

1997

The Autumn Celebrations of the Ritual Calendar Year in the Later-Stuart Period

Alexander James Dove

Eastern Illinois University

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The Autumn Celebrations of the Ritual
Calendar Year in the later-Stuart Period
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BY

Alexander James Dove

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1997
YEAR

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Graduate Thesis
History Department
Alexander J. Dove
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Abstract

This thesis discusses the patterns in the celebrations of the autumn ritual calendar of the later-Stuart period. It focuses on the annual celebrations of the Gunpowder Treason and Plot (5th of November) and the Anniversary of the Accession of Queen Elizabeth (17th of November). For comparison, the Lord Mayor's Show (29th of October) is studied. The central theme of this thesis is to distinguish between the customs and traditions of the two dominant cultures of the later-Stuart period: elite and non-elite.

This thesis is broken down into three chapters. The first chapter discusses the November celebrations of the later-Stuart period. It illustrates the similarities between the 5th of November and the 17th of November by examining where the celebrations took place (indoors or outdoors) and who participated in them (elite or commoners). This thesis uses and analyzes "official" and partisan newspapers from the 1660s to 1715. It was through the analysis of these newspapers that the celebrants and ceremony could be discovered. The second chapter examines the participants, content, and form of the October and November celebrations. It discusses who the participants were (elite or commoner, adult or youth), what specifically occurred during these celebrations (bonfires, bells, public dancing, rough music, beer barrels, pageants, balls, banquets, and fireworks), and how the celebrations were constructed (when they began, where they commenced, the route, and where they ended). A central theme to this chapter discusses the three tiered model of the social culture extant within the late-Stuart dynasty. This three tiered model is the elite sphere, the popular sphere, and the interaction between these two cultures. The third chapter examines the continuation of these three annual celebrations into the nineteenth century.

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Introduction

Since the English Reformation of the 1530's, the English ritual calendar was modified and used by both the mobile and the gentry, sometimes violently. English society was often heated by emotions governing the ritual calendar. The English ritual customs included those within the political and the ecclesiastical arena. Ritual customs in late- seventeenth and early-eighteenth century England germinated controversy between religious groups, political parties, in areas between town and country, chalk and cheese, and between elite and commoner.

This thesis examines festivals and celebrations associated with particular calendar days. Some of these popular events took place in the public sphere and some in the private sphere. One rough measure to distinguish these two spheres is to differentiate between inside and outside customs and traditions. This thesis explores the annual celebrations chronologically (their rate), geographically (where they occurred across England and within towns), and socially (who participated). It also seeks to discover what was being “stated” through parades, placards, and bonfires to delineate the late-Stuart ritual culture and its place in popular culture (and the role of the elite in it). This study follows other historians, such as Peter Burke, who note that although there was a distinct plebeian culture separate from elite culture, there was an interaction between the two which formed to play an intricate role in the construction and content of the celebrations of the late-Stuart period.

I bridge the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by examining the late-Stuart period between 1660 and 1714. While other historians have examined Elizabethan and

early Stuart England for calendar customs, I examine a later period to see if the customs and their theories about these customs apply to a later date. I focus on the annual celebrations of November 5th (anniversary of the Gunpowder Treason Plot of King James 1st), November 17th (the accession date of Queen Elizabeth), and October 29th (annual celebration of the Lord Mayor's Show). Specifically, I am extending the scope of David Cressy's excellent calendar days research from the Restoration to 1715. Tim Harris, Sheila Williams, Roy Strong, and O.W. Furley have developed theories that I incorporate into my study of these annual celebrations. Although I am not the first to examine the celebrations of the 5th of November, 17th of November, or the 29th of October during this time period, I am integrating new material on an extended time period after the Revolution. I look at various celebrations from evidence of newspapers that other historians have not used. Although these sources come from a print culture which is part of the literate culture, my goal is to get at popular culture. My research was developed through the use of newspapers such as the Daily Courant, London Gazette, Flying Post, Post Boy, Post Man, True Protestant Mercury, Domestick Intelligence, and the Loyal London Mercury published between the years 1665 and 1715, as well as broadsheets, diaries, and pamphlets between 1660 and 1715. Although Cressy argues that the calendar became an important instrument in English Protestant culture, and that it slowly became increasingly politicized throughout the later years in the seventeenth century, I theorize that the events surrounding the Protestant calendar did not wither away from the participation of the mobile and the gentry but rather bonfires and festivities continued to burn on into the early eighteenth century. Furthermore, I argue against Ronald Hutton's

contention that the celebrations of the early Stuart dynasty declined from the annual calendar of celebration during the later Stuart period.

In Religion and the Decline of Magic, Keith Thomas points out that the records and sources of popular social activity decline with the close of the seventeenth century. The sources do not provide him with adequate records of accounts past the 1700s. Such a decline in church and lay records nearing the end of the seventeenth century might explain why, as Ronald Hutton asserts in The Rise and Fall of Merry England, celebration customs and traditional festivities seemed to cease to hold the importance they once did in the early Stuart period of the seventeenth century. Moreover, David Cressy argues in Bonfires and Bells that the celebration customs and traditional festivities of the early seventeenth century are particularly important to the Protestant culture of England during the Stuart dynasty. I argue that the annual celebrations which were once memorable to the people of England during the early Stuart period did not lose their zeal for the spirit of celebration in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The remembrance of special days of the calendar is what bound the people of Protestant England together against a common adversary, primarily Catholicism. Although most villages, towns and cities of England commemorated these special days with annual regularity, the city of London did so most regularly in the late Stuart period.

Peter Burke declared that it is impossible to define the term “culture” before employing it. I intend to utilize the term, as Burke describes, to

refer to attitudes and values, or world-views. These attitudes and values may be embodied in artifacts, such as images and texts (including broadsides and chapbooks). They may also be expressed in performances,

whether formal (plays or pageants); or informal [bonfires, public dances, or beer barrels]. Any institution and any form of behavior has a place at the edge of the definition, for they can all be regarded as cultural artifacts, but images, texts and performances will occupy the centre.¹

It is at this edge of the definition of culture where the mentalities of people or sets of people become important in defining celebrations in terms of particular customs and traditions inherent to specific areas. Berce asserts that “mentalities . . . are partly shaped by geographical factors, but they are extremely influential in their own right in restricting, distorting or inspiring the actions of groups of people.”² It is the conception of these mentalities that defines popular culture. Popular culture is hard to define and difficult to get at because it is an oral and illiterate culture, although recently people have looked at the ritual year to understand popular culture. Popular culture is the summation of shared customs, beliefs, rituals, characteristics, and the social system of events³ which is a definition of the way things work according to the people (masses). There are other definitions of popular culture, such as J. A. Sharpe’s statement that “popular culture is something which changes, adapts and assimilates.”⁴ Historian David Sabeen defines

¹Peter Burke, “Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London,” in Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, ed. Barry Reay, (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 31.

²

Yves-Merie Berce, History of Peasant Revolts, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986), 334.

³

Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe. Great Britain: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd., 1978.

⁴

Ronald Hutton, The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 228.

popular culture as an interaction between the elite and populace; it is how the masses interact with the elite in celebrations which defines England with images (anti-Catholic) which both the high and low could accept.⁵ Although this interaction occurred in public spaces throughout London, there also existed the separation of high and low culture which took place in private spaces, thus providing for the ceremonies which represented a symbolism of elite and popular culture respectively. This separation of elite and popular culture is best illuminated by Hutton commenting on Wrightson, who asserted that “in the Restoration period the educated could regard the world of the common people as something alien: ‘the poor had become not simply poor, but to a significant degree culturally different.’”⁶ The celebrations of the 5th of November and the 17th of November combined the interaction between the elite and populace. A review notes that Hutton “argues against the idea of a conflict between patrician and plebeian over older calendar customs before the mid-eighteenth century.”⁷ Burke applies this model of interaction between the elite and the masses to the metropolis:

In seventeenth-century London, what one would have found would have been something in between, or more exactly, a whole spectrum of artifacts and performances with a greater or less degree of participation from below or imposition from above. So much so that it might be useful to build this tendency into the model, and to think, as historians and sociologists are increasingly coming to do, in terms of interaction between the two

⁵

David Sabean, Power in the Blood: Popular culture and village discourse in early modern Germany, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 [1984]).

⁶Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 228.

⁷R. O. Bucholz, review of The Rise and Fall by Hutton, Albion, 27 (Winter 1995), 665.

cultures, learned and popular, dominant and dominated.⁸

This thesis examines if there exists a redefinition of the way society viewed the process of celebration in the later Stuart period. I am interested in looking at the assumptions and attitudes of those who comprise the masses. Burke defined ordinary Londoners as

the unlearned, the non-elite, the people who had not been to grammar school or university, who did not know Latin, who were not members of the king's court or the Inns of Court, and who could not afford to visit a private theatre or buy many books. The upper classes called these people 'the vulgar', 'the multitude', or 'the mob'. Their culture might be described as 'blue-apron culture', for in the seventeenth century 'blue-apron' carried associations similar to the more recent coinage, 'blue-collar'.⁹

Contemporaries viewed the masses of England easily led. For example, Tim Harris has collected the following contemporary statements:

'what is more fickle than the multitude?' and 'the multitude judg weakly', and nothing could be expected from them but 'uncertaintie.' Oliver Cromwell believed that 'those very persons' who cheered him in success, 'would shout as much if [he] . . . were going to be hanged.'¹⁰

This thesis agrees with Harris that the commonality was certainly capable of organizing action itself in order to promote its own aspirations."¹¹ It was the ordinary people of London, or as George Rude termed "the 'inferior set of people'— wage-earners

⁸Peter Burke, "Popular Culture,"32..

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰

Tim Harris, London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II, (Cambridge: University Press, 1987), 9.

¹¹

Tim Harris, "The Problem of 'Popular Political Culture' in Seventeenth-Century London," *History of European Ideas* 10, 1 (1989):48.

(journeymen, apprentices, labourers and servants), and lesser craftsmen, shopkeepers and tradesmen”¹² — who filled the streets during the celebrations of October and November. An important part of the popular audience and participants in the celebrations was the youth. The youth played an intricate part in the customs and traditions of the celebrations. Burke provides some insight into the numbers of youth potentially active in London during these celebrations. Burke explains that “London had more than its fair share of the young, come to better themselves or simply to find work. Modern estimates of the seventeenth-century apprentice population vary between 10,000 and 20,000.”¹³ The participants in the celebrations and audience surrounding them were a mix between young and old alike. It was part of plebeian culture that, Cressy illustrates, “the fires formed an unofficial commentary on public affairs” and that for the 5th of November “some communities went further and laid on a public beer barrel or supply of wine for all comers, or established a parish commemorative feast. The anniversary became a day of indulgence, of drinking and festivity, as well as of worship and meditation.”¹⁴

Some historians view the crowd as a fickle and unimportant body politic and are skeptical that the crowd had a mentalité and a conscience unto themselves. Tim Harris cites John Miller, J.R. Jones, and Christopher Hill respectively on the supposedly apolitical mob: “the [London] mob was not very important during the Exclusion crisis’

¹²Ibid., p.44.

¹³Burke, “Popular Culture,” p.33.

¹⁴

David Cressy, “The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England,” *Journal of British Studies* 29, 1, (1990): 40-41.

[Miller], . . . ‘the London masses were not capable of independent and sustained political action’ [Jones], . . . ‘the “mob” [was] basically non-political’” [Hill].¹⁵ However, the actions of the populace during political and religious demonstrations, especially their celebrations on the 5th November and the 17th November, clearly rebuke these historian’s assertions. Although these celebrations were originally conceived by the elite, it was the populace who claimed the celebrations as its own. While Hutton shows that the Protestant ritual year began with elite prompting, it was the populace who picked and chose which days it celebrated and continued. Thus, the days became part of popular culture.

During the later Stuart period, English society was divided by a rigid class structure. Keith Wrightson explains that “the most fundamental structural characteristic of English society was its high degree of stratification, its distinctive and all-pervasive system of social inequality.”¹⁶ It was this stratification that the commonality used to its advantage during the course of national celebrations. It is important to note, as Cressy describes, that although the masses took the annual celebrations of the 5th November and the 17th November as their own

it becomes clear that the common people who participated in anniversary festivities and gave their stamp to them were not the originators of the new calendar customs. Gunpowder Treason Day [and Queen Elizabeth’s Accession Day] and the host of ad hoc observances had their origin in the high politics of Whitehall and Westminster and reached the local

¹⁵Harris, London Crowds, 14.

¹⁶

Keith Wrightson, English Society: 1580-1680, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1982), p.17.

community through almanacs and sermons, precepts, proclamations, and unwritten instructions. The direction descended through a matrix of command involving privy councillors, city fathers, ministers, and church wardens. Social superiors and political masters prompted or activated the local celebrations, even if ordinary villagers and townsfolk joined in and made them their own.¹⁷

Although the germination of these popular festivals came from high society, while the elite had their own separate indoor festivities, the outdoor celebrations were “for the people” and many celebrations were “of the people.”¹⁸ Because, as Harris describes, “the gap between the two cultures, popular and elite, was growing increasingly wide throughout the early modern period,”¹⁹ the celebrations of October and November became part of “plebeian culture”. Some historians, such as Hutton, argue against the withdrawal of the elite theory. However, a contemporary individual involved in festivities during the early modern period, in defending his right to celebrate, stated that “foolishness . . . is our second nature and must freely spend itself at least once a year. Wine barrels burst if from time to time we do not open them and let in some air.”²⁰ This contemporary merry-maker was defending his right to annual celebrations arguing that if the street antics, street theatre, and beer and wine barrel donations were not part of the festivities, at least once per year, then the wine would go bad and break the barrels. This shows that the commonality was conscious of festivals and actively took part in their organization and

¹⁷Cressy, “Protestant Calendar,”38-39.

¹⁸Harris, “The Problem of ‘Popular Culture’,” 43.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰

Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), 48.

promotion.

This thesis hopes to show that there was a crowd mentalité, at least during annual celebrations. A crowd mentalité in late-Stuart annual celebrations can also be linked to the politicization of the crowd that Tim Harris and others have argued for the period. This theme is relevant to understanding the relationship between elite and *non-elite* culture in early modern English society. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, political, religious, and social influences began metamorphosing European culture into a new genre of existence culminating near the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. This change was a sporadic, intermittent, and cumulative education of the *masses* through a series of events. These events evolved the *people* into an emerging political influence. While less formed, in the late-Stuart period than the nineteenth century, the masses were capable, through their heightened politicized nature, of coordinating politically astute acts. The crowd, the “mobile vulgus” combined with the “middling sort,” contributed to the formation of a body politic consciousness capable of acting and mobilizing in a politico-religious force. The nature of festivals changed in character to become more politicized as the seventeenth century came to a close.

As Peter Burke states in Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, political awareness of the *ordinary people* did not germinate simply from the influence and impact of the ideas of the learned upon them, but rather “the people were assimilating the new ideas to their own experiences, their own needs”²¹, to develop into a quasi-autonomous political influential body. Both Harris’ and Burke’s central early modern European political theme is

²¹Burke, Popular Culture, 261.

that change is afoot through the awareness and political consciousness of the *common man* within the social structure. This gradual surge in assertiveness by the *people* is evident through their growing involvement in public meetings and coffee houses,²² political committees, mock-trials, political songs, pamphlets, prints, medals, badges,²³ and especially newspapers.²⁴ These examples all contribute to the heightening awareness of the *common man*. Theorists label this the growth of the “public sphere” in early modern Europe.

The politicization of celebrations throughout England during the later years of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was not an isolated process. There was also a change in the political propaganda and politics. The changing atmosphere of the political arena were influenced by the changing of attitudes towards celebrations.

Society could have become more politicized during festivals because of the growing sensitivity to anti-Catholic sentiment for example, increased Pope-burning, during the Exclusion Crisis of 1679-1681. During the reigns of William and Anne, as well as during the 1670s and 1680s, religion played an important factor in determining social attitudes. The anti-Catholic fears elicited by people from England took many

²²

Coffee houses were often seen as centers of political debates. “Manuscript literature, especially political poems, certainly circulated in the underground world. These establishments became the main focus for the dissemination of political information.” Harris, London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II, 28.

²³Burke, Popular Culture, 262.

²⁴

“Newspapers were a major influence on the populace thus assisting in their cumulative education. The prints and pamphlets of one generation drew on earlier ones. The newspapers let people know that they were not alone, that other regions and even nations were fighting in the same cause.” Ibid., 269-70.

forms. This anti-popish sentiment was shown in the ringing of bells to commemorate the relinquished threat of Catholicism on 5th of November, the Pope-burning ceremonies on Queen Elizabeth's Day (17 November), and in other fashions. These annual celebrations combined religious order and nationalism together: "historic episodes involving Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada, the Gunpowder Plot, and the fortunes of the Stuart kings were memorialized and commemorated as signs of God's interest in his Protestant nation."²⁵ The fear that embraced Protestant England was an abstract, general fear of Catholicism.²⁶ For example, "On 5 November 1668, the Spanish ambassador's coach was besieged, the crowd throwing fireworks and then pursuing the ambassador to his door until the guards came to suppress them."²⁷ This shows that, even when unprovoked, Catholicism seemed to threaten the people of England, and they responded with physical action.

Throughout England, smaller communities played a role in the growing politicization of the seventeenth century. Because of a community's isolation from the remainder of the surrounding villages or communities, it developed strong individual traditions and rituals. People were connected with what was around them and connected to what they knew as the truth. As the socio-political arena came to be more politicized, people became more aware of their own surroundings and took an interest to what changes were being made in their own communities. David Underdown asserts that:

²⁵Cressy, "Protestant Calendar,"36.

²⁶Harris, London Crowds, 30.

²⁷Ibid.

in the course of the seventeenth century some at least of the participants in these outbreaks had become politicized . . . that enabled even ordinary villagers to make judgments about matters of government. Throughout that process popular politics . . . drew heavily on the rituals and traditions — often regionally contrasting ones — of popular culture.²⁸

Ordinary people were capable of determining their predilection towards a governmental entity and displaying their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in symbols, images, and artifacts which were elicited during annual celebrations of the 5th of November and the 17th of November.

As the seventeenth century moved into the eighteenth and as the populace of England became more politicized and more self autonomous, the crowd depended less and less upon the control from the elite to mobilize them. The celebrations of the 5th November and the 17th November became days which the masses could call their own. For on these days at least, the people became a body with a consciousness unto themselves.

Chapter 1: Autumn Calendar Customs of the later Stuart Dynasty

Throughout the later seventeenth century, there were both the official London

28

David Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 291.

Gazette, and more partisan newspapers²⁹ reported on public celebrations. Partisan papers flourished with the loosening of the censorship laws in England in 1679-81 and after 1695. These newspapers still provide a rough index of celebrations by both elite and the commonality, though elite- originated celebrations in London were perhaps over-represented. Some celebrations were hosted by the elite for entertaining the populace. Others combined mass and elite participation while the remainder of the celebrations were driven by the political, national and ecclesiastical consciousness of the crowd. One rough test of popular versus elite participation is whether a celebration was outdoors (involving the commoners) or indoors (involving expenses and only the elite): between public and private celebration. This chapter attempts a description and chronological analysis of celebrations of the autumn calendar in Britain, specifically those occurring between the London Lord Mayor's Show in late October and the celebration of the accession day of Queen Elizabeth on 17th November, as a sample of the ritual calendar year.

Coffee houses proliferated in England from the 1650s. In the coffee houses, information was transferred between men of widely differing status. Those that could read would make the news known to the remainder of the populace. Harris provides some insight into the cultural diversity existing within England stating that

29

The Daily Courant (1702-1715), The Post Boy (1695-1727), The Post Man (1701-1705), The Flying Post (1696-1702), Domestick Intelligence or News both from City and Country (1679-1682), True Protestant Mercury or Occurances Foreign and Domestick (1680-1682), Loyal London Mercury or Currant Intelligence (1682), N. Luttrell (1678-1715).

the attainment of literacy by the upper and more prosperous middling types, whilst the lower sort remained predominantly illiterate, is normally seen as a crucial element in the process of cultural polarisation in early modern England. Those who could not read could always gather around someone who could read and hear such material read aloud, or else learn about politics through visual and oral forms of propaganda, such as prints, ballads and sermons.³⁰

This information (on a daily basis with the advent of the Daily Courant in 1702) would simply inform the public. Surrounding popular political, national, or ecclesiastical holidays, news could, on the other hand, have incited riotous and patriotic feelings within the people. In London when governmental censorship laws briefly came to an end during the popish Exclusion Crisis of 1679 and 1681, unofficial newspapers, such as the Domestick Intelligence or News both from City and Country, True Protestant Mercury or Occurances Foreign and Domestick, Loyal London Mercury or Currant Intelligence, proliferated. The other, more 'official' newspaper was the London Gazette, which commonly reported official occurrences such as the war with France, but rarely reported on events which smacked of popular involvement.

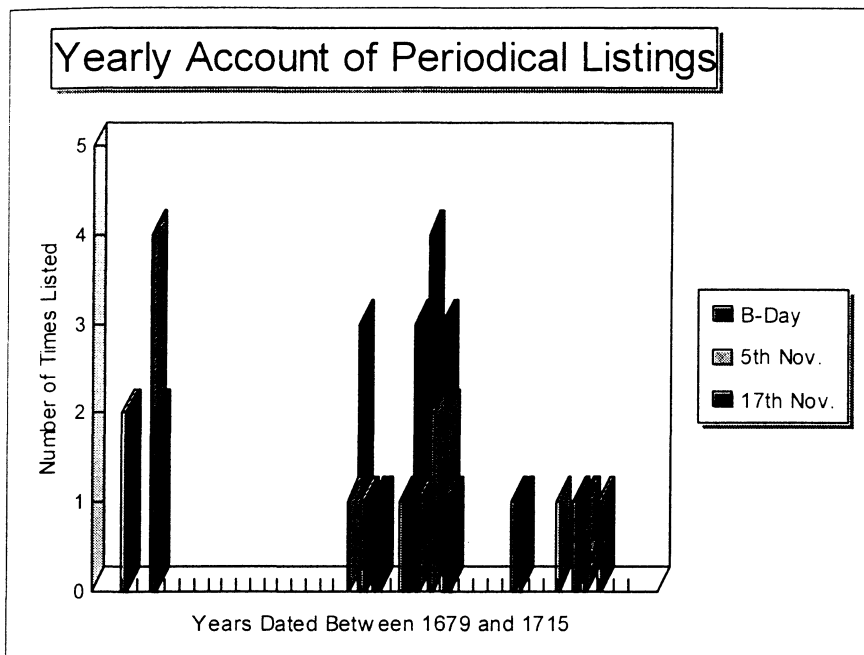
November celebrations throughout England and Scotland were noted in late-Stuart newspapers. Most celebrations occurred in London. Other celebrations and festivals are occurred in: Edinburgh (1), Salisbury (1), Taunton-Dean (1), Cows (1), Dartmouth (1), Nottingham (1), Falmouth (1) and the county of Sussex (2). Thirty-three out of forty-two accounts of the total celebrations noted were in London between the years of 1679 through 1712. The county of Sussex followed with two accounts, while the remainder of the counties held only one account of celebrations and festivals. Perhaps

³⁰Harris, "The Problem of 'Popular Culture'," 50-51.

this may describe which areas throughout England and Scotland considered what was important throughout the time period. It remains unclear how many counties celebrated November customs that were not reported, although Hutton provides a more extensive measure through use of churchwardens' accounts.

Hutton examines churchwardens' accounts during the late Middle Ages and the Tudor and Stuart periods. His thesis focuses on the identification of elite and popular activities common to the ritual calendar. It includes annual festivals, customary pastimes, secular entertainments, elite customs, and popular recreation. Hutton bridges the gap between the Middle Ages and the Stuart period investigating the economic and social factors which had their impact upon the cultural change in early modern England. These churchwardens' accounts provide a close look at the process of celebration and the customs and traditions which were important to the community and the nation. What these churchwardens' accounts show are the cultural spheres of the elite and the populace as well as the interaction between the two spheres.

The graph depicts a yearly account of periodical listings for the years between 1679 and 1715. Plotted on the graph are the number of times each year the birthday of King William the III (4th November), the Gunpowder Treason Plot (5th November), and the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth (17th November) were documented in newspapers. There was a gap in the documentation of the 5th and the 17th November between the years



between 1682 and 1694. Newspapers listed the celebration of the 5th and 17th of November through 1713; however, since 1703, the number of times they were posted remains at once per

year. The maximum number of accounts of the 5th and the 17th November was during the Exclusion Crisis between the years 1679 and 1681. This ceased entirely, however, after the last year of the Exclusion Crisis of 1682. The anxiety which germinated over foreign policy and the increasing fears, during the 1670s, that England was drifting into a Catholic-style government similar to that of Louis XIV in France,³¹ died short of destruction. Its apex was reached between 1678 and 1679. The emphasis which once provided fuel for the fears and anger of the people of England fizzled away after belief in a devilish Catholic plot crumbled. By 1682, according to Tim Harris, the bulk of the public no longer believed in the Popish Plot.³²

Documentation of the celebration of King William's birthday began in 1688 with

³¹Harris, London Crowds, 94.

³²Ibid., 164.

his accession to the English throne, but was at its height between 1695 and 1702 and irregularly peaked in 1701. Newspapers still continued to list accounts of the late King William's birthday up to 1712. Some insight has been made into the reasons why there was a decline in the celebration of church days in the reign of Queen Anne. Although there was some headway towards celebrations on the special days throughout November, for the most part, they were disregarded as unimportant. The Queen thought that other days closer to her personal rule were considered more important. As R.O. Bucholz asserts, the Queen did not "go out of her way to commemorate the great — but increasingly partisan — political anniversaries, that is, . . . the Gunpowder Plot and William's landing at Torbay on November 5th, or even Queen Elizabeth's accession day on November 17th."³³

Since the topics of religion and politics were hotbeds for conversation throughout England, the information printed in the newspapers took on either a religious, nationalistic, or political tone. The English Protestants wore the defense of their political and religious convictions on their sleeves. Their beliefs were shown through their ceremonial customs and traditions. Through broadcasting religious and political events in the newspapers or newsletters, the newspapers helped spur emotions and perhaps cause people to act out in ceremonies. Remembrance of socio-political or religious events was both a word-of-mouth event and a printed custom. The cultural connotations between word-of-mouth and printed custom were seen as the differences between the semi-literate and the literate cultures of England: the non-elite and elite, respectively.

³³Bucholz, "Nothing But Ceremony," 299.

Few newspapers advertised or reported on forthcoming events but merely reported what happened afterwards. From the evidence provided, we, therefore, cannot predict how much promoting and prompting of these celebration customs was actually done. Literacy was a crucial element in the 'plebeian culture' of England. Harris argues that "London proves an exception, where adult male literacy was probably as high as 70% taking the metropolitan area as a whole, and higher in the City proper." He further asserts that "most artisans and shopkeepers were probably literate, and even servants and apprentices achieved literacy rates of 70-80%."³⁴ Thus, in London especially, was the spreading of information primarily done by the elite, who controlled the large unitary celebrations, or was the spreading of information primarily done by the commonality, who was preserving its traditional popular culture? The answer lies within the interaction between the these two spheres: elite and popular.

Although the newspapers were in elite control, the common people of England might well have had a communal bond to the annual celebrations themselves. Even though the elite were in control of the initial budding of the celebrations, the people of England became attached to the annual celebrations and attempted to make them part of their own distinct "plebeian culture." Bonfires, street theatre, public dancing, public beer barrels, and other street antics brought the festivities of the 5th of November and the 17th of November to the level of the common man. Although the initial sponsorship of the annual festivities was prompted by the elite, the continuance of the celebrations and the style of the celebrations were carried on by the populace for the populace. These

³⁴Harris, "The Problem of 'Popular Culture'," 50.

celebrations of the ritual year became events which many, especially the people of London, came to rely upon for support in their national, political, and ecclesiastical convictions.

To celebrate these festival days in November many communities needed no prompting from the elite. The commoners prepared for the ceremonial customs by gathering wood, mattresses, scraps, and other burnable items to create the apex of their celebration: the bonfire. Bonfires were often part of the cultural vocabulary of the commonality. Some institutions, such as the Whig-partisan Green Ribbon Club, would sponsor and pay money for bonfires during the Exclusion Crisis. Cressy states that “payments for bonfires and bells on November 5 became an ‘ordinary’ expense in many parishes, and Gunpowder Treason Day became as firm in the seventeenth-century calendar as Christmas.”³⁵ Some bonfires, as could be expected, were simply made for entertainment. They spread their light across towns and cities, especially London, while allowing the youth to play with fireworks, squibs, and crackers. Drink, which was often sponsored by a local tavern or establishment (sometimes the elite would sponsor food and drink for a large event), would provide the people plenty of merriment on these special days. Other times families would provide food (and some drink) to highlight these special occasions which would allow them to show devotion to both church and country. “Gunpowder Treason Day,” as Cressy explains, “was a national commemoration, in which all shades of Protestant opinion could join. While some were awaiting a millennial

³⁵Cressy, “Protestant Calendar,” 40.

message, others were only there for the beer.”³⁶ These memories would be replayed in the minds and mouths of the people of England until the seasonal clock rotated around once again.

There was a distinct difference between the celebrants, content, and form of the celebrations of the commoners and the elite during the later-Stuart period. It was common for the popular celebrations to go unmentioned in newspaper reports, while newspapers focused on the elite London celebrations. The papers would mention one or two large bonfires through the city but elaborate on a ball or play hosted by the elite which had commenced that evening. There was a separation in the manners in which the celebrations of the elite and the commonality took place. As Harris describes, the “late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries are now recognized as a crucial period of social and economic polarization in the English countryside. As society became less and less integrated, the gentry and middling ranks gradually withdrew from contact with the common people.”³⁷ The celebrations of the elite and the middling sort had generally taken place indoors, while the remainder of the populace (the ‘publick’) traditionally celebrated their festival customs outdoors. For instance, when King William’s Birth-Day was celebrated in Dublin, Ireland on 4 November, 1700, a report distinguishes between popular and elite components of the celebration:

His Majesty’s Birth-Day was observed here yesterday with the usual Solemnity; Several Discharges were made of the Cannon from the Castle, and of the small Arms of a Regiment of Foot now here; and at night there

³⁶Ibid., 42.

³⁷Harris, “Popular Political Culture in 17th Century London”, 45.

was a Firework in *Stephen's-Green*, where divers of the Nobility and Gentry, the Ladys, and other Persons of Quality, were present, who from thence came to the Castle, where they were sp'endidly entertained at Supper, and afterwards there was a Ball. In the Town were Bonfires, Illuminations, and other publick Demonstrations of Joy. This day being the Anniversary of the Discovery of the Gunpowder-Plot, was kept in the usual manner.³⁸

Here it is evident that there was a distinct split in the ceremonial customs of the elite and the commonality. As reported, 'the Nobility, the Gentry, the Ladys, and other Persons of Quality' celebrated in the confines of a castle. They were given displays of gunfire, cannon fire, and fireworks outside, while "sp'endidly" treated to an elegant dinner indoors and afterwards a ball. These ceremonial customs were distinctly different from those entertained by the common people of England. In the lower echelon of society, they celebrated outdoors. The "publick" entertained themselves or were entertained with bonfires, illuminations and one can assume food, drink, and dancing around the fire. For the latter eighteenth century, as the conditions surrounding the celebration of the 5th of November changed, E.P. Thompson suggests that behavior was often accompanied by traditional rough music,³⁹ a part of plebeian ceremonial culture. Dancing and singing around the bonfires and the burning of the Guy Fawkes or the Pope was necessary to Guy Fawkes Day in England. Thompson states that rough music and the burning of effigies was "simply one (effective and enduring) component of the available symbolic

³⁸The London Gazette, Nov. 11- Nov. 14, 1700.

³⁹

Rough music often flourished on November 5th, when it was the custom to make effigies of "any evil doer, bad liver, or unpopular person" in the village and burn these before their homes. E.P. Thompson, Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture. (New York: The New Press, 1993), 481.

vocabulary, components (noise, lampoons, obscenities), or could be detached from these altogether.”⁴⁰ This separation of celebration into indoor (ball, dinner) and outdoor (fireworks, Church) custom is also elucidated in a report from 1698:

In the evening there were Fireworks in St. Stephen’s Green, which the Lords Justices saw from my Lord Orrery’s House; After which, their Excellencies returned to the Castle, where there was a splendid Entertainment for all the Persons of Quality that were in Town, and afterwards a Ball. The next day, being the Anniversary of the Discovery of the Gunpowder-Treason, their Excellencies went to Church with the usual Formalities, and afterwards entertained at Dinner the Nobility, and the Chief Officers of the State and Army.⁴¹

And in Lime the segregation was still evident when on the 5th of November, 1689, the celebration was almost entirely reserved for the elite:

In the morning the Mayor and his Brethren in their Formalities went to Church, being attended by the Militia Company, and a Company of young Gentlemen and Merchants, richly cloathed; who were afterwards treated at the Mayor’s House.⁴²

Part of these celebrations were acted out by the elite, the bonfires (all over London and surrounding counties) were part of popular culture. The popular culture of celebration customs in England was established through years of festivals throughout the early Stuart period. This ceremonial popular culture had an effect on all strata of society, whether a poor vagrant, a journeyman, an apprentice, an artisan, a master-craftsman, or a member of the aristocracy. Although the elite and the commonality displayed their ceremonial intensity in different manners, the fact that they both celebrated these customs

⁴⁰Ibid., 481.

⁴¹The London Gazette, Nov. 10-Nov. 14, 1698.

⁴²The London Gazette, Nov. 7-Nov. 11, 1689.

on the same days represents an important unifying tradition. Participation in these ceremonial October and November customs became rather political in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Though political partisanship often divided participation in the celebrations between political groups, the commoners, the “middling sort,” and the elite sympathetic to or part of the political cause, still participated in the annual celebrations. There developed partisan celebrations which allowed entire communities, though potentially divided by political outlook and participation, to celebrate in the ritual calendar. Furthermore, while the gap between the people and the elite widened, concerning their popular culture and their ceremonial culture, the fact that English communities as a whole celebrated these days together presents a strong case for a continuing common popular culture.

The 5th of November had a political connection with the people of England. This particular political connection celebrated the thanksgiving of saving King James I, the Queen, Charles (heir to the throne), and all of Parliament from the devilish designs of the papist conspirators. The celebration ceremonies commemorate the deliverance from the reign of Catholicism which would have descended upon the country of England if Queen Elizabeth failed in destroying the threat of the Spanish Armada or the Gunpowder Plot had succeeded, or even the Popish Plot of 1679-1681. The 5th of November was not only tied to the people by a political bond, but also held a religious bond with England because the discovery delivered England from the hands of Catholic popery. For example, on the 5th November, 1679, the Domestick Intelligence or News both from City and Country reported an annual celebration:

the Anniversary Festival or the Happy Discovery of the Horrid Design of the *Papists*, in the *Gunpowder Treason Plot*, there was a Great Bonfire made in the Palace Guard at Westminster, and many of the Books Garments, Crucifixes and other *Popish* Trinkets were there publically Burnt, with the Acclamations of the People; And in several other places of *London* there were divers Images or Figures of the Pope, and the Devil whispering his Intregues in his ear, carried about the Houses of several Eminent Persons, who were pleased to gratifie the Young men concerned therein, for the Zeal and forwardness in appearing against the Cursed *Popish* Interest; after which they were Burnt in divers places: And it is observable, that the generality of the People in the City, were never more Brisk, neither has their lately been seen more Bonfires and Rejoycing, than at this time, when our Implacable *Romish* Adversaries seem most confident that they shall yet prevail against us.

We see a separation between high and low culture within the source telling us who was orchestrating what. For instance, one bonfire had taken place in the Palace Guard at Westminster. This tells us that it was an elite driven ceremony because the event was organized at a place of well-to-do standing. Although this bonfire may have been orchestrated by the elite, the people of the city participated in its celebration which suggests that although the spheres between the elite and the commonality were distinct, the elite and commoners may have had more interaction during ceremonial bonfires. There they burnt books, garments, crucifixes, and other Popish trinkets. This Catholic iconoclasm stressed the importance Protestantism played in the lives of the English. They not only rejected Catholicism by the traditional burning of the effigy of Guy Fawkes or the Pope, but by also burning all things Catholic. Furthermore, images of the Pope and the Devil were carried around the city by young men past houses of several eminent persons. This may signify a politico-religious connection between the people and the higher orders. But it may simply stem from the idea that these young men were

attempting to win the sympathy and affection of these eminent persons so as to give them food or drink, which was commonly practiced during communal celebrations. There exists a second culture of celebration within the lower orders. We have already witnessed the young men, the commonality of the city, participating in the elite ceremonial iconoclastic celebrations; now we see them participating in their own domain, the streets of the city. This lower order popular culture is found when it was stated that the “generality of the People in the City” participated in bonfires spread throughout the city. Once we determine that the people of the city are participating in ceremonial demonstrations throughout the city, it can be determined that they have taken on a popular culture unto their own likeness, separate (and sometimes in conjunction with) the elite.

An illustration of the use of public space by the populace was reported in The True Protestant Mercury: Or Occurrances Foreign and Domestick. The account of a celebration in Taunton-Dean for the 5th of November, 1681, occurred in a public place (illustrating a popular involvement) instead of a private one (signifying an elite participation) in Westminster:

Yesterday a great number of Loyal Protestants marched through all the Streets of this Town, before whom the Pope in his *Pontificalibus*, with a Triple-Crown upon his Head, and the Devil at his right hand: in conclusion they all marched into the *White Hart* Yard, where after mutual embraces between the Pope and the Devil, the people gave a great Shout, and without doing any Execution upon the Effigies of the Pope or his Abettors departed peaceably to their Habitations, they are only reprevied to the 17 Instant, and will then be committed to the Flames, as a just punishment for many flagitions Treasons, as well against his present Majesty (whom God long preserve) as Queen *Elizabeth*, of glorious Memory, who upon that day came to fit upon the *English* Throne, and restored the true Protestant

Religion to this Kingdom.

The celebrations occurred throughout the town streets in obvious public spaces, indeed “through all the streets of this town.” The populace witnessed and was involved in the ceremonies. There existed a two-fold system of celebration customs in England during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. There was the high culture of celebration which involved the nobility and sometimes the populace and which often took place in private spaces. However, celebrations by the commonality often took place in open public spaces. This is a characteristic which separates the two cultures of high and low society.

Celebrations for the 17th November began during Queen Elizabeth’s reign and took on a religious and political demeanor. It was she who delivered the kingdom of England away from the popery of Mary Tudor in the middle of the sixteenth century. Mary had reinstated Catholicism as the official religion of England, restored Mass and reestablished the authority of the Pope. However, in 1558, Elizabeth began the institution of Protestantism throughout England, releasing the people from the bonds of Catholicism. The people of England commemorated this day to the memory of the late Queen Elizabeth and the power of the English crown. Historian J. E. Neale asserts that Queen Elizabeth was a popular Queen for many different reasons. She was foremost characterized as a Queen who instilled a strong national spirit which soon swept over the country of England in the second half of the sixteenth century. She restored faith in the monarchy as a strong national character which everyone looked up to for solidarity, unity,

strong commerce, and exceptional military strength.⁴³ However, remember that this was an ideal myth. In reality, the wars from the 1590's just about bankrupted England. But, in popular memory, England prospered in the reign of Queen Elizabeth and the populace returned the favor in commemorating her accession day with celebration and popular revel. An example of the ceremony commemorating the late Queen Elizabeth was shown in a 1711 paper report of her anniversary celebration:

Upon Information, That the Effigies of the *Devil*, the *Pope*, and his *Attendants* were to be carry'd in Procession and , according to Custom, burnt on *Saturday* last, the 17th Instant, being the Anniversary of Queen ELIZABETH's Accession to the Crown, of ever Pious and most Glorious Memory . . .⁴⁴

Thus, the religious overtones of Queen Elizabeth's Day carried over to the later Stuart period. For example, a report for the 17th November, 1681 noted:

This day being Annually observed of the Birth day of Queen *Elizabeth*, of ever Blessed Memory, the Burning of the Pope in Effigies has been the usual Ceremony, to shew the Peoples Zeal and Loyalty, have prepared several Pageants, first the Effigies of Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey* on Horse-Back, next the Pope upon a Sledge, seated in his Chair in his Pontificalibus, with the Devil behind him: This Pageantry to pass through the City, and all except the Effigies of Sir *Edmundbury Godfrey*, to be committed to the Flames in *West-Smithfield* Rounds, where a great Bonfire will be prepared for that purpose, and the Ceremony concluded with excellent Fire-works.⁴⁵

From the information generated within this article, we can infer that this was an elite driven ceremony with the participation of the local populace. The purpose of the pageant

⁴³J.E. Neale, Essays in Elizabethan History, (London: Alden Press, 1958).

⁴⁴ Protestant Post-Boy 20th November, 1711

⁴⁵Domestick Intelligence or News both from City and Country, 17th November, 1681.

was to “shew the peoples Zeal and Loyalty” which designates a top-down model of society. This was a rather elaborate pageant with many different characters displayed for the crowd. There was the infamous Pope and his counterpart the Devil, and the honest Protestant citizen Sir Edmundbury Godfrey. Also mentioned were the Jesuits who were accused of fiendishly murdering Godfrey, and a slew of denominational characters including several Romish clergy. The procession passed through the city where everyone could participate in some manner or other which ended in West-Smithfield Rounds. (This celebration was obviously a stage for a political and religious ceremony because Smithfield was where Mary had ordered Protestants burned). This would have to be a public space for all of the participants and observers to partake in the festivities. In these ceremonies, only the Pope, Catholic clergymen, and the Devil are burnt in the flames of the bonfire, while the good Godfrey is spared the degradation. The pageantry was completed with a public display of fireworks. While the sledges on which the Pope, the church official and the Devil were carried may have been just a convenient means of transportation resembled an early modern English charivari. In early modern England, the charivari was used as a shaming ritual for townsfolk to segregate and single-out an individual who had broken a social norm or code of the village or town. The charivari was part of the plebeian vocabulary. The charivari and rough music are complimentary activities where the charivari originated in France, while rough music germinated in England. E.P. Thompson defines rough music as the denotation of “rude cacophony, with or without more elaborate ritual, which usually directed mockery or hostility against

individuals who offended against certain community norms.”⁴⁶ The charivari or rough music, represented on the either the 5th November or the 17th November, was escalated from a local micro-scale to a larger national scale importance. It represented the people of England rejecting the disciplines of Catholicism on a national scale.

Although some celebrations were hosted by the elite, festivals and popular celebrations did exist on a local “lower order” level throughout England. Actual evidence for such non-elite activity outside local churchwardens’ accounts used by Hutton, however, is rare. It is worth pondering what type of distinct activity might have existed. How were the plebeians able to host their own popular celebration culture? Hutton asserts that “one method of coping with the evidence has been to suggest that certain kinds of local society were more inclined to retain the seasonal celebrations than others.”⁴⁷ Burke asserts that popular culture is a distinct set of beliefs and customs set into a local society or community that become a traditional part of its everyday life, which, change with time and are different from place to place. Some communities were able to retain strands of these traditional popular celebration customs. Communities which held onto their popular culture developed their own methodology for ceremonial calendar customs. This provides some insight as to how communities and the commonality in general make these annual celebrations their own.

In London, the separation of cultures seems most evident. As Burke elucidates, there was a change in the attitude of the elite classmanship that “marked their withdrawal

⁴⁶Thompson, Customs in Common, 467.

⁴⁷Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 161.

from participation in popular festivals . . . the clergy, nobility and bourgeoisie alike were coming to internalize the ethos of self-control and order⁴⁸ even when this came to nationalistic rituals and customs. Although the populace of England symbolically unified under a common cause (celebration), the distinct separate structure between the elite and the commonality remained erect and rigid. The elite did not share the common festival customs of the lower order. With the advent of the English Reformation in the 1530s, the upper echelon in England began pulling away from participation with the commonality and began organizing its own distinct customs. It is the difference between these elite and popular⁴⁹ customs which created a dichotomously defined order to English celebration customs. Although the November calendar customs united the populace of England together through religious ties and patriotic symbolism, there still was a distinct difference between the ways and methods the celebrants celebrated.

Although the celebrations of the 4th (late King William III's birthday), the 5th and 17th November were originally constructed by the elite, they were opportunities for the populace to gather together in a common interest. There was a communal and even a national bonding between the elite interests and the popular involvement. However, not all of the celebrations that occurred on these days were organized and engineered by the

⁴⁸Burke, Popular Culture, 272.

⁴⁹

"The clergy, the nobility, the merchants, the professional men — and their wives — had abandoned popular culture to the lower classes, from whom they were now separated, as never before, by profound differences . . . one symptom of this withdrawal is the change in the meaning of the term 'people', which was used less often than before to mean 'everyone', or 'respectable people', and more often to mean 'the common people'." Ibid., 270.

elite. Much of the celebrations took place at the local, grassroots level where the “common man” would organize multiple bonfires and illuminations, drinking, dancing, and general revel throughout villages, towns, and cities. On Gunpowder Treason Day 1633 two Norwich men were so carried away by the festive spirit of the occasion that they stole some doors to throw on the fire.⁵⁰ In 1692, Guy Fawkes Day was celebrated by the people of the cities of “London and Westminster with Illuminations, Bonfires, and other Expressions of Joy.”⁵¹ The mass production of bonfires and illuminations were signals or signs of popular involvement. The people would burn anything, including stolen paraphernalia. The large bonfires sponsored by the elite were rather expensive to create because the wood used to construct them was, in most instances, purchased. Singular large bonfires and the ringing of bells and cannon fire often meant that the elite were directly involved in the celebrations. The dichotomous distinction between these two celebration customs was the organization of festival entertainment by the elite whereas the populace brought their own character to the celebrations. The populace would stage mock sermons, mock burnings of the effigies of the Pope, the Devil, and of Guy Fawkes. They would transform the streets into a fanfare of mimicry against the Catholic Church. These festivals allowed people of all ranks in society the opportunity to interact together. During the elite driven ceremonies and bonfires given in public spaces, people of high and low stature would gather around the bonfires celebrating the great joy of the day. However, communal rejoicing between the two cultures was short lived because they

⁵⁰Underdown, Revel, Riot and Rebellion, 70.

⁵¹The London Gazette, Nov. 3-Nov. 7, 1692.

would soon separate into their distinct class divisions. The upper echelon would separate from the “rabble” to entertain themselves in their own private sector, secluding themselves from the revel in the streets. In the evenings, religious ceremonies were delivered, great dinners were presented, and fabulous balls were thrown for the nobility and other of quality ranking, while outside one could hear the rantings of the “rabble” throwing squibs and crackers. For example, a report from Dublin, Ireland 1700, shows the elite celebrating in private, separate from the commoners:

The Nobility and Gentry, the Ladys, and other Persons of Quality, were present, who from thence came to the Castle, where they were sp'endidly entertained at Supper, and afterwards there was a Ball.⁵²

Bonfires would light the streets and the skies, while the illuminations would paint the windows of the city in a warm glow as shown through the commoners celebrations in a report from Whitehall, England, 1701: In an extraordinary manner [there was the] Ringing of Bells, Bonfires, and Illuminations in the Cities of London and Westminster.⁵³

There was a delicate balance between the interaction between the elite and the commonality in the processes of the celebrations; however, the celebrations of England brought together the lowly apprentice, the artisan, the shopkeeper, and the aristocrat for one point in time where they would interact together, although they still had their separate spheres of activity.

In the late seventeenth century, whether these celebrations were to rejoice in the glorious memory of the crown, to commemorate of the anniversary of the deliverance

⁵²The London Gazette, Nov. 11-Nov. 14, 1700.

⁵³The London Gazette, Nov. 3-Nov. 6, 1701.

from the devilish designs of the popish plot against the king and Protestantism, or to revel in the memory of the strong reign of Queen Elizabeth and her emancipation of England from the clutches of Catholicism and “Bloody Mary,” the 4th, 5th, and 17th November were all days where England came together under a semi-unified cause of celebration. This semi-unification was seen in the interaction between the elite and the commonality. However, as early as 1679-1681 and definitely by the early eighteenth century, these special days became more and more politically stratified instead of bringing the people and the elite together in common celebration. The elite were continuing to separate themselves from the common people. This separation between the elite and the populace was not a political move, but a social one, dividing society horizontally. The separation of society through politics operated in a different manner dividing society vertically, between political groups, which included people from all sectors of society: the commoners, the “middling sort,” and the elite.

There were deep political roots which ran throughout the country to villages and provincial towns scattered across England. These times of ceremony gave people time to show their patronage and their loyalty to the crown when at other times they may have been overlooked. As R.O. Bucholz states in “Nothing But Ceremony”, “on the most obvious level, progress and thanksgivings, as well as the coronation, garter ceremonies, and military reviews gave the political classes an excuse, even an obligation, to attend the monarch and to participate in, and so validate, royal and national ritual.”⁵⁴ Therefore, the top down model approach to civic ceremonies affords a new definitional light. These

⁵⁴Bucholz, “Nothing but Ceremony,” 294

civic expressions of joy and loyalty to the crown, as Malcolm Smuts asserts, were a “ceremonial dialogue” between court and town.⁵⁵ Even after 1702, in the reign of Queen Anne, “these great ceremonial occasions served to unite queen, court, nobility, gentry, clergy, the military and the commonality,” if only briefly, “in corporate celebration of the benefits of Anne’s reign.”⁵⁶ The ceremonial rituals gave the populace excuses for the deployment of a national scale entertainment in which everyone participated in the rituals from towns large and small throughout England.⁵⁷

Although festival days were not continually documented throughout the reigns of Charles II, James I, William and Mary and that of Queen Anne, participation in the national religious and patriotic celebrations was a customary ritual. Ebbs in the high culture celebration of these special days mean nor imply the deterioration of the commonality from participating in its ritual customs. These days were special to both high and low culture throughout the nation of England. The atmosphere, although ripe for one sphere of people was not necessarily ripe for all. The common populace often celebrated the advent of these special days on their own accord, without the sponsorship of the elite in their celebration activities. For example, Hutton asserts that some parishes between 1625 and 1640 sponsored bonfires and the burning of tar barrels in London, Cambridge, and Durham. However, more importantly to the popular level of celebration, he notes that “images of the Pope or Devil were burned in *unofficial* blazes in the

⁵⁵Ibid., 295

⁵⁶Ibid., 297

⁵⁷Ibid., 296

capital.”⁵⁸ Though this example reports on an earlier period, it shows a popular element to the ritual celebrations. Officially, the celebrations on the 4th, 5th and the 17th November were sponsored by the elite in society or the “social superiors and political masters” as Cressy calls them.⁵⁹ The commonality of England brought to the celebration table its own character of festival customs. Cressy elucidates that:

individuals towns and villages developed local customs involving pageants, bonfires, or ritual doles to the poor on 17th November, in a subdued secular version of the old religious festivals. Most places rang their bells (showing an elite influence); however . . ., [other communities like] Maidstone, Ipswich, Coventry and Nottingham were among the towns holding plays or pageants in the streets on 17th November (identifying a popular character or custom).⁶⁰

The revelry of these three days throughout November was not always celebrated with annual regularity. In some communities the reflection of these days fell mute while in others they resounded with acclamations joy and good will. In some years the practice of communal festive customs disappeared while in the following years they rose back into popularity. Communal celebration was erratic. Cressy argues that “away from London there was greater variety of practice . . . in some years they might record ringing on all three occasions, in others two, one or none.”⁶¹

This chapter explained the differences between the popular culture elicited by the people of England and those which governed the elite surrounding the annual celebrations

⁵⁸Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 186.

⁵⁹Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, xiv.

⁶⁰Ibid., 54..

⁶¹Ibid., 58.

of the 5th of November and the 17th of November. In late seventeenth and early eighteenth century England, there existed a three tier model of social celebration. There was the first the elite sphere which commonly encompassed indoor activities (balls, banquets, religious ceremonies); secondly there was the popular sphere which provided the masses with their outdoor entertainment (bonfires, burning of effigies, public dances, beer barrels) in the “public sphere.” There also existed a middle or third tier which involved the interaction between the elite and the populace. This social interaction between the two, normally segregated social classes, required the elite to come into contact with the people through some public bonfires, as audience to the populace’s street theatre, or as sponsors of fireworks displays or beer barrels. This social interaction was like a continual circle where the populace fed off the elite as a participating audience in the people’s antics, while some antics would not have been performed without the involvement (such as payment for a street theatre, payment for the ringing of bells, or for the provision of a beer barrel) of the elite.

The celebrations of the 5th of November and 17th of November were surrounded by national, patriotic, and ecclesiastical themes. It was the remembrance of these themes which spurred the continual celebration of the ritual calendar. Although these days were originally contrived by the elite, they were personalized by the populace, rather reconstructed to fit their needs and wants and continued mainly because of the people’s efforts. Yes, elite sponsorship existed and was a driving force for the ringing of bells and the construction of bonfires on Gunpowder Treason Day and on the Anniversary of the Accession of Queen Elizabeth; however, the masses constructed a “plebeian culture” or

popular character surrounding these days, which connected them ever closer to the ritual calendar.

Chapter 2: Participants, Content, and Custom in the 29th of October and the 5th and 17th of November Celebrations

Between 1660 and 1714, the Gunpowder Treason Plot, otherwise known as Guy Fawkes Day, on the 5th November and the accession of Queen Elizabeth's Day on the 17th November were celebrated in very similar ways. In fact, for London, its celebration customs are similar to the celebration of the Lord Mayor's Day on 29th of October. This chapter discusses the similarities and differences between these three British festival holidays. It also seeks to distinguish the evolutionary pattern between the three days. Since the Lord Mayor's Day customs and traditions were in use for hundreds of years prior to either the Gunpowder celebrations or Queen Elizabeth's Day events, the customs and traditions present in the latter could have been copied from the Lord Mayor's Day ceremonies. Although this chapter does not conclude the historical connections between the origins of the three days, it simply notes the similarities and suggests how these similarities relate to the larger question of the participants, content, and form of the autumn ritual calendar in the late-Stuart period.

Although the celebration customs and traditions of the Lord Mayor's Day provide no evidence to religious or nationalistic background to spur celebration as with the 5th of November and the 17th of November, between the three days there were many common themes and traditions. Since the reign of King John in the thirteenth century, the citizens of the City of London had had the right to elect their own mayor. With the germination of this tradition came the ceremony of the "official" Lord Mayor's Show and pageantry. There are many creative nuances that make these three dates especially similar. On the 5th

and 17th November, the days and nights were significantly decorated with anti-Papal customs and performances. The people of London and surrounding counties lit the countryside ablaze with bonfires, and sacrificed effigies of the Pope and the devil to the flames. People gathered around bonfires to sing and dance. Displays of fireworks were set off by the elite, while the commonality played with squibs and crackers. On the 5th of November, effigies of Guy Fawkes and the Pope were toted around townships and city streets, while on the 17th of November, effigies of the Pope and Devil were masterfully created and carried around the streets of London and provincial cities in a great pageantry celebration. Both days had a religious background and were filled with political connections. There were many political motives behind the pageantry of the 5th and 17th of November, while traces of popular involvement were interwoven into every celebration. Like the 5th and 17th of November, the celebrations on 29th of October were celebrated with annual regularity, too. This special day was commemorated with pageantry and was full of musical instrumentation. Although there were no bonfires and effigy burning on this day, it was a day of jubilation, revelry, dancing and drinking. All three celebrations focused on parades.

Within the pageants and processions, the effigies and Pope-burnings, whether the celebrations were anti-Catholic or they were popular celebration customs, the crowds acted together. October celebrations began with processions and floats with bands and groups of musicians. The Lord Mayor's Show festivities began early in the morning with horns, strings, and lyrics, complimented with drink, dining, and dancing in the streets and in front of taverns and store fronts. November festivities began with Gunpowder Treason

Day and peaked with the Pope-burning processions of the 17th November.⁶² Floats and figures were constructed to parade down the streets of towns and cities of England where on Queen Elizabeth's Day the people

strutted and paraded, brawled with popish sympathizers, and ended the festivities with fires. Rich in imagery and symbolic reference, the November demonstrations were controlled and imaginative adaptations of customary forms. The pope-burning was carefully scripted and choreographed. On the streets but not of the streets, and hovering within the limits of control, it was more like the Lord Mayor's show than a popular protest.⁶³

The study of these three days will be broken into three parts. The processions, pageants, street festivals, popular celebrations, and elite parties will be discussed as to 1.) Who participated in the celebrations?; 2.) What was the content of the celebration customs and traditions?; and 3.) What was the form of the different celebrations? Ronald Hutton has demonstrated how parish churchwardens would pick and choose which days to celebrate by bellringing from year to year. The question remains as to why these days were celebrated. What meaning could they have had?

The involvement of the youth in the celebrations of English customs of the 5th of November, 17th of November, and the 29th of October is an important characteristic in the popular culture of their celebration patterns. The youth played an active role in the participation of the audience of the pageantry, processions, street antics, and popular celebrations. The English youth, primarily that of London (because most of the research

⁶²David Cressy, Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 180.

⁶³Ibid.

and information on youth groups focused on London), play an important role in celebration traditions. Additionally, in the midst of their participation, the youth create a defining class structure separate from the remainder of society. Cressy asserts that “a particularly strong case can be made, and indeed has been made, for describing London apprentices as a subculture, with a strong sense of fraternity, a tradition of collective action.”⁶⁴ It was during these three holidays that the whole of England, especially London, broke down into misrule. “Not everyone was equally active on these festive occasions,” Cressy adds. “The apprentices seem to have been more active than most, who took the initiative in organizing festivals. But for whom? It is impossible to give a precise answer to that question because popular culture (unlike learned culture) was open to all.”⁶⁵

I. The celebration of the Gunpowder Treason Day

Preparing for the festive event, the people of London and the provincial towns and villages filled the streets and boulevards with bonfires, pageants and processions. The celebrants danced, threw streamers, played music, mocked national figures, played rough music⁶⁶, carried the “Guy” around, and more formal popular ceremonial national processions commemorated the blessed day and night. The festive fervor continued late into the night and into the early hours of the morning. Cressy points out that the “proper

⁶⁴Cressy, “Seventeenth-Century London,” 34.

⁶⁵Ibid., 38.

⁶⁶Natalie Zemon Davis defines rough music as the banging together of pots and pans, tambourines, bells, rattles and horns. “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past & Present* 50, (1971): 52-53.

performance involved noise, fire, dress, aspect, mood, individual behaviour, and community action⁶⁷ and “not always with sweetness and light.”⁶⁸ The noise and merriment of the “crowd” on 5th of November was commonly a popular ritual where “ordinary people lit bonfires or made merriment for their own purposes.”⁶⁹ The national celebration of the day called for noise and spirit where the air was filled with the “sounds of bells . . . [and] musical instruments, cheers, percussion, fusillades, cannon shot, and the explosions of squibs and crackers, [but the] explosive noise was not always officially sanctioned or controlled.”⁷⁰ A thought which held the test of time was mentioned by the sixteenth century lawyer Claude de Rubys who said: “IT IS SOMETIMES EXPEDIENT TO ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO PLAY THE FOOL and make merry lest by holding them in with too great a rigour, we put them in despair.”⁷¹ This is another example of a justification for celebration and the continuance of the ritual calendar year.

A) Who participated in the celebrations of the 5th of November?

To begin, we should note who was participating in the processions and celebrations on the 5th of November, and secondly we should note the actions of and the audience interpretation of the actions of the participants. The city’s “young men” and boys were involved. What can we conclude about the adolescent character of misrule?

⁶⁷Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 68.

⁶⁸Cressy, “Protestant Calendar,” 37.

⁶⁹Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 68.

⁷⁰Quote in *Ibid.*, p.69.

⁷¹Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule,” 41.

Natalie Zemon Davis suggests that for sixteenth-century France, the youth bonded in a fraternity of “brotherhood existing among themselves.”⁷² Although Davis examined the youth of sixteenth-century France, much of her research and sociological implications may be applied to late seventeenth century England. Davis’s conclusions are supported by works of S.N. Eisenstadt who argues that the youth as a distinct social group “exist despite the economic differentiation among the peasants, from rich labourer to landless hired hand, and despite changes in the demographic pyramid” extending from the old proverb “like seeks like.”⁷³ Steven R. Smith argues that the youth of England in the seventeenth century, in bonding with each other, tended to associate together building strong ties. This youth consisted mainly of apprentices or journeymen, given their young age, prior to adulthood. Smith states that “London apprentices often associated themselves with the young men of the city in political petitions, the young men being journeymen who recently had finished their apprenticeships but who continued to live in the homes of their former masters.”⁷⁴ It was formation of groups of these apprentices and young journeymen which Smith asserts “offered opportunities for young people ‘to excite and stir up one another.’ All of these occasions would have reinforced the feeling of youth as a separate group.”⁷⁵ It is within these groups of young men that they would

⁷²Ibid., 54.

⁷³ Quoted in Ibid., 57.

⁷⁴ Steven R. Smith, “Youth in Seventeenth Century England,” *History of Childhood Quarterly* 2, 4, (Spring 1975), 496.

⁷⁵Ibid., 497.

interact in certain formats and manners. They basically followed group mentalité as shown through Erik Erikson's *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. Erikson elaborates on the psychological characteristics of youth action where the youth "would rather act shamelessly in the eyes of [their] elders, out of free choice, than be forced into activities which would be shameful in [their] own eyes or in those of [their] peers."⁷⁶ Smith commented that the youth were susceptible to peer pressure whereas "since youth were fickle and unsettled . . . it indicates the importance of the peer group and the adolescent desire for peer approval."⁷⁷

English young boys, then, were taught to hate the Catholic "Whore of Babylon." The elders who knew the Plot well set out to teach their young, according to one 5th of November pamphlet, "so that 'tis no wonder if the very remembrance of it did sharpen the Mothers Milk, and their Children sucking it in with their sustenance, became instinctively irritated at theirs and their Parents intended Murder."⁷⁸ This elucidates the involvement of the young and old alike in the celebrations of the 5th of November. The pedagogical intent was underlined in the pamphlet: "why should not even our Youth then espouse a noble Indignation at the injustice and by their resentments on the Effigy, divulge a deserved contempt of the Original?"⁷⁹ One of the earliest descriptions of a

⁷⁶Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1968), 129.

⁷⁷Smith, "Youth in Seventeenth Century England," 500.

⁷⁸Burning The Pope In Effigies In London, 1678, 4.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 4.

pope-burning, from 1673, details the cultural and popular history behind the hatred and abhorrence toward Catholicism. This short narrative personifies the involvement of the participants in the 5th of November celebrations as well as detailing some of the content:

The memory of that never to be forgotten day, is carefully transmitted from the Elder to the Younger, so that the Child, as well as the Man of years considers it; and the middle-age, as well as either; nor is there any degree of men in the Kingdom that have not (as they have had occasion) testified their abhorreny of the Papist Principles and practices, the Zeal whereof is again renewed from the Highest to the Lowest.⁸⁰

Smith believes that “it is in adolescence that an individual becomes even more aware of his identity.”⁸¹ It was this sense of identity which was formed through the group participation in the celebration patterns and customs of the British calendar. Smith quotes Erikson that “it is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs.”⁸² To classify the youth throughout England, Smith details its participation in traditional customs. He states that “certainly not everyone passed through a special stage of life known as youth: the great silent majority in the countryside probably did not, and the sons and daughters of the nobility may well have escaped it, but for the young people in the towns and especially in London, there was a phase of life distinct from both childhood and adulthood.”⁸³ “There were attempts,” Smith further

⁸⁰The Burning Of The Whore of Babylon, 1673, 2.

⁸¹Smith, “Youth in Seventeenth Century England,” 493.

⁸²Smith, “The London Apprentices,” 157.

⁸³Smith, “Youth in Seventeen Century England,” 495.

adds, “in the seventeenth century to set age boundaries for youth. The Office of Christian Parents divided life into six stages: infancy (from birth to age seven), childhood (ages 7-14), youth (ages 14-28), manhood (28-50), gravity (50-70), and old age (over seventy), acknowledging that these stages would vary with the individual.”⁸⁴ The celebrations of the 5th and 17th of November involved people of all ages; however, the youth played its part in the local customs.

Some examples of the participants in the pageants on the 5th of November were reported in a newspaper from Lewes, in the county of Sussex, 1679, and in two pamphlets titled “The Burning of the Whore of Babylon” [1673] and “Burning the Pope in Effigies in London” [1678], respectively.

In the first place went a company of young men arm’d with Swords and Muskets, Pikes, etc., like a company of Souldiers; There were between twenty or thirty boyes with Vizards.⁸⁵

Now having filled themselves with good Liquor, and gratified their own humors, every Man and Boy went to his own home⁸⁶

But that being no more than what was common for kind, though not in degree; The Apprentices were resolved to make a new Addition, which was, a large Effigie of the Whore of Babylon⁸⁷

[As part of the pageants the raised platforms upon which the floats were carried were] born like Pageants on Mens Backs⁸⁸

⁸⁴Ibid., p.495.

⁸⁵Domestick Intelligence, or News both from City and Country, Tuesday, Nov. 18, 1679.

⁸⁶The Burning Of The Whore of Babylon, 1673, 3-4.

⁸⁷Ibid., 3.

⁸⁸Burning The Pope In Effigies In London, 1678, 5-6.

What this shows is that the participation in the pageants and celebrations of the 5th of November involved the youth, apprentices, and men of the city. Although the audience of the pageants and celebrations may have been comprised of people of all ages and gender, the participants were usually boys or men from the city. The history of the celebration of the Powder Plot passed from generation to generation of men to youthful boys growing up in and around London. The London celebrations in the nineteenth century changed considerably, involving a more rowdy group of adolescents. There were roving “gangs” of youth who participated, rather violently, in the celebration of the 5th of November. These adolescents involved in the celebration procession left no stone unturned in their aggression against Catholicism.

B) What was the content of the 5th of November celebrations?

Now that who participated in the pageantry has been unveiled, we should turn our attention to the context of the procession. An example of the orchestration and content of the celebration on Gunpowder Treason Day is shown in a report from Lewes in the county of Sussex, 1679:

Several Pictures were carried upon long Poles, the first being a *Jesuite* represented with a bloody Sword and a Pistol, with this Inscription, *Our Religion is Murder, Rapine, and Rebellion*. The second was the Picture of a *Frier* and a *Jesuite* wantonly dallying with a *Nun*, the Devil looking from behind a Curtain, and saying, *I will spoil no sport my dear Children*. The third was the Picture of two Devils bringing a Tripple Crown to the Pope, with these words, *Hail Holy Father*. Just before the Pope marched Guy Fawx with his dark Lanthorn, being booted and spurr'd after the Old Fashion, and wearing a Vizard with a wonderful long Nose. Next comes the Pope with his Cross Keys; Crosier staffe, and other Popperies; having his Train borne up by several of his Clergy, being saluted as he pass'd by, with a Copy of Verses. But last of all comes the Ghost of Sir Edmunbury Godfrey, represented by a Person in black Cloaths, and a Shirt all Bloody, and his Face painted so white that he seemed rather Dead than Alive;

before whom went a person carrying a Bloody Sword in his hand, who sometimes looking back would seem to be greatly affrighted at the sight of him. In this manner they having carried his Holiness through the Town and Streets adjacent, at Night, after they had first Degraded him, they committed him to the Flames.⁸⁹

While the city's youth paraded around the streets of town with swords, muskets, and pikes carrying pictures of Jesuites, Friars, the Pope and the Devil, they slandered Rome with verbal taunts and accusations. Protestant boys and young men disparaged the Romish kingdom through inscriptions of "Our religion is Murder, Rapine, and Rebellion," or accusing the Devil to speak with and then bow before the Pope to utter "Hail Holy Father." This procession on the 5th of November was filled with anti-Catholic symbols. These implications, analogies, and overtones would seem consistent with the manners and meanings behind the Plot of 5th of November; however, it is the length and veracity that strikes one's attention. This situational irony and slanderous attack against the church of Rome was a normal occurrence on the 5th of November. The boys mocked the Catholic institution by parading the Pope around while trailing him came the ghostly body of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey. In 1678, Titus Oates revealed that the Catholics were plotting to assassinate Charles II and take over the government. Little might have come of this had not Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, the London magistrate who was furnished with the details, been the victim of a still unsolved mystery.⁹⁰ He was murdered, but it is still unclear who murdered him. It was Sir Edmundbury Godfrey who

⁸⁹Domestick Intelligence, or News both from City and Country, Tuesday, Nov. 18, 1679.

⁹⁰O.W. Furley, "The Pope-Burning Processions of the Late Seventeenth Century," *History* 44 (1959), 17.

solidified the Catholic threat and menace in the eyes of the English people. Rumor spread that it was the Catholic menace who silenced Sir Edmundbury Godfrey.

The apex of culturally popular festivities during the Gunpowder Plot Day was the resound burning of the Pope. Numerous effigies of the Pope were constructed for the night's festivities and throughout the city there were bonfires carpeting the streets. But one effigy was decorated more than others. An anonymous pamphlet Burning The Pope In Effigies In London, written in 1678, details the procession of the effigy of the Pope on the 5th of November:

He was raised on a small Pavillion, with a large Cross filled with Lamps, which in much majesty stalkt before him, whilst the Effigies, curiously adorned with his Triple Crown, Neck-lace of Beads, and all his other superstitious Accouterments, came very sumptuously behind, in procession from the Royal-Exchange to Temple-Bar, and visiting most Streets, Courts, and Alleys as he walkt a-long . . . in fine after this feigned Pope had been sufficiently exposed to the Vulgar Reflections, he was hurl'd, Canopy, Triple Crown, Beads, Crucifix and all into the Bonfire.⁹¹

This shows that the object of the procession was to show-off the effigy of the Pope to the masses lining the streets and balconies of the city. Not only was the effigy to be seen, but it was significant that the effigy represent all the imagery and idols extant within Catholicism (Triple Crown, rosary, crucifix) which Protestant England despises. The costumes and elaborate decorations may symbolize the interaction between the popular and elite classes. This is illustrated by the expenses involved in the materials and construction of the costumes and floats. Could the common man provide for all of the expenses himself or would have financial support been provided by the wealthy? After

⁹¹Burning The Pope In Effigies In London, 1678, 5-6.

the crowd had its fill of the abomination of the Pope, the participants in the procession disposed of the Pope on the bonfire. Both the celebrations of the 5th and the 17th of November held their most magnificent bonfires at Temple-Bar. Temple-Bar was relevant to the people of England because it held particular memories of English pride, national glory, and Protestant themes. It represented a sanctuary of collective spirit for the English people, and it was there where they rejoiced with particular acclimation. An account of the 5th of November, 1673, shows the effigy of the Pope (Whore of Babylon) was

drest up Cap-a-Pe, with all the Whorish Ornaments, having a Cross and Two Keyes in his hand; I know not if they were the Keys of the Celler that Guy Faux had, but I suppose they might belong to Purgatory; he had a string of Beads in the other hand: and never more need you will say, to fall to his Beads. In his posture he was carried, not in a Chaire, but as the Traytors heads are upon the Bridge, fixed upon a Pole in Procession, all about the Poultry Market-place, attended with new an hundred Torches, and more than a thousand people. This Ceremony lasted some considerable time; after which, the Effigies was hung up, upon a high Rope that was tyed at two Garret windows, cross the Poultry-Street about two hours, with a great Bonfire before it, lest it should catch cold by hanging so long in the Ayr.⁹²

This narrative from an anonymous author describes the contents of a procession on the 5th of November. During this pageant, the Pope was dressed in all of his Romish pomp and circumstance. It was suggested that he held in his hand a key to the cellar where Guy Fawkes was hiding the terrible plot. Blunt attacks upon the Pope and the kingdom of Rome were common for the 5th of November. This procession had taken place within a market place and the Pope was carried in similar fashion to previous customs. Showing the content of the procession the heads of the co-conspirators of Guy Fawkes were carried

⁹²The Burning Of The Whore of Babylon, 1673, pp. 3-4.

upon pikes, accompanied by a hundred torches surrounding the Pope. While the form of the procession followed according to custom, the effigy of the Pope was hung above the street for everyone to jeer and taunt. Below him was the creation of a great bonfire where the Pope would be burnt.

C) What was the form of the processions and celebrations on the 5th of November?

The processions which encompassed much of the day of the 5th and the 17th of November were similar in construction, content, and form. The participants raised platforms upon their backs and carried the platform, with its performers upon it, through the streets of London. The form of the processions was always similar; the spotlight placed upon the defilement of the Pope. The apex of the celebration was when the effigy of the Pope would be thrown into the bonfire, Romish trinkets and all. A narrative of the extensive ceremony surrounding Guy Fawkes Day was detailed by The Burning Of The Whore of Babylon in 1673 which described the day's events:

The Citizens rejoyceing, seemed to fuel the banks last Wednesday Night, where you might have seen the broad Streets of London so thick with Bonfires, as if they had been but one Hearth, and the Fire-works flying in such numbers, that the Serpents flew like Bees through the Ayre, and could scarce have room for one another to pass: The Bells were very early up that Morning, and rung so loud, as if they had prefaced in a Jubilee.⁹³

This example shows the extent and duration of the celebrations on Gunpowder Treason Day. The city's citizens were full of excitement, beginning the entertainments early in the morning. This example combines the participants, the content, and the form of the celebrations. There were the citizens (identifying the popular sphere), bonfires and

⁹³Ibid., 2.

fireworks (identifying symbols of activities the citizens participated in), and ceremonies beginning in the early hours of the morning (identifying the form of the celebrations). The celebrations began early in the day, sometimes as early as three in the morning. In 1673, the anonymous author described the events of the night where the bonfires were so plentiful that they were seen everywhere, while the fireworks were in such a multitude that the night was turned to day.

Most of the parades celebrated on the night of the 5th were popular not “formal or official.” Numerous bonfires were constructed throughout the city of London and provincial towns. However, the townspeople’s ceremonial escapades were not complete without the burning of the effigy of the Pope. As custom permitted, young men degraded the Pope prior to committing him to the flames and thus danced about when the effigy was thrown into the center of the bonfire. Cressy described this torture for the late seventeenth century, where the “monster (Whore of Babylon) was strung up above the street, to dance in the air and to provide a target for pistols, before descending into the flames. The crowd was noisy, rowdy, and inebriated, but the symbolism was specific and controlled.”⁹⁴ A pamphlet The Burning of the Whore of Babylon in 1673 details the construction of a bonfire upon which the effigy of the Pope was strung on a rope and burnt. Once the effigy of the Pope was hung in the air, some of the spectators surrounding the bonfire began to shoot the hanging effigy. However, once the fire was ended, the people (both adult and youth), filed away from the celebration center and went home. This shows the diversity of traits and customs which were present. While the

⁹⁴Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 175.

display of gunfire on the 5th of November is not surprising; shooting at the effigy of the Pope is important in that it represents Protestant England's aggression and abhorrence of Popery.

There was a Hogshead filled with small fuel & combustible stuff, which was set right under his feet; but such was the forwardness of some of the Spectators, they must employ some other weapons for his destruction, some letting flie at him with Pistols, and others with Fowling-Peices; but the fire over-powering it, soon spoyled their sport, by burning the Mark; yet they were loth to omit the use of Guns. ⁹⁵

Not only were bonfires and fireworks a usual practice on the 5th of November, but the commonality created songs and poems to be performed during the day and night on the 5th of November. Cressy reports one which most likely began early in the seventeenth century.

Remember, remember the Fifth of November
The Gunpowder Treason and Plot
I see no reason why Gunpowder Treason
Should ever be forgot.⁹⁶

Songs like this were used to not only commemorate the day, but to instill a sense of duty and responsibility in the populace of England to never forget the horrible tragedy on the 5th of November 1605. This was a short tune which could be memorized easily and sung by children and adult alike. They also used literature to show their expressions of fear and hate for Catholicism. This type of literature could have been sold in the streets and passed around in taverns and coffee houses. It is a good representative example of the style of pamphleteering which existed in the late seventeenth century England. Here is an

⁹⁵The Burning Of The Whore of Babylon, 1673, 3-4.

⁹⁶Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 141.

excerpt of a poem from the 5th of November, 1680:

When loe! Methought, a Mighty Earth-quake came
And Cleft the Ground; then, in a Sulpherous Flame
That seem'd to fill the Chamber, straight arose
A Ghastly shape, Ugly and Black as those
We Paint the Devils in, its Glaring Eyes
Look'd like two Comets of a Monstrous size.
So Hidious 'twas, I guess'd it straight to be
Some Damn'd Arch-Traytor's Ghost; but whose, to me
Was something hard, at first, to Understand;
But when I spy'd th' Dark Lanthorn in his Hand,
I knew 'twas FAUX, (that Darling of the Devil,)
That strove t' Out-doe even Hell itself in Evil.⁹⁷

This poem preserved the memory of Guy Fawkes and his treacherous deed. The 5th of November when was “a Day which had not Heaven,/ (Just when the Fatal Stroke was to be given,)/ Strectht out its Saving Hand, had seen the Fall/ Of King and People; Root, and Branch, and all.”⁹⁸ The poem supports the Protestant right to remain the rightful religion of England as if under the watchful eyes of God. The author places the reader of the poem in a situation where he believes the world is coming to an end. The poem portrays the ghost of the traitor Guy Fawkes as a dark, ugly ghost with burning eyes.

Another set of poems were reported in 1690:

To Times long past, I would not say forgot,
First came thine Eye; *remember, oh! remember,*
The *Cursed Hellish Powder Plot,*
Intended to be acted in *November.*
Let no salst Medium blind thine Eyes,
Nor think 'twas Cecil's Artifice;
A Trick of State, by Policy design'd,
Let no such Stories cheat thy Mind;

⁹⁷FAUX'S GHOST: or Advice to PAPISTS, 1680, 2.

⁹⁸FAUX'S GHOST: or Advice to PAPISTS, 1680, 1.

Rubbish may oft be thrown on Things of Worth,
But time at length will bring the Matter forth.⁹⁹

The celebration of the day was filled with a narrative retelling of the 5th of November, 1605.

Under the Room where English Senators
Do meet, the Nations Business to Discoarse,
A Celler was, dark, long, and unobserv'd;
All Qualities which for their Business serv'd:
This hir'd; great store of Powder first is laid,
Faggots o'er that, left all should be betraid.¹⁰⁰

These two poems demonstrate the history behind the Gunpowder Plot, not only conveying the obvious attack against nation and religion, but aid in continuing the remembrance of the Plot. Each poem is like a story with an inherent moral. This moral was to keep alive the remembrance of the Powder Plot for the preservation of the English nation and Protestantism.

The celebration of the 5th of November was most organized in London. But celebration also occurred in other towns and villages. Cressy elucidates that the revelry in some places was sponsored by local establishments and private funding where “some communities went further and laid on a public beer barrel or supply of wine for all comers, or established a parish commemorative feast. The anniversary became a day of indulgence, of drinking and festivity.”¹⁰¹ On the 5th of November, 1700, in Nottingham, England

⁹⁹Taylor, R. The Double Deliverance, 1690, act 2.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., act 4.

¹⁰¹Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 147.

the same was kept and observed here with all the Demonstrations of Joy imaginable, the Morning was ushered in by Ringing of Bells, firing of Guns, etc., and at Night we had Illuminations and Bonfires, the Inhabitants Expressing their Loyalty and Zeal for the present Government on this occasion; but that which was most Remarkable, was, the Bonfire made before the Door of the Honourable William Peirpoint Esq. which contained no less than a Tun of Pit Coal, besides he gave a Hogshead of Stout Ale among the People to drink to the King's Health.¹⁰²

In this particular year, William Peirpoint Esq. who had provided ale for the celebration was honored with a bonfire in front of his home. This shows that there was a link between the elite and the non-elite. Providing drink for the commonality is an example of the interaction which occurred between the two classes. The celebrants, in turn, rewarded William Peirpoint Esq. with a bonfire. Consistent with former years, the celebration of the 5th of November, 1700 contained similar form as previous celebrations. The form of the festivities began early in the morning with the ringing of bells (which was common throughout all three festive holidays, the 5th and 17th November and the 29th of October), accompanied with the firing of guns. We can assume, although not mentioned, there was the lighting of squibs and crackers by the youth. Although not mentioned often, the celebrations involved not only the youth, but an array of people from society. Supporting evidence of this is provided through the use of gunfire where the use of guns was probably limited to the adult population. During the evening hours, illuminations lit up the windows of the city, while bonfires blazed in the streets.

The celebrations of the 5th of November were of plebeian culture. Bonfires and effigy burning were symbols of the popular culture vocabulary in the late seventeenth

¹⁰²The Post Boy, Nov.7 - Nov.9, 1700.

century England. E.P. Thompson argues that rough music and effigy burning were central to Guy Fawkes Day. Thompson states that the “November 5th was a day when effigy burning and rough music ran into each other . . . they were simply one (effective and enduring) component of the available symbolic vocabulary, which could be employed in combination with other components (noise, lampoons, obscenities), or could be detached from these altogether.”¹⁰³

II. The celebration of the Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s Day

The celebration of the Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth’s Day was regarded as a Protestant carnival. Similarly to the 5th of November, the 17th was a time when the populace of England could sing, dance, drink, make bonfires and generally be merry. As argued by J.E. Neale in his Essays in Elizabethan History, “for London prentices and the London mob, the seventeenth of November became henceforward a second Guy Fawkes day.”¹⁰⁴ The burning of effigies was a distinct connection between the celebrations on Guy Fawkes Day and the celebrations on the Accession of Queen Elizabeth’s Day. O.W. Furley reports that by 1673 the burning of the Pope in effigy became a custom when James had made the unpopular marriage with the Catholic Princess Mary of Modena.¹⁰⁵ The burning of the effigy of the Pope on Guy Fawkes night carried over to burning effigies on the Accession of Queen Elizabeth. The high point in the celebration of the

¹⁰³Thompson, E.P., Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture. (New York: The New Press, 1993), 481.

¹⁰⁴Neale, Essays in Elizabethan History, 15.

¹⁰⁵Furley, “The Pope-Burning Processions,” 17.

17th November was the Pope-burning processions throughout London and provincial townships. These processions were part of the total day's events which could last from early in the morning to late in the evening. The bonfires leading up to the effigy burnings were a catalyst in building excitement, especially in an anti-Catholic atmosphere which existed throughout most of England during this time. In 1673, Charles Hutton wrote that "The Pope and his Cardinals were, in Cheapside and other places, hung up and burned in their effigies. One told me he counted two hundred bonfires between Temple Bar and Aldgate."¹⁰⁶

Roy Strong provides a glimpse at a plausible explanation to the germination of the 17th celebration customs. While other earlier dates may apply, it was around this time that bells ringing for the service of the Queen became a popular event:

Annually on the 17 November the college inmates enjoyed a "gaudy day" in honour of their patron St. Hugh. It so happened about the year 1570 that some of the revellers went to the church of All Hallows to ring the bells for exercise. This resulted in the descent of the mayor, who charged them with popery for ringing a dirge for Queen Mary, to which one had the wit to reply that on the contrary it was for joy at the present Queen's accession. At this the mayor departed and ordered as many of the city bells as possible to be rung in the Queen's honour.¹⁰⁷

Another example of the origin of the celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Accession was provided by the contemporary historian, William Camden:

The twelfth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth being now happily expired, wherein some credulous Papists expected, according to the prediction of certain wizards, their Golden day — as they termed it — all

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p.17.

¹⁰⁷Roy C. Strong, "The Popular Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21, (1958), 88.

good men through England joyfully triumphed, and with thanksgivings, sermons in churches, multiplied prayers, joyful ringing of bells, running at tilt, and festival mirth began to celebrate the seventeenth day of November, being the anniversary day of the beginning of her reign: which, in testimony of their affectionate love towards her, they never ceased to observe as long as she lived.¹⁰⁸

No matter how the annual celebrations got their germination, the impetus behind their continuance grew throughout the Stuart dynasty. Hutton asserts that the celebration customs on the 17th November underwent a considerable decline through the latter years in the reign of Elizabeth. They picked up their tempo again by the late seventeenth century. There was a proverbial cultural pendulum which swayed to and fro, as Hutton describes, which swings from one extreme to the next (between popular and unpopular celebrations) creating this ebb and flow in the ceremonial rite of the 17th November. During the late sixteenth century, this pendulum had swung to one end of its arch; however, by the late seventeenth century, it had reached its other end.

A) Who participated in the celebrations of the 17th of November?

The vocabulary of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth was multi-faceted and filtered down through the levels between the elite and the populace in society. The processions were elaborately decorated and created for public appeal. The celebrations of the 17th November comprised of the ringing of bells and the burning of the effigy of the Pope or Devil. As the contemporary Charles Hatton described on the 17th of November 1673, London witnessed

‘mighty bonfires and the burning of a most costly Pope . . . his belly filled

¹⁰⁸Neale, Essays in Elizabethan History, 10.

full of live cats who squawled most hideously as soon as they felt the fire: the common people saying all the while it was the language of the Pope and the Devil in a dialogue betwixt them. A tierce of claret was set out before the Temple Gate for the common people.’¹⁰⁹

Hatton’s narrative shows that the celebrations of Queen Elizabeth’s Day were constructed for the populace. The Pope-burning processions were choreographed and constructed by the artisans and apprentices who used their spare time to construct the figures and floats.¹¹⁰ The commonality played a major role in the celebration of the 17th November, for without its part, the celebration would be drearily non-existent.

The participants of the Queen’s Day were much like those who celebrated the Gunpowder Treason Day. These two days were culturally linked because they were celebrating similar traditions. The heightened emotions and festive participation in the customs and traditions of the first celebration day (Gunpowder Treason Day) fed the second (Queen Elizabeth’s Day). A cross section of society can be drawn from an example of one of the largest celebrations given on the 17th of November, 1679:

A Bellman Ringing his Bell, and, with a dolesome Voice, crying all the way, Remember Justice Godfrey. Two Boys sate on each side the Pope. Never were the Balconies, Windows, and Houses, more filled, nor the Streets more thronged with Multitudes of People, all expressing their abhorrence of Popery, with continual Shouts and Acclamations; so that, in the whole Progress of their Procession by a modest computation, it is judged there could be no less than Two Hundred Thousand Spectators. Thus, in some Hours they arrived at Temple-Bar, where all the Houses seem’d to be converted into Heaps of Men, Women, and Children¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹Quoted in Furley, 17.

¹¹⁰Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 180.

¹¹¹The Protestant Post Boy, Nov.17-Nov.20, 1711.

This report shows the audience being men, women, and children, similar to the 5th of November. Equally similar were the participants comprised of the youth and men. The same social guidance and peer pressure which molded the actions of the youth on the 5th of November were equally applicable to the 17th of November. Except for the difference in days, there was little difference in either the audience or the participants of the Powder Plot Day or the Queen's Day throughout the later-Stuart period.

To further elucidate the popular interest in the celebration of the 17th November, Strong states that local celebrations "depended upon local interests and sympathies."¹¹² Therefore, the celebrations of the Queen's Day took on a popular character. The 17th November, like the 5th of November, became ingrained as part of the popular culture of England. However, there may have been further underlying facts which perpetuated the celebration of the 17th as a national festival. It is known that Queen Elizabeth delivered England from the clutches of Catholicism upon her accession to the throne. Although there may be a difference in the celebration principles between the 5th (which kept Popery from invading the country) and the 17th November (which stripped Popery away from England) in the eyes of the people of England, the underlying premise behind the celebration of these two annually popular events was they perpetuated Protestantism. The 5th of November was celebrated for the deliverance of the kingdom from arbitrary government and the Catholic menace, and although the day was continually celebrated to remember and commemorate the special day in Protestant history, the 17th November may have been celebrated for a deeper meaning the continual deliverance of England

¹¹²Strong, "The Popular Celebration," 91.

from the Catholic threat. Strong argues that

although it was a celebration of a deliverance from darkness, it was also constantly reiterated that the forces of evil still menaced England both within and without. The chaotic hordes of the Antichrist of Rome are only kept at bay while God's holy handmaiden rules. Chaos will be let loose if ever she ceases to guide the realm of England. It was an atmosphere charged with these thoughts that generated the fervent cult of the Queen.¹¹³

The people of England fervently believed in a 'cult' idealism and the celebration of the 17th was celebrated with annual regularity. Both the Gunpowder Plot Day and Queen Elizabeth's Day were celebrated in remembrance of the deliverance from Popery and generated the veneration of the crown which created the belief and faith in the powers of the throne and ruler. With this remembrance of the Queen and in celebration of the stronghold of Protestantism within England, the people of England felt confident that Catholicism had taken its last stand upon her shores. For both the commonality and the elite, their participation in the celebration of the Queen's Day was to continue the 'cult' of the Queen, foster national pride, praise the faith of Protestantism within the kingdom, and criticize the existence of Catholicism.

The processions of the 17th November were elaborate and detailed. They were outreaches of people's beliefs in the threat of Catholicism. Cressy adds that "the cult of Elizabeth grew directly in proportion to the perceived Catholic menace."¹¹⁴ Their feelings of fear and abhorrence of Popery grew from the enlightenment of Protestantism. It has been said that "Elizabethan Protestants held the 17th November represented more than the

¹¹³Ibid., 101.

¹¹⁴Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 136.

accession day of a monarch. Rather, it signified the turning point in England's religious history, a providential divide between the nightmare of popery and the promise of the development of God's true church."¹¹⁵ The Accession Day of the Queen represented a time where the people could celebrate. It was a day returned to the people for all the other saints holidays and pagan rituals which were stripped from public entertainment with the reformation of the 1530s. Neale states that the celebration of the 17th November brings the zeal of celebration back into the lives of the people of England for their older holidays were removed from their calendars. "In Catholic England," Neale asserts, "there had been saints' days galore to provide the people with Holy Days and fortify parish bell-ringers with practice, refreshment and fees. Protestant England cut down the number of saints and thereby deprived the people and their bell-ringers of much traditional festivity."¹¹⁶

B) What was the content of the celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's Day?

Like the 5th of November, the people of England celebrated the 17th November by beginning the day with the ringing of bells, or by singing patriotic and religious songs. Londoners constructed bonfires, danced and drank around the flames, and concluded the day with committing the effigy of the Pope or Devil to the flames and by igniting fireworks, squibs, or crackers. Queen Elizabeth's Day had much in common with the Gunpowder Plot Day; however, there were small inconsistencies between the two dates as will be illustrated. The celebration of the Accession of Queen Elizabeth's Day was the

¹¹⁵Ibid., 53.

¹¹⁶Neale, Essays in Elizabethan History, 10

commemoration of the Queen and the joy of her government, which began during her reign, whereas the Gunpowder Treason and Plot was simply the celebration of the deliverance from Popery and the survival and preservation of the king and England's current regime. The 17th November became a day of national festival for both court and 'crowd'.

Lavish pageants, processions, and immense spectacular events were prepared to excite the whole of London.¹¹⁷ Sheila Williams adds that it was during the exclusion crisis that "mighty bonfires and ye burning of a most costly pope, caryed by four persons in divers habits, and ye effigies of 2 devils whispering in his eares, his belly filled full of live cats who squawled most hideously."¹¹⁸ Not only were Pope-burnings significant to the celebration customs of the 17th November, but lyrical interludes filled the air of London. The most dramatic displays of Catholic bashing were in the form of Pope-burning, which was a major component in the critical display towards the religion of Rome. Although fireworks and bonfires were displayed to excite the populace, songs created to accompany the processions to incite the whole of London:

Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder and a Ghost!
We know not what you can desire or hope
To please you more, but burning of a Pope.¹¹⁹

These songs which wavered throughout much of the day and night of 17th November

¹¹⁷Sheila Williams, "The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679,1680 and 1681," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21, (1958), 105.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 105.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 105.

commemorated the day of the Queen, her reign, her religion, and added to the celebration of the people's national pride:

Cardinal Howard.
From York to London Town we come,
To talk of Popish Ire,
To Reconcile you all to Rome
And prevent Smithfield Fire.

The People Answer.
Cease! Cease thou Norfolk Cardinal,
See yonder stands Queen Bess,
Who sav'd our Souls from Popish Thrall,
O Queen Bess, Queen Bess, Queen Bess.

Your Popish Plot and Smithfield Threat,
We do not fear at all,
For Lot! beneath Queen Besses feet,
You fall, you fall, you fall.

Now God prevent Great CHARLES our King,
And tke all Honest men;
And Traytors all to Justice bring,
Amen, Amen, Amen.¹²⁰

Songs such as this represent the strong connection Queen Elizabeth had to English society. This lyrical piece rebukes the intervention of Roman involvement in English affairs and declares that England is protected from the threats of Catholicism by Queen Elizabeth. The English populace afforded itself equal protection under the reign of King Charles II; however, as Cressy concludes, the bells rang to such an extent on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth often drowned out the celebrations of the reigning regime.¹²¹ These types of songs reinforce the memory of Queen Elizabeth, sometimes

¹²⁰Domestick Intelligence, Or News both from City and Country, Fri. Nov.21, 1679.

¹²¹ Cressy, Bonfires and Bells.

with an overpowering zeal so as to cloud the importance of the reigning monarch.

An example of the magnitude of the psychological and physical effort the populace of England put into preparing for the ceremony of the Queen on her accession day was printed in the Domestick Intelligence in 1679. On the 17th of November 1679, the people of London assembled around a statue of Queen Elizabeth and a great bonfire in the city:

In Solemn burning of the Pope at *Temple-bar*, upon Monday last the seventeenth of *November*, in memory of that excellent Princess Queen *Elizabeth* . . . now in regard of the day, the Statue of Queen *Elizabeth* was adorned with a Crown of gilded Lawrel on her head, and a golden sheild in her hand, with this *Motto* inscribed thereon, THE PROTESTANT RELIGION, and MAGNA CARTA, several Flambeaus or lighted Torches being placed before her. [With the burning of the effigy of the Pope and the Devil] This last Act of His *Holiness's* Tragedy, was Attended with such a Mighty Shout of near Two Hundred Thousand People¹²²

This shows that the processions and celebrations of the 17th of November consisted of celebrants from all levels of society: commoner, the “middling sort,” and the elite. Such ceremonial rites were constructed and performed so that “we may hope it will frighten the *Popish* Faction, from proceeding in their Idle and Abortive *Plots*, since their is so little Likelihood that the People of *England* ever again to Submit to that Yoke of *Popery* and *Slavery*, from which their Fathers and Themselves have been so Happily Delivered.”¹²³ Not only was a statue of the Queen erected, but the people “adorned [her] with a Crown of gilded Lawrel” and set lit torches before her. This example shows the involvement of both the elite and the commoners. For instance, these “outside” burnings

¹²²Domestick Intelligence Or News both from City and Country, Fri. Nov.21, 1679.

¹²³Ibid.

suggest that the celebrations of the 17th of November involved a popular character. However, the populace could not afford to sponsor a statue of the late Queen, suggesting that the statue was provided by the elite. The combination between the provision of the statue and the construction of bonfires shows that there was an interaction between the elite and the commonality. The populace of England honored not only the Queen herself, but the myth of the Queen. England was awe struck by the power and prestige Queen Elizabeth wielded during her reign, and this sense of awe projected onto later generations, even after the death of the Queen herself. Thus, the people provided the Queen's statue with the inscription on her shield reading "The Protestant Religion, and Magna Carta." This was most likely undertaken because the people of England regarded Queen Elizabeth as a just and fair queen who upheld the faith of Protestantism for her country. This unanimity she had with the people connected her and branded her as England's rightful and prosperous ruler. One reason why Queen Elizabeth was treated with such gratitude by her people was hinted upon by Cressy when he stated that "Elizabeth was venerated as the embodiment of feminine virtues — religion, chastity, prudence, temperance, clemency, justice, fortitude, science, patience, and bounty — that set her above the normal human condition."¹²⁴ An important point must be taken into account which is the magnitude of the attendance at 17th November celebrations. These ceremonies were not simply popular, nor were they simply elite. With over two hundred thousand participants celebrating the accession day of Queen Elizabeth, there is a strong potential that the festivities included both elite and popular participants. Strong adds that "the festivities

¹²⁴Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 135.

on Accession Day were both courtly and popular . . . it was a national festival.”¹²⁵ Similar to the celebration on Guy Fawkes Day, the celebration on Queen Elizabeth’s Day involved political partisan influence. Each political group, Whig and Tory, respectively, celebrated the day with similar aggression and with equal politico-religious overtones. The Whigs burn effigies of the Pope, while the Tories burnt “Jack” the Presbyterian.

The celebration of the 17th took on its own character as it migrated from village to village and city to city where “individual town and villages developed local customs involving pageants, bonfires, or ritual doles to the poor . . .”¹²⁶ The most popular form of expression on the 17th November was the ringing of bells. Parish accounts display a rich history of expenses of food and drink for the bellmen. Bells were part of the rich social vocabulary of early modern Englishmen. Cressy states that “ringing in honour of Queen Elizabeth was a matter of local preference. The cult was strongest in the City and vicinity of London, with an echo in provincial towns.”¹²⁷ These pageants were filled with “costumed figures and representational effigies [which] were reminiscent of the parades and pageants of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, or the midsummer devil processions of an earlier era.”¹²⁸ The Accession of Queen Elizabeth’s Day involved dancing, bonfires, sponsorship of food and drink, guns, cannon fire, ringing of bells, squibs and crackers. Cressy adds that the popular ceremony and celebration of the 17th

¹²⁵Strong, “The Popular Celebration,” 87.

¹²⁶Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 54.

¹²⁷Ibid., 137.

¹²⁸Ibid., 179.

November included “drums, squibs, gunshots and shouts [which] built up the excitement for the evening procession . . . crowds lined the streets, and refreshments flowed freely. In addition to mocking effigies of the Pope and his minions there were floats representing Protestant heroes and popish villains.”¹²⁹ Although the celebration of the 17th November was originally constructed through elite means, it too, like the celebration of the 5th of November, took on a popular character unto itself. Davis elucidates on a cultural theme which applies to the seventeenth century celebrations which argues that “virtually all the popular recreations were initiated by laymen. They were not, however, “official” affairs . . . that is, city governments ordinarily did not plan, programme and finance them as they did the great Entry parades for royalty or other important personages or the celebration of peace treaties. Rather (like the Lord Mayor’s Show) the festivities were put on by informal circles of friends and family; sometimes by craft or professional guilds and confraternities.”¹³⁰

C) What was the form of the celebrations on Queen Elizabeth’s Day?

Reminiscent of the form of earlier pageants, the celebrations on the 17th November began early in the morning. The sharpest incline in the Pope-burning processions of the 17th November occurred during the years of the Popish Plot (1678-1681). Sheila Williams, in “The Pope Burning Processions of 1679, 1680, and 1681,” describes the content of the day’s events:

especially since there were ‘Wine and other Liquors’ for which the only

¹²⁹Ibid., 181.

¹³⁰Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule,” 42-43.

payment demanded was cries of 'No Popery' and 'God bless the King, Protestant Religion, the Church, and Dissenting Protestants, both whom God Unite. Amen.'¹³¹

Detailing the form, similar to both the 5th of November and the 29th of October, the celebrations on the 17th of November began early in the morning with the ringing of bells. Continuing all day long, the bells would ring until the processions. During the celebrations of the Pope-burnings, there were the descriptions of the generosity of libations for which the masses cried out in triumph for the health of the nation and Protestant religion.

One of the largest processions given on the Queen's Day was in 1679 during the Exclusion Crisis. Although the pageantry of the 17th resembled that of the 5th, the intensity and fervor of the Queen's Day processions seemed to overwhelm the street antics of the Gunpowder Treason Day. It seemed that the 17th was truly a national holiday for it was stated that the Queen's Day was 'a holidaye wich passed all the popes holidayes.'¹³² Upon the 17th of November the Bells began to Ring about three a Clock in the Morning, in the City of London; in Commemoration of that Blessed Protestant Queen, which was as follows:

Lastly, the Pope in a glorious Pageant or Chair of State, At his Back stood the Devil, his Holiness Privy Council, Hugging and Whispering him all the Way, and often instructing him aloud to destroy his Majesty, to contrive a pretended Presbyterian Plot, and to fire the City again; . . . Men, Women, and Children who were diverted with Variety of excellent Fire-Works: . . . Having entertained the thronging Spectators for Some Time with ingenious Fire-Works, a very great Bonfire was prepared at the

¹³¹Williams, "The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679,1680 and 1681," p.107.

¹³²Strong, p.87

Inner-Temple Gate, and his Holiness, was decently tumbled into the Flames. The same Evening there were Bonfires in most Streets of London, and universal Acclamations, crying Let Popery perish, and Papists with their Plots and Counter-Plots be for ever confounded, AMEN.¹³³

These processions were filled with floats, music and participants, who paraded the streets ending at Temple-Bar. Much of the pageantry of the 17th was reminiscent of the 5th of November. At Temple Bar, a great bonfire was constructed where the Pope was to be sacrificed with universal acclamations “Let Popery perish, and Papists with their Plots and Counter-Plots be for ever confounded, AMEN”.

Londoners were wakened at three in the morning on November 17th by the ringing of the church bells all over the city, and the excitement continued all day till five in the afternoon when the procession started on its way . . . the crowd was naturally greatest at the scene of the climax (the burning of the Pope).¹³⁴

Harris argues that the Pope-burning processions on 17 November, “marked the final triumph of protestant monarchy in England. The elaborate pageantry, the long-processions through the streets, and the general carnivalesque atmosphere was reminiscent of other civic spectacles.”¹³⁵ The popular character of the celebrations on the 17th of November mocked the elite driven ceremonies and pageants of the 29th of October.

III. The Lord Mayor’s Show on the 29th of October

The ceremonies of the 29th of October were very similar to those occurring on both the 5th and the 17th November; however, although the principal premise behind the

¹³³The Protestant Post-Boy, Sat. Nov. 17th - Tue. Nov. 20th, 1711

¹³⁴Williams, “The Pope-Burning Processions of 1679, 1680 and 1681,” 107.

¹³⁵Harris, “The Problem of ‘Popular Culture’,” 47.

day was different, the celebration customs and traditions contained many similarities. The Lord Mayor's Show on the 29th of October was a time where the passing of the old mayor and the coming of the new would be celebrated. On this day the Lord Mayor elect would take an oath before the presence of the king. This was the "official" ceremony surrounding the Lord Mayor's Show. The celebrations of the commonality were illustrated as distinct and separate ceremonies. Just as the 5th and the 17th November were separated into distinct spheres of participation in the celebration (between elite and commoner), so too was the celebration of the 29th of October. Harris argues that although the Lord Mayor's Show was elite driven, it still contained many popular characteristics. He states that

the annual Lord Mayor's Shows may be regarded as perhaps the classic, and most highly stylized, forms of public rituals of legitimation sponsored by the elite. They typically involved formal processions through the streets of the capital, an elaborate repertoire of pageants and street theatre, and would usually be followed by more informal celebrations in the form of bonfires and fireworks.¹³⁶

Although participation in the celebration held different weights for different people in London, it was a time when all of London came together again in communal interaction. The streets were filled with splendorous colors and jubilation, plays and pageants, music and noise where the elite and the commonality could, at times, infrequently interact together. Lacking the bonfires and fireworks displayed on the 29th of October, the Lord Mayor's Show was still a day which resembled much of the celebration of both the 5th and the 17th November.

¹³⁶Ibid., 46.

A) Who participated in the celebrations of the 29th of October?

Although it was customary for the plebeians and the patricians to participate in the festivities in a communal bonding rite, they kept their distinct social spheres intact throughout both the 5th and the 17th of November and the 29th of October. However, there was a major distinction between the ceremonial customs of October and November which entailed where the celebration customs originated. For on both the 5th and the 17th of November the major impetus behind the celebrations were from the commonality who took the national celebrations and turned them into their own. The ceremonies in November were carried on by the commonality in a popular culture unto itself, distinct from that high culture of the elite. However, the celebrations on the 29th of October took on a different form from that of customary celebrations in November. The central driving force for the Lord Mayor's Show was driven by the elite of the city. The pomp and circumstance was delivered and performed for the higher-order, while the commonality simply participated in the ceremonies and took advantage of the opportunity to revel and rough-house, drink and be merry. The pageantry was part of an elite popular culture where it was performed with annual regularity. This elite culture was central to the celebration rites of the Lord Mayor, his dignitaries, and the king.

An example of the participants in the celebrations of the 29th of October was presented in the London Triumphant in 1672:

the Children that sit in the Pageants, there refresh themselves, until his Lordship is glorified with the splendor and presence of his Loyal Highness the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, the Duke of Monmouth, the Arch-bishop

of Canterbury, and all other Bishops at this time in London.¹³⁷

The combination between the populace and the elite takes place during the processions of the Lord Mayor's Show. The youth of London participated in the celebrations with its elite. This interaction was standard, but, remained confined to the "official" processions. The separation of social spheres between the high and the low orders was prevalent in customary ceremonial days. Just as on both the 5th and 17th of November, the 29th of October too separated its celebration customs into segregated ceremonies. The commoners had their revel, riot, and ceremonial customs in the streets of London while the higher-order had their pageantry, dinners, banquets and balls. Even though they all celebrated the day's events communally, the social barriers between the commoner and the elite were infrequently permeated. The commoners had their events while the elite had its. However, the common strand of the three tiered social model filtered through all three customary ceremonies and celebration days.

Although there were some commoners who participated in the pageantry, they had an overall different experience than the elite. Like the 5th and the 17th November, the commonality enjoyed the festivities with shouts, waves, drink and general revelry¹³⁸ as Thomas Jordan's detailed description of the 1679 Lord Mayor's pageantry shows:

the disorder'd People below in the Street was an excellent Scene of confusion to the Spectators above in the Belconies, who like waves of the Sea, did in continual agitation, roul over one anothers necks like Billowd

¹³⁷Thomas Jordan, London Triumphant, (London, 1672), 12

¹³⁸Michael Burden, '*For the Lustre of the Subject*': *music for the Lord Mayor's Day in the Restoration*. Early Music. 23, (London: Oxford University Press, Nov. 1995) 585-602.

in the Ocean, and the Gallantry above were as pleasurable a sight to the Spectators below, where hundreds of various defensive postures were screw'd, for that prevention of fiery Serpents and Crackers that instantly assulted the Perukes of the Gallants, and the Merkins of the Madams. In that scene below, I saw a fellow carried in a throng of Squeezers, upon Men's backs like a Pageant for the space of thrity Yards; in all which time, being somewhat over-sensible of his Elevation, strutted, cock'd his Beaver, and rid in Triumph, 'till at last a new provocation of diversion separating the shoulders of his Supporters, drop'd him in a dismal dirty kennel, whil'st a race of fresh Gamesters ran over him.¹³⁹

The disorderly bands of people reveled and frolicked about in the streets like that on the 5th of November. As can be assumed, the mass hysteria produced by the participants was most likely performed by those described as “mob” participants. It simply was a time when the commoners of London quaffed and inebriated themselves, let down their sensibilities and partied with the remainder of the city. However, not all partying was alike. While the commonality danced, drank, and generally had a joyous time, the higher-order participated in the celebrations in a different manner. Among those present in the pageantry were the Livery, Batchelors, Budg-Batchelors, and Gentlemen-Ushers, along with a multitude of poor persons and Petitioners. Although the poor persons played a part in the ceremonies, they still did not participate with the upper-echelon that included the Master of Defence, Foot-Marshals, City-Marshals, Aldermen, the sponsoring Company, various members of the Court, and the Lord Mayor elect and present Mayor.¹⁴⁰

B) What was the content of the celebrations of the Lord Mayor's Show?

During the day of the Lord Mayor's Show, the streets of London were filled with

¹³⁹Thomas Jordan, London in Luster, (London, 1679), 16.

¹⁴⁰Thomas Jordan, London in its Splendor, (London, 1673), 5.

revel and celebration. The content of the processions detailed people dressed in fanciful colors, elaborate gowns with satin hoods¹⁴¹, plush coats, chains of gold, white hats, colored staffs and displayed banners of diverse ‘colours’¹⁴² and some with flags and streamers.¹⁴³ The shows and pageants included bands, brass instrumentals, or percussions and other various sorts of musical instrumentation, as well as lyrical songs. The elaborate costumes for the celebration were dramatic where “the Petitioners, and other poor people (in number a 100) are habited in Blew Gowns, Flat Caps, and Crimson Fustian Sleeves . . . Forty other Petitioners in Blew Coats and Copped Caps . . . [while] Five Pages in Watchet coloured habits, trim’d with white, and white Stockings, blew Garters, white Caps, [and] blew Cap-bands . . .”¹⁴⁴

Thomas Jordan narrates the events which had taken place during the Cloth-workers-Trade pageant in 1677 when he stated:

Whilst others, more jocose and at liberty sing a Song in Commendation of the Cloth-workers-Trade, and at the end of the Song, certain Rusticks, and Shepherd-like persons, Pipe, Dance, and exercise the activity of their limbs, in Gambolling, Tumbling and Capering, with devers mimical motions and ridiculous actions; the whole Pageant being a piece of ingenious Confusion, or a Comical Scene of delightful disorder.¹⁴⁵

While the commonality danced and sang in the streets, the elite exercised its own forms

¹⁴¹John Tatham, Londons Triumphs, (London, 1663), 1.

¹⁴²Ibid., (London, 1664), 1.

¹⁴³Thomas Jordan, London in its Splendor, (London, 1673), 7.

¹⁴⁴John Tatham, Londons Triumphs, (London, 1664), 2.

¹⁴⁵Thomas Jordan, London Triumphs: Structures & Pageants, (London, 1677), 20.

of entertainment in seclusion from the plebeians. They amused themselves with dinning, dancing, and music (instrumental and lyrical). The differences between the two styles of lyrical instrumentation, that for the commonality and that performed for the elite, were displayed in the lyrics themselves. For the populace, it praised the fortitude of hard work and labor for themselves and the blessing of having a generous and gracious King, Queen, and Mayor. However, the elite songs had a different tone. They expressed their delight and joy by extending welcoming gesture to the guests; they offered a thankful blessing for their bounty of food and entertainment and finally toasted to the health of the King, Queen and Mayor.

Popular Song:

Of the Clothworkers Trade
There much has been said,
Wherein there has nothing bin util,
But all have set forth
Its Excellent worth,
How good, how convenient and util.

We hate to live idle,
Our Trade is our bridle,
We are helpful to every poor Neighbour;

We break no Love-leagues,
Have no Plots or Intrigues,
But lawfully live by our Labour.

Whilst my Lord is before us,
Let's all sing a Chorus,
Containing a Cordial Prayer;

May God from his Throne
Shower his Blessing upon
The King, Queen, Duke, & Lord Mayor.

Elite Song:

Let all that invites
To Joy and Delights,
From every Invention that rare is,
Be sweetly exprest
To welcom the Guest
Of my Lord Mayor, and new Lady
Mairress.

Their Welcomes are good,
And so is their Food,
Their Table is imbroider'd with
plenty.

Here's Ciaret and Sack
Can call your years back
From fifty to five and twenty.

Then fall to your Fare,
Since welcome you are,
Let bounty with freedom perswade
ye,
And a brisk Health begin
To the King and the Queen
And the next to my Lord and my
Lady.

Let's Drink, Dance and Sing,
'Tis the Chamber of the King,
May Love, Peace and Plenty-----
So shall it be free
From all Treacherie,
Whilst Prator and Censors secure
it.¹⁴⁶

This shows that while the popular songs were sung for the people to entertain them and possibly solidify their work ethic the elite songs were sung for the flattery and praise of the host of the ceremony and accompanying guests. The songs were created and performed for their selected audience. The magnitude of the processions and pageantry were possibly performed for a particular ceremonial rite the “mock” and spiritual protection of the city. In 1664, Thomas Jordan accounted a scene in a pageant where:

This last scene is made in manner of a Mountain, on the Top whereof Magnanimity is mounted on a Lyon, holding a Banner of St. George in one hand, and a Sword in the other. The Lyon turning his head to Magnanimity, and close by him on each side, are feeding Lambs, Goats, Kids, and Beavers; on the side of the Mountain Bears, Wolves, and other Beasts of Prey, in a snarling posture, envying the happiness of the Lambs being under the Protection of the Lyon.¹⁴⁷

This scene depicts the Lord Mayor as the Lyon surveying his kingdom. Everything under his rule is under his protection thereby offering protection to the citizens of London, who in this example would be the Lambs, Goats, Kids, and Beavers. The pomp and circumstance of the pageantry upholds this tradition of ceremonial protection. To further extend the celebration customs of the elite, after the “Banners flying, Trumpets sounding,

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁴⁷ John Tatham, Londons Triumphs, (London, 1664), 13.

and Drums beating” the Lord Mayor and his entourage of official and personal guests would depart for a banquet. The music would continue “until his Lordship and his Attendants be entered into Guild-hall to Dinner, in order not only for the welcoming his and the Sheriffs Guests, but also for their own refreshment.”¹⁴⁸ It was after the day of ceremonial splendor in 1672, when they concluded their

Ceremonial and Customary Duties and Obligations, as, an Oath to be True and Faithful to his Majesty and Government established, Sealing of Writs in the Court there held, and having taken leave of the Lords and Barons of the Exchequer¹⁴⁹ they made their way into Guild-hall “after which, the Companies repair to the Hall to Dinner.”¹⁵⁰

C) What was the form of the processions and ceremony of the 29th of October?

The London Triumphs and pageants, similar to the form in celebration traditions behind the 5th of November and the 17th of November, began as early as four in the morning. Regarding the “worthily honoured . . . Company of Haberdashers” the business of the day began where “the petitioners [met] at Four of the Clock in the Morning. The Batchellors at Six. The Livery at Seven.”¹⁵¹ As tradition dictated, the pageants organized into formation ranked two by two. They followed the traditional route of the processions of the Lord Mayor’s Showing:

In this Equipage two by two, they march from *Skinners-Hall* towards the

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Thomas Jordan, London in its Splendor, (London, 1673), 7.

¹⁵⁰Thomas Jordan, London Triumphant, (London, 1672), 12.

¹⁵¹John Tatham, Londons Triumphs, (London, 1664), 1.

Lord Maior's House in *Mincing-Lane*, together with the old Lord Maior and his attendants, the whole body march towards *Guildhall*, his Lordship enters his Barge at the Stairs next *Westminster*, the Company enters theirs at *Merchant Taylors Stairs*, The Lord Maior and the several Companies of *London* being thus imbarqued, they make all speed to *Westminster*, where by the way several peices of Ordinances are discharged, placed on the *Bank-side* to that purpose, for congratulating his Lordship.¹⁵²

The processions on the Lord Mayor's Day were formalized and structured, particularly more so than on either the 5th of November or the 17th of November because the Lord Mayor's Show was designed for the elite. The processions began across the city; however, like Guy Fawkes Day and Queen Elizabeth's Day where they ended at the Temple Bar, so too does the celebration of the Lord Mayor's Show have an equally special conclusive ending. After the procession picked up the new Lord Mayor at Guildhall, they traveled through the city until they reached Westminster where the "official" ceremony of the Lord Mayor's Show took place. The ranking followed in orderly succession whereby "between each Distinction placeth Gentlemen Ushers, Banners, and Military Musick (except in the Van of the Petitioners, who have no Gentlemen Ushers.) And thus march."¹⁵³ The day was divided into numerous pageants, shows, speeches and songs. While one procession was completing its showing, another was commencing. The organization for a pageant displayed for the Lord Mayor elect, Oct.29, 1663 included those "bearing Ensignes, Serjeant Trumpet, Drum-Major, and each other Trumpet, Drum and Fife, together with the several Marshalls, Master of Defence,

¹⁵²Ibid., (London, 1663), 4.

¹⁵³Ibid., (London, 1664), 2.

and the other Attendants, have each of them the Companies Colours in their hats.”¹⁵⁴

The participation in the celebrations of November and October by the commonality and the elite remained fairly consistent. Analyzing who participated in the English customs and traditions is important to understanding the meanings behind the celebrations themselves. Although the adults and elderly held a portion of the participation in the ritual calendar, the participation of the youth plays an important role in defining the character of the annual celebrations. Because the adolescents and apprentices were involved in the ceremonies of November to such a high degree, the celebrations of the Gunpowder Day and the Anniversary of the Queen Elizabeth could be considered dominated by the youth. These two days in the ritual calendar could be seen as the inverse of the Lord Mayor’s Day for the commonality ruled the day and night with their street antics, street theatre, bonfires, public dancing, bells, beer barrels, and fireworks. Although the elite had its own private celebrations and infrequently interacted with the commonality, the celebrations in November were characteristic of popular culture or ‘plebeian culture’. The Lord Mayor’s Day was controlled by the elite for the elite, contrasting the November days which were dominated by the commonality.

The content and form of the processions and celebrations of November and October were amazingly similar. The celebrations of these three days contained rather common customs and traditions. For the commonality there was the ringing of bells, the shooting of guns and cannon fire, the display of fireworks, squibs and crackers, bonfires and the burning of effigies (only for the celebrations of November), public dancing, street

¹⁵⁴Ibid., (London, 1663), 2.

processions, instrumental music, rough music, beer and wine. For the elite there was the interaction between the masses and themselves (surrounding bonfires and processions); however, they held their own private banquets, dancing balls, plays, and concerts. Beyond the infrequent contact made between the two classes, the elite remained distant from the commoners. The format between the annual celebrations of November and October were strikingly similar. The days began with the ringing of bells between three and five in the morning while the organization of the processions commenced. Traditionally the processions in November embarked from their sponsor's designation and ended at Temple-Bar, while the processions in October commenced from Guildhall and ended at Westminster. On all three occasions, the celebrations traditionally continued from daybreak to early morning hours until finally the participants and audience disbanded.

The people of England in the late-Stuart period were connected to the ritual year through what historians define as "calendrical consciousness." There was a distinct popular culture evident through the celebration customs and traditions of November and October. This strand of popular culture bridged three different dates connecting national, patriotic, and ecclesiastical themes together. This thesis argues that the commonality were not only conscious of their actions and their national, patriotic, and ecclesiastical implications, but brazen about what their meanings implied. Although the origin of these annual days were contrived by the elite, the commonality, in choosing to continue to celebrate these days, manipulated the content and form to suit its needs and wants, thereby, reflecting a political consciousness. At least for the celebrations in November,

the ritual calendar was dominated by the designs of the commonality and its distinct character that it brought forth called popular culture.

Chapter 3: November celebrations after 1715

The customs and traditions of the ritual calendar declined, as Hutton argues, during the late sixteenth century with the 'reformation of manners,' and the pattern of celebration continued to decline into the early Stuart period. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the extent that the seasonal celebrations of the 5th of November, 17th of November, and the 29th of October continued beyond the early eighteenth century. Cressy adds that the calendar became an important factor in defining the vocabulary of a Protestant national culture. His general thesis uncovers the social interaction between the elite and the populace to discover how the people of England experienced events during the ritual calendar. Cressy's research and evidence extend into the late seventeenth century, further than Hutton's evidence shows. However, Cressy's argument abruptly ends shortly after the end of the Exclusion Crisis. This suggests that Cressy, like Hutton, believes that there was a decline in the celebrations of the ritual calendar, but that this decline began towards the end of the Stuart reign instead of near its beginning. The distinct ringing of bells in the late seventeenth century commemorate the patriotic and Protestant holidays. "National and dynastic ringing continued during the 1690s," as Cressy states, "with a greater cost and intensity than in previous reigns. This may have been done in thanks for the turning from Catholicism, to generate loyalty to William and Mary, and perhaps, too, because people enjoyed the sound and the spectacle."¹⁵⁵ Bells were not the only source for commemorating festive occasions, bonfires, guns, cannon fire, fireworks, public dancing and shouting remained consistent reminders of the ritual

¹⁵⁵Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 79.

calendar. Although the ritual calendar remains present in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Hutton's theme on the decline of the ritual calendar returns to haunt the celebrations of November circa 1715.

Although the cultural pendulum swung from one extreme to the other in regards to the extent and duration of bonfires and bells during the Stuart regime, the fervor of annual celebration continued after the Stuart dynasty. Cressy provides evidence of the continuance of celebration customs when he states that:

along with parades and protests, the bonfires were a feature of outdoor politics as the seventeenth century gave way to the eighteenth. Linking immediate political circumstances to memories of past traditions, celebration and commemoration, their purpose was to impress, to demonstrate, and to proclaim, as well as to mobilize and to entertain. The tradition was by no means extinguished with the passing of the Stuart dynasty. Bonfires galore greeted the Hanoverian dynasty.¹⁵⁶

With the "reformation of manners" in decline during the later sixteenth century, the sparks of traditional merry-making began to rise. Hutton asserts that "by the end of the Elizabethan period there were signs of a sentimental reaction in favour of old-style popular merry-making among writers and their patrons."¹⁵⁷ This shows a reaction by the semi-literate (populace) and literate (educated) bodies in society. The reaction of the elite filtered throughout society, involving the interaction between the elite and the populace. It is this rise in the rites of the seasonal calendar that gives credence to the assertion that this cultural swing in traditional and customary celebration patterns lasted through the Stuart reigns and into the modern period. Cressy reminds us that the celebrations and

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁷Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 152.

commemoration of historic days are celebrated for diverse reasons thereby binding one generation to the next. This chapter bridges the gap between the later-Stuart period and the twentieth century in regards to the celebration customs and traditions of the English autumn ritual calendar year. It examines the celebrations of the Powder Plot, the Queen's Day, and the Lord Mayor's Show to discover whether these annual celebrations actually declined circa 1715 or continued into later periods.

I. The celebration of the Gunpowder Treason Plot

The celebrations of the 5th of November began during the reign of King James I. After threatening to be replaced by the 17th of November, Guy Fawkes celebrations continued into the eighteenth century and nineteenth century with loyal esteem, but the meaning changed between the early Stuart and Hanoverian periods. Since its discovery, the celebrations of Guy Fawkes Day were of national interest. The Plot “ had been aimed at King James, but his entire family, government and nation had been threatened; all had been blessed with miraculous preservation. The deliverance was national, so the celebration continued under James successors.”¹⁵⁸ Robert D. Storch, author of “Please to Remember the Fifth of November,” argues against the assertion that the 5th of November was an elite driven institution. He contends that the celebrations on the Powder Plot day were dominated by the commoners who orchestrated the celebrations and created a national Protestant popular culture. Storch states that “the Fifth had been of interest to the upper classes because it was a commemorative rite marking the failure of a plot which, in their view, could have changed history and suppressed ‘English Liberty’. It

¹⁵⁸Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 150.

symbolised the survival of certain institutions -- even the nation itself.”¹⁵⁹ However, he responds next by contending that the celebrations of the Fifth were dominated by the plebeian class. It was the plebeian element of society, Storch argues, who “made and conducted bonfires, organised processions, identified persons to be vilified, constructed effigies, directed crowds and collected funds.”¹⁶⁰

The customs, traditions, and conditions surrounding the celebration of the Gunpowder Plot changed between the early eighteenth century and the nineteenth century. The street antics became more politicized, the character of the celebrations involved personal attacks against local villains represented in charivaris, and the commemoration of a national and religious holiday was turned into an annual day for revenge. Storch provides credence to the roving gangs which began to emerge in the mid-nineteenth century. With the withdrawal of the elite from the celebration of the 5th of November,

the Fifth more and more became a vehicle for the vilification of local figures, [and] this withdrawal became permanent. When official participation ceased, manifestations were left to be exclusively mounted by plebeian elements. This helps to account for the appearance in the nineteenth century of new phenomenon, the bonfire societies or gangs, whose function was to organise and stage bonfires and give direction to the crowds they led.¹⁶¹

Attempts to stop the bonfire societies from organizing or creating an uprising evoked

¹⁵⁹

Robert D. Storch, Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 72.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 78.

¹⁶¹Ibid, 72.

violence and threats as indicated by this 1867 threat against the mayor of Exeter:

it will be to your sorrow if you dare . . . interfear [sic] with our rights and usage which has not been interfeared [sic] with for centuries. Fine one if you dare; look out for your shrubery [sic] and your cot [sic] if you do when you little think of it.¹⁶²

The celebrations of the 5th of November in the nineteenth century drew heavily upon the rich vocabulary of the plebeian culture of previous centuries. The lower orders instituted E.P. Thompson's rough music and Bercé's charivari throughout their ceremonies. Like the charivaris of early modern France, England drew from these and turned the Fifth into a day of public mockery and a re-institution of the community's norms. Berce describes the charivari as an institution which "were, in their day, the token of an unquestioned solidarity which was felt by the inhabitants of every village and district. Through them the population showed that it thought as one."¹⁶³ Berce further adds that "popular culture takes its character from original creativity pertaining to the lowest social orders. It follows, therefore, that those participating in popular revolts had their own way of thinking and acting, illustrated by the activities of peasant assemblies, the choice of arms and songs, the content of their manifestos and the nicknames of their leaders,"¹⁶⁴ which is no more evident than in the nineteenth century celebration of the 5th of November by the plebeian classes. The customs and traditions existent in nineteenth century England were similar to those in sixteenth and seventeenth century France as Bercé, Thompson, and

¹⁶²Ibid., 72-73.

¹⁶³Berce, The History of Peasant Revolts, 30.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 335.

Davis illustrate through the use of rough music and charivari rituals. These ritual customs were designed as a form of punishment by a community whose social norms had been broken. Whether condemning an adulterous affair, the marriage of an elderly man to a young woman, or husband beatings, the charivari and rough music attempted to deter deviations from the norm. The youth's victims were drawn from a variable host of public enemies. The rich vocabulary illustrated by the lower ranks on the Fifth "increasingly drew on a rich symbolic tradition of popular justice. The bonfire gang frequently decided the figure(s) to be burned in effigy. Those burned could be remote figures (the Pope), offenders against local standards of behavior, or outsiders threatening to upset neighbourhood affairs. Procedures could be highly formalised."¹⁶⁵ For example, reports came from Devon where effigies were often "paraded to rough music — whistle and kettle or tinpot bands. After 1850 the Fifth increasingly incorporated actual domestic charivaris for adulterers, irresponsible fathers and child-abusers in Devon."¹⁶⁶

An early nineteenth century contemporary commented that the youth of London would first prepare a bonfire for the burning of the effigy of Guido Fawkes and secondly, create a 'Guy' to tote around the city streets. Because of these boy's appetite for destruction and lawlessness it was documented that

ill [was] sure to betide the owner of an ill-secured fence; stakes [were] extracted from hedges, and branches torn from trees; . . . deserted building yield[ed] up their floorings; unbolted flip-flapping doors [were] released from their hinges as supernumeraries; and more burnables [were] deemed

¹⁶⁵Storch, Popular Culture and Custom, 73.

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

lawful prize than the law allow[ed].¹⁶⁷

These boys would pilfer villages and towns alike begging for faggots; however, if they were refused they would retort in unison:

If you don't give us one
We'll take two,
The better for us, sir,
And worse for you.¹⁶⁸

The second necessary component for the celebration of the Gunpowder Treason Plot was the making of the “Guy”. Often he was constructed out of straw and materials of dress which were commonly an “old coat, waistcoat, breeches, and stockings . . . his hose and coat [were] frequently ‘a world too wide;’ in such cases his legs [were] infinitely too big, and the coat [was] ‘hung like a loose sack about him.’ A barber’s block for the head [was] ‘the very thing itself;’ chalk and charcoal [made] capital eyes and brows . . .”¹⁶⁹ They finished him off with a stiff paper hat “painted and knotted with paper strips”¹⁷⁰ and often decorated with ribbon. However, the “Guy” was not completed until he was dressed with a lantern in one hand and matches in the other. When the Plot was discovered, Guy Fawkes was found dressed as a servant keeping watch on thirty-six barrels of gunpowder and on his body were found a lantern in one hand, a tinder-box in the other with three matches. He was documented as saying upon his arrest that “it was

¹⁶⁷The Everyday Book, v.1 London, 1430 (1825).

¹⁶⁸Ibid., v.2, 1379 (1826).

¹⁶⁹The Everyday Book, v.1, 1430 (1825).

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

the devil and not God that was the discoverer” of the Plot.¹⁷¹

At bonfires where the effigy of Guy Fawkes was to be burnt, prior to his committal to the flames, he would be tortured by the commonality surrounding the flames. It was documented that according to custom, the “poor Guy [was] shot at by all who have the happiness to possess guns for the purpose, and pelted with squibs, crackers, etc.”¹⁷² A witness to the celebrations of the 5th of November in 1827 stated: “I remember, on one occasion, hearing the guns firing as I lay in bed between two and three o’clock in the morning. The public-house is kept open nearly all night. Ale flows plentifully, and it is not spared by the revellers. They have a noisy chorus, which is intended as a toast to his majesty, it runs thus:--”

My brave lads remember
The fifth of November,
Gunpowder treason and plot,
We will drink, smoke, and sing, boys,
And our bells they shall ring, boys,
And here’s health to our king, boys,
For he shall not be forgot.¹⁷³

The ringing of chorus lines throughout the seventeenth century did not end with the passing of the throne from one ruler to the next. Seventeenth century lyrics were passed onto generations to come. Mid-eighteenth century compositions were similar to the following versus:

¹⁷¹Ibid., 1434.

¹⁷²The Everyday Book, v.2, 1380.

¹⁷³Ibid.

Please to remember the fifth of November
Gunpowder treason and plot;
We know no reason, why gunpowder treason
Should ever be forgot!
Holla boys! holla boys! Huzza — a — a!

A stick and a stake, for king George's sake,
A stick and a stump, for Guy Fawke's rump!
Holla boys! holla boys! huzza — a — a¹⁷⁴

Revels of the 5th of November resounds throughout the nineteenth century, too, whereas another verse common to the revelers of England, as quoted by Sir Henry Ellis in his edition of Brand's Popular Antiquities, are sung:

The fifth of November,
Since I can remember,
Gunpowder treason and plot:
This is the day that God did prevent,
To blow up his king and parliament.
A stick and a stake,
For Victoria's sake;
If you won't give me one,
I'll take two:
The better for me,
And the worse for you.¹⁷⁵

Songs such as this where the reigning ruler was commemorated in the same verses as Queen Bess are a positive feature. This shows that the populace is conveyed the message that they felt as confident under the reigning government as they did (or would have felt) under Queen Elizabeth. Similar to the songs representative of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, these nineteenth century songs illustrate the violent nature of

¹⁷⁴Ibid., v.1, 1431.

¹⁷⁵The Book of Days, 550.

the 5th of November.

Some of the more memorable events on the 5th of November from years prior had taken place in Lincoln's Inn Fields and in Clare-market where exceptional bonfires, merriment, and revelry occurred. In Lincoln's Inn Fields, there were over two-hundred cartloads of faggots to feed the raging bonfires were more than thirty "Guys" were to be burnt on gibbets and consumed by the flames. In Clare-market butchers paraded through the streets clanging together bones creating their own 'rough music' typically called 'marrow-bone-and-cleaver' music.¹⁷⁶ These butchers "thrashed each other 'round about the wood-fire,' with the strongest sinews of slaughtered bulls . . . by ten o'clock, London was so lit up by bonfires and fireworks, that from the suburbs it looked in one great heat."¹⁷⁷

The growth in the celebration of the 5th of November continued well into the nineteenth century. Even though reformers desired to restrict the festive culture and attacked popular celebrations, as Hutton states, to "enforce a stricter standard of sexual morality and of personal decorum . . . to create a more orderly and sober, as well as more pious, society,"¹⁷⁸ the celebrations of the Gunpowder Plot continued. Protestantism fostered a newly developed culture in England which provided new alternatives to older customs, and this was provided by the new national calendar festival.¹⁷⁹ As shown

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷The Everyday Book, v.1, 1433 (1825).

¹⁷⁸Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 111.

¹⁷⁹Ibid., 146.

through newspaper articles from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the celebration customs of the 5th of November did not decay, but through the dynastic changes some celebration customs were quieted or muted altogether for the sake of preserving the status quo among the politico-religious leaders. For example, the London Gazette had not reported the celebrations of the 5th of November throughout the reign of King James II due to his Catholicism. This suggests that the elite celebrations on the Powder Plot may have been silenced. Since the London Gazette was an “official” newspaper, it infrequently reported on the daily activities of the commonality, thereby leaving open the plausibility that the Gunpowder celebrations continued among the lower orders. However, after the changing of the guard when (Protestant) William uprooted James from the throne in the Glorious Revolution (1688-1689), the celebration of the 5th of November was again reported. If the celebration of the Gunpowder Treason Day had taken place prior to the reign of King James II and continued after the reign of King William, and knowing that anti-Catholic demonstrations occurred in the reign of King James, the three years of his reign could have simply shown a decrease in the officially sanctioned celebration customs, whereas the populace continued as custom permitted. The celebrations behind the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot were created to commemorate the monarchy, but it was also a day to attack Catholicism.¹⁸⁰ This gave the people of England ample opportunity and reason to continue their national celebrations of the 5th of November. As Cressy points out, “the annual celebration was a binding

¹⁸⁰Ibid., 182.

ingredient in the developing mix of a national political culture.”¹⁸¹ Another example of the annual celebration in the later-Stuart period is shown through a contemporary cartoon drawn in 1849. It details the celebrants (youth and adult), illustrates the interaction between the two dominant cultures (elite and non-elite), shows the content of the celebrations, and provides some evidence of the form of the “informal” processions. This illustration of the celebration of the 5th of November in the nineteenth century symbolizes the character and customs of the autumn ritual calendar year.

Storch recognizes the three tier model of society in England, he also describes two distinct sets of culture extant within the celebrations of the Fifth. Apart from the infrequent interaction between the elite and the commonality, there existed the celebration customs and traditions of the elite and populace. Storch asserts that “even where popular manifestations were countenanced by gentry or town authorities, two distinct (but linked) ‘versions’ existed. An example of the annual celebration in the later-Stuart period is shown through a contemporary cartoon drawn in 1849. It details the celebrants (youth and adult), Another example of the annual celebration in the later-Stuart period is shown through a contemporary cartoon drawn in 1849. It details the celebrants (youth and adult), illustrates the interaction between the two dominant cultures (elite and non-elite), shows the content of the celebrations, and provides some evidence of the form of the “informal” processions. This illustration of the celebration of the 5th of November in the nineteenth century symbolizes the character and customs of the autumn ritual

¹⁸¹Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 146.

calendar year.illustrates the interaction between the two dominant cultures (elite and non-elite), shows the content of the celebrations, and provides some evidence of the form of the “informal” processions. This illustration¹⁸² of the celebration of the 5th of November in the nineteenth century symbolizes the character and customs of the autumn ritual calendar year. In Exeter

the official version consisted of church-bell ringing, official processions, prescribed sermons and illumination of municipal premises; the plebeian version centered upon the



assembly in the cathedral yard, with its bonfires, tumult and effigy-burnings.”¹⁸³ Peter Burke describes a world turned upside down in which popular customs and social stereotypes and norms are inverted. This venting or role reversal allowed the public to set the limits of control within their community. This carnivalesque atmosphere which accompanied the Fifth brought “a general breakdown or reversal of the customary order

¹⁸²

C. Northgate Parkinson, Gunpowder, Treason and Plot, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), Illustration 22.

¹⁸³Storch, Popular Culture and Custom, 73.

and was a classical day of licence. A carpenter or butcher could appear as a woman or archbishop, disguise himself, carry arms, discharge fireworks and burn local big-wigs in effigy.”¹⁸⁴

Since the later-Stuart period, the customs and traditions surrounding the celebrations on the 5th of November were drastically altered by the nineteenth century. The celebrations involved more participation from the youth where they not only were forward with their intentions, but offensive. They toted a stuffed or painted “Guy” around the streets begging for change. If they were refused, the youth became violent and destructive. This medley between the youth and the change givers was a balance in the interaction between the elite and the populace. In addition to these changes in the customs and traditions of the celebration of the Powder Plot, the youth combined the vocabulary of rough music and the charivari to their bag of tricks. Whereas in the later-Stuart period the effigies of the Pope, the devil, and Guido Fawkes were publicly humiliated, tortured, and burnt, in the nineteenth century, the entire community was under attack. Every social deviant who broke the norms of the community opened himself up to the “justice” of the youthful gangs. Although social deviants were punished, the communities allowed the carnival vocabulary to permeate traditional roles where role-reversal was the norm. While non-existent in the Powder Plot celebrations of the later-Stuart period, this role-reversal helped establish and strengthen the social norms of the community. The customs and traditions which governed the vocabulary of the participants and audience of the 5th of November deviated from the original background

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 73.

of the celebration which commemorated the nation, the monarchy, and Protestantism. The popular culture of the autumn ritual calendar in the nineteenth century added the impact of the community's conformity to ritual and customary social norms.

II. The celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's Day

Even though the ceremony of the 17th of November deteriorated in the late sixteenth century and the celebration customs were not followed as stringently as when Elizabeth's reign was in its youth, these customs did make a comeback during the Stuart dynasty. Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth was continued with near annual regularity throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Cressy states that "by the end of Elizabeth's reign coronation day was firmly established in the national calendar . . ." ¹⁸⁵ while regular expenditure of the ringing of bells in churchwardens' accounts "continued well into the seventeenth century long after the death of the queen." ¹⁸⁶ The celebration of the Accession of Queen Elizabeth became such an annual event that it began competing with the celebration day of the current living king. In the study of churchwardens' accounts, if the amounts paid to the ringers are any indication to the desire for celebration spirit or enthusiasm, the celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Day rang louder and more vigorously than any other day on the national calendar. ¹⁸⁷ While the bells rang for Stuart royalty, as Cressy elucidates, the bells

¹⁸⁵Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 54.

¹⁸⁶Ibid., 56.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., 59.

seemed “to have a special fondness for the virgin queen.”¹⁸⁸ Hutton’s research concluded that the seasonal ceremonies for Queen Elizabeth underwent a definite period of decline beginning in the “middle of the 1560s and remained steady until the end of the reign,”¹⁸⁹ but the cultural transformation known as the ‘reformation of manners’ began a steady turnaround in the last years of Elizabeth’s tenure. Hutton concludes that “whereas the decline of the festivities continued steadily beyond the end of the reign, in the last years of Elizabeth a revival of local interest in the liturgical year began.”¹⁹⁰

Unlike the celebrations of the 5th of November, the celebration customs of the 17th of November did not continue as far into the eighteenth century. Although the cult of Elizabeth furnished generations of popular and elite persons seasons of good cheer, religious festivity and prosperous activity and provided for an atmosphere rich in political vivaciousness, Hutton’s cultural pendulum had swung around again. Written in 1864, a commentary on the dissolution of the celebration of Queen Elizabeth’s Day provides some illumination to its mysterious decline. An attempt was made to reconstruct the excitement of the celebration’s earlier customs and traditions which were inflamed by the Sacherverell incident and the fears surrounding the Pretender, but the entertainments were silenced and prevented through governmental intervention. Near the end of Queen Anne’s reign, a contemporary narrated the suppression of the celebration of the Queen’s Day providing some insight into the ritual celebrations’ decline:

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 71.

¹⁸⁹Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 119.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 121.

The very proper suppression of all this absurd profanity was construed into a ministerial plot against the Hanoverian succession. The accession of George I, a few years afterwards, quieted the fears of the nation, and 'Queen Elizabeth's Day' ceased to be a riotous political anniversary.¹⁹¹

III. The celebrations of the Lord Mayor's Show

The celebration of the Lord Mayor's Show was a celebration which surpassed others in the ritual calendar. Like many annual celebrations during the Civil War, the Lord Mayor's Show was discontinued until the Restoration. Wavering during the Interregnum, this ritual celebration remained steadfastly celebrated throughout the early seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Unlike other ritual celebrations, like the Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's Day, the Lord Mayor's celebration was unhampered by Hutton's cultural pendulum. Could the continuance of the Lord Mayor's Show be connected to the fact that it was sponsored by the elite for the elite, while the Gunpowder Day and Queen Elizabeth's Day were dominated by the commonality? Hutton illuminates this question by asserting that "eighteenth century England was rich in civic ceremony and display, but it tended to be associated with political and administrative occasions such as the inaugurations of officials, local and parliamentary elections, fairs, royal accessions, coronations and visits, and national victories and treaties."¹⁹² Not only did the tradition of celebration continue into the nineteenth century, but the celebrations of the Lord Mayor's Show continue to this day in the city of London.

The celebrations of the autumn ritual calendar in England became strained as

¹⁹¹The Book of Days, vol.II, 1864, 590.

¹⁹²Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 230.

some customs and traditions altered, while others began to disappear into the eighteenth century. The celebrations of the 5th and 17th of November and the 29th of October continued through the late-Stuart dynasty, while some of the celebrations began to wither and decline circa 1715. Hutton's theory of the cultural pendulum is correct in that the celebration of the ritual calendar waxed and waned, but the celebrations of November in the late-Stuart dynasty did not begin to decline until the reign of Queen Anne. Hutton missed his marked hyperbole of the rise and fall of the English ritual calendar by about one hundred years. The celebration of Queen Elizabeth's Day declined by mid-eighteenth century, the ceremony surrounding the Gunpowder Plot continued, at least, through the nineteenth century, and the celebration of the Lord Mayor's Show is currently still in existence. The celebrations of autumn ritual calendar outlived the later-Stuart dynasty.

Conclusion

This thesis argues against the theory provided by Hutton that the autumn ritual calendar year began to wither by the mid-seventeenth century. However, this thesis supports the evidence that the calendrical celebrations of England remained steadfast until the mid-eighteenth century. Past the later-Stuart period, the autumn ritual calendar began to change for the 5th of November and began to decline for the 17th of November. Hutton is correct when he argues that the ritual calendar year was in decline; however, its downward slope began after the late-Stuart period, circa 1715. This thesis also examines the customs and traditions extant in the vocabulary of England's popular culture during the later-Stuart period and suggests that a three tier model of social customs existed. The first two tiers were the ritual spheres of the elite and the populace, while the third tier was the interaction between the elite and the commoners.

This thesis examines the extent popular and elite culture played in the vocabulary of the autumn ritual calendar. Official and partisan newspapers provided a rough index of ceremonies and celebrations during the months of October and November. However, the celebrations of the Lord Mayor's Show were used as an illustration of comparison to both the Gunpowder Treason Day and Queen Elizabeth's Day. The celebrations of November, this thesis contends, were dominated by the lower orders and where popular culture set the codes of conduct. Even though these dates were originally established by the elite, these dates were taken over by the popular character of the lower orders of society. These calendar customs and traditions were reminiscent of the ritual calendar year from the calendrical reformation of 'saints days' of the sixteenth century. With the removal of

these “saints days” from the ritual calendar, other occasions developed in their wake. “Local festivity — at least bellringing, and often health-drinking, feasting, illuminations, and bonfires too — greeted the birthdays and accession days of each succeeding monarch,”¹⁹³ Cressy states. He adds that “overlapping this royal calendar, and sometimes competing with it, was the developing calendar of English Protestant thankfulness, watchfulness, and commemoration. The crucial dates were 5 and 17 November, the anniversaries respectively of the Gunpowder Treason and the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Just as Elizabeth’s accession was celebrated under her Stuart successors, and the Gunpowder Plot against James I created a calendrical occasion of enduring significance.”¹⁹⁴ The calendar days of November, unlike October’s which were created by the elite for the elite, these days were created by the elite and dominated by the commonality.

This popular culture that provided the customs and traditions was changed and manipulated as the seventeenth and eighteenth century wore on. Although elite prompting generated concern for the safety of pyrotechnics and moved some outside festivities indoors, the mainstay of popular celebrations continued on as usual. This change was a selective adaptation because Hutton describes that at Oxford by 1692 “bonfires were mostly confined to colleges (illuminating the participation of the youth) and townspeople preferred to light up their windows”, the Gunpowder Treason Day held a new significance. By 1689 it commemorated the deliverance of William in 1688 and

¹⁹³Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, xii.

¹⁹⁴Ibid., xiii.

yielded “parishioners parad[ing] with tubs of fire.”¹⁹⁵ For the celebrations in November, Hutton describes the 5th of November, whereby in both early and late-Stuart period England, the “success of the day derived largely from the flexibility of its message: to some it was an opportunity to berate Catholics, to others one to eulogize monarchy and condemn all rebellion.”¹⁹⁶ The flexibility of the message of the 5th of November extended to the justification of local violence, charivaris, and revenge against popular villains whether political figures or husband beaters. By the nineteenth century, the popular culture of the autumn calendar resembled little of the origins of the nation, state, and Protestantism. However, it may have been the extent of this flexibility which allowed the 5th of November to continue to be celebrated through the nineteenth century as Hutton asserts that “the symbolic flexibility of Gunpowder Treason Day enabled it to do more than hold its own.”¹⁹⁷ “The Plot,” Cressy adds “had become all things to all men, a malleable symbol in the face of fragmentation.”¹⁹⁸ These changes in the customs and traditions of the autumn ritual calendar “address the possibility that it did so because the rituals in question ceased to say what they had once said, ceased to function meaningfully as they had once done, for their participants.”¹⁹⁹

As part of the central theme, this thesis distinguishes where these popular events

¹⁹⁵Hutton, The Rise and Fall, 257.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., 252.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 255.

¹⁹⁸Cressy, “Protestant Calendar,” 50.

¹⁹⁹Bucholz, Albion 27, 4 (Winter 1995), 665.

took place (whether indoors or outdoors), what the significance was of these findings and who participated in the celebrations. The geography of the celebration provides some illustration as to who was participating. This thesis concludes that between the two separate cultures, elite and popular, elite celebrations took place indoors (involving balls, banquets, concerts, and religious dissertations) whereas the popular celebrations took place outdoors (involving bonfires, effigy burnings, public dances, beer barrels, gun fire, cannon fire, and bell ringing). However separate these two cultures remained, there was a social interaction between them which held the celebrations together (processions, street theatre, bonfires). This three tier model of English society in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century formed an intricate balance in the construction and content of the celebrations of the late-Stuart period. Cressy justifies this interactive phenomenon through “a new set of national anniversaries [which] flourished in the seventeenth century as distinctive reference points in the English Protestant year, tying together God’s calendar, the king’s calendar, and the calendar of the Protestant nation. Bell ringing on the anniversary of Elizabeth’s accession and the bonfires for King James’s deliverance from the Gunpowder Plot connected the elite and the populace, the parishes and the court in synchronized festive action.”²⁰⁰ Adding to the depth of this interaction between the elite and the populace comes Harris’s discussion that “during the exclusion crisis and indeed through to the reign of Queen Anne, political debate was to a remarkable extent conducted in a public arena, allowing for common participation by a wide range of social

²⁰⁰Cressy, “Protestant Calendar,” 36.

groups. Again we have a picture of interaction rather than segregation.”²⁰¹ It was through the political processes of celebration on the 5th of November and 17th of November, beginning in the seventeenth century, which brought a rise in the interaction of the elite and the populace. Burke describes the popular “political culture” as “nothing new for Londoners to be on the receiving end of official political messages. They were exposed to them in a way in which other ordinary Englishmen and women were not. They had front seats at traditional political performances. There were bonfires and other celebrations on [the 5th of November and the] 17 November.”²⁰² Harris describes this rise in the ‘popular political culture’ as a “growth of political consciousness amongst ordinary Londoner. It suggests that in the area of politics ordinary people were becoming increasingly engaged in a world which hitherto had been confined to the elite. Indeed, Burke has gone so far as to say that the politicisation of popular culture was a trend which seems ‘to have reduced the gap between the elite and the people’.”²⁰³

Intertwined in the cultural medium of festive participation were the youth, especially the London youth. Involved in the participation and audience of the autumn ritual calendar, the youth played an intricate part in defining popular culture. They developed a distinct subculture within society and actively participated in the November revelry. As Smith describes, “they saw themselves as moral agents, defending the right,

²⁰¹Harris, “Popular Culture in 17th Century London”, 51.

²⁰²Burke, “Popular Culture” 43.

²⁰³Ibid.

whether it were the 'right' Protestant religion, or the 'right' behavior"²⁰⁴ of London's citizenry, who were frequent targets of apprentice riots as the eighteenth century turned into the nineteenth. Cressy asserts that young people contributed to the processions and ceremonies of the 5th and 17th of November. He says that "young people paraded diabolic and papal effigies, and called at the houses of eminent persons demanding money. The exchange of coins linked the crowd with the elite, and turned selected merchants and gentlemen into informal sponsors of the processions. Unwilling contributors were booed, and the windows of suspected papists were broken."²⁰⁵

Two examples of youthful attacks are provided from a nineteenth century source:

They were once refused by a farmer (for faggots for their bonfire), and accordingly they determined to make him repent. He kept a sharp look out over his faggot pile, but forgot that something else might be stolen. The boys got into his backyard and extracted a new pump, which had not been properly fixed, and bore it off in triumph to the green, where it was burnt amidst the loud acclamations of the young rogues generally.²⁰⁶

Another example of mischief by the youth on the 5th of November was printed in 1827:

A poor hard-working man, while a breakfast in his garret, was enticed from it by a message that some one who knew him wished to speak to him at the street door. When he got there he was shaken hands with, and invited to a chair. He had scarcely said 'nay' before 'the ayes had him,' and clapping him in the vacant seat, tied him there. They then painted his face to their liking, put a wig and paper cap on his head, fastened a dark lantern in one of his hands, and a bundle of matches in the other, and carried him about all day, with shouts of laughter and huzzas, begging for their 'Guy.' When he was released at night he went home, and having

²⁰⁴Smith, "The London Apprentices," 161.

²⁰⁵Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 181.

²⁰⁶The Every Day Book, vol.2, 1379.

slept upon his wrongs, he carried them the next morning to a police office, whither his offenders were presently brought by warrant, before the magistrates, who ordered them to find bail or stand committed. It is illegal to *smug* a man for 'a Guy.'²⁰⁷

From holding a space as a member or the audience or as an active participant in the processions of the 5th and 17th of November, the youth played its part in the diverse atmosphere of popular local customs. Cressy adds that "for apprentices in the London crowd the November bonfires occasioned licensed lawlessness. Samuel Pepys saw 'boys in the street fling their crackers', and found his way home from the theatre obstructed by bonfires. On 5 November 1668 young people threw fireworks into the Spanish ambassador's coach. Mayoral proclamations failed to stop the practice."²⁰⁸ The energies of the 5th of November changed to violence in the heated atmosphere of the autumn calendar. "Energies that had been channeled towards ritual performance," Cressy adds, "were now free to spill over into uncontrolled violence. Orchestration gave way to anarchy. The 'multitudes of the mobile . . . behaved themselves very insolently . . . Captain Bloomer, coming through Newgate Street, was barbarously pulled out of his coach, and knocked down several times by the rabble."²⁰⁹

The observances in the autumn ritual calendar year were celebrated to commemorate national, political, and ecclesiastical dates. Having special meaning to many, these dates drew many people to the celebrations simply for the beer. Illuminating

²⁰⁷Ibid., vol.1, 1435.

²⁰⁸Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 173.

²⁰⁹Ibid., 182.

the differences in culture, Burke describes the festivities of the 5th and 17th of November as “open to all, rich and poor, learned and unlearned; the upper class watching from balconies (indoor), and the ‘blue apron auditory’ (outdoor) in the streets.”²¹⁰ What may have enabled these autumn dates to endure into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is that they provided enthusiasm for the nation and Protestantism. Cressy states that:

rather than fading with time, such ‘mercies’ as the triumphs of Queen Elizabeth and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot remained in view as highly charged points of reference and commentary. Any danger that they might lapse into oblivion was overcome by their continuing utility for religious polemic and political mobilization. Instead of being drained of meaning they were reinfused with significance in the face of recurrent popish threats.²¹¹

A theme of this thesis is to discover and discuss the social culture extant during the autumn ritual year. A three tiered model of the social culture has been constructed to distinguish who were the participants, what the content of their celebrations were, and what was the form of their celebrations. What has been discovered during the later-Stuart period is that there were three cultural sections which divided English society: (1) there was the elite culture; (2) there was the popular culture; and (3) there was the interaction between the two cultures. These three sections constructed the three tiered model of English society during the later-Stuart period. An example of the interaction between the elite and popular culture was reported during the celebrations on the 17th of November in 1681:

After the most decent order of a Popish Procession, attended by many

²¹⁰Burke, “Popular Culture,” 44.

²¹¹Cressy, Bonfires and Bells, 172.

thousands of people . . . a large fire being prepared by the Gentlemen of the Loyal Inns of Court.²¹²

This shows an interaction between those who were sponsoring the bonfire (elite) and the audience and celebrants of the ceremony (populace and elite). The interaction between these two cultures was a significant element in the social culture of the later-Stuart period. Although the distinction between elite customs and popular traditions remain a steadfast component of the autumn ritual calendar, the interaction between them plays an important role. This role helped define the celebrations and assisted in providing the overall character and festive atmosphere of the ceremonies.

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The Procession: Or The Burning of the Pope in Effigie, in Smithfield-Rounds, Nov.17, 1681.

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