation. But these people had a problem, as Christopher Haigh points out: "The

[58] Pollen, *Unpublished Documents*, 60-1.
[59] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 14.
[60] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 239.
[61] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 285.

Protestant Reformation advanced an exclusive model of Christian life…If the Christian would be saved, he or she must be a thinker: a sermon-goer, a catechism-learner, a Bible-student, an earnest prayer, a singer of psalms."[62] Whereas medieval Catholicism left people free to lead their lives, as long as they conformed (at least outwardly) to the Church, the advent of the English Reformation brought new demands. People now had to make a choice not only about what they believed, but how intensely they would express this belief. This created a ripe atmosphere for ideological battles. At executions, multiple political and religious factions maneuvered to gain adherents from the crowd.

The evangelistic attempts of religious traitors and heretics were mostly concerned with converting people to the "true religion." Some people, however, aimed at a more political "evangelism." Peter Lake and Michael Questier write that such people "used the aura attached to the last dying speech not to clear their consciences with God, but to destabilize the state and undermine the people's allegiance by making dark hints and pseudo-prophecies."[63] The scaffold served as the perfect stage for such a performance; Tudor people feared political instability as much as they did the destination of their souls. Those who gave forewarnings capitalized on both fears.

Northumberland, for example, admonished the crowd to return to the Roman Catholic faith to avoid more occurrences of "all the plagues that have chanced to this realm of late years since afore the death of King Henry the Eighth."[64] Edward Abington, one of the

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[62] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 286.
[63] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 276.
[64] Charles Mitchell, ed., "The Dying Speech of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland," *Tyburn Tree: Public Execution in Early Modern England*, Loyola College of Maryland, http://www.evergreen.loyola.edu/~cmitchell.

Babington conspirators, predicted "great bloodshed in England before it were long."[65] The sheriff recognized the power of such a portend over the crowd, and he told Abington:

> "Seest thou all these people, whose blood shall be demanded at thy hands, if thou, dying, conceal that which may turn their peril; therefore tell why, or which way such blood should be shed?" [Abington] said, "All that I know, you have of record;" and at last, said he, "this country is hated of all countries for her iniquity, and God loves it not."

Such prophesies could be very disconcerting for crowds, who believed that every natural disaster had a moral origin.[66] Due to this Tudor understanding of adversity, I would argue that scaffold prophets such as Abington had religious as well as political aims. They may have wished to undermine the people's allegiance, but this included religious as well as political allegiance. The sixteenth-century was, after all, "an age of religion: God mattered."[67] Politics and religion in Tudor England were never separate categories. Of the twenty-seven political traitors examined in this thesis, not one person committed an act of treason that did not have at least some religious motive behind it.

The Crowd as Witnesses

As we have seen, the crowd played an important role in the political and ideological battles played out on the scaffold. Tudor executions were more than power struggles, though. No matter how impersonal or abstract the ideologies expressed on the scaffold, nothing could erase the individuality of the human being facing death.

The public aspect of Tudor executions fostered this sense of individuality, due to the direct exchange between the convicted person and the crowd. As Charles Carlton writes,

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[65] Cobbett, *State Trials*, 1158.
[66] Lacey Baldwin Smith, *Treason in Tudor England: Politics and Paranoia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 125.
[67] Haigh, *English Reformations*, 285.

"While the early modern English state might have done away with its enemies cruelly, viciously, and unfairly, it did at least do so openly, giving them the last word. It was far less totalitarian than modern states which silently exterminate their opponents by the million... Their victims are remembered not as individuals, but as categories."[68] The presence of an interactive crowd allowed the traitor or heretic to die as an individual, not as a nameless entity. This in part explains why individual performances had such an effect on crowd reactions.

One of the crowd's main duties was to witness the traitor or heretic's dying words and actions. According to Gerald Broce and Richard Wunderli, literature on the art of dying always "stressed that in the last moments there should be a final interrogation of [the dying person] by onlookers concerning the doctrines of the Church and a final profession of faith."[69] The crowd adapted deathbed interrogations to the scaffold. They could ask the traitor or heretic questions and receive an answer.[70] At Edmund Genings execution in 1591, for example, "many questions were asked him by some standers by, whereto he still answered directly."[71]

In addition to asking questions, the crowd provided spiritual protection to the dying person through their physical presence. According to contemporary belief, God and the devil vied for control of one's soul at the moment of death, and "one's state of mind at the final instant of life eternally committed one's soul to salvation or damnation."[72] To counter the power of the Devil, literature on the art of dying suggested that "it is right profitable and

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[68] Charles Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death: Scaffold Confessions in Early Modern England," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 49 (Fall 1983): 78.
[69] Richard Wunderli and Gerald Broce, "The Final Moment before Death in Early Modern England," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no.2 (1989): 269.
[70] Bellamy, *Tudor Law of Treason*, 194.
[71] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 176-78.
[72] Broce and Wunderli, "Final Moment before Death," 260.

good…when a man is in agony of dying, with an high voice oft times to say the Creed before him."[73] This helped prevent the devil from taking control of the dying person's mind. The crowd served as witnesses to these confessions of faith, giving through their presence a certain legitimacy and assurance. Therefore, almost every traitor and heretic that gave a scaffold speech told the crowd in so many words, "Bear me witness that I die in the true faith."

Of course, as the Reformation continued, the crowd and the condemned traitor became more and more likely to differ in what that true faith was. By the time of the Jesuit executions, the phrase "bear me witness" had taken on a double meaning. Not only were Catholic priests and recusants concerned with the final moment before death, but they also wanted the crowd to understand that they died as martyrs.[74] The invocation of the people to serve as witnesses became an important part of Catholics' attempts to establish that they died for religion, not treason. Humphrey Pritchard thus told the people at his execution in 1589, "I call you all to witness, in the presence of God and of His holy angels, that I am a Catholic, and that I was condemned to die for the confession of the Catholic faith, and that I die willingly for the Catholic faith."[75] Pritchard not only hoped to win the spiritual battle for control of his soul, but the temporal battle between the state and his religion.

Part of the crowd's duty as witnesses to a death included hearing the dying person's last confession. Again, this goes back to the art of dying well. Christopher Marsh explains that "confession in the late-medieval church was a fundamental element in the sacrament of penance…for a person to be saved, it was necessary to have been confessed (if the

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[73] Frances Comper, ed., *The Book of the Craft of Dying and Other Early English Tracts Concerning Death* (New York: Arno Press, 1977), 11.
[74] Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Though of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 60.
[75] Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, 158-59.

opportunity had presented itself)."[76] At sixteenth-century executions, the opportunity always presented itself: the dying person had both the crowd and members of the clergy to hear the confession. Moreover, these last dying confessions held the most importance, since people greatly feared the thought of dying "unshriven."[77]

Although the Catholic rite of confession had changed in England by the time of Elizabethan Protestantism, the practice did not die out. Rather, it took on new form, as the execution of Swithin Wells in 1591 demonstrates. Wells, a schoolmaster and lay Catholic, had an interesting encounter on the scaffold with a man referred to as "Sir John," a "hot-spirited" minister. As Wells mounted the ladder, the minister admonished Wells to confess his sins:

> It is a point both of Papists', and also of Protestants', religion, that no man can be saved without confession. Papists say to a priest, but we say to the congregation; wherefore, if thou wilt be saved, thou must needs confess that thou hast offended God and her Majesty by following false doctrine and traitorous priests.[78]

At least in the mind of Sir John, the crowd resembled a congregation. Wells refused to confess, but had he done so it would have been an outdoor version of what happened inside many Elizabethan Protestant churches. David Cressy and Lori Ann Ferrell explain:

> The church used sanctions of public penance and temporary excommunication to reform popular culture, to improve godly conduct, and to standardize worship with the Book of Common Prayer. Serious offenders were made to dress in a white gown, hold a white candle, and publicly recite before the assembled congregation the details of their crime and their apology.[79]

The Elizabethan church (and state) used public penance to send a not-so-subtle message to its congregants. Never wishing to miss an opportunity to reinforce order, it extended its church

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[76] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, 79-80.
[77] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, 81.
[78] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 107-08.
[79] David Cressy and Lori Anne Ferrell, *Religion and Society in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1996), 107-108.

walls to encompass the scaffold. Again we see the complex relationship between religion and politics that characterized Tudor life and the scaffold.

Today death tends to be a very private experience; to die in front of strangers seems a violation of privacy, even an indignity. But the reverse characterized death in early modern Europe: "Death was always public…at that time one was never physically alone at the moment of death."[80] Crowds at executions thus played an important role in the ritual of a "good death." Whether they were serving as witnesses, interrogators, or confessors, crowds contributed to the spiritual welfare of the dying person.

Beyond the Scaffold

Scaffold performances reached a much larger audience than the number physically present for the execution. Due to pamphlets documenting last dying speeches, many more people had access to the traitor or heretic's scaffold speech. The question is, "how many?" Even if these pamphlets were readily accessible, how many people could read them? Historians have found literacy rates difficult to measure, and they have had to rely on indirect sources. David Cressy, for example, turned to "depositions, declarations, and such scraps of evidence as can be assembled." Cressy estimates that in 1550, about 82% of English men and 97% of English women were illiterate. By the end of the century, the rate had dropped to around 73% and 91%, respectively.[81] With such high numbers, one would assume the pamphlets documenting scaffold speeches did not circulate widely or have much influence.

However, as Christopher Marsh argues, literacy rates must be interpreted carefully: "People who live in predominantly oral/aural cultures will tend to treat texts as matter for

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[80] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 19.
[81] David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 176-177.

reading aloud to others…It is extremely likely, therefore, that literature reached the illiterate with a fluidity that seems alien today."[82] This would explain why pamphleteers took such pains to document scaffold performances, as well as why some people dreaded their publication. Sheriff Topcliffe, for example, complained to Swithin Wells: "This dialogue will be talked of hereafter, for I warrant you there are some of thy own profession who hear thee."[83]

Publications often competed with each other, each claiming to tell the "true relation" of the execution. Those documenting the executions of religious traitors and heretics tended to produce pamphlets aimed at either martyrology or defamation. Obviously, due to the large number of people that witnessed executions, pamphleteers could not falsify the scaffold speech. However, they did color the account with commentary suited to their purpose. As Sarah Covington writes, "Executions thus constituted an exchange not only between authorities, crowds, and martyrs, but also between later interpreters who shaped an essentially ambiguous event toward their own proselytizing purposes."[84]

The pamphlets published after the death of Edmund Campion, Ralph Sherwin, and Alexander Brian serve as a good example of how different writers responded to the same performance. Thomas Alfield, a Jesuit priest, published the Catholic version of the execution based on the first-hand documentation of a priest. This priest emphasized that "What he [Campion] spake openly, that my meaning is to set down truly, my self being present and very near, as heard by Sir Frances Knowles, the Lord Howard, Sir Henry Lee and other gentlemen then gathered there to see and hear him."[85] The priest mentioned both his location

[82] Marsh, *Popular Religion*, 139.
[83] Pollen, *Acts of the English Martyrs*, 107-08.
[84] Covington, *Trail of Martyrdom*, 197.
[85] Alfield, "A True Reporte," *EEBO*.

(near the scaffold) and the presence of prominent people as an attempt to legitimize his account. He then related Campion's speech, adding such remarks as, "And so he meekly and sweetly yielded his soul unto his savior, protesting that he died a perfect Catholic."

Anthony Munday's account of Campion's execution included an almost identical scaffold speech to Alfield's, but Munday wrote with a different bias. Munday was a hack writer and erstwhile spy against the English Jesuits at Rheims. He, like Alfield, noted that Campion confessed Elizabeth to be his lawful queen. However, it appeared to Munday that Campion "drew his words to him self, whereby was gathered, that somewhat he would have gladly spoken, but the great temerity and unstable opinion of his conscience, wherein he was all the time, even to the death, would not suffer him to utter it."[86] In stating that Campion died in an uncertain state of mind, Munday implied that he died a bad death. Munday thus shaped Campion's death in a very different manner from Alfield's account.

Such pamphlets continued the power struggle between the state, the traitor, and the crowd that started on the scaffold. However, neither the state nor the traitor had control over what pamphleteers printed.[87] This dialogue was strictly between the pamphleteer and his audience. Munday, for example, published his chapbook on Campion in 1582, shortly after Campion's December 1581 execution. Next, Alfield published his account, which started with a preface entitled "To the Reader." This preface denounced the recent "false reports" of Campion, Brian, and Sherwin's behavior on the scaffold. Alfield also included "A Caveat to the Reader Touching A.M.," in which he gave a brief sketch of Munday's life in an attempt to discredit him. Twice, then, Alfield's account entreated the reader to believe his account over Munday's. Not to be outdone, Munday responded to the "libels" of Alfield's account

[86] Munday, "A Discoverie of Edmund Campion," *EEBO*.
[87] See Frances E. Dolan, "Gentlemen, I Have One More Thing to Say: Women on Scaffolds in England, 1563-1680," *Modern Philology*, 92.2 (Nov. 1994): 160-61; Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 253.

within the year.[88] He minced no words in his attempt to regain the reader's confidence, equating Catholicism with the devil and emphasizing the political threat that Roman Catholicism presented to the nation.

This heated exchange over credibility shows how desperately pamphleteers wanted to reach the reader. These writers, like the men and women whose dying words they documented, always kept their audience in mind. The emotion and drama of the scaffold created an ideal breeding ground for ideological fervor and recruitment, and people took advantage of this. Every Tudor execution produced "a number of religiously motivated factions or groups (as well as hack writers and printers) all attempting to enlist the considerable frisson of popular interest that surrounded these events for their own ideological and material benefit."[89] By the time a scaffold speech achieved print form and arrived on the market, it had passed through the censures of the state, the reaction of the crowd, and the reinterpretation of the pamphleteer.

Conclusion

What emerges from studying public executions is the considerable difference between the people on the scaffold and the people below the scaffold. Those on the scaffold, both the offending party and the representatives of the state, had clear motives. They all acted in the manner most conducive to achieving their agendas. Those below the scaffold, the crowd, for the most part treated executions as a social event rather than an expression of personal dogma. Therefore, although clear differences exist between the scaffold performances of

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[88] See Anthony Munday, "A Breefe Aunswer Made unto Two Seditious Pamphlets…Contayning a Defence of Edmund Campion and His Complices" (London: Charlewood, 1582), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, http://eebo.chadwyck.com.
[89] Lake and Questier, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 279.

political and religious traitors and between those of Protestant and Catholic martyrs, the behavior of the crowd does not lend itself to such categorization.

Rather, the crowd tended to respond to individual performances, much as if they had been at the theater. The scaffold performance was an interactive drama where the crowd commanded a leading role. The crowd's reactions could determine the outcome of the execution. The crowd also could determine whether the traitor or heretic died a "good death:" to die well in Tudor England required the presence of active onlookers. But the Tudor scaffold was more than just a stage; it served as an arena for power struggles. Through public executions, the state reminded the people of its strength, and the people reminded the state of their presence. During and after the execution, various political and religious ideologies competed with each other, trying to reach the crowd with their messages. Thus, despite their mercurial and unpredictable nature, crowds remained essential to the drama of the scaffold.

IMPLICATIONS

In considering the span of years and variety of offenses represented in this study,[1] it becomes evident that the distinctions between political and religious treason developed gradually. Similarly, changes to the state religion also unfolded over time. Mary Tudor did not ascend the throne and revert England back to Catholicism. Rather, Parliamentary legislation made the changes in intervals over a two-year period: the 1553 Act of Repeal, the 1554 Royal Injunctions, and the 1555 Proclamation of Religion. Likewise, Elizabeth took time to establish a Protestant regime; she kept the pope guessing for almost twelve years as to whether she would convert to Catholicism.

If the government took years to make changes official, how much more time passed before individuals could assess their situation and form a new response? Cranmer clearly struggled with how to respond to the charges levied against him only a year into Mary's reign. By the end of the century, though, the laws against recusancy dated back twenty years, and religious traitors had numerous previous examples to refer to when composing their scaffold speeches. This facilitated the process of identity.

For, at their core, scaffold performances were about identity: who am I and how shall I die? Building on predecessors' examples, each convicted person had to form his own identity within the boundaries set by the state. He or she then had to project this image through a theatrical scaffold performance, all the while interacting with authorities and crowds who had their own ideas about the convicted's identity.

What made the years from 1535 to 1603 so unique was that for the first time in centuries, traitors and heretics had choices when forming their identity. Was one Protestant?

[1] See Table 1.1, page 87-89.

Roman Catholic? Loyal to the monarch in all matters, spiritual and temporal? Loyal to the pope as the supreme head of the Church in England? Answering these questions meant that a convicted traitor or heretic did not come to the scaffold merely as a George Marsh, a William Flower, or an Anne Line. He or she came to the scaffold as a repentant political traitor, a defiant heretic, a martyr. Four hundred years later, the written records of these scaffold performances shed light on how some individuals attempted to respond to the political, legal, and religious changes of Tudor England. As the ordinary of Newgate Prison commented in 1618, "Dying men's wordes are ever remarkable, and their last deeds memorable for succeeding posterities."[2]

[2] Henry Goodcole, "A true declaration of the happy conversion, contrition, and Christian preparation of Francis Robinson," *Early English Books Online* (EEBO), http://eebo.chadwyck.com.

Table 1.1

List of Scaffold Performances Examined in this Study

	DATE	NAME	CRIME
1	**1535**	Thomas More	treason/heresy
2	**1535**	John Fisher	treason/heresy
3	**1536**	Anne Boleyn	treason
4	**1540**	Thomas Cromwell	treason/heresy
5	**1552**	Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset	treason
6	**1553**	John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland	treason
7	**1554**	Henry Grey, Duke of Suffolk	treason
8	**1554**	Sir Thomas Wyatt	treason
9	**1554**	Lady Jane Grey	treason
10	**1555**	Dirick Carver	heresy
11	**1555**	Laurence Saunders	heresy
12	**1555**	Rowland Taylor	heresy
13	**1555**	William Flower	heresy
14	**1555**	John Rogers	heresy
15	**1555**	John Bradford	heresy
16	**1555**	Nicholas Ridley	heresy
17	**1555**	John Hooper	heresy
18	**1556**	Thomas Cranmer	treason/heresy
19	**1570**	Thomas Norton	treason
20	**1570**	Christopher Norton	treason
21	**1570**	John Felton	treason
22	**1571**	John Throckmorton	treason
23	**1572**	Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk	treason
24	**1577**	Cuthbert Maine	treason
25	**1578**	John Nelson	treason
26	**1581**	Everard Hanse	treason
27	**1581**	Edmund Campion	treason
28	**1581**	Ralph Sherwin	treason
29	**1581**	Alexander Bryan	treason
30	**1582**	William Lacy	treason
31	**1582**	Lawrence Richardson	treason
32	**1582**	Luke Kirby	treason
33	**1582**	William Filby	treason
34	**1582**	Thomas Cottam	treason
35	**1582**	Robert Johnson	treason
36	**1582**	John Sherte	treason
37	**1582**	Thomas Ford	treason

Table 1.1 (continued)

List of Scaffold Performances Examined in this Study

	DATE	NAME	CRIME
38	**1583**	Richard Thirkill	treason
39	**1583**	William Hart	treason
40	**1583**	James Thompson	treason
41	**1583**	John Bodey	treason
42	**1583**	John Slade	treason
43	**1584**	James Fenn	treason
44	**1584**	George Haddock	treason
45	**1584**	John Finch	treason
46	**1585**	William Freeman	treason
47	**1585**	Thomas Webley	felony*
48	**1585**	Thomas Alfield	felony
49	**1586**	Edward Jones	treason
50	**1586**	John Ballard	treason
51	**1586**	Robert Barnwell	treason
52	**1586**	John Savage	treason
53	**1586**	Anthony Babington	treason
54	**1586**	Charles Tilney	treason
55	**1586**	Chidiock Tichborne	treason
56	**1586**	Henry Donn	treason
57	**1586**	Thomas Salisbury	treason
58	**1586**	Edward Abington	treason
59	**1586**	Margaret Clitherow	treason
60	**1587**	Mary, Queen of Scots	treason
61	**1588**	Richard Lee	treason
62	**1588**	Robert Sutton	treason
63	**1588**	William Dean	treason
64	**1588**	Robert Widmerpool	treason
65	**1588**	Christopher Buxton	treason
66	**1588**	Alexander Crow	treason
67	**1589**	John Amias	treason
68	**1589**	Humphrey Pritchard	treason
69	**1589**	Richard Yaxley	treason
70	**1589**	William Hartley	treason
71	**1590**	Anthony Middleton	treason
72	**1590**	Christopher Bales	treason
73	**1591**	Eustace White	treason
74	**1591**	Brian Lacey	treason

Table 1.1 (continued)

List of Scaffold Performances Examined in this Study

	DATE	NAME	CRIME
75	**1591**	Monford Scott	treason
76	**1591**	Edmund Genings	treason
77	**1591**	Roger Diconson	treason
78	**1591**	Oliver Plasden (Palmer)	treason
79	**1591**	Ralph Milner	treason
80	**1591**	Swithin Wells	treason
81	**1593**	Joseph Lampton	treason
82	**1593**	James Bird	treason
83	**1594**	Roderigo Lopez	treason
84	**1594**	Thomas Bosgrave	treason
85	**1594**	Patrick Salmon	treason
86	**1594**	John Boste	treason
87	**1595**	Robert Southwell	treason
88	**1598**	Christopher Robinson	treason
89	**1598**	John Jones	treason
90	**1600**	John Rigby	treason
91	**1601**	Henry Cuffe	treason
92	**1601**	Giles Merrick	treason
93	**1601**	Christopher Blunt	treason
94	**1601**	Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex	treason
95	**1601**	Anne Line	treason
96	**1602**	Francis Page	treason
97	**1602**	James Duckett	felony
*Those executed for felony either possessed or distributed Catholic literature			

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