An interdisciplinary review of the crowd at eighteenth century hangings in England

by

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STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION

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ABSTRACT

This is an interdisciplinary study of the crowds at eighteenth century hangings in England. The three disciplines involved are sociology, psychology and history. The first two disciplines are combined in the first chapter which provides an overview of psychosocial research on crowd behavior and shows that these theories have evolved from initial theories which hypothesized that an individual loses his autonomy and becomes subject to the collective mind to more recent theories which hypothesize that an individual's behavior in a crowd is consistent with an existing norm which the individual uses as a model for his behavior in that situation. The second chapter provides a historic review of different types of crowds in the eighteenth century and shows that the behavior of individuals in these crowds is consistent with existing norm theories of crowd behavior. The third chapter sets forth the rituals associated with hangings in eighteenth century England which included expectations regarding how the crowd should act or react at a hanging. The fourth chapter reviews the Ordinary's Accounts for 1746-1756. The Ordinary was the prison chaplain for Newgate prison and he published an account of the lives, crimes, and execution of the person just hanged after each hanging. These accounts were reviewed for descriptions of the crowd and its behavior. This review shows that from the Ordinary's perspective the crowd was behaving as expected.

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INTRODUCTION

Debate about capital punishment periodically rears its head in the United States. Most recently, it has been brought to the public's attention with the hanging of Saddam Hussein. Prior to Hussein's execution many of the major television networks in the United States questioned how much of the hanging to include in their news programs and on their websites. One network executive stated that his network wanted to "fulfill our obligations as journalists in documenting the event" but would "absolutely not go too far in showing graphic images. Taste and propriety are the two key guidelines".[1] Part of the dilemma for these executives was their belief that videotape of the execution would, at the very least, turn up on one or more Web sites. Thanks to a hand-held camera cell phone and the World Wide Web that prediction turned out to be true.[2]

At one time execution by hanging was the preferred method by which capital punishment was accomplished and there was no debate regarding whether or not the public should be allowed to view the execution. All hangings were public and viewed by many people. Today, however, most countries have abolished hanging even if they have not abolished capital punishment. In England the practice of hanging criminals followed an evolutionary path moving from the public hanging of large numbers of people for a large number of crimes to the private hanging of a limited number of people for a limited

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[1] Bill Carter, "How Much Should be Shown of a Hanging? Network Executives Wonder and Wait," *The New York Times* (Dec. 30, 2006). Http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/30/business/media. (Accessed June 3, 2007).

[2] Google Video. Http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7532034279766935521 (accessed May 16, 2007).

number of crimes. Public opinion played a role in this evolution and in the eventual

demise of hanging in England. The first movement to abolish hanging and the death

penalty occurred in the 19th century. Although it did not succeed, it did end the public

spectacle of hangings – in 1868, hangings were moved inside a prison and the public was

excluded from watching them. Public debate regarding the death penalty continued,

however, with the result that the last hanging in England occurred in 1964 and the death

penalty was abolished entirely in 1998.

Scholars have studied many aspects of public hangings in England. For example,

research has focused on the rituals associated with hanging,[3] the last dying speeches given

by the condemned,[4] the criminal biographies written about them,[5] and factors which led to

the exclusion of the public from hangings.[6] These studies have described what the crowd

at a hanging was likely to see and hear or what members of the public could read about

the condemned afterwards in criminal biographies or broadsheets containing the lives and

last dying speeches of those who had been hung. One of the factors noted by scholars

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[2] V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868*
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[4] J. A. Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches: Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in
Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 107 (May 1985):144-167; Barbara White, "The
Inferior Sort of the Kingdom of Ireland: Irishmen and Tyburn Tree," *Irish Studies Review* 6, no.1
(1998):17-26.

[5] Philip Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices: Criminal Biographies of the
Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[6] Randall McGowen, "Civilizing Punishment: The End of the Public Execution in
England," *Journal of British Studies* 33, no.3(1994):257-282.

studying the demise of public hangings is the criticism by social commentators of the eighteenth century that the crowd at public hangings was disorderly and immoral.[7] Henry Fielding was one of these social commentators. He complained that the crowd at hangings lacked the proper solemnity and terror and stated that "[n]o good mind can avoid compassionating a set of wretches who are put to death we know not why, unless, as it almost appears, to make a holiday".[8] He also criticized the response of the crowd at hangings by noting that "[t]he great business is to raise terror [but] admiration or pity or both" were the most likely reactions in the crowd when property offenders were put to death. He disapproved of these reactions.

Despite the scholarly interest in public hangings and the general perception that hangings were moved inside prison walls because the crowd was too rowdy[9], little research has been done which focuses specifically on the crowds who watched public executions and whether or not the crowds were, in fact, unruly or acting as if it were a holiday. This thesis will attempt to fill that gap by focusing on the actions of crowds attending hangings in eighteenth century England. It will begin with a review in Chapter 1 of social psychology research on and theories of crowd behavior in general with the aim

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[7] McGowen. "Civilizing Punishment", 266.

[8] Henry Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase in Robbers* (London, 1751).

[9] The view that hanging crowds were rowdy, disorderly or riotous is widely accepted by historians. It is also generally accepted by non-historians as evidenced by my experience when sharing the subject of this thesis with friends and others who asked – the most common reaction when learning this thesis was a study of hanging crowds was a comment to the effect that such crowds were out of control.

of determining what behavior might be expected of a crowd at a hanging based upon these theories and research. Chapter 2 provides a general overview of when and where crowds were likely to gather during the eighteenth century. The purpose of this chapter is to put the crowd at a public hanging in context of other occasions upon which a crowd might be expected to gather in the eighteenth century and to determine whether crowds acted differently depending upon the occasion for which they gathered. Chapter 3 describes the rituals associated with public hangings and is intended to show what the crowd at a hanging would have seen and heard. This, in turn, provides an idea of how the crowd was expected to act or react.

Chapter 4 presents a review of the Accounts of the Ordinary of Newgate for the period of 1746-1756. The Ordinary was the appointed prison chaplain for Newgate Prison in London and was present at almost all hangings. Beginning in the mid-1670s, the Ordinary's Account of the lives and crimes of those who had just been hung was published the day after each hanging and sold to the general public. These accounts also included a brief description of the execution.   Those descriptions of the execution are reviewed for statements regarding the size and behavior of the crowds at the hangings in order to determine whether the Ordinary's depiction of the crowd is consistent with that created by social commentators such as Henry Fielding. Because the number of Ordinary's Accounts reviewed is limited to eleven years in the middle of the eighteenth century, similar accounts provided in the *Newgate Calendar* for the entire eighteenth century are also reviewed with the same purpose in mind and to provide a basis for

comparing the Ordinary's Accounts to descriptions of the hanging crowd throughout the

eighteenth century. The *Newgate Calendar* contains accounts of the lives, crimes and

executions of eighteenth century criminals.   It was first published in 1773 and contained

reports of criminals from 1700 to the date of publication.[10] It does not purport to contain

accounts of the lives and deaths of all criminals but to report the lives and deaths of the

most notorious criminals. The purpose of the *Newgate Calendar* was to provide

instruction to its readers regarding the consequences of crime. The motives of the

Ordinary and the authors of the accounts found in the *Newgate Calendar* are important to

consider and will be discussed in Chapter 4 as will the motives of social commentators.

The final chapter of this thesis attempts to synthesize the information contained in

the preceding chapters and concludes that the crowds at hangings in the middle of the

eighteenth century were not unduly disorderly or riotous.

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[10] British Library, "Facts about the Newgate Calendar," British Library, http://www.bl.uk
(accessed May 9, 2007).

CHAPTER ONE - The Psychosocial Crowd: General Theories of Crowd Behavior[11]

One of the assumptions underlying the disciplines of psychology and sociology is the belief that people act in predictable ways. By studying how people interact with one another and the social structures created by people, sociologists seek explanations of and solutions to social problems. Through the study of the mental processes of individuals and how those processes influence the behavior and emotions of an individual, psychologists seek explanations of and solutions to individual problems. These hopes would be dashed if, in fact, people do not act in predictable ways.

One of the areas of study for both sociologists and psychologists is crowd behavior – how a crowd affects the individual and vice versa. Out of this research various theories of crowd behavior have been created and tested. Because the focus of this thesis is the crowd at hangings in the eighteenth century, this chapter will provide an overview of these psychosocial theories with the goal of ascertaining what these theories can tell us about those crowds. In other words, theoretically what crowd behavior would we expect to see if we could attend an eighteenth century hanging?

<u>Observational and Quantitative Research on Crowds</u>

Although Gustav Le Bon was not the first person to develop a theory of crowd

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[11] Many persons have studied, developed theories and written about crowd behavior. It would be impossible to discuss all of these theories. Instead, this chapter surveys some of the more well-known of the researchers and their theories in order to illustrate the general trend of research in this area. The format and content of this discussion follows that used by Clark McPhail in his seminal book *The Myth of the Madding Crowd*, (New York: Aldine, 1991).

behavior, his theory was one of the first to generate interest in crowds and has influenced the work of subsequent scholars. Le Bon, a French sociologist/psychologist who was born in 1841, witnessed many gatherings involving the political unrest and violence of the Paris Commune in 1871. He published *The Crowd; A Study of the Popular Mind* in 1895. Having witnessed a great deal of violence involving crowds, Le Bon argued that when an individual becomes a member of a crowd, he becomes transformed and loses his sense of personal responsibility and falls prey to the dominant emotion of the crowd.[12] This transformation is aided by the sense of anonymity created by being a member of a large crowd. Under the influence of the collective mind of the crowd, an individual is likely to think and act in ways that he would not do if he was by himself. So important is the notion of a collective mind that Le Bon defined a psychological crowd not as a mere aggregation of people but as an aggregation of people who are subject to a collective mind. Although his theory was the result of his observation of mostly violent crowds, LeBon did note that a crowd is also capable of heroic acts.

Le Bon's focus on the crowd as a whole and his belief that members of the crowd lose their individuality and become subject to the dominant emotion and actions of the crowd has been praised and criticized. As will be discussed shortly, many recent researchers have rejected these beliefs. That is not true of all scholars, however, as

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[12] Le Bon's bias is best captured by his statement: "To-day the claims of the masses are becoming more and more sharply defined, and amount to nothing less than a determination to utterly destroy society as it now exists, with a view to making it hark back to that primitive communism which was the normal condition of all human groups before the dawn of civilisation." Gustave LeBon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, 2nd ed. (Dunwoody, Georgia: Norman S. Berg, Publisher, *n.d.*). Page xvi.

demonstrated in a recent book on the dynamics of crowd minds which adopts Le Bon's

view that members of a crowd lose their rationality and release "repressed impulses".[13]

Ezra Park, who built upon LeBon's theory, began his career as a newspaper

reporter. This sparked an interest in the impact of newspapers upon the public and when

he turned to an academic career one of his interests was crowd psychology.[14] He made a

distinction between the public and a crowd. Park defined the public as the rational

discussion between people which occurs around issues; members of the public retain their

individuality and do not fall prey to a common emotion. A crowd, on the other hand,

consists of a number of people who are in close geographic proximity to one another and

under the influence of a common impulse. This common impulse is similar to Le Bon's

concept of the collective mind. Park's major addition to the study of crowd psychology

was his argument regarding the source of this common impulse. He believed it was the

product of social interaction and reciprocity between members of a crowd. For example,

person A interacts with person B and communicates his discontent to B. B then reflects

that discontent back to A. Through a series of such interactions a crowd impulse is

created which takes over the rational thought of members of the crowd. Individuals are

thus transformed into a homogeneous crowd.

Elaborating upon these theories, Herbert Blumer created a five-step theory of the

transformation of individuals into a crowd. The first step occurs when an exciting event

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[13]Andrew Adamatzky, *Dynamics of Crowd-Minds: Patterns of Irrationality in Emotions, Beliefs, and Actions.* (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2005).

[14] Clark McPhail, *The Myth of the Madding Crowd.* (New York: Aldine, 1991) 5-6.

of some sort takes place and large numbers of people gather. People who have gathered

engage in milling behavior by which they interact with each other. As a result of this

interaction a common object emerges that fosters a common impulse which, in turn, leads

to collective behavior. The underlying mechanisms of this process are the circular

reaction which takes place during the milling process when people interact with each

other. This reaction leads to collective excitement which leads to social contagion. In

other words, individuals infect each other with interest in and excitement over the event

and this leads to a decrease in impulse control and reduced self-consciousness.

The preceding discussion sets forth related theories of crowd behavior that have

been labeled transformation theories. These theories are generally based upon the

observations and deductions of their creators rather than upon quantitative research and

focus on the common actions of a crowd and essentially view the crowd as a

homogeneous mass acting in concert.[15] The theories assume all members of a crowd

think in the same way, act in the same way, and feel the same emotion(s). They are,

therefore, cookie-cutter theories of collective behavior which, for the most part, do not

concern themselves with why some crowds become violent while others do not.

On the whole, then, transformation theories of the crowd actions and mentalities

are not very powerful. They explain *post hoc* what happened but their explanation is not

helpful in determining why a particular crowd engaged in collective behavior or in

predicting how a crowd will act. For example, Iowa State University experienced

multiple riots between the late1980s and the first few years of the millenium. These were

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[15]McPhail, Chapter 1.

associated with its annual Veishea celebration in the Spring. Transformation theory does

not explain why they occurred in some years during this period and not others. Nor does

it explain what initiated the riots other than a vague explanation that members of the

crowd became possessed of a "collective mind" which prevented them from engaging in

rational thinking. This "collective mind" somehow developed while members of the

crowd were interacting with each other. Transformation theories provide no explanation

of why this interaction resulted in a negative rather than a positive emotion or how long it

took before the "collective mind" was created.

Another line of crowd theories have been labeled disposition theories.[16] Floyd

Allport, one of the early disposition theorists, criticized transformation theories for

focusing on the crowd as a whole and ignoring the individuals who make up the crowd.

He argued that crowd behavior is best explained by understanding the psychological

processes of the individuals who make up the crowd. The psychological processes which

Allport emphasized, however, were basic primary drives common to all persons such as

the need for nourishment. He stated that all individual behavior is in response to a need

to satisfy these basic drives or to overcome interference with the satisfaction of those

drives. These drives become the basis of crowd behavior when the drives of two or more

individuals become threatened or frustrated. Those individuals then interact with each

other and come together. Action is taken when a specific course of action is suggested by

a leader or when a course of action is modeled by members of the crowd. Unlike

transformation theorists, Allport believed that individuals in a crowd do not act in a way

[16] McPhail, Chapter 2.

they would not otherwise act if alone.

Allport also argued that individuals learn to submit to authority and to large numbers and that this learned response explains an individual's willingness to take part in crowd behavior. He further noted that once a part of a crowd, an individual is likely to have an impression of universality and believe that his/her actions and those of others in his/her immediate vicinity are the same as all other members of the crowd. Allport acknowledged that this impression was most likely an illusion but stated that it allowed an individual to rationalize the actions taken while a member of the crowd. He thus implicitly acknowledges that all members of a crowd do not take the same actions but did not explore that idea in any depth.

Later disposition theorists built on Allport's ideas by arguing that the drives which initiate behavior can be the primary drives such as the need for nourishment or secondary drives (which are based on the primary drives) such as anxiety (based on pain) or appetites (based on food, sex, or thirst).[17] More elaborate paradigms for the process of the formation of crowd behavior were also developed. These paradigms are based on the research of B.F. Skinner and his development of the theory of operant conditioning which posits that behavior which is rewarded will persist while behavior which is punished will be extinguished. A paradigm of crowd behavior based upon the precepts of operant conditioning looks something like this: drive - cue - response - frustration - increased drive strength - aggressive response - reward - reduced drive strength - catharsis -

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[17] Work in this area was done by Neil Miller and John Dollard. See McPhail, p 31, *et seq*.

stronger connection between aggressive response and frustration. In this sequence the response to the cue did not satisfy the drive and this led to frustration. Frustration, in turn, led to an increase in the strength of the drive. An aggressive response is then used to satisfy the drive and succeeds so that the aggressive response is rewarded and drive strength is reduced. This produces catharsis. The sequence establishes a strong connection between the drive and an aggressive response which increases the likelihood of an aggressive response in the future. This model explains violent crowd behavior by arguing that the frustration of individual members of a crowd leads to crowd action via a circular reaction wherein one member of a crowd interacts with another member and so on. This ultimately leads to a group consensus of what to do.

Disposition theories of crowd behavior advanced beyond the transformation theories by explicitly recognizing that crowds are composed of individuals who bring innate drives and learned responses to crowd situations. Disposition theories also advanced beyond transformation theories by incorporating research that was being conducted in other areas of psychology such as Skinner's work on operant conditioning. Disposition theories, however, still assume that all members of a crowd act and think in the same way once a consensus has been reached. This notion of deindividuation or depersonalization has not been empirically supported so far.[18]

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[18] Naoki Kugihara, "Effects of Aggressive Behavior and Group Size on Collective Escape in an Emergency: A Test Between a Social Identity Model and Deindividuation Theory," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 40 (2001):575-598; Eun-Ja Lee, "When and How Does Depersonalization Increase Conformity to Group Norms in Computer-Mediated Communication?" *Communication Research* 33, no. 6(2006): 423-447.

A group of theories labeled emerging norm theories also focus on the individuals who make up a crowd and how they can affect crowd behavior but posit a different basis for group actions from that cited by disposition theorists. Mazafer Sherif developed an early emerging norm theory. Sherif did not believe individuals were transformed by their membership in a crowd. He also rejected the notion that innate drives were somehow the basis of crowd behavior. His leading contribution to crowd behavior theories was the addition of the methodology he used to create and test his theories – he conducted experiments. Sherif believed that when a group of individuals find themselves in a novel situation where there is no preconceived notion of how to act, a group norm emerges which becomes the pattern for the behavior of that crowd.[19] To test this idea and to determine the importance of the actions of other individuals upon another person's actions, he conducted experiments in which an individual subject was put in a dark room and asked to estimate how far a point of light moved. This was repeated 100 times and a mean estimate calculated. The individual was then placed in a dark room with two other subjects and each subject was allowed to hear the estimates of the other subjects in the room. The experiment was repeated 100 times and mean estimates for each of the three subjects were calculated and compared to each other and to their previous estimates when in the room alone. Sherif found that the mean estimates of individuals, although initially quite different when alone, became quite similar when put in a room with other subjects. He also conducted this experiment by first putting subjects in the darkened room with two

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[19] See section on Sherif in McPhail, 62, *et seq.*

others and then putting them in it alone. He compared results and found that the mean

estimates for the subjects in the same room were similar and that the mean estimates for

these individuals continued to be similar to the group estimate when they were put into a

room alone. Sherif concluded that when individuals find themselves in a new situation,

they establish a group norm and continue to act in accordance with the group norm when

they are no longer in a group.[20] Interestingly, this experiment establishes that the actions

of individuals can influence the actions of others even when they are not allowed to

interact with each other. This indicates that the premise of some disposition theories that

interaction is a prerequisite to crowd action is not entirely accurate. It may be more

appropriate to state that crowd interaction is a sufficient, but not necessary, precursor of

crowd action.

Later theorists building on the work of Sherif explored in more detail how crowd

norms emerge. The paradigm developed by two of them, Ralph Turner and Lewis

Killian, looks remarkably similar to that of the transformation theorists. Turner and

Killian argue that crowd behavior begins with a rumor regarding some event. This rumor

leads to a gathering of people who have diverse motives. As people gather they engage in

a milling process during which they interact with each other and engage in "keynoting"

which is the differential expression of motives and thoughts. Out of the process of

milling and keynoting a group norm emerges regarding the definition of the situation and

what should be done. Collective behavior is the final step as action is taken.[21] Turner

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[20] See McPhail, 64-65.

[21] See McPhail, 72, *et seq.*

and Killian acknowledge that members of a crowd act for differing motives or, at least, bring differing motives to the crowd situation.

Other contributions to crowd theory by Turner and Killian include a focus on different types of crowds and an effort to create a crowd typology of four types: (1) acting solidaristic (lynching), (2) acting individualistic (looting), (3) expressive solidaristic (religious ceremony), and (4) expressive individualistic (celebrating). In addition to identifying types of crowds, Turner and Killian also attempted to identify different types of crowd participants. They identified five types: (1) ego-involved - those who care about what happens and generally have ideas of what should be done; (2) concerned - those who care about what happens but have no ideas of what to do; (3) insecure - those who seek out any crowd regardless of the issue; (4) spectators - those who are motivated by curiosity; and (5) exploiters - those who are detached from the crowd objective and are present for their own purpose such as selling food or picking pockets.

Emerging norm theories advanced beyond disposition theories by recognizing that the basis for a crowd's behavior may be something other than a primary or secondary drive. But with their premise that the crowd's behavior is based upon a group norm that is somehow created by that crowd and hence unique to it, emerging norm theories require a great deal of individual action before consensus is reached and collective action taken. Emerging norm theorists advanced the field of crowd theory by conducting their own research and thereby attempting to quantify the study of crowds. They also acknowledged that not all crowds act in the same way and that not every participant in the crowd acts in the same way or for the same reason.

Other researchers interested in crowd behavior do not fall easily into one of the categories of theorists just discussed. In his critique of crowd research, Carl Crouch stated that "[c]rowd behavior is distinctive, but to emphasize the 'abnormal' dimensions of crowd behavior appears to be fruitless".[22] He argues that individuals in crowds act in essentially the same way they do when alone. In other words, they are no more emotional or violent when in a crowd than when they are alone. Crouch believes it is wrong to label crowds as antisocial or to believe they are spontaneously formed. He argues that crowds are often the result of planning by someone and, as such, have a motive for gathering and a plan to follow. Responding to emergent norm theorists, Crouch argues that people in crowds are no more subject to emergent norms than are individuals in any other situation in which they find themselves. Examining research on the composition of crowds, he concludes that crowds are not composed primarily of members of the lower class but often include people from a variety of backgrounds and occupations. Couch also noted that people attend crowd events with people they know and that these individuals then tend to interact primarily with each other. This latter observation undermines emerging norm theories which require individuals to interact with many other individuals if a group norm is to develop. Crouch's ideas, therefore, differ from those of previous theorists by expanding the study of crowds to include a focus on the purpose for which the crowd gathered and the composition of the crowd. He also emphasized the study of ordinary crowds rather than just those that act in a primarily disorderly or destructive manner.

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[22] Carl Couch, "Collective Behavior: An Examination of Some Stereotypes," *Social Problems* 15, no. 3(1968):310-322.

Charles Tilly defines collective action as people acting together in pursuit of a common interest.[23] He initially created a classification of crowds which was based upon the interaction between the crowd and other groups but later abandoned it in favor of an analysis of the repertoire of collective action.[24] Tilly defined this as a "set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice."[25] Tilly believed that repertoires were learned cultural creations which have emerged throughout history. Only a limited number are known by the crowd at any one point in time. Discussing one of the repertoires which has been used by crowds -- demonstrations -- Tilly notes that at least four types of actors participate in this repertoire. They include the demonstrators; the objects of the claim being made by the demonstrators; specialists in control of public spaces such as the police; and spectators. Additional actors such as news reporters, counterdemonstrators, pickpockets, or researchers may also be present.

Tilly's ideas about crowds are important because he introduces the notion of an historical evolution in the ways that crowds act. Through his study of repertoires, he rejects the notion of a norm emerging from crowd interaction and introduces the idea that crowd action is consistent with an already existing norm. Furthermore, Tilly reinforces the notion of other theorists that not every crowd participant is there for the same reason; each has his or her own reason for being there and that reason is likely to affect that

[23] Charles Tilly, "Major Forms of Collective Action in Western Europe 1500-1975," *Theory and Society* 3, no. 3(1976):365-75.

[24] Charles Tilly, "Contentious Repertoires in Great Britain, 1758-1834," *Social Science History* 17, no. 2(1993):253-280.

[25] Tilly, "Contentious Repertoires", 264.

person's behavior.

Clark McPhail has done extensive research on crowd behavior as well as reviewing the work of previous crowd theorists and researchers. He takes a broad view of crowd behavior, which he calls collective behavior, and defines it as two or more persons engaged in one or more behaviors that are judged to be common or concerted on one or more dimensions.[26] One of his conclusions is that people do behave collectively but that what individual members of a crowd or gathering do "varies greatly in complexity, in duration, and in the proportion of the gathering that actually participates".[27] McPhail also concludes that collective behavior consists of sequences of individual and collective behavior: "heterogeneity is the rule rather than the exception".[28]

Discussing the simplicity or complexity of crowd actions, McPhail notes that "[i]n prosaic gatherings, demonstrations and ceremonial events, a sizeable proportion of the observed sequences of collective behaviors are extremely simple behaviors".[29] These behaviors can include clapping or laughing at what is being seen. They do not require consultation with other members of the crowd regarding what to do. Instead individuals draw upon repertoires of action from prior similar occasions. The response of other

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[26] McPhail, 159; see also Clark McPhail and Ronald T. Wohlstein, "Individual and Collective Behaviors Within Gatherings, Demonstrations and Riots," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9(1983):579-600.

[27]McPhail, 85.

[28] McPhail, 221.

[29] Clark McPhail and Ronald T. Wohlstein, "Collective Locomotion as Collective Behavior," *American Sociological Review* 51, no. 4(1986):447- 463.

individuals in the crowd is important to the extent that it may indicate to an individual

that his response is inappropriate or needs to be adjusted in some manner. McPhail thus

also rejects notions of an emerging norm and focuses instead on the importance of

existing norms.

Qualitative Research on Crowds

So far the theories discussed in this chapter have been based upon the

observations of theorists or upon controlled experiments conducted in a laboratory

setting. What has been missing is qualitative research which relies upon interviews with

or surveys of actual participants in crowd gatherings. Recent scholars of crowd behavior

have utilized such qualitative research methods and have sought out participants in crowd

events to conduct surveys and/or personal interviews of them. Consistent with the

practices of previous scholars, these researchers have focused their study of the crowd

upon the destructive or disorderly crowds prevalent during the period in which the

research is conducted. This has meant that many of the current crowd studies have

focused upon celebratory or campus riots which occur on or near a college campus and/or

in response to a victory by a sports team or in conjunction with an annual celebration.

Another body of current research focuses upon the phenomenon of soccer hooliganism.

Current research is not entirely lacking in quantitative analysis and one of the

aspects studied has been the frequency of celebratory/campus riots. Using an electronic

database of daily newspapers, one researcher found 178 such conflicts between large

numbers of participants and authorities for the period of 1985-2001. It was further noted

that 114 of the disturbances occurred between 1996 and 2001.[30] A more restricted search

of the Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe databank for "sports related campus riots" for the

years 1995-2003 found 37 such riots on 24 campuses.[31] It therefore appears that

celebratory/campus riots occur with some frequency. Of interest is the finding that 37

riots occurred on 24 campuses. This would indicate that the phenomenon is not only

widespread but that it also tends to reoccur in the same locations. The truth of this

statement is demonstrated by the fact that Ohio State University experienced between 9

and 18 large scale disturbances between 1996 and 2004 (depending upon the definition

used),[32] Michigan State University experienced three riots between 1997 and 1999,[33] and

Iowa State University has experienced eight riots since 1985. The fact that these

disturbances reoccur in the same locations has interesting implications for crowd

behavior theorists. If, in fact, crowds are transformed into mindless robots

(transformation theory) or act in accordance with human drives (disposition theory) or

create their own norms out of the interactions of members of the crowd (emerging norm

theory), why does this occur in some locations on a repeated basis but not in other

locations? None of these theories provide an entirely satisfactory explanation for the

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[30] Cynthia K. Buettner, "Parties, Police and Pandemonium: An Exploratory Study of Mixed-Issue Campus Disturbances" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 2004).

[31] Stan A. Kaplowitz and Shelly Campo, "Drinking, Alcohol Policy, and Attitudes Toward a Campus Riot," *Journal of College Student Development* 45, no. 5 (2004):501-516.

[32] Buettner.

[33] Kaplowitz and Campo.

reoccurrence of crowd behavior in the same location. On the other hand, research on the role played by existing norms is consistent with this phenomena and it is that research which has been cited by many of the recent researchers who are also utilizing qualitative research methods. Those theorists have focused on variables external to the members of a crowd and how those factors affect crowd behavior. This focus has resulted in theories of collective behavior which emphasize social identity and existing norms.

One of the external factors studies by these researchers is alcohol. This is so because many of these riots have occurred on or near college campuses. Consequently, researchers have hypothesized that alcohol played a role in instigating or continuing the riot. This was perhaps not a huge inferential leap as college students are generally assumed to be participants in these riots and a large proportion of college students are users and abusers of alcohol. The findings of researchers regarding these assumptions are nonetheless interesting.

One of these researchers, Cynthia Buettner, conducted both qualitative and quantitative surveys of OSU students. She asked them both about their drinking habits in general and asked questions that elicited information about whether or not they had been involved in or a spectator to the most recent riot and, if so, whether they or their friends were drinking that night. Answers to her written survey revealed that 81.3% had used alcohol in the last month and 52.8% reported binge drinking behaviors.[34] Qualitative responses from students showed that drinking is perceived to be the norm at college. For example one student said: "I mean everyone on campus drinks underage, like, pretty

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[34] Buettner, 108.

much and you can't stop it; why try?".[35]

Buettner also established that many college students are drinking in the residences of friends off-campus. They justified this because they were underage and could not legally drink in local bars. Buettner also mentions that in an effort to cut down on underage drinking some bars near the campus had been torn down and the lots left empty. The pressure or desire to drink even when underage and the lack of establishments in which to drink created a situation where many OSU students gathered at parties off-campus to drink. This was apparently true on the night of the latest riot in 2002. In regards to that night, one student stated: "One of my friends went to a bar, like, that night (OSU/Michigan football game) and she said it was completely empty . . .like, completely empty. There was no one there, and it is a popular bar and there was no one around".[36] Student answers further indicated that many had been drinking that night.

Kaplowitz and Campo also questioned college students regarding their use of alcohol and their attitude toward a recent campus riot at Michigan State University.[37] Students were asked to provide the number of days in a typical week they consumed an alcoholic beverage and the number of days in a typical week they got drunk. To determine attitudes towards the riot, students were asked to respond to statements such as

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[35] Buettner, 108.

[36] Buettner, 111.

[37] Kaplowitz and Campo.

"There was no justification for the riot".[38] The answers were then analyzed for the

interaction between the responses to the various items. It was concluded that drinking

was positively correlated with both attitude toward the riot and participation in it.

Interestingly, the studies just noted uncovered another way in which alcohol may

have played a role in the riots. Both Buettner and Kaplowitz noted that OSU and MSU,

respectively, had instituted policies designed to cut down on alcohol consumption by

students. A presumably unanticipated result of these policies was the generation of

resentment by students. Kaplowitz hypothesized that a greater degree of resentment of

restrictions against alcohol would lead to more favorable attitudes toward the riot and

found that this hypothesis was supported by the results of his survey. He further

concluded that most of the students felt the restrictions were excessive and that the

restrictions were a cause of the riot.[39] Kaplowitz even went so far as to characterize the

riot as a protest against the university and city because of the alcohol restrictions but the

timing of the riot would seem to belie this assertion – it occurred after the basketball team

lost a game in the Final Four in 1999 rather than after the alcohol restrictions were

instituted. Nonetheless, it is possible that resentment against the restrictions created a

frame of mind that was conducive to aggressive action under the right set of

circumstances. It also seems fair to conclude that the restrictions played a role in the riots

studied because they led to more off-campus parties in private housing where large

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[38] The article does not specify the nature of the response, so that it is not clear whether
students answered "yes" or "no" to these statements or were asked to respond on a Likert scale.

[39] Kaplowitz and Campo, 2–4.

numbers of students gathered to drink and party.

In conclusion, recent research indicates that alcohol consumption is correlated with celebratory/campus riots to the extent that many of the participants are consuming alcohol prior to the riots. Alcohol consumption is also positively correlated to attitudes towards riots. Policies designed to restrict access to alcohol by underage drinkers, however, appear to backfire to the extent that they generate resentment which then makes individuals more open to participating in a riot once it starts. At this point no conclusion can be drawn that alcohol causes riots or causes individuals to participate in a riot once it is started. Alcohol consumption and policies designed to restrict it, however, appear to be external risk factors which may affect crowd behavior, especially the behavior of crowds of college students. The significance of these findings for theories of crowd behavior is that the actions of a crowd are not determined solely by the event which causes a crowd to gather. Multiple events which precede the gathering may put members of the crowd in a frame of mind which makes them open to behaving in a certain manner. Likewise, policies which are implemented in an attempt to control people may generate resentment which also makes individuals open to acting in a destructive manner or in opposition to the authority which implemented the policy.

Another factor which appears to impact crowd behavior is the media. Buettner states that prior to the most recent riot at OSU, administrators attempted to prevent a riot by issuing a news release about behavior expectations for students during and after the upcoming game. These expectations were stated in positive terms such as a vice-president for student affairs stating that he trusted and hoped fans would celebrate like

real champions. Fans were also challenged to celebrate with respect and class. Emails were sent to students expressing similar sentiments as did letters sent to students from various administrative entities. This media campaign did not work -- a riot occurred.

When Buettner talked to students about the riot, she found that the media campaign apparently backfired. Rather than conveying a positive message to the students, students interpreted the campaign as meaning OSU administrators expected them to riot. One student noted that the emails and "stuff" had planted the idea in students' minds and another stated that "it just invited more students to consider it".[40]

Local media also played up the riot angle in the week leading up to the football game. This also was mentioned by several students. One student stated, "All the publicity and the hype of wondering would the students riot, maybe this added something to the situation? Camera crews consistently asking students, will there be a riot?" Another student stated that the huge production made by the media created an atmosphere of expectance and drew students "to come looking to act out against everyone telling them to behave."[41]

Another perspective on the role of the media in crowd behavior comes from the world of soccer hooliganism. One team of researchers looked at perceptions of English soccer fans compared to Scottish soccer fans and how this seemed to affect the experience of those fans who attended 1998 World Cup Finals in France. English soccer fans are generally portrayed by the media as hooligans who are likely to engage in violent

[40]Buettner, 114.

[41] Buettner ,115.

behavior and to cause riots before, during or after a game. The media portrayal of

Scottish soccer fans, on the other hand, is of boisterousness which does not cause

trouble.[42] Qualitative data were collected from fans attending the finals and analyzed.

This data showed that English fans reported more encounters with persons of other

nationalities where the other person exhibited hostility to them. Scottish fans did not

report such incidents occurring. English fans also reported incidents where they were the

subjects of attacks which were ignored by local police; again no such incidents were

reported by Scottish fans. English fans further reported some incidents where they were

threatened by others but when police intervened, the police directed their actions towards

them. They were also more likely to report that they felt justified in their use of violence

to respond to these incidents or to condone the use of violence by other English fans.

This study demonstrates that the image portrayed in the media is apparently used by

people encountering these fans to determine how to respond to them. Persons expecting a

fan to be a violent hooligan respond with hostility or assume the "hooligan" is the

instigator of violence and respond accordingly. Persons expecting a fan to be boisterous

but harmless respond by allowing the boisterousness to occur without repercussions and

also respond to these fans in a positive manner.

The role of the media in creating soccer hooliganism has also been considered. It

has been stated that the media have under-reported the frequency of crowd disturbances at

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[42] Clifford Stott, Paul Hutchison, and John Drury, "Hooligans Abroad? Inter-Group Dynamics, Social Identity and Participation in 'Disorder' at the 1998 World Cup Finals," *British Journal of Social Psychology* 40 (2001):359-384.

soccer matches.[43] This is attributed to selection by the media which reports only those

disturbances deemed newsworthy. Earlier articles discussing hooliganism, however,

stated that the problem was that the media reports were too sensational[44] and tended to

distort or exaggerate the threat to the established order created by hooligans.[45] Williams

also makes the pertinent point that media coverage not only distorts what has occurred

but in doing so it provides status and identity to the fans engaging in that behavior.

In conclusion, the media plays a role in crowd behavior. There is no indication

that media coverage or social commentary is responsible for the initial riot on a college

campus but the response of the media and other commentators to that first riot and their

attempts to prevent future riots appear to play a role in subsequent riots by creating

expectations/norms. When the media dwells on whether or not a riot is likely to happen,

it often happens. When the media portrays some people as violent agitators, they are

often treated as such. The success of the media, however, in creating expectations or

norms depends upon how well it conveys those expectations or how people interpret

media reports. From a psychological point of view, media coverage in the days before an

event which has been linked to violence in the past seems to act as a risk factor and/or as

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[43] Gordon W. Russell, "Sport Riots: A Social-Psychological Review," *Aggression and Violent Behavior* 9 (2004): 353-378.

[44] Peter E. Marsh, "Football Hooliganism: Fact or Fiction?" *British Journal of Law and Society* 4, no. 2(1977): 256-259.

[45] John Williams, "Football Hooliganism: Offenses, Arrests and Violence: A Critical Note," *British Journal of Law and Society* 7, no. 1(1980):104-111.

a prime regarding expectations for behavior at the event and as a script for future participants in similar events to follow.

As was previously stated, some theorists have noted that not everyone in a crowd acts in the same way or has the same reason for being present. For example, Tilly noted that people at a demonstration may be there as demonstrators, spectators, crowd control personnel or as pickpockets. More recent research has focused on the role played by one of these participants – the police. Buettner's data contains numerous remarks about the police which Buettner separated into different themes. One of these themes revolved around the police responding inappropriately to bystanders. For example, numerous students mentioned being trapped outside as the police responded to the disturbance in full riot mode. One student said he went to get pizza and on the way back to campus saw about 30 or 40 police officers shooting tear gas all over the place and "people hadn't really done anything but just standing outside the dorm smoking a cigarette or just hanging out".[46] Another student said the police were just pepper spraying anyone they saw regardless of the action or inaction of those being sprayed. Police also ordered bystanders into nearby dorms regardless of whether or not they lived there.

Not surprisingly, many students voiced concern or disappointment about police behavior. One student stated that he was disappointed because he had been sober and walking back to his dorm when the police confronted him and he "got like reamed"; he thought it was really stupid and unorganized. Other students also mentioned police officers attacking innocent persons who were not involved in destructive behavior. One

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[46] Buettner, 123.

student stated it was no fun watching the police beating and gassing students away from the riots. The degree of resentment created by police tactics is demonstrated by the comment of one student who stated he had been in the dorm watching what was happening and if the resident assistant had not stopped them, he and his friends would have gone outside and "tried to be aggressive towards the cops."[47]

Still other students placed some of the blame for the riot on the police. One stated that it seemed that at every riot the police were instigating the crowd by arresting intoxicated students and breaking up drinking parties. This student continued, "Granted, the students are breaking the laws, but the police fail to see the bigger picture. That is, hundreds of angry, drunk students willing to do stupid things." Another student noted that if you start raiding parties and arresting people you get drunks angry and that is when the rioting is going to start quicker than if the police "would have just sat back and let the students handle it on their own."[48] Other students made the observation that the police had ignored some of the early behaviors that should have been responded to like flipping a car or burning a chair. Both of these incidents were witnessed by officers who ignored them. Still other students attributed part of the blame for the riot on bad relations between students and police as a result of earlier confrontations.

Overall, it appears that in the eyes of the students, local police did not handle the riots well. They ignored early unruly behavior and when things escalated responded in full riot mode which meant they indiscriminately pepper sprayed people including those

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[47] Buettner, 130.

[48] Buettner ,132.

not engaged in unruly behavior. Furthermore, the riot was partially attributed to the fact that the police broke up drinking parties and enraged the attendees at those parties.

Buettner's findings are similar to those previously mentioned in the study of English and Scottish soccer fans. Police were primed to view English fans as likely to cause trouble and treated them harshly; police were primed to view Scottish fans as unlikely to cause trouble and ignored their boisterous behavior. In the case of the OSU riot, police were apparently primed to view all young people as riot participants and acted accordingly. Furthermore, when police respond to unruly behavior in a manner which is not proportionate to the act, it causes resentment to build and this seems to contribute to the likelihood that a potentially dangerous situation reaches that potential. When people believe they are being treated unfairly they are likely to respond with violence.

In conclusion, police can play a role in the instigation and continuation of crowd behavior. Qualitative research into and anecdotal accounts of such riots generally note that police response to the situation is often perceived by crowd members as excessive or inappropriate. This leads to aggressive behavior from some of the members of the crowd which in turn often leads to riot-control measures from the police such as indiscriminate pepper spraying. This further enrages the original participants and the spectators who have done nothing but then find themselves on the receiving end of aggressive action by police. A relatively small incident thus escalates to a riot. This finding is important to theories of crowd behavior because it shows that the response of non-crowd members can affect the behavior of the crowd. It also reinforces the importance of existing norms to any explanation of the behavior of a crowd because the existing views of the police

regarding the persons involved in destructive behavior and those who are watching them affect the response of the officers to the situation.

Through their use of qualitative methods current researchers have shown that crowd behavior is affected by events which have preceded the formation of the crowd and by the attitudes and perceptions individuals bring to their participation in a crowd situation The theory most often cited by these researchers is Social Identity theory which posits that group membership is important to an individual because membership in a group provides a script for the individual to follow when membership in the group is relevant to the situation in which the persons finds himself. [49] For example, a person may belong to the group of "students". This has implications for how that person should interact with other persons who are students and with persons who are teachers when the person is in a classroom setting. Meeting expectations associated with membership in the group generates positive emotions and reinforces membership in the group. In regards to crowd behavior, Social Identity theories posit that a person in a crowd acts in accordance with group norms related to membership in that group.[50] For example, persons celebrating a win by their favorite sports team belong to the group of sports celebrants and flip automobiles because that is their perception of how members of that group act. Researchers conducting experiments to test Social Identity theory have generally found

[49] Michael A. Hogg, Deborah J. Terry, and Katherine M. White, "A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* (1995): 255-269.

[50] See Stott, et al. , 362, for a brief review of this tradition.

support for their theory.[51]

      Support for Social Identity theory can also be found in other sources. An example

of one of those sources is a book written about the Miami Riots in 1980 by Bruce Porter,

a journalist, and Marvin Dunn, an associate professor of community psychology.[52] In

their book, Porter and Dunn provide a description of what occurred during the riots but

also describe events that preceded the riots in the days and years before the riots took

place and which they consider to be contributing factors to them. Events following the

riots are also described. As part of their research, Porter and Dunn interviewed 250

people involved in the riots and consulted many historical resources such as newspaper

reports of past riots and other events considered relevant to the occurrence of the 1980

riots. They conclude that the riot did not occur in a vacuum – it was preceded by years of

antagonistic race relations and police brutality to African Americans. There had also

been prior riots. The riot of 1980 was initiated by the acquittal of a white police officer

who had beaten to death a black man he claimed was reaching for a gun. Following the

acquittal crowds of young blacks gathered in public places where they talked about the

verdicts; these gatherings led to rocks and bottles being thrown at cars driven past them

by whites. At some point a rumor spread that someone in a car driven by a white person

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[51] James Dimmock and J. Robert Grove, "Relationship of Fan Identification to
Determinants of Aggression," *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* 17 (2005):37-47; Paul
Norman, Tom Clark, and Gary Walker, "The Theory of Planned Behavior, Descriptive Norms,
and the Moderating Role of Group Identification," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 35, no.
5(2005):1008-1029; and Stott, et al.

[52] Bruce Porter and Marvin Dunn, *The Miami Riot of 1980* (Lexington, Massachusetts:
Lexington Books, 1984).

had shot at a black child. Although there was no evidence that this rumor was true it

increased the anger of the crowd and led to attacks upon white persons who wandered

into or drove into the areas where blacks had gathered. The violence escalated from there

and eventually expanded to the looting and burning of many businesses in the area where

the riot started.

Willie Matthews, 47, a black storeowner, was one of the persons interviewed. He

had witnessed some of the violence but had chosen not to participate in it. He stated that

it was mainly young people assaulting white people. He further stated

> These kids, they just got no God in them. No God. Now me, I've still got God
> and Jesus in me. I'm a bitter man . . . . If I get angry at you I'll whip your ass, but
> then I'll let you go. . . . They didn't do that. They just beat them and didn't
> stop".[53]

In other words, Matthews did not fall prey to the collective mind but was able to assess

what was happening and chose not to participate because the social identity he felt was

most pertinent was his religious identity.

Another interview included in the book is even more interesting in terms of its

implications for theories of crowd behavior. An unnamed thirty-two-year-old black man

who was a lawyer was interviewed. He stated that he and his wife and 10-year-old son

had attended a rally that was staged after the rioting had begun in attempt to stop it. That

rally had deteriorated into violence and police officers had moved in driving their

cruisers. The man stated that he remembered being consumed with rage at that point and

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[53] Porter and Dunn, 58.

"feeling that somehow I had to dramatize it".[54] He said he had only felt that way twice

before – after the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. and after the death of Robert F.

Kennedy. He felt he had to do something this time. The first thing he did was to stand

fast and block the passage of one of the police cruisers. Explaining this action, he said:

> I refused to back down. I refused to move for him. Even though I was a public
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> official in a sense, I didn't identify with anyone official at that time. All I
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> identified with were my black brothers, and all I could think about was how the
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> criminal justice system I had respected put its foot on my neck and face.

In other words, this man recognized that he had multiple social identities as a lawyer and

as a black man that he believed dictated different reactions to the situation. He chose to

act in accordance with his identity as a black man and blocked the passage of a police car.

That was not all he did, however. He also began tearing antennas off of police cars in the

area. When interviewed he said he was shocked at this action on his part because it was

not in character. However, he further stated that while tearing off antennas he

remembered thinking about how his son would interpret such action and what it meant to

a son for his father to act like that but he also wanted his son to "know what it was about

and why I was angry".[55] So another social identity was activated and considered by this

man but he apparently made the decision that it was more important to act in accordance

with his identity of a black man than his identity as a father. This interview provides an

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[54] Porter and Dunn, 62.

[55] Porter and Dunn, 63.

example of a person who was apparently infected with LeBon's collective mind and acting in a way that he would not do if alone. The explanation provided by the man, however, regarding what he was thinking at the time shows that he was influenced by what was happening around him but that he made conscious decisions regarding how to act in response to it.

Taken as a whole, this book about the Miami Riots of 1980 presents a picture that is consistent with that created by the research on celebratory/campus riots in the sense that the riots did not occur in a vacuum. They were preceded by events that created mindsets which were open to violent actions. Further, the media and the police helped create this mindset. People who participated in the violence as well as those who did not participate in the violence made conscious decisions regarding their actions. These decisions were based upon the social identity determined to be most important to the person.

Today, social identities are created and internalized in a variety of ways. One of the sources of a social identify may be the Internet. As was demonstrated by Saddam Hussein's execution, the ubiquity of hand-held cameras and cell phones with cameras is supplying the Internet with videoclips of real events. One such videoclip shows part of the Veishea riot at Iowa State University in 2004 in which a crowd of young people are gathered on the street chanting, "Let's go Cyclones" as they would at an athletic event.[56] A streetlamp can be seen rocking back and forth. It eventually crashes to the ground and two police officers dressed in riot gear, who had been shown briefly watching the crwod

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[56] YouTube. Http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiiqP1ffFXg (accessed May 16, 2007).

while the streetlamp was rocking, throw tear gas into the crowd. They then retreat and

the video ends. Although nothing can be conclusively determined from such a short clip

it is interesting in that it shows only two or three people rocking the streetlamp. All of

the other people are watching. Again, there is no indication that people in a crowd act the

same or become subject to a collective mind. An intriguing aspect of this situation is that

the spectators seem to have borrowed the social identity of "spectator" associated with

being a spectator at an athletic event as is show by their chanting. The fact that this

videoclip is available for viewing by anyone with access to the Internet creates a situation

wherein this depiction of a riot will be available to many people and will create

expectations of how college students at ISU act during Veishea. It also provides a script

or existing norm to be followed when students find themselves in a similar situation.

<u>Implications for the study of eighteenth century hanging crowds</u>

In conclusion, theories of crowd behavior have evolved from simplistic theories

which view the crowd as a homogenous whole to more complex theories that view the

crowd as an aggregation of individuals subject to the influences of each other and of

outside forces. Initial theories of crowd behavior posited that members of a crowd lose

their ability to reason and to control their behavior. They then become subject to a

collective mind. Later scholars of crowd behavior began to study the mechanics by which

this collective mind was created. These scholars first focused on human drives and then

on paradigms based upon principles of operant conditioning. The theories based upon

this research all assume that at some point members of a crowd reach a consensus as to

how to act and that all members of the crowd then act in the same way. This assumption

was questioned and researchers began to study the composition of crowds and differences

in how crowds or individual members of crowds acted. Many of the recent theories of

crowd behavior posit that members of a crowd remain individuals and that they act in

accordance with their own notions of how people who are members of that crowd should

act. For example, people at a sporting event watch the event and clap or boo according to

how their team is doing or, if they are soccer hooligans, they act as they believe soccer

hooligans should act. Not all members of the crowd act in the same manner and their

behavior can be affected by outside influences such as media representations of the event

or its participants or the response of law enforcement personnel to the situation. The

actions of individual members of a crowd are also affected by whichever social identity is

activated by that person among the many social identities available to him or her.

Applying these theories to eighteenth century hanging crowds Transformation

theories, for example, view the crowd as a monolithic whole which unaccountably acts

with one purpose in mind. If these theories are correct, people at a hanging will act in the

same way with no explanation for their action. Transformation theories provide no

means by which it is possible to predict what that action will be.

Current theories of crowd behavior argue that members of the crowd arrive at the

hanging with preconceived notions of what they will see and how to respond to it. These

preconceived notions can be influenced by a variety of factors such as media portrayals

and popular criticism in the form of social commentary. Recent theories also consider the

importance of the reactions of persons who are not members of the crowd to the crowd

situation and how that may affect behavior. For example, indiscriminate action by police

or others in authority can turn a spectator into a riot participant or convey an expectation that crowd participants will act in an unruly or destructive manner. These expectations are often self-fulfilling.

The more recent theories, especially Social Identity theory, provide a better basis from which to predict how crowds at eighteenth-century public hangings acted. They predict that members of a hanging crowd arrive at the hanging with an expectation as to what will be seen and heard and how to act and react. Not everyone in the crowd will necessarily behave in the same manner because the expectations of individual members of the crowd may be modified by external factors such as media portrayals or social criticism, the person's attitude to the situation and the role the person expects to play. More specifically, these theories of crowd behavior predict that crowds at public hangings will be unruly only if that is what is expected of them or if they have developed a social identity which involves violence and that social identity is activated.

Although the Internet was not available in the eighteenth century to act as a source of existing norms, as will be discussed in the next chapter, people during this time period frequently found themselves in crowd or group situations which would have provided them with an opportunity to discuss recent events, how people acted during those events and how they should act in the future in similar situations. These discussions would have created social identities which would have influenced individual behavior. The eighteenth century also saw an increase in literacy rates and an increase in the number of newspapers and other media which discussed current events and how they should be interpreted. These news accounts and other forms of social criticism were widely

disseminated and often read to those who could not read themselves.[57] The manner in which hangings and the crowd at hangings was depicted in the media and in social commentaries should have affected the crowd at hangings and would have contributed to any changes in the behavior of that crowd over time.

These conclusions have special import for the behavior of crowds at hangings in eighteenth century England which is supported by the historical record. As will be discussed later, the use of the corpses of those who had been hanged for scientific study of human anatomy introduced a disruptive element to the ritual of hanging and led to frequent disturbances at hangings in the early part of the eighteenth century as friends and family of those had been hanged sought to prevent their loved one from being dissected. This, in turn, led to an increased presence of soldiers at hangings which undoubtedly conveyed an expectation on the part of the state that the crowd would become unruly or riot. The presence of these soldiers would have distracted the crowd to some degree from the intended solemnity of the occasion and may have created a self-fulfilling prophecy of disorderliness. It is also true that as the eighteenth century progressed social criticism of the hanging crowd increased. As this criticism spread it too may have become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

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[57] Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England*. (London: Hambleton and London, 2004), 18.

CHAPTER TWO - The Historic Crowd: Crowds in Early Modern England

This Chapter will explore crowds in eighteenth century England (give or take about 50 years) from the perspective of historians. After reading the works of several historians who have written about crowds during this time period, it becomes apparent that historians, like sociologists and psychologists, are primarily fascinated by or interested in disorderly crowds or the potential of a crowd to become disorderly. This fascination with disorderly crowds is consistent with the fact that these crowds have generally reflected or been a result of political and/or economic changes occurring in society at the time. The first section of this chapter explores the disorderly crowd and the conclusions historians have made about these crowds. Historians have, of course, recognized that people do gather together in crowds for many purposes. The second section of this chapter will therefore explore nonviolent crowds during this time period.

<div align="center">Disorderly Crowds</div>

Part of the early historiography of the crowd in Early Modern England focuses on the numerous riots which occurred during this time period. The explanation provided by historians goes beyond LeBon's notion of the randomness and irrationality of a crowd run amok. In his analysis of three riots which occurred in London, George Rude assesses contemporary sources in order to determine discernible patterns regarding the composition of these crowds, how they behaved, and their motives.[58] Rude studied the

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[58] George Rude, "The London 'Mob' of the Eighteenth Century," *The Historical Journal*. 2, no. 1 (1959):1-18.

London riots of 1736, the Wilkes and Liberty movement of 1768-9, and the Gordon Riots

of 1780. He found a number of similarities to these riots. First, he notes that in all three

riots the destruction done to property was not general in nature. Instead, the rioters

picked "out the houses of selected victims" to destroy or vandalize.[59] In other words, the

crowd did not lose its ability to think but apparently had a specific intent which was

followed. Second, Rude notes that the crowds were generally composed of persons from

the same general vicinity in which the riot took place.[60] He states that it was generally

local people and not outsiders that predominated. After reviewing the social status of

those who were arrested in connection with these riots, Rude concludes that most of them

were wage-earners from the lower orders so that it would be wrong to conclude that the

rioters were the poorest of the poor, vagrants, homeless persons, or the criminal element.

Turning to the question of motive, Rude disputes the statements of eighteenth century

writers that the rioters were bribed to participate by access to free liquor and/or that their

primary purpose was to engage in looting or drunken orgies (although he does not deny

that such activity may have taken place). Instead, Rude finds a number of social and

economic grievances to be the motivating factors for these riots. Among the grievances

he identifies are protest against an excise tax, hostility to foreigners and "Popery", and

notions of liberty which he describes as notions of what it means to be an Englishman.

The picture that emerges from Rude's analysis of these rioting crowds is that they

were not random aggregations of strangers engaged in mass destruction for the sake of

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[59] Rude, 3.

[60] Rude, 4.

mass destruction or of participants engaged in a drunken orgy but groups of people

employed at the bottom of the income scale who most likely knew each other or at least

knew many of the other people in the crowd. Further, each crowd had an agenda related

to a perceived grievance. Pursuant to this agenda the crowd engaged in what Rude

termed "certain common traditions" of behavior such as window smashing, house

breaking, burning victims in effigy, and parading.[61] Although the crowd often had a

leader, it was not a passive instrument of this leader.

Rude concludes his analysis by tentatively stating that these riots represent the

beginnings of a mass basis for the Radical movement of the later-eighteenth century. He

challenges the conclusions of others that this movement was almost exclusively the realm

of the middling sort and states that through these riots and the establishment of The

Radical London Corresponding Society in 1792 a base for the Radical movement was

established among the "petty craftsmen and wage-earners of the metropolis" who were

the ones that had participated in these riots.[62] Rude's historiography of the crowds of the

eighteenth-century is therefore primarily a political one.

In contrast, E.P. Thompson provides a historiography of eighteenth century

English crowds which is primarily economic.[63] He studied food riots which occurred in

1709, 1740, 1756-7, 1766-7, 1773, 1782, 1795, and 1800-1. He concludes that these riots

[61] Rude, 12.

[62] Rude, 17.

[63] E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth
Century," *Past and Present* 50 (1971):76-136.

were linked to a change in the nature of the English economy. He identifies that change

as being from a paternalistic economy which focused on providing food supplies to

everyone at reasonable prices and which relied somewhat on price controls to a market

economy which followed the laws of supply and demand and introduced the new

economic role of middleman.   As of a result of this transition, poor people, who once

made their own bread after buying their corn directly from a local farmer at the local

market, had to buy their bread from a baker. Bakers, of course, could set the price of their

bread and did so in order to maximize profit rather than feed the poor. Poor people did

not like this and engaged in riots in order to display their displeasure and in an attempt to

change the situation.[64]

In the report of his findings reviewed for this chapter, Thompson's main thesis is

that "[i]t is possible to detect in almost every eighteenth-century crowd action some

legitimizing notion".[65] Although details are not provided regarding the actions of specific

crowds, it is possible to create a picture of what happened during a typical riot or protest.

For the most part, these crowds acted in a manner similar to the crowds described by

Rude. Specifically, destructive action taken by a crowd was aimed at a specific target

associated with the source of the crowd's grievance. For example, Thompson describes a

substantial farmer and publican, who was apparently acting as a middleman, complaining

in 1795 because a crowd had threatened to pull down or fire his house because he was

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[64] This latter statement is an overgeneralization. Thompson links the riots which occurred
to specific economic and social conditions. In other words, the occurrence was not as random as
this statement might imply.

[65] Thompson, 78.

taking in the butter of neighboring farmers. Thompson also states that one crowd

destroyed the machinery of a miller while another crowd threatened to close an estuary at

its narrowest point in order to stop a shipment of coal. In all of these cases, the action

taken or threatened was related to the specific grievance of the crowd taking the action.

In his analysis of the actions of these crowds, Thompson states:

> What is remarkable about these "insurrections" is, first, their discipline, and,
> second, the fact that they exhibit a pattern of behavior for whose origin we must
> look back several hundreds of years: which becomes more, rather than less,
> sophisticated in the eighteenth century; which repeats itself, seemingly
> spontaneously, in different parts of the country and after the passage of many quiet
> years. The central action in this pattern is not the sack of granaries and the
> pilfering of grain or flour but the action of "setting the price".[66]

The "origin" to which Thompson refers is the *Book of Orders* codified in 1580 and 1630

which provided emergency procedures in times of scarcity. It gave local magistrates the

power to inventory local supplies of corn stocks, to order that certain quantities of those

supplies be sent to market, and to enforce those orders with whatever measure was

necessary. In other words, the local magistrate could force local growers to make their

corn available to the local populace and could set the price that the growers would

receive. Thompson links the riots to a desire to enforce the provisions of the *Book of

Orders*.

Discussing the actions of the crowds, Thompson finds restraint to be more

remarkable than disorder and points to the fact that, despite their hunger, the crowds often

attacked mills and granaries not to steal the food but to punish the owners. Examining

the composition of the crowd, Thompson states that often a nucleus of persons formed

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[66] Thompson, 108.

and then raised a larger crowd by use of horns or drums. The nucleus was usually composed of poor wage-earners. Thompson also states that the initiators of these actions were often women who were presumably more concerned with the price of and accessability to corn.

Rude's political historiography of the crowd combined with Thompson's economic historiography present a similar picture of eighteenth century rioting crowds in regards to their composition, motives, and patterns of behavior. A picture which is at odds with LeBon's theory of the "collective mind" but which is consistent with Social Identity/existing norm theories of crowd behavior. Specifically, Rude and Thompson found that crowds were composed primarily of the working poor who had a specific grievance behind their actions. The actions engaged in by these crowds were for the most part limited to destruction of property which was linked to their grievance. For instance, a crowd incensed at the actions of a miller attacked the mill rather than destroying everyone and everything in the vicinity. All of this suggests that rioting crowds retained their rationality and followed existing social expectations regarding what action was appropriate under the circumstances.

This picture is consistent with that provided by later historians studying the same time period. In his study of riots and rebellions in England from the mid-sixteenth century through the mid-eighteenth century, Andy Wood links specific riots to specific causes such as taxation that was perceived to be excessive, the enclosure of common

lands, food riots, and the politics of the Restoration of Charles II to the throne in 1660.[67].

In all of these riots, the actions of the rioting crowd were aimed at specific targets linked

to the cause of the riot. Wood does make two additional observations.[68] First, he notes

that the size of rioting crowds decreased as the use of legal processes and litigation

increased. Second, he notes that "crowd rituals" not only provided a means of voicing

displeasure or popular criticism but also "helped maintain notions of community".[69]

Wood's study of historical crowds thus reinforces the notion that they are not irrational

automatons.

Similarly, Tim Harris studied London crowds during the Restoration and reign of

Charles II.[70] He begins his study by noting that he is not studying crowds *per se* but is

interested in studying the political views of the people from the lower end of the social

status scale who composed the majority of London crowds during this time period.

Harris's study is therefore primarily a political study. It is possible, however, to glean

some sense of the composition and action of the crowds studied. Once again the picture

that emerges is of crowds engaged in controlled activity. Crowds that were destructive

aimed that destruction at specific targets related to the grievance or politics of the crowd.

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[67] Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England.* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

[68] Actually, to be fair, Wood makes many more extremely interesting observations. I am just including those which are pertinent to this thesis.

[69] Wood, 107.

[70] Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II: Propaganda and Politics from the Restoration until the Exclusion Crisis..*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

After examining how crowds were formed, Harris concludes that some crowds were

created spontaneously but most were planned either by politicians from above or by lesser

people from below. The crowds studied were created for political purposes and were part

of the struggle for control of the government between the Whigs and Tories. Harris does

not provide a complete picture of the composition of these crowds but does note that

many included the "middling" sort. His discussion of the creation of these crowds also

gives the impression that if persons of the upper class were not part of the crowd they

may have helped plan the crowd demonstration. Further, Harris notes that the upper class

had an "ambiguous" attitude towards crowds.[71] Although the crowd was often described

by the upper class as "unruly"," the rabble", or "the rude multitude", the upper class

under certain circumstances was willing to "countenance or even encourage" crowd

activity.[72]

In his exploration of the London mob in the eighteenth-century, Robert

Shoemaker reinforces the conclusions of the historians previously discussed. Shoemaker

notes that although ordinary Londoners were often merely spectators of political

demonstrations they "developed the capacity both to manipulate organised political

demonstrations for their own purposes and to riot on their own".[73] Specific methods such

as ringing a bell, beating a drum or displaying a flag were used to gather crowds and,

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[71] Harris, 16.

[72] Harris, 16.

[73] Robert Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Hambleton and London, 2004) 113.

once gathered, the actions followed by the crowd were well-known by the participants

because they had been used by previous crowds on similar occasions. These actions were

often symbolic. For example, Shoemaker states that displaying lighted candles in a

window became a sign of public support for a cause. A crowd, depending upon its

political view, might therefore either target houses not displaying a lighted candle and

force the householder to light a candle or might break the window of a house in which a

lighted candle was displayed. Shoemaker concludes that most riots were disciplined as

well as celebratory. Any violence which did occur was aimed at property rather than

people. And the aim of the riots was to create an appearance of public support for the

grievance or political view of the crowd. . Once again, the picture that emerges is of the

crowd as a group of people engaged in actions designed to voice their displeasure or

political views.

Mark Harrison studied crowds in four towns (Bristol, Liverpool, Norwich, and

Manchester) for the period of 1790-1835. Using newspaper reports and public notices

from this time period, he studied factors such as when and where crowds gathered, the

purpose for which they gathered, and how the crowd was described by the reporter of the

event.[74] He concludes that most crowds did not riot; that although issues of policing and

public order were raised from time to time they were not seen as overwhelmingly

important; that large crowds generated reactions of awe at the size of the crowd as well as

fear of the potential for destructive behavior; that depictions of the crowd often depended

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[74] Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History: Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835.*
(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

upon the motives and attitudes of the reporter; and, most significantly, "that analysis of

the trends in crowd occurrence and the established forms for describing those crowds

produced clear patterns of procedure, location, timing and language".[75]   Harrison

believes these patterns are not only visible to historians but were well-understood by

contemporaries. This latter conclusion reinforces the argument that existing norms are

more important to crowd behavior than are emerging norms or the "collective mind". In

his discussion of the descriptions of crowds, Harrison further notes that the authors of

these descriptions often ascribed motives to the crowd which may or may not have been

accurate but which were consistent with the author's viewpoints or attitudes.[76] The crowd

was thus sometimes used as a blank canvas upon which an author's ideas were drawn.

Finally, Peter Linebaugh studied disturbances at London hangings during the

eighteenth-century.[77] Linebaugh characterizes these disturbances as riots and connects

them to the practice of surgeons obtaining the corpses of hanged persons to dissect.

Friends and family of hanged persons were often present at hangings in order to prevent

surgeons from taking the bodies of their loved ones. This often resulted in disturbances.

No information is provided regarding the amount of disturbance generated on these

occasions so that it is not clear whether the disturbances involved just a few or many

people and whether or not or they resulted in property damage or personal injury. But, in

[75] Harrison, 317.

[76] Harrison, 318-319.

[77] Peter Linebaugh, "The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons," in *Albion's Fatal Tree*. (London: Allen Lane, 1975).

order to eliminate these disturbances, authorities frequently assigned a number of soldiers

to guard the procession to Tyburn and the gallows there. This practice continued until the

mid-eighteenth century by which time surgeons had found other sources of dead bodies.

In any event, when these riots or disturbances occurred, they seem to have been confined

to a relatively small number of people and to have been tied to a specific grievance - the

dissection of dead bodies.

<p align="center">The meaning of "riot"</p>

An operational definition of what it means to "riot" is noticeably lacking in these

studies of disorderly, a/k/a rioting, crowds. Such a definition was also lacking in the

psychosocial studies of rioting crowds. This lack is not necessarily fatal to any

conclusions drawn by these scholars but does reflect an assumption that there is a general

consensus regarding the meaning of this word. That assumption may not be entirely

valid. A commonly accepted dictionary definition of "riot" as it pertain to a crowd

follows: "A noisy, violent public disorder caused by a group or crowd of persons."[78] This

definition provides a picture of a crowd similar to that provided by LeBon's theory of the

collective mind but lacks any sense of how many people must be involved and what type

of behavior they must be exhibiting in order to constitute a "riot". The notion of the

number of persons involved is especially important. The general impression created by

when it is announced that rioting has occurred is that a large number of people were

involved. This is the assumption that is not necessarily valid as is shown by the

definition of "riot" provided in another dictionary. That dictionary provides the

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[78] *The Random House Dictionary* (New York: Random House, 1980).

following two definitions of "riot" as that term might be used to describe a crowd: (1) wild or violent disorder, confusion, or disturbance; tumult; uproar, and (2) a wild, violent public disturbance, or disturbance of the peace, by a number of person, (in law, three or more) assembled together.[79] One of the comments provided in this same dictionary describes the Riot Act, which was passed in England in 1715. That Act provided that if twelve or more persons were unlawfully assembled to the disturbance of the public peace they must disperse upon reading of the Riot Act or be punished for committing a felony. To say that a crowd was rioting therefore does not necessarily imply widespread violence and mayhem; it may mean that a relatively small number of people got together and disturbed the peace.

<div align="center">Recreational Crowds</div>

Although rioting crowds have captured the interest of many historians who have studied crowds, people during this time period did gather for other purposes. Many of these crowds are best described as recreational in origin and nature. In his review of popular recreations in England during this time period, Robert Malcolmson describes the many holidays contained in the English calendar and states that many of these holidays were associated with a fair or a festival of some sort.[80] Crowds also gathered to watch

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[79] *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* 2nd Ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983).

[80] Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society 1700-1850*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

and/or play various sports such as football,[81] wrestling, cudgels, ninepins, cricket, ringing

of bells, quoits, bull and bear baiting and cock fighting. People also gathered at alehouses

or homes of friends in order to socialize. In addition to the entertainment provided by

these activities, they also helped create a sense of community.

Many of these crowds were composed mainly or entirely of the people of a

particular village where the event took place. Persons considered to be "gentlemen" may

or may not have participated in these activities depending upon the nature of the activity.

Gentlemen did participate in or watch pugilistic fights, cricket and cock-fighting.

Additionally, the local gentry often sponsored or paid for other activities such as

mumming and dancing rituals at Christmas. Through the middle of the eighteenth-

century even when not participating in or sponsoring the activities of the common people,

the gentry or upper class at least tolerated such activities. Malcolmson describes this

attitude as one of paternalism "reinforced by an awareness of the methods of maintaining

social control".[82]

By the end of the eighteenth century, the number of recreational occasions

diminished and some of the activities became more organized. A number of factors

account for this change. According to Malcolmson, toleration for the recreations of the

common people declined as the English developed a concern for effective labor

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[81] This is, of course, a reference to soccer. Interestingly, Malcolmson notes that football was a popular pastime and apparently drew a considerable crowd as it was sometimes used as way to mask meetings of dissidents. (p 40) The connection between soccer and soccer "hooliganism" may therefore have started early in the history of the sport.

[82] Malcolmson, 71.

discipline; instead of participating in recreational activity people were supposed to be working. He also credits the evangelical movement, which began in the 1730's, with its concern with sin and salvation and the need for discipline as a source of growing intolerance of recreation. Not only did many recreational activities take away from time when people could be working, they also provided the opportunity for and temptation to engage in various forms of sin. In addition to these outright attacks on recreation, long term changes such as the enclosure movement curtailed recreation by taking away the space in which many of them had occurred. Public attitudes also changed in regards to some forms of recreation such as bear baiting and cock fighting so that the frequency of these activities abated sharply until they disappeared.   And some forms of recreation, such as boxing, became more organized as formal rules and regulations were created and boxing matches were organized in order to attract large numbers of spectators.

Robert Shoemaker's examination of the crowds in London during the eighteenth-century leads to the conclusion that membership in a crowd was a frequent experience. In addition to the recreational crowds just described, the streets of London were crowded as the population grew enormously during the eighteenth century. Streets were used not only for travel but by persons such as fruit sellers, shoeshine boys and prostitutes in order to make a living. The streets and other public places were also the scenes for recreational activities, parades and other types of processions.

Public spaces in London were also used for shaming rituals such as the stocks or public whippings whereby convicted criminals were punished.   In fact, the criminal justice system of this time relied upon crowds for its effectiveness. This reliance began

after a crime was committed because London lacked an organized police force until 1829.

Until then the public was actively involved in the process of investigating crime and

arresting criminals. This was accomplished through an expectation that anyone

witnessing a crime would intervene to stop the crime and capture the wrongdoer. If this

did not occur as soon as a victim was attacked he or she would yell "stop thief" to enlist

the assistance of nearby persons or "watch" in order to obtain the help of watchmen who

were paid to patrol the streets. In regards to punishment, the public was expected to

participate in a criminal's punishment through the expression of appropriate sentiments or

by throwing mud or other objects at persons placed in the stocks or subjected to a public

whipping or some other form of public punishment. This did not always occur, however,

as the public was known to protect persons with whom it sympathized.

<p align="center">Implications for the study of eighteenth century hanging crowds</p>

Much of the focus of historians and other social analysts of the eighteenth century

has been upon crowds which were disorderly or destructive. This is consistent with the

fascination with such crowds shown by the many of social psychologists discussed in

Chapter 1. Because of this focus less is known about how peaceful crowds acted but it

seems safe to say that peaceful crowds were the rule rather than the exception. This

conclusion is important because it shows that in the eighteenth century being a member of

a crowd was a common experience and one which did not often lead to violence or

submission to a "collective mind". Undue violence or aggression would have been

viewed as a violation of social expectations in most situations.

Another picture that emerges of crowds during the eighteenth century is one of

persons congregating for specific purposes. The purpose which created the crowd also gave it direction regarding how to act. Crowds that gathered because of a common grievance directed their actions towards the object of their grievance. This remained true even when their actions became violent; the violence was directed at property and not people. Recreational crowds acted much like modern recreational crowds. They participated in the fair or game or they watched it, voiced their opinions of what they were seeing, or gossiped. Most of the crowd violence which did occur was planned to a certain extent and, for the most part, short-lived. There were, of course, exceptions but these seem to have been infrequent.

This review of the historiography of eighteenth century crowds also demonstrates that those crowds acted in accordance with modern theories of crowd behavior in that crowd participants acted according to existing norms regarding the crowd in which they found themselves. For example, people with an economic grievance which had reached the point where talking about it was insufficient, participated in crowd riots. During these riots participants directed their actions to the object of their grievance and restrained their actions to destruction of property for the most part. There is no evidence that crowd participants completely lost the ability to think for themselves or to control their actions. This raises the question of how hanging crowds were expected to act. The next chapter will explore the rituals associated with a hanging including how the crowd was expected to act.

CHAPTER THREE - The Ritual of Public Hangings

As was demonstrated in previous chapters most crowds gather for a specific

purpose and that purpose provides members of the crowd with a script to follow which,

for the most part, sets forth expectations for crowd behavior. Before turning to a review

of the *Ordinary's Accounts* to determine what those accounts tell us about the crowds at

public hangings, this chapter will review what happened at public hangings in the

eighteenth century so we can consider the script that crowd participants would expect to

be followed and gain a sense of what script, if any, the crowd was expected to follow.

Hangings in London could occur up to eight times each year with multiple persons

being hanged each time. Hangings rarely occurred on all eight days set aside for them

each year. This was especially true as time went by and fewer people were hanged.

Hangings outside of London occurred less frequently, no more than twice a year and

generally not even that often. For example, in his study of various types of crowds in

Bristol during 1790-1835, Harrison states there were 17 executions during this time.[83]

All of them were staged during the time period of noon to 2 p.m., the lunch hour. This

time was chosen for two reasons. First, it allowed the public to witness the execution

during a time they were not expected to be at work and second, the London mail was

generally received shortly before noon. The latter was important because a pardon might

be included in the mail and officials, naturally, did not want to execute a criminal who

had been pardoned.

There were a number of rituals associated with hanging. The description which

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[83] Harrison, at 120.

follows is of a generic hanging. It is intended to be representative of what occurred

during a hanging but individual hangings varied.

First, the rituals associated with the hanging of a criminal were not confined to the

events on the day of the hanging. Ritual was also attached to events leading up to that

day and typically began with the arrival of the assize judges in an assize town outside of

London. In London the ritual began with the arrival of the assize judges at the Old

Bailey, the court where London's criminal trials took place. The judges would be

splendidly attired and accompanied by a procession. They would dine with "local

notables" and there would be a "brilliant assizes ball".[84] Other rituals associated with the

assizes were the reading of the charges to the grand jury and the assize sermon which was

usually given to a select few of the local population.[85]

After a defendant had actually had his day in court and been adjudged guilty he

was subjected to a statement from a court official which generally followed a ritualized

format. This statement was directed as much to the general public as to those condemned

to die. For example, in the speech given at the Old Bailey on 10th September 1783, the

Deputy Recorder begins by noting that "it must give inexpressible concern to all who see

or hear" of the crowd of criminals condemned to die that the laws which require death for

those who violate them have "lost their terror". The condemned were then advised to not

delay the important business of looking into themselves and to endeavor to "obtain the

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[84] Peter King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion in England 1740-1820* (Oxford, 2000), 334-35.

[85]King, 334-35.

pardon of the Almighty." The remainder of the speech contains similar religious

references and

exhortations.[86]

In the days leading up to a hanging, the condemned received numerous visits from

a minister or priest whose goal was to convert him and to help him admit his guilt and the

need to die for his sins.[87] The priest or minister often accompanied the condemned to the

gallows. The condemned was also likely to receive visits from family and friends during

the time between conviction and hanging.

On the day of the hanging, the condemned were taken from the jail to the gallows

in a cart, on a horse, or on a hurdle. Before the procession began a bell-man would make

an announcement from a nearby churchyard similar to the following:

> All good people pray heartily to God for these poor sinners, who are now going to
> their deaths; for whom this great bell doth toll. You that are condemned to die,
> repent with lamentable tears. Ask mercy of the Lord for the salvation of your own
> souls, through the merits, death and passion, of Jesus Christ, who now sits at the
> right-hand of God, to make intercession for as many of you as penitently return
> unto him.

The bellman then repeated three times: "Lord have mercy upon you! Christ have mercy

upon you!"[88]

Along the route and at the gallows a crowd assembled to watch. Hangings outside

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[86]The Proceedings of the Old Bailey Ref: s17830910-1; www.oldbaileyonline.org
(accessed June 5, 2007).

[87] W. Thackery, *Going to See a Man Hanged* (1840); E. Wakefield, *Facts Relating to the Punishment of Death in the Metropolis* (1832).

[88] Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England*. (London: Routledge, 1989).

of London generally took place on a market day in an area near the market so that the

number of spectators would be maximized. Hangings in London took place at Tyburn

just outside of the London city limits. The route to Tyburn was a mile long which meant

the procession to the gallows could take several hours. This was especially true if the cart

stopped at a tavern or two along the way so the condemned could get drunk, as sometimes

happened. Processions in London were sometimes accompanied by a contingent of

soldiers if the authorities thought it was necessary. This was especially true during the

first part of the eighteenth-century.

By 1783 suburban growth had reached Tyburn. After November 7, 1783,

hangings took place immediately outside Newgate prison so that there was no longer a

procession to the hanging. The elimination of the procession and the rowdy crowd was

the putative reason given for the change in locale but some historians have questioned

this reason and point to the desire to develop the Tyburn area for commercial or

residential purposes as the real reason for the change.[89]

The size of the crowd at a hanging varied. The record is estimated to be 80,000

spectators at a hanging at Moorfields in 1767.[90] Space was generally limited so that

places near the gallows were at a premium. Some people walked to the place of

execution and others rode horses or went in carriages. Once at the place of execution

they were all squeezed together if there was a large crowd and generally filled all

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[89] See, e.g., V.A.C. Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree: Execution and the English People 1770-1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 96.

[90]McLynn, 266.

available space including trees, adjoining buildings (if any) and adjoining streets. Persons

of all classes attended public executions. However, there is some controversy as to how

long this continued to be true. Some historians contend that the middle and upper classes

began to regard public executions as uncivilized and therefore ceased to attend them

sometime in the nineteenth century. Other historians contend that persons of all classes

attended public executions until they were eliminated in 1868.[91]

Before a hanging each person condemned to hang was allowed to make a speech.

The speech, which was a Tudor innovation,[92] was expected to follow a ritualized pattern

in which the condemned acknowledged his guilt, recounted the life of sin which had led

him to the gallows, and exhorted the crowd not to follow his wicked ways. The

condemned was then hung until dead. The death was often sped along by help of loved

ones or others in the crowd who would pull on the legs of the condemned to hasten his

death. After the hanging the friends or family of an executed criminal, if present, would

claim the body in order to bury it properly.

Many purposes have been ascribed to public hangings. One of the main purposes

is the deterrence of crime.[93] The condemned was, obviously, deterred from committing

future crimes by the simple fact that he was in no state to do so after the hanging. The

[91] McLynn, 266, *et seq.*

[92]J.A. Sharpe, "'Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology, and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* (1985), 165.

[93]Robert Shoemaker, 'Streets of Shame? The Crowd and Public Punishments in London, 1700-1820', in *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500-1900: Punishing the English,* ed. Simon Devereaux and P. Griffiths (New York, 2004).

more important audience, therefore, for the message of deterrence (and all other messages related to the gallows) was the crowd who witnessed the hanging and those who were not present but who learned of it later. This audience was supposed to be deterred from committing crimes by learning that crime doesn't pay and "the wages of sin is death".[94]

The pairing of the secular and the religious in the last sentence is deliberate. There was no separation of church and state. From a religious viewpoint the purpose of a hanging was to save the condemned person's soul and to deter sin.[95] This point was specifically made by any remarks made by the clergyman present at the hanging. But, as was recounted above, it was also made by the judge when he condemned convicted defendants to die. More interestingly, the point was frequently made by the condemned themselves.

Each person to be hung was allowed to make a speech before he died. These speeches were often printed in pamphlets and sold to the general public so that their content would have reached an audience beyond those present at the hanging. Many of these speeches have survived and have been studied by various historians who remark on the religious aspect of these speeches and the similarity of their form.[96] A typical "last dying speech" included a confession to the crime for which the person was being hanged and a recounting of the life of sin that had resulted in the final crime. Quite often the life

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[94]Romans 6:23 (Revised Standard Version).

[95] C. Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death: Scaffold Confessions in Early Modern England," *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* (Fall 1983) 71.

[96] Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches".

of crime started with the commitment of a relatively innocuous sin such as breaking the

sabbath and then went downhill from there. The speech generally ended with an

exhortation to the crowd to learn from the mistake(s) of the condemned.

Another purpose ascribed to gallows rituals was "to bear witness to the law's open

processes".[97] It was considered important that hangings take place where all could see

them because an execution was "the act of the whole nation" so that people must "see

their own punishment" meted out.[98]

A related purpose or message to be achieved at a public hanging was the

validation of the power of the State. This was accomplished in last dying speeches in

which the condemned acknowledged that he deserved to die. By this confession the

condemned implicitly acknowledged the right of the State to be the instrument of that

death.[99] He also legitimatized "the whole structure of secular and religious authority".[100]

Finally, the overriding purpose of those already discussed is the exertion of

social/ideological control over the general populace by the government. As Sharpe has

noted, in Tudor and Stuart England "one factor remained constant – the weakness and

uncertain operation of the order-keeping forces at the disposal of the state".[101]

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[97]Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, 601.

[98]Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, 601.

[99] See, e.g, Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death".

[100]Sharpe, 'Last Dying Speeches", 163. See also, Barbara White, "'The Inferior Sort of
the Kingdom of Ireland': Irishmen and Tyburn Tree", *Irish Studies Review* (1998).

[101] Sharpe, 'Last Dying Speeches', 158.

Consequently, the State depended upon the internalization of obedience and hoped to accomplish that through the rituals of the gallows.[102] The use of the gallows ritual as a means of social control and an illustration of the power of the state has been challenged by Thomas Laqueur who argues that if the gallows and its rituals were meant to be a "solemn state theatre", it was not well-designed.[103] Specifically, Laqueur argues that the rituals were shabby, the presence of state agents minimal, and control of the crowd lacking. He also states that the choice of a location was poor; Tyburn was surrounded by fields and lacked imposing structures or other reminders of state authority. Laqueur also describes the crowd at a hanging as "a festive, buoyant, holiday crowd" but seems to rely upon descriptions of the crowd provided by contemporaries who were critics of public executions.[104]

Regardless of what message was intended, in order for a message to be effective someone must hear or see it. This raises the question of the size of the crowd at a

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[102]Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches". Cf. Hays, et al. Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England (London, 1975), 25 (noting criminal law is important to maintenance of obedience and deference, maintaining status quo, and recreating structure of authority). See also, Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England*. (London: Routledge, 1989), 258. Michel Foucault also presents public executions as a means of social control and an expression of the power of the state. His main thesis is that public executions exemplified the state's control of its citizens by punishing the body and that the use of public executions decreased and was eliminated as the state shifted its focus to controlling the soul of its citizens through punishments such as the penitentiary. Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

[103] Thomas Laqueur, "Crowds, Carnival and the State in English Executions, 1604-1868", in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*. ed. A.L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[104] Laqueur, 332.

hanging and the frequency with which hangings occurred. After all, the more often a

hanging is held and the more people that attend it, the more likely it is that the State's

messages will be communicated to most, if not all, of the public.

As was stated previous, the frequency of hangings depended upon the town.

Outside of London hangings would have occurred no more than twice a year as this was

frequency with which local assizes were held. In London, hangings could occur up to

eight times a year. The size of the crowd also varied. Most of the information about the

size of the crowd at hangings seems to come from anecdotal reports during the 18th and

19th centuries, which are in general agreement that the crowds were large with some of

the estimates for a particular hanging being in the tens of thousands.[105]

Likewise, exact numbers are not available regarding the number of people who

were hanged. However, there is every reason to believe it was large number. Gatrell

estimates that 75,000 people were executed between 1530-1630. He states the rate of

execution declined in the second third of the 17th century when transportation provided an

alternative to execution but the rate rose again in the later 18th century and thereafter

stayed high.[106] The high rate of executions in England was noted by visitors to that

country. In 1695, a visitor stated, "There are more Men and Women hang'd here (I mean

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[105] Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree,* Chapter 2 (providing estimates for various hangings in London which range from 20,000 to 150,000); Cf. King, 'Rituals of Punishment', 341 (noting that crowds in rural towns probably numbered in the hundreds rather than the thousands but that even a crowd of that size would have been significant as it would have been as large as or greater than the number of inhabitants of the town).

[106] Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, 7.

in London) in a Year, than in Amsterdam and all seven United Provinces."[107] Another

visitor in 1717 noted that more people were executed in England than in some countries

within three years.[108] The exact number or rate of hangings each year and the exact

number of people who viewed each hanging is impossible to determine. What is

important for this thesis is the fact that large numbers of people were hanged and that,

generally, large numbers of people saw these hangings[109]. This means that hanging

crowds formed on a relatively frequent basis, at least in London, and that these crowds

generally contained a large number of people.

     Contemporary reports from people who had attended hangings provide varied

characterizations of hanging crowds. These persons said the hanging crowd was unruly

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[107]Randall McGowen, "The Problem of Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England", in *Penal Practice and Culture, 1500-1900* ed. S. Devereaux and P. Griffiths (New York 2004).

[108] Ibid.

[109] In the late-18th and early-19th centuries, commentators began to complain that the large number of hangings and large crowds were, perhaps, counterproductive. See Randall McGowan, "Civilizing Punishment: The End of the Public Execution in England" *Journal of British Studies* (1994).

[110], eager[111], sympathetic[112], respectful[113], sad[114], ruthless[115], insulting[116], compassionate[117], or admiring[118]. If these accounts are to be believed, the hanging crowd brought a range of emotions to a hanging and quite often displayed those emotions. These reports, however, are erratic and anecdotal. They are not the result of a systematic study of the behavior of hanging crowds.

Modern scholars writing about public executions have taken it for granted that the behavior of hanging crowds varied and have generally ascribed this variance to the general expectation that the public was an active participant in the criminal justice system. In other words, just as the crowd was expected to exhibit negative attitudes towards criminals being whipped or placed in the stocks they were expected to express disapproval of criminals condemned to die. Scholars have also linked the assumed variation of the behavior of the crowd to the crimes for which the condemned were executed. For example, it has been stated that hanging murderers or sex offenders

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[110]State Papers Domestic (1603).

[111] Parson Witts (1872).

[112]Adam Smith, Theory of Moral Sentiments.

[113]Execution of James Coigly, Irish radical, State Trials (1798).

[114]The Weekly Chronicle (1837).

[115]Henry Angelo, Reminiscences (1828).

[116]Chelmsford Chronicle (1792).

[117] Henry Fielding, *Enquirey into the Late Causes of the Late Increase in Robbers* (1751).

[118] Ibid.

evoked emotions of approval of the hanging and contempt for the condemned whereas hanging persons convicted of property crimes often evoked disapproval of the hanging and opposition to the authorities who had ordered it.[119]

The behavior of the condemned has also been stated to be an influential factor in the determination of the crowd's reaction to a hanging.[120] King states, "A good deal turned on the details of the [condemned's] speech and gestures."[121] Persons condemned to die were expected to die well. Part of dying well was dying bravely or "like a man".[122] Dying bravely was not just an indication of bravery, however. It also had religious connotations because dying bravely and showing an indifference to pain or suffering were associated with godly men and martyrs.[123] Dying well was also thought to be an indication of the condemned man's guilt.[124] Clearly, the crowd at the gallows would have been very interested in the actions and demeanor of the condemned as each was brought to the gallows and hung. Additionally, there was always the possibility of a last minute pardon to add excitement to the proceedings.[125]

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[119]King, *Crime Justice and Discretion*, 348; Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, 59.

[120] P. Lake & M. Questier,"Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England", *Past and Present* (1996).

[121] Lake, "Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric", 99.

[122]Andrea McKenzie, "Martyrs in Low Life? Dying 'Game' in Augustan England", *Journal of British Studies*, (2003).

[123] McKenzie, "Martyrs in Low Life", 178.

[124] McKenzie, "Martyrs in Low Life", 196.

[125] Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches" 149.

In addition the crowd was very interested in the last speech of the condemned. Andrea McKenzie has noted that last dying speeches "were 'esteemed as of greatest authority' as it was widely believed that only an atheist, a lunatic, or an idiot would risk appearing 'before the high tribunal of Almighty God' with a lie still fresh in his or her mouth".[126] As was discussed earlier, these speeches generally followed a formula and were often printed for sale to the general public. It was, however, up to each of the condemned to decide whether he was going to follow the formula. Some did, but some did not. Those that chose to depart from the formula did so for a number of reasons. Some condemned simply refused to play the game and chose to be defiant to the end.[127] Other condemned persons chose to use the platform of the gallows as a platform upon which to justify their faith. This latter route was used quite effectively by many Catholics who were convicted of treason in Tudor England. Although convicted of treason, their main crime was being Catholic during the reign of a Protestant monarch. These "criminals", therefore, were especially motivated to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them during the gallows drama to die bravely and to proselytize.[128] Not to die well "would negate the whole point of their self-sacrifice."[129] Likewise, many Irishmen condemned to die for crimes they had committed resisted the exhortations of

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[126] McKenzie, "Martyrs in Low Life", 173.

[127] McKenzie, "Martyrs in Low Life", 174. See also King, *Crime, Justice and Discretion*, 345.

[128] Lake & Questier, "Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows"; Sharpe, "Last Dying Speeches".

[129] Carlton, "The Rhetoric of Death", 75.

clergymen to convert to the Protestant faith before dying and chose instead to die as brave

Catholics.[130]

An element of suspense was therefore part of the gallows drama as the crowd did

not know beforehand exactly what it would see or hear from the condemned. This

element of suspense should have made the crowd more susceptible to the words and

actions of the condemned. It also brought an element of entertainment to the gallows

drama. It should also be noted that part of the suspense of the gallows ceremony included

the manner in which the condemned died. Hanging is not an especially efficient way of

killing a person and Gatrell describes numerous hangings in which it took the condemned

a long time to die after they were actually hung.[131] Additionally, hanging usually kills a

person by suffocating them. One reason a hood was placed over the head of the

condemned was so the spectators would not have to see the protruding tongue or eyes or

other visible indications of a suffocation. Hoods, however, can slip off so that the crowd

was sometimes able to see indications of the agony of the condemned. This generally did

not go over well with the crowd and Gatrell describes several instances in which the

crowd attempted to rescue a person whose hanging was botched and/or jeered the

hangman or tried to attack him.

Another factor that is likely to have shaped the expectations or reactions of the

crowd and which also emphasizes the entertainment aspect of the gallows was the media

representations of the gallows and those who died on it. Pamphlets, songs, and prints

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[130] White, "'The Inferior Sort of the Kingdom of Ireland".

[131] Gatrell, *The Hanging Tree*, Chapters 1 & 2.

were created about the gallows drama. This allowed messages to be spread to those who were not present at a hanging. These representations of the gallows would also have helped to shape and create public opinion at the same time that the representations were being shaped by public opinion.

In addition, as time went on, criminal biographies were published; often with the cooperation of the condemned. In the beginning these biographies generally followed the formula of the last dying speech in that they recounted a life of sin and crime leading to the gallows. Towards the middle or end of the 18th century, however, the tone and message of these biographies began to change. They continued to pay lip service to the religious formula of earlier biographies but took on much more of a how-to-commit-crime tone as they recounted the details of the crimes committed.[132] The change in content of these biographies must have reflected a change in the general attitude to crime, criminals, and the gallows from one which focused on the religious implications of crime to one which focused on the economic aspects of crime. The change in the tone of the biographies also reflects a change from viewing criminals as sinners who were essentially no different from any other member of the general public to viewing criminals as being different or deviant from the rest of the population.

Ballads were also composed and sung about gallows-related themes. These ballads would have affected the crowd perception either of the particular criminal or the crime committed. For example, Kirilka Stavreva has studied the portrayal of murderous

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[132]Philip Rawlings, *Drunks, Whores and Idle Apprentices: Criminal Biographies of the Eighteenth Century* (London:Routledge,1992).

wives in ballads and how these ballads and the prints that often accompanied them

contributed to "cultural meaning".[133] She notes that ballads about murderous wives were

"structured in commodified ways" but that the portrayals of the women "were far from

unambiguously negative".[134]

Between the crime for which the condemned was to hang, the actions and words

of the condemned, and media portrayals of the gallows and those who were put to death

by the state thereon, there were a number of factors which could have affected the

behavior of the crowd. But the question remains as to how hanging crowds really acted.

Gatrell has provided a partial answer to that question by characterizing the gallows and its

rituals as being carnival-like. But the examples he uses are primarily from the nineteenth

century after the middling and upper classes had arguably begun to question whether a

"civilized" nation should be hanging its citizens in public. The observations of the

hanging crowd which survive from this time period and which are used by Gatrell come

primarily from persons who are questioning the use of public hangings so that there is

reason to doubt the accuracy of their portrayals of hanging crowds as being composed of

the lower classes and as failing to show proper restraint for the occasion. The same is

true of others who have also characterized the gallows crowd as being unruly and

carnival-like.[135]

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[133] K. Stavreva, "Scaffolds unto Prints: Executing the Insubordinate Wife in the Ballad Trade of Early Modern England", *Journal of Popular Culture* (1997).

[134] Stavreva, "Scaffolds unto Prints", 179.

[135] See McLynn, 272, *et seq*.; Philip Smith, "Executing Executions: Aesthetics, Identity, and the Problematic Narratives of Capital Punishment Ritual", *Theory and Society*, 25, no.

As the discussion of destructive and recreational crowds in the previous chapter demonstrated, the eighteenth century was a time of economic and political transition, which may or may not have affected how crowds reacted at or to a hanging. The ritual of a public hanging contained many religious elements which should have discouraged rowdiness, disorder, or riots. However, that ritual also provided opportunities for some sort of crowd participation in the form of responding to the crimes of the condemned, their actions or the content of their last dying speeches.

It is also true that although the actual hanging took a relatively short time, the space around the gallows was limited so that hanging crowds began to gather well before the hanging took place so that individuals could obtain the best viewing space possible. This would have given the crowd a lot of free time in which they would have needed to amuse or entertain themselves before the real action of the hanging took place. This free time might be the time during which rowdiness occurred.

Finally, one element of a hanging has not yet been described. That is the moment between the speeches of the condemned and their hanging. At that moment there was a cry of "hats off" and the condemned mounted the gallows to be hung. As late as 1868 one observer noted the "awful silence" after the cry of hats off and the mixture of sounds which indicated the "horror and terror" felt by spectators at that moment.[136] This moment of awful silence emphasizes the fact that even though a crowd might be disorderly, the disorderliness did not necessarily last throughout the event for which the crowd gathered.

2(1996), 235-61.

[136] Gatrell, 67.

In other words, an adjective which accurately describes a crowd at one point in time may not apply at a different point in time during the same crowd gathering. The next chapter will explore what words and phrases were used to describe a hanging crowd during the eighteenth century and what conclusions about the crowd can be drawn from those descriptions.

CHAPTER FOUR - The Hanging Crowd

In 1725 Bernard Mandeville, one of the early critics of public hangings, described

the procession from Newgate to Tyburn as follows:

> At last, out they set; and with them a Torrent of Mob bursts through the Gate.
> Amongst the lower Rank, and working People, the idlest, and such as are most
> fond of making Holidays, with Prentices and Journeymen to the meanest Trades,
> are the most honourable Part of these floating Multitudes . . . All the Way, from
> Newgate to Tyburn, is one continued Fair, for Whores and Rogues of the meaner
> Sort . . . No modern Rabble can long subsist without darling Cordial, the grand
> Preservative of Sloth, Jeneva . . . The Traders, who vent it among the Mob on
> these Occasions, are commonly the worst of both Sexes . . . Here stands an old
> Sloven, in a Wig actually putrify'd, seqeez'd up in a Corner, and recommends a
> Dram of it to the Goers-by; There another in Rags, with several Bottles in a
> Basket, stirs about where the Throng is the thinnest . . . The intelligible Sounds,
> that are heard among them, are Oaths and vile Expressions, with Wishes of
> Damnation at every other Word . . . nothing is more entertaining to them than the
> dead Carcasses of Dogs and Cats . . . These well trampled in Filth, and, if
> possible, of the worst sort are, by the Ringleaders, flung as high and as far as a
> strong Arm can carry them . . . . And to see a good Suit of Cloaths spoiled by this
> Piece of Gallantry, is the tip-top of their Diversion.[137]

Likewise, in 1751, Henry Fielding published an inquiry into the cause of an

increase in robbers in which he voiced a common complaint that executions had become

a holiday farce and could not serve as a deterrent when the criminal exits as a hero, albeit

a drunken one, and when the only emotion aroused in the spectators was pity or

admiration.[138] Fielding argued that a proper execution should arouse terror among the

spectators not touched by any pity or admiration for the condemned. He also advocated

execution shortly after apprehension.

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[137] Bernard Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at
Tyburn* (London, 1725), 20-22.

[138] Henry Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase in Robbers* (1751).

The criticisms of Fielding and Mandeville are consistent with those made by social critics during this time. In his review of Fielding's social writings, Malvin Zirker, Jr. concludes that the sentiments contained in those writings are consistent with social critics who preceded Fielding and that these writings, for the most part, were aimed at controlling the poor.[139] The gist of Fielding's social criticism is that the poor have too much free time which they spend in drinking, gambling and other amusements. Fielding advocates the use of workhouses to put the poor to work and argues that the poor should be forced to accept whatever work is offered to them. Zirker points out that although Fielding's attitude towards the poor, which is reflected in the nouns he uses to describe them such as the mob and lower sort, is consistent with that of the class conscious society to which Fielding belonged, Fielding couches his argument that the poor should not be amusing themselves in economic terms. Specifically, he expressions of concern that the poor will spend money they do not have on idle amusements. Fielding's criticisms of the crowd at public hangings should, therefore, be read in light of his social position and associated view of the poor as should those of other social critics such as Mandeville and any other person writing about or describing crowds.

The Ordinary of Newgate attended almost every hanging in London. Newgate is the prison where London's condemned were held until it was time for them to hang. The Ordinary was the prison chaplain, an appointed position, with a duty to the condemned to ensure they met their maker in the proper frame of mind. This meant he was supposed to

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[139] Malvin R. Zirker, Jr. *Fielding's Social Pamphlets: A Study of An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers and A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provisions for the Poor*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

make sure they were properly contrite and ready to acknowledge their crime(s) and to display proper contrition at the gallows.

The Ordinary was paid £35 a year and had a house on Newgate Street upon which he did not have to pay the land tax.[140] To supplement his salary, the Ordinary would write an account of the lives of the condemned and their execution which was published on the day following an execution. Estimates vary as to the amount the Ordinary earned through this practice but one historian has estimated it to be £200 a year by the early eighteenth century.[141]

In light of the Ordinary's undoubted monetary motive, a question naturally arises as to the accuracy of the Accounts and whether or not the Ordinary slanted his Accounts in order to sell more copies. Linebaugh provides one answer to this question. He located 237 different Accounts which recorded the lives and executions of 58 women and 1129 men and then attempted to verify the information they contain through the use of collateral sources.[142] Using the *Proceedings* of the Old Bailey, a printed version of the trials at the Old Bailey, which was the main courtroom for hearing felony cases in the city of London and built-up Middlesex (the county which contained London) and the indictments filed and preserved in the Middlesex or City record offices, Linebaugh was

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[140] Peter Linebaugh, . "The Ordinary of Newgate and his Account" in *Crime in England 1550-1800*, ed. J.S.Cockburn. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[141] Andrea McKenzie, "Making Crime Pay: Motives, Marketing Strategies, and the Printed Literature of Crime in England 1670-1770," in *Criminal Justice in the Old World and the New: Essays in Honour of J.M. Beattie*. (University of Toronto: Centre of Criminology, 1998). Linebaugh is in general agreement with this figure – his estimate is £180 (see Lingbaugh, p. 250).

[142] Linebaugh, "The Ordinary of Newgate and his Account", 247.

able to verify the details of the trials of the condemned contained in the Ordinary's

Accounts. But he was less successful in finding supporting sources when it came to the

question of the details provided about each condemned person's life. When he was able

to do so, the details in the Ordinary's Account were verified in the main. There were

some discrepancies, however. For example, the age given for some of the condemned in

the Account might differ from that found in a collateral source by a year or two; place of

birth, however, was verified in all instances where it was possible to find a collateral

source. Overall, Linebaugh concludes that the Accounts were accurate or, at least, an

accurate rendition of the details provided by the condemned themselves. Although

Linebaugh did not test the accuracy of the Ordinary's descriptions of the crowd, his

findings argue that any description of the crowd provided by the Ordinary should be

accurate as well.

The Ordinary was criticized by some of his contemporaries as being too assiduous

in his desire to minister to the condemned and to gain the confession which he later

included in his Account. Some of these critics suggested that the Ordinary's main

purpose was to extract the confession for monetary gain rather than to comfort those

about to die and help them meet their maker in the proper frame of mind. Daniel DeFoe

was one of the more outspoken critics of the Ordinary. His attitude was based upon his

experience with the Ordinary during time he spent in Newgate in 1703 as a prisoner. Paul

Lorrain was the Ordinary at that time. DeFoe apparently disliked Lorrain but his

criticisms were not universally or widely shared.[143]   Further, this line of criticism is

relevant to the Ordinary's motive in gaining a confession from a prisoner. That is so

because the criticism was not that, once obtained, the confession was falsified in anyway

before it was included in the Ordinary's Account but that the motive in gaining a

confession was monetary rather than religious. These criticisms, therefore, do not

indicate that there is reason to question the accuracy of the details included in the

Ordinary's Accounts only the motive for obtaining them.

Another factor to consider when assessing the description of the crowd provided

by the Ordinary is any religious or moral purpose the Ordinary might have in writing

these Accounts. Specifically, the Ordinary was a religious figure whose responsibility

was tending the souls of Newgate prisoners. The seriousness with which the occupant of

the office undertook this duty no doubt varied but it should be kept in mind. This is so

because it is possible that the Ordinary may have shaped his Accounts consistent with his

religious purpose. This could result either in the omission of facts which were

inconsistent with his message or the outright fabrication of facts. Based upon

Linebaugh's assessment of the accuracy of the facts regarding the lives of those

condemned to die, there is every reason to believe the Ordinary was not fabricating the

details provided in the Accounts, but it is still possible that some details were omitted.

In contrast, Andrea McKenzie has considered the motives and marketing

[143] Robert R. Singleton, "DeFoe, Moll Flanders, and the Ordinary of Newgate" *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 24 (1976), 407-13.

strategies of eighteenth century writers of criminal biographies, including the Ordinary.[144]

Although she draws no firm conclusions regarding the accuracy of these biographies, she

focuses on the monetary motives of the writers and concludes that the biographies were

ambiguously written so that they could be interpreted in various ways.   Consequently,

these biographies could both appeal to a large number of readers as well as avoid

offending a large number of readers. The implications of McKenzie's conclusion for an

assessment of the Ordinary's descriptions of the crowd are also ambiguous. On the one

hand, the Ordinary might omit pejorative descriptions of the crowd for fear of offending

his readers who were presumably members of that crowd. On the other hand, the public

is fascinated by descriptions of rioting so that the Ordinary might include such

descriptions to appeal to potential readers. A similar argument can be made when the

religious motive of the Ordinary is considered. A rowdy or disorderly crowd gives the

Ordinary the opportunity to preach against such behavior and warn his readers of the dire

consequences of such behavior. A quiet or respective crowd, alternatively, gives the

Ordinary the opportunity to praise such behavior.   Taken together, the monetary and

religious motives of the Ordinary can be argued to support or refute an allegation that the

Ordinary's descriptions of the crowd are inaccurate. They should be kept in mind but it

should also be remembered that the primary focus of the Ordinary's Accounts was

describing the lives and deaths of the persons who had hanged albeit in a way which

emphasized the religious aspects of a hanging. The section describing the execution is a

small portion of any Account and even when describing the execution the primary focus

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[144] McKenzie, "Making Crime Pay."

is upon the behavior of the condemned and not the behavior of the crowd.

Not all of the Ordinary's Accounts have survived and those that have are scattered amongst various depositories. But they are not much more accessible in an Internet source called "The Proceedings of the Old Bailey".[145] The Proceedings are a document which contains accounts of the trials at the Old Bailey for the years 1674-1834.[146] Also included in this online depository are copies of the Ordinary's Accounts for the years 1746 - 1756. Altogether there are 53 Accounts distributed amongst the years as shown in Table 1.

Year	Number of Accounts
1746	3
1747	7
1748	3
1749	6
1750	8
1751	6
1752	9
1753	5
1754	2
1755	2
1756	2

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[145] For a discussion of this online source, see Guy Gugliotta, "Digitizing the Hanging Court", *Smithsonian* (April 2007), 66-75.

[146] The Proceedings of the Old Bailey Ref: www.oldbaileyonline.org (accessed June 5, 2007).

Table 1

Although the Accounts are not evenly distributed over this period, the distribution should be sufficiently even to give an idea of whether and how the Ordinary described the crowd at a public execution over this eleven year time span in the middle of the eighteenth century.

There were three different Ordinaries during this time period (or at least three different persons purport to be the Ordinary who wrote the Account). James Guthrie authored the two Accounts for April of 1746. Samuel Rossell wrote the Accounts for August 1, 1746, and January 21, 1747. And John Taylor authored all of the remaining Accounts. All three followed the same format. Each Account begins with a list of those who were executed and the crime(s) for which each was convicted. The next section provides details regarding the crimes and lives of each of the condemned persons. The final section is titled "At the Place of Execution" and describes the behavior of the condemned during the procession to Tyburn and at the gallows. This section generally comprises one or two paragraphs is actually a small portion of each Account. I will focus on the third section in order to determine what, if anything, can be learned about the behavior of hanging crowds. Specifically, each account will be reviewed for any indication of the size of the crowd, for descriptions of the behavior of the crowd or for words or phrases such as "crowd" or "mob" which are used to characterize the people gathered at the gallows. These words are significant because the positive or negative connotations connected to the word can indicate whether the author of the Account approves of the crowd's behavior. For example, as will be discussed later," mob" is

generally used to indicate disapproval of the crowd.

All but two of these Accounts includes a description of the execution. The Account for May 28, 1753, provides the names of the three men who were executed on that date and an explanation that the Ordinary, who was a Protestant minister, did not attend the execution because all three were Roman Catholics and the Ordinary did not want to give them the opportunity of turning their backs upon him as he knew they would do if he attended.

The Account for the execution of two men on June 26, 1754, omits a description of the execution without an explanation. The Ordinary, however, does conclude this particular Account with "a few reflections on the pernicious nature, and mischievous tendency" of the offense for which the two men were sentenced to die – forgery of a bill of exchange – in which he explains why persons guilty of this crime deserve to die. This Account illustrates the Ordinary's willingness to use his published Accounts to provide social or religious commentary and indifference to whether or not this commentary alienated his readers. It may also indicate that there was political need to justify this execution specifically or executions in general, perhaps in response to disapproval of gallows spectators.

Of the 53 Accounts reviewed, five of them include such commentary. Adding this commentary constitutes a deviance from the format of the Accounts and, as such, most likely indicates that the Ordinary is commenting on a topic upon which he felt strongly and believed it was important to educate the readers of the Account. The number of deviations from the usual format may not be significant but it does show a willingness to

use the pulpit of the Accounts to preach to the public on subjects that are of special

interest to the Ordinary. It also indicates that the Ordinary is not necessarily worried

about offending his readers and, consequently, may be willing to indicate when the crowd

at a hanging has been acting inappropriately according to his standards.

Other Accounts that include material which can be considered to be social

commentary include the Account for the execution on August 1, 1746. That Account

begins with a reference to the "tragedies of this week" and discusses the state's necessity

to execute some of its citizens for "the welfare and security of the body politick" and

likens this to the necessity to bleed a man in order to preserve his life. In other words, it

is necessary to punish and even execute criminals in order to deter others from

committing crimes.

The preface to the Account of the execution on June 17, 1747, includes a lengthy

statement from the newly appointed Ordinary regarding his perception of his duties, the

necessity of punishing malefactors, and his promise to execute his duties faithfully and to

the best of his abilities. Consistent with the concern about economic crimes expressed in

an earlier Account, the Accounts for the executions on July 29, 1747, and November 16,

1747, include sections commenting on the evils of smuggling and why that crime is as

great or serious as any other felony.

Finally, the description of the October 23, 1751, execution includes the following

statement:

> A dismal Spectacle to the thinking Part of the World! Pity that the Examples of
> such Numbers executed in a Christian Country should have no better Effect; but
> the Evil seems to increase with Punishment. And, no sooner is one Set of the
> publick Infectors of the peace and Property of the Community cut off from among

the Inhabitants of the Earth, but another is ready to follow in the same Way."

Turning to the question of whether and what the Ordinary's description of the execution tells us about the hanging crowd, a review of the 51 Accounts which included a description of the execution shows that 26 include references to the crowd. Included in these 26 Accounts are 26 direct comments upon or descriptions of the crowd such as "multitudes of people". There are 14 indirect comments such as "All was done without any great Hurry or Noise". The date and the statement(s) for each of these references are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Date of Execution	Statement(s) referring to the crowd
April 25, 1746	"but soon was the cart called to lead him to execution amidst the greatest multitude of people of all ranks ever known upon such an occasion"
November 16, 1747	"He frequently calling to the People, desired all young Men to take Care . . "
October 18, 1747	"They came there about Eleven, with a very great Multitude of People . . ." "Alford . . . twice repeated to the People that stood round him . . ."
February 7, 1750	"Their Bodies were all carry'd off by their Friends; nor was there any Disturbance, great Care being taken to keep off the Mob so long as it was necessary."[147]

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[147] The Ordinary was very concerned about what happened to the bodies of the condemned after they were dead and almost all of the Accounts contain a sentence or two indicating what happened to the body. Many of then were taken by friends, some were taken by soldiers to be displayed elsewhere (presumably the scene of their crime), some were taken by the surgeons to be anatomized, and a very few were not claimed by anyone.

March 26, 1750	". . . Sundiland, who declared to the Populace, that he died innocent . . ."
August 8, 1750	"Crawford talk'd some Time with a Friend at the Side of the Cart . . ." "Chamberlain desir'd a Friend that stood by . . ." "Smith called to a Man in the Crowd, and bid him adieu." "The whole Procession from Newgate to Tyburn was with the utmost Decency and Order; nor was there the least Commotion during the whole Ceremony of the Execution, proper Care being taken, and sufficient Assistance provided to keep the Populace in Awe, and to guard against, or put a Stop to any Disturbance that might possibly arise."
October 3, 1750	" . . . were conveyed to the Place of Execution, through a vast Concourse of People, as great as perhaps has at any Time been known upon such a melancholy Occasion."[148] "Smith did not, as was expected make any Speech to the Spectators . . ."
December 31, 1750	"And the Execution was done with as little Noise and Disturbance as the Nature of so tragical a Scene will admit."
February 11, 1751	"The Whole was carried on with what Decency the Nature of such Affairs will admit, without much Hurry; and there was no Disturbance, or Tumult among the Populace."

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[148] Twelve men were executed on this date. One of those men was James Maclean who appears to have been the cause of the interest in this execution. Maclean's last words are included verbatim in this Account and a note was added to the Account stating that in it being impossible to include "so Remarkable a Life as that of Maclean's" a special edition would be published to accomplish that purpose and to "satisfy the Curiosity of the Public". This special edition would include "several Curious Original Letters, wrote to and from Maclean; and as a Frontispiece, will be press'd, a very neat Picture of Him taken from the Life, while under Sentence, Drawn, and Engrav'd by Mr. Boitard."

June 17, 1751	"Not one of them spoke any thing to the Populace worth remarking . . ."
July 29, 1751	". . . went to the Place of Execution from Newgate, thro' great Numbers of Spectators." "Their Bodies were all delivered to their Friends in a particular Manner, occasioned by the Mob's crowding in upon the cutting down of one of the Bodies . . " " . . . and so on till they were all cut down and taken away; which prevented a good deal of Hurry and Disturbance."
November 11, 1751	" . . . were conveyed from Newgate to the Place of Execution, attended by a large Number of Constables, and Multitudes of People."
January 13, 1752	"All was done without any great Hurry or Noise."
March 23, 1752	"And during the whole Time of the Execution, there was not the least Disturbance. From whence we may conclude, that when Justice, supported by proper Authority, is taking Place, the Hearts of the Wicked shall tremble."
July 2, 1752	" . . . Thomas Wilford was carried in a Cart to Tyburn, amidst a numerous Multitude of Spectators. His Behaviour all the Way, and at the Place of Execution, moved the Compassion of the Beholders."
July 13, 1752	" . . . were carried to the Place of Execution, thro' a vast Croud of Spectators"
September 22, 1752	"Their bodies being cut down, were put into a Coach provided for the Purpose, and very quietly carried to Surgeon's Hall, the Mob scarce taking any Notice of it. And the whole Ceremony of the Execution of the Law was done without the least Confusion."
October 11, 1752	"The whole solemn and dismal Scene was conducted with Decency, and good Order, while the Laws were putting in Execution, and when they had hung the proper Time, their Bodies were delivered to their Friends."

November 13, 1752	"The Execution was done with all Decency and Quietness."
April 16, 1753	""Their Caps being put over their Faces, the Cart drew away, and all was done with Decency and Order."
June 23, 1753	"After which Stockdale declared to the Populace, that he did not intentionally kill the Man . . "
October 1, 1753	" . . and the whole dismal Scene passed on without any Hurry or Disturbance."
October 29, 1753	"The dismal scene went on without any interruption or disturbance; and their bodies were delivered to the care of their friends."
June 5, 1754	" . . were carried to the Place of Execution through a vast Crowd of People, the Streets all the Way being crowded on both Sides as they passed along."
March 17, 1755	"Execution was done upon them without any disturbance, tho' a vast multitude were gathered together on the occasion."
June 28, 1756	"The populace expressed great pity towards them, upon account of their youth, and, as they were turned off, called on the Lord to have mercy on them."

None of the descriptions of the scene at the execution or the procession to Tyburn mention the crowd being unruly or riotous or acting in any other inappropriate way. In fact, there are only two references to the behavior of the crowd. One is on July 2, 1752, when the behavior of one of the condemned is said to have moved the compassion of the beholders. The other is on June 28, 1756, when the Ordinary states that the populace expressed pity towards the condemned because of their youth. Although it is impossible to know why the Ordinary generally did not comment upon the actions of the crowd, it is likely that the Ordinary generally chose not to comment upon the actions of the crowd unless they were remarkable and only did so on these two occasions because the actions

were so far out of the ordinary. This implies either that the crowd was not rioting or disorderly or, if it was, that the disorderliness of the crowd was taken for granted as being the behavior expected of the crowd.

The terms used to refer to the crowd are, for the most part, respectful. The terms and their number of uses follow: beholders (1), concourse of people (1), crowd of people (1), crowd of spectators (1), mob (3), multitude (1), multitude of people (3), multitude of spectators (1), people (2), populace (6), spectators (2), the wicked (1). Of these terms only "mob" has negative connotations, as will be discussed later, and it was used only three times. The term "wicked" is used once but in the context of noting that when justice is done the hearts of the wicked will tremble; it therefore is not being used to create a negative impression of the crowd. There are several references to a condemned person talking to a friend in the crowd. Finally, there are fourteen (14) references to the execution occurring without great or undue disturbance (or words to that effect). These statements therefore imply that there was probably a certain amount of noise but that it was not greater than the Ordinary thought was appropriate. This, in turn, implies that the hanging crowd was not expected to be disorderly or generally was not so. Overall, these references to the crowd provide a picture of a group of people who were apparently acting in a manner which did not offend or disturb the Ordinary.

This picture of the gallows crowd is in sharp contrast to that painted by social commentators such as Henry Fielding who generally depicted the gallows crowd as a group of people who failed to show the proper respect and decorum demanded by such a solemn occasion. Consistent with Social Identity theory, the contrast may be due to the

differing perspective of the Ordinary when compared to that of the typical social

commentator such as Fielding. The Ordinary was focused upon the religious aspects of

the situation and would most probably have focused upon the behavior of the crowd only

when it added to or detracted from the religious aspect of a hanging. Social

commentators, on the other hand, were generally from the upper class and brought upper

class notions about the behavior of the lower class, who they assumed composed the

greater part of the gallows crowd, to their viewing of the gallows crowd. In other words,

upper class commentators were primed to view the gallows crowd as being composed of

lower class people who were thought to be unable or unwilling to act properly. Another

way of thinking about this contrast is the difference between viewing a glass as being half

full (the Ordinary's perspective) versus viewing the same glass as being half empty (the

upper class perspective).

Another possible explanation of this contrast in depictions of the gallows crowd is

political/economic. One of the main sources of income for the Ordinary was the

Accounts he published after every hanging. He would want to maximize the number of

these Accounts sold and may have pandered to his primary audience – those people who

were most likely to attend hangings. He may therefore have deliberately depicted the

crowd as acting appropriately or omit any reference to the crowd so as not to offend his

readers. Similarly, social commentators generally had a political agenda to follow and

may have depicted the gallows crowd in a way which furthered this agenda. Because the

agenda for many of these commentators included the abolishment of public hangings or

control of the poor, they would have been more likely to focus on the unsavory or

inappropriate behavior of persons in the gallows crowd. Once again, the contrast in the

depiction of the gallows crowd may be a case of describing the glass as half empty or half

full.

Returning to an analysis of the Ordinary's depictions of the gallows crowd it is

interesting to note that most of the statements regarding the crowd come towards the end

of this period. Only three of the nineteen Accounts prior to 1750, or 16%, contain

references to the crowd. Twenty-three of the thirty-four Accounts for 1750 and after, or

68%, contain references to the crowd. The only clue to this disparity contained in the

Accounts are references to soldiers being involved in hanging. There are seven such

references and all but one occur prior to 1750. The first comes on July 29, 1747, when

the Ordinary states that a company of soldiers attended the cart from Newgate to the place

of execution. The next occurs on December 21, 1747, when the cart, which carried only

one man, was attended by a "Draught of about forty Men of the Second Regiment of Foot

Guards" to the place of execution. The procession was also attended by a party of

soldiers on March 18, 1748. The procession on May 11, 1748, was accompanied by a

"Draught of about Sixty Men of the First and Third Regiments of Guards". The March

17, 1749, procession was attended by a party of Dragoons and Foot Guards. The final

reference occurs on November 11, 1751, when the Ordinary states that the carts were

escorted by a large number of constables. These statements regarding the presence of

soldiers and other law enforcement officers are consistent with Linebaugh's study of the

disturbances at Tyburn related to the the disposition of bodies. He concluded that "a

relative peace" had settled at the gallows after mid-century as the surgeons found other

sources of bodies to dissect.[149] It is therefore likely the soldiers and other law

enforcement personnel whose presence the Ordinary notes were there in order to deter the

tussle over dead bodies between surgeons (and their agents) and the friends and loved

ones of the dead person and less likely that they were present because the crowd was

becoming increasingly disorderly and out-of-control although this possibility cannot be

discounted entirely.

Regarding the Ordinary's failure to comment on the crowd prior to 1750, perhaps

the presence of soldiers, which seems to have occurred on a fairly regular basis before

1750, discouraged any action from the crowd. An alternative explanation might be that

he was more impressed by the presence of the soldiers than by the size of or actions of the

crowd. Another possible explanation may be that he was aware of the criticisms made by

Fielding and others and decided to include references to crowd behavior in his Accounts

to refute them. It is also possible that the size of the crowds at Tyburn increased as time

went by so that the size of crowd became remarkable and was included in the Accounts.

Regardless of the reason for the increased attention paid to the crowd, the picture

of the hanging crowd that emerges from the Ordinary's Accounts is not consistent with

the picture provided by Fielding and other social critics. The question that naturally

arises is which picture of the hanging crowd is accurate. In order to provide additional

information regarding hanging crowds during the eighteenth century, another source of

information was located. That source is the *Newgate Calendar*, which is a collection of

criminal biographies. The original *Newgate Calendar* was published in five volumes in

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[149] Linebaugh, 1975, 78.

1760 and described notorious crimes and criminals from 1700 until that date. Later

editions were published and included additional biographies. The edition of the *Newgate*

Calendar used in this thesis was published in 1932 and contains accounts of the lives and

deaths of various criminals for the years 1700-1790.   The crimes and criminals described

are from all over Great Britain. Of the 203 criminals described, 149 were executed. Only

31 of the accounts describe the crowd at the execution or refer to the crowd indirectly.

Table 3, which follows, provides the date and place of the execution as well as the

reference to the crowd for each of those accounts.

Table 3

Date	Place	Reference to Crowd
July 5, 1720	Tyburn	her devotions were "much interrupted by the mob throwing stones and dirt at her"
Sept. 24, 1722	Tyburn	"On his way to the place of execution, the daughter above mentioned was permitted to go into the cart, to take her last farewell of him, – a scene that was greatly affecting to the spectators."
Nov.16, 1724	not given	"He died with difficulty, and was much pitied by the surrounding multitude."

| May 24, 1725 | Tyburn | "On his way to the place of execution the populace treated this offender with remarkable severity, incessantly pelting him with stones, dirt, etc. and execrating him as the most consummate villain that had ever disgraced human nature."

At Tyburn he continued to sit in the cart "but the populace were at length so enraged at the indulgence shown him, that they outrageously called to the executioner to perform the duties of his office, violently threatening him with instant death if he presumed any longer to delay. He judged it prudent to comply with their demands, and when he began to prepare for the execution the popular clamour ceased."[150] |
| Sept. 7, 1736 | Edinburgh | "The main body of the mob, all disguised, marched in the mean time to the prison; where, finding some difficulty in breaking open the door with hammers, they immediately set fire to it . . . "[151]

"When they were satisfied he was dead, they immediately dispersed to their several habitations, unmolested themselves, and without molesting anyone else." |

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[150] These quotes come from the biography for Jonathon Wild whose crime was feloniously conniving with thieves. Wild is actually quite well known. He was the leader of a ring of thieves who would steal items and bring them to Wild. Wild would then contact the rightful owners and return the item to the owner for a reward as was the custom at that time. Such persons were called thief takers.

[151] This selection describes the death of Captain John Porteous who was killed by a crowd before he could be hung. Apparently, Porteous was the captain of a group of men charged with keeping the peace. Porteous was overzealous in his pursuit of that occupation as noted by the author of this selection who states that Porteous "would generally exceed the bounds of his commission, and would treat the delinquents with the utmost cruelty, by knocking them down with his musket, and frequently breaking legs and arms." When Porteous found himself in prison the inhabitants of the city took their opportunity for revenge against him.

April 10, 1739	York	"The spectators of the execution seemed to be much affected at the fate of this man, who was distinguished by the comeliness of his appearance."[152]
May 3, 1740	Ivelchester	"As the country people were violently enraged against them, they were conducted to Ivelchester (the place of execution) between three and four in the morning of May 3, 1740, lest they should have been torn in pieces." They were not executed at six o'clock "to the disappointment of thousands of people who had come from all parts of the country to witness the death of two such unworthy wretches."[153]
April 9, 1740	St. Edmund's-bury	"He was hanged . . . Amidst the greatest crowd of spectators that were almost ever assembled on such a melancholy occasion in that part of the country.,"
April 9, 1747	Tower Hill, London	"Just before he came out of the Tower, a scaffolding near the Ship alehouse, Barking Alley, built from that house in many stories, with near one thousand persons on it, suddenly fell down, by which eight or ten were killed on the spot, and numbers had their arms, ribs, and legs broken."
Jan. 18, 1749	Chichester	"They were hanged . . . amidst such a concourse of spectators as is seldom seen on occasions of public execution."
April 7, 1749	Canterbury	"Collington prayed with the minister, but declined making any speech to the surrounding multitude."
April 6, 1752	not provided	"The crowd of spectators assembled on this occasion was immense . . ."

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[152] This selection describes the life and death of Richard Turpin who was quite notorious. The author of the selection reports the reaction of the crowd to the death but did not approve of this reaction. He states that "[i]t is difficult to conceive the reason of all this concern and sympathy; for surely a more heartless and depraved villain than Turpin never existed."

[153] This selection describes the crime and deaths of Elizabeth and Mary Branch, a mother and daughter, who had a reputation for cruelty and who were convicted of killing Jane Butterworth, a poor girl who had been placed with them by the parish.

August 14, 1752	Horsham, in Sussex	"An immense crowd attended at the place of execution."
April 13, 1753	Gloucester	her sentence was carried into execution "among a number of spectators, who showed little pity for her fate, and which became still more shocking from denying that fact, so incontrovertibly proved, to the very last moment of her existence."
June 7, 1753	Tyburn	" . . upon which the sledge moved towards Tyburn, among a great number of spectators, who all pitied his situation."
May 5, 1760	tyburn	The procession containing a large number of soldiers is described. The condemned stated his wish to have it over "saying that 'the appartus of death, and the passing through such crowds of people, were ten times worse than death itself'". The condemned wished to stop at a pub along the way but this was discouraged because this "would necessarily draw a greater crowd about him" which might disturb and incommode him.[154]
April 4, 1761	Haymarket (near the victim's house)	"He was executed . . . amidst the shouts and hisses of an indignant populace . . ."

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[154] This selection describes the crime and death of Laurence Earl Ferrer who killed one of his servants while he was drunk. Ferrer was a nobleman and was said to be descended from royalty. Hence the immense interest in this execution, the use of a large number of soldiers, and the concern that the condemned man not be disturbed.

December 15, 1761	near Strabane, in Ireland	"The spectators, who saw him drop when the rope croke, looked upon it as some contrivance for his escape, which they favoured all they could by running away from the place, and leaving it open. The populace would not probably have been so well disposed towards him had they known of his horrid designs of murder; but they had been persuaded that he only meant to get possession of his wife."[155]`
July 28, 1762	near the City Road	"he was turned off . . . amidst an amazing concourse of people . . ."
March 28, 1763	Hartford	"Immense numbers of people attended at the place of execution, to see the last of a man who had made himself dreaded through the country by the enormity of his conduct."[156]
Nov. 13, 1756	Grass Market in Edinburgh	"At the place of execution he made an address to the populace, still asserting his innocence; and soon as he had concluded his devotions, he was turned off, amidst an immense concourse of people."
Sept. 14, 1767	Tyburn	"On her way to the fatal tree the people expressed their abhorrence of her crime in terms which, though not proper at the moment, testified their detestation of her cruelty." Before her death she was joined by the Ordinary "whom she desired to declare to the multitude that she confessed her guilt, and acknowledged the justice of her sentence."
Jan. 19, 1767	Chiswell Street, in Moorfields	He was turned off "amidst an amazing concourse of people."

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[155] This selection describes the crime and death of John M'Naughton, Esp. who killed a young woman with whom he was infatuated. The author states that the two of them underwent a fake wedding ceremony which he took seriously but she did not. The young woman was killed when a carriage in which she was riding with her parents was waylaid by M'Naughton and an accomplice in an attempt to kidnap her.

[156] This particular criminal was a well-know highwayman.

Dec. 9, 1771	Tyburn	"They were attended to Tyburn, the place of execution, by immense crowds of people, who were anzious to witness the exit of wretches whose crimes had been so much the object of public notice."
July 8, 1772	Tyburn	"An immense concourse of people attended this execution."
Jan. 17, 1776	Tyburn	"On the day of the execution the brothers were favoured with a mourning-coach, and it was thought that thirty thousand people attended."
Dec. 12, 1777	Tyburn	"On the way to execution the mob insulted Russen; but the propriety of his behaviour at the fatal tree had an evident effect on the spectators; and, when his body was cut down, it was put into a hearse, and delivered to his friends for interment."
April 19, 1779	Tyburn	"This shocking and truly lamentable case interested all ranks of people, who pitied the murderer's fate, conceiving him stimulated to the commit the horrid crime through love and madness."
April 5, 1779	Haverfordwest	" . . .amid the execrations of every honest Welchman."
July 21, 1781	Tyburn	" . . he seemed to be totally abstracted from the surrounding multitude, as he scarcely ever took his eyes from a devotional book which he held in his hand."
Sept. 6, 1789	not stated	" . . . amidst a vast concourse of pitying spectators."

The terms used to refer to the crowd in these selections are as follows: concourse of people (3), concourse of spectators (1), crowd (2), crowd of spectators (3), crowds of people (2), mob (4), multitude (4), people/persons (7), populace (5), spectators (6). Overall, the terms used to refer to the hanging crowd are neutral. Of the different terms used only "mob" has negative connotations. Mob was used 4 out of 37 times, which is approximately 10% of the references.

There are sixteen references to the actions or emotions of the crowd. The actions

include throwing stones, shouting and hissing and, in one case, killing the condemned man. The emotion most often noted was pity or the lack of thereof. The crowd was also reported to be disappointed, interested, and to favor one of the condemned.

Overall, the description of the hanging crowd found in the *Newgate Calendar* is consistent with that found in the Ordinary's Accounts. Once again, the crowd tends not to be mentioned at all and when it is mentioned, the terms used to refer to it are neutral. No crowd is described as riotous or unruly although those terms could have been used to describe the gathering that killed Captain Porteous in 1736; that crowd was described as a "mob" but the author also notes that this crowd was not molested and molested no one other than Porteous.

The only other two crowds termed mobs also engaged in negative behavior. One threw stones at a condemned woman at the place of execution. The other insulted the condemned man on the way to the execution. Interestingly, this same crowd was referred to as "spectators" at the place of execution where the propriety of the behavior of the condemned man was said to have an "evident effect on the spectators".

The authors of the *Newgate Calendar* used "mob" to refer to crowds engaging in negative behavior. This use of the term is consistent with the manner in which that term was used during the eighteenth century. George Rude points out that there were three ways in which the term "mob" was used during this time.[157] First, it was used to refer to people of the lower orders. Second, it might refer to a hired gang acting in the interest of a specific political group. And third, it was sometimes used to refer to crowds engaged in

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[157] Rude, "The London 'Mob' of the Eighteenth Century", 1.

riots, strikes or political demonstrations. In his book on the London mob, Robert

Shoemaker states the term was used to refer to the lower orders, to the totality of the

people on the London streets, and to those people who rioted.[158] These two historians are

therefore in agreement as to the various uses of this term by those who lived in the

eighteenth century. In his analysis of crowds and history, Mark Harrison argues that

"mob" was generally used to refer to crowds that had gathered together for their own

purposes and which lacked the official stamp of approval by someone in authority.[159] He

further states that newspaper descriptions of the 17 hangings in Bristol between 1790 and

1835 do not describe the hanging crowd as a mob but use other terms instead. They are:

multitude (which was used 10 times), spectators, crowd, populace, concourse, and

assemblage. He also reviewed references to the crowds at recreational events and found

that similar terms were used. There were, however, two uses of the term mob to describe

a recreational crowd and but Harrison states that these events were of dubious legality.[160]

Harrison's argument that the term mob was used to provide a negative connotation to a

crowd at an event that lacked official approval or where the actions of the crowd were

inappropriate is consistent with the use of that term in the *Newgate Calendar* and the

Ordinary's Accounts. Consequently, the fact that the term is seldom used to describe the

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[158] Shoemaker, *The London Mob*, xii. For a discussion of the origin and first use of the term, see p. xi, *et seq.* See also, Peter Linebaugh, *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century.* (London: Verso, 2003), 38 - for a discussion of the origin and use of the term.

[159] Harrison, *Crowds and History*, 184.

[160] Harrison, 185.

crowd at a hanging is significant in that it indicates that hanging crowds were generally

not acting in a manner considered to be inappropriate.

In conclusion, a review of the Ordinary's Accounts for the years 1746-1756 shows

that the crowds at hangings at Tyburn were apparently acting in a manner considered to

be satisfactory for the occasion by the Ordinary. This is generally consistent with the

comments made about hanging crowds in the *Newgate Calendar* for the years 1700-1790

and with Mark Harrison's review of newspaper accounts of hangings in Bristol during the

years 1790-1835. This conclusion is in contrast to the statements made by social critics

which may be more reflective of the critic's political agenda and class status than what

was really happening at a hanging.

CHAPTER FIVE - Conclusion

<u>Hanging crowds acted as expected</u>

This thesis has considered the hanging crowd during the eighteenth century from

several perspectives. First, modern psychosocial theories of crowd behavior were

reviewed. Those theories have evolved from LeBon's early theory which argued that

individual members of a crowd lose their sense of self and their rationality and become

mindless automatons subject to the will of the crowd whether it be for good or evil.

Recent theorists have developed theories which are intended to explain all types of

crowds and which argue that individual members of crowds do not lose their sense of self

or their rationality. Instead, each member of the crowd brings to his participation in the

crowd a ready-made norm or script which provides an expectation of what will be seen

and how to act and react to it. For example, in the case of crowds at sporting events, this

norm or script may dictate that a member of the crowd to cheer for the home team,

interact with other crowd members seated nearby, and eat lots of overpriced food. The

case of celebratory riots is more complicated. In these situations, there are generally

different types of actors who each has his or her own norm or script to follow. These

actors include persons who engage in destructive behavior, some who watch events

unfold, and some (law enforcement officers) who behave in ways that are intended to stop

the destructive behavior but which may rile up the spectators and initially make the

situation worse before it gets better. Application of modern psychosocial crowd theory to

eighteenth century hanging crowds indicates that members of these crowds would not

lose their rationality but would instead have gone to a hanging with pre-existing expectations regarding what they would see and how they should act.

Turning to a historical analysis of crowds in the eighteenth century, several different types of crowds are described. Rioting crowds were shown to act in ways that were considered appropriate to the situation. For example, those crowds who participated in bread riots engaged in destructive behavior which was aimed at persons associated with their grievance such as a miller. Furthermore, this behavior was generally aimed at property rather than persons and generally ceased after it was destroyed. In other words, these crowds were following scripts regarding what was appropriate for the situation.

It is also true that there were many different types of crowds in the eighteenth century. Crowds gathered together for fairs and festivals, to worship, at the marketplace, to watch or participate in sports, and on the streets of London and other towns and cities. Crowds also gathered to support political causes or parties but rarely turned into rioting crowds. In other words, being a member of a crowd was a common experience in the eighteenth century. If crowd membership does cause a person to lose his autonomy, there were many opportunities for this to happen. Historians, however, have found that destructive crowds occurred generally in the context of a political or economic protest and that those crowds acted purposefully. Consequently, the historic analysis of eighteenth century crowds supports modern psychosocial theory of crowd behavior as being controlled by existing norms or expectations rather than a collective mind.

Many rituals associated with a hanging during the eighteenth century had religious overtones. A minister generally accompanied condemned persons to the place of

execution. Once there, he asked the condemned to pray with him. The condemned also

was given the opportunity to make a last dying speech. The content of these speeches

generally followed a pattern in which the condemned described how one small sin led

him or her down the path to the final sin/crime for which he or she was now about to die.

The condemned was also expected to acknowledge the appropriateness of being hung for

his or her sins/crimes and to ask for God's forgiveness. This script, of course, was not

always followed. Some condemned people refused to acknowledge their guilt and some

used the platform of the gallows as a political platform upon which to affirm their faith or

political views. Once dead, the body of the condemned person was generally claimed by

friends or relatives and the crowd dispersed. Because there was little variation to the

ritual of a hanging other than the contents of the speech or the behavior of the

condemned, the ritual would have been well-known and would have created expectations

regarding what the crowd would see at a hanging and how to react to it. This reaction

varied according to the crime of the condemned or the content of the speech but did not

include violence except in specific situations such as surgeons or their agents trying to

take the corpses for dissection – an action which offended religious practices of the time.

The Accounts of the Ordinary of Newgate for the eleven years reviewed reveal

that during the time period of 1746-1756 the crowd apparently acted in ways that were

considered appropriate by the Ordinary. The terms used to describe the crowd such as

multitude or spectator are generally neutral. Further, there were several indirect

references to the crowd in which the Ordinary notes that events passed off without great

noise or disturbance. None of the Accounts contained statements specifically stating that

the crowd acted inappropriately. This is significant in light of the fact that the Ordinary was apparently willing to include social commentary in his Account. Consequently, it is likely that he would have given some indication of his disapproval if it existed.

Descriptions of the lives and executions of eighteenth century criminals can also be found in the *Newgate Calendar*. These descriptions contained references to the emotions or actions of hanging crowds but, again, do not depict the crowd as being generally riotous or unruly. Of the 149 executions described only 31 mention the crowd and only three of these describe any manner of unruly behavior. That behavior is merely described and is not commented upon. For example, the crowd is described as throwing stones and dirt at Jonathon Wild, a notorious criminal who was disliked. The terms used to describe the crowd in the *Newgate Calendar* are generally neutral and similar to those used by the Ordinary in his Accounts. This is also consistent with the findings of Mark Harrison who reviewed the descriptions of crowds at hangings in Bristol during 1790-1835. Harrison makes the further argument that the only negative term used to describe hanging crowds in his sources was mob, and that this term was generally used during the eighteenth century when the crowd had gathered together without the approval of authorities. The use of the term, therefore, is generally significant as an indicator of the attitude of the user of the term rather than as a description of the crowd or its activities.

Taken together, the psychosocial theories, historical analysis and review of descriptions of hangings during the eighteenth century show that hanging crowds during this period gathered together and acted in accordance with social expectations regarding how they should act at a hanging. This conclusion contrasts with the depictions of

hanging crowds provided by social commentators of the eighteenth century such as

Bernard Mandeville and Henry Fielding. These commentators had their own agendas

which most likely affected what they saw when they attended hangings or how they

described what they saw. For example, Mandeville's description of a hanging which is

provided at the beginning of Chapter 3 actually describes the crowd as they are gathering

together before the hanging rather than how they acted once they had gathered at the site

of the hanging and during the time of the actual hanging. His expectations of the crowd

seem unreasonable. For example, he describes people as being dressed in rags in a

disapproving manner. Given the fact that many of the people in London were poor, it is

not surprising that they were, in fact, dressed in rags. It seems unreasonable and

unrealistic to expect otherwise. He also describes some people throwing the carcasses of

dead cats and dogs. Unfortunately, he does not describe the number of people in the

crowd or the number of people engaging in this behavior. It is, therefore, difficult to

determine if this activity was engaged in by a few or many. It seems likely that it was

only a few people and it is unfair to impute the actions of a few to the many.

Henry Fielding's expectations likewise seem unrealistic. Fielding was a

Middlesex magistrate, founder of the Bow Street runners (a forerunner of the police), and

an author of novels as well as social commentary. This background may have formed his

expectation that people going to a hanging do so with a sense of terror not affected by pity

or admiration for the condemned. Furthermore, Fielding did not react well to the Penlez

Riot in July of 1749 in which the crowd burned down bawdy houses. During the riot part

of the crowd gathered before Fielding's office in Bow Street and he decided to use the

military to suppress this crowd. Subsequent events showed that to be a poor decision.[161]

Fielding later published accounts of the riot which stated that the crowd situation had

deteriorated to the point where the military was needed, but other accounts were

published by eyewitnesses which disputed his characterization of the crowd. Fielding's

later social commentaries on the poor and the need to put them to work were quite likely

affected by his experience in 1749 and his need to justify the unpopular actions he took to

quell the disturbance as well as his experiences as magistrate.

It should also be noted that both Mandeville and Fielding appear to be arguing for

changes in a social norm rather than for the continuance of an existing norm.

Specifically, they expected the crowd not to participate in the hanging other than to watch

it silently. This is contrary to existing expectations that the public should be actively

involved in criminal apprehension and punishment. Critics of public hangings saw or

described hanging crowds in ways that were consistent with their expectations and

ignored or failed to mention the actions of the crowd that fit existing social norms.

But there is no way to definitively determine which picture of the hanging crowd

is accurate. As was previously stated, the crowd at a hanging may have been both orderly

and disorderly depending upon the social identity of the person describing the crowd.

This inability to accurately describe historic crowds and their susceptibility to the agenda

of the describer has been noted by others. For example, Mark Harrison notes that "[t]o a

large extent the history of the crowd is the history of other people's perceptions of the

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[161] See Linebaugh, "The Tyburn Riot Against the Surgeons", 91, *et seq.*

crowd".[162] He further states that since a crowd existed through the eyes of commentators who were generally not crowd participants and who often occupied advantaged social positions, the crowd's existence often functioned as a means through which the beliefs of the commentator were reflected.

The inability to definitively describe eighteenth century hanging crowds as being orderly or disorderly is not fatal. It reinforces the truth of Harrison's statements regarding the importance of the beliefs and agendas of the describer of those crowds. Further, it reinforces the importance of the role of the media in regards to crowd behavior which was first noted in the portion of Chapter 1 discussing recent research on crowd behavior. The role of written descriptions of hangings became increasingly important during the eighteenth century because literacy rates increased during that time as did the availability of all sorts of written literature. Those persons unable to read would often have newspapers and other written literature read to them. This means that the general population of England would have been aware of what was being said and written about hanging crowds. The views expressed by the writers would have become part of the existing expectations regarding how people acted at a hanging so that it is likely that descriptions of the hanging crowd as being disorderly became self-fulfilling prophecies. This could explain why even though Fielding was complaining about hanging crowds in the 1750s hangings were not moved inside until 1868.

<u>Blending sociology, psychology and history</u>

In addition to learning more about the hanging crowds in eighteenth century

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[162] Harrison, 39.

England, this thesis has attempted to blend the methodologies and findings of three

separate fields of study: sociology, psychology, and history.   Consequently, research on

crowds from each of these fields was first reviewed and summarized and implications for

eighteenth century hanging crowds set forth. Social psychology overlaps the fields of

sociology and psychology and the research on crowd behavior already conducted by

social psychologists was provided in Chapter 1. That research predicts that crowds do not

necessarily act as a unitary whole. A crowd is composed of many individuals who each

bring to the crowd situation an expectation of what will be seen and heard. Individuals

also bring to the crowd situation many different social identities. Consequently, even

though the expectations of what will be seen and how to react to it will most likely be

similar for each person in the crowd, the reactions/actions of individuals may vary

depending upon which social identity is activated.

Historical research on eighteenth crowds was reviewed in Chapter 2. The results

of that research demonstrated that crowds in the eighteenth century acted in accordance

with the principles of crowd behavior discussed in Chapter 1. Specifically, eighteenth

crowds, disorderly or otherwise, acted in accordance with the situation which caused the

crowd to gather. Crowds which gathered because of a common grievance acted out

against the objects of that grievance but did not become subject to a collective mind and

lose the ability to control their actions. Crowds which gathered for recreational purposes

acted in a way consistent with the purpose, e.g., a crowd at a soccer match watched the

game and talked to the people with whom they were attending the match.

The lesson learned from these two chapters is that research in the fields of

sociology and psychology can be used to predict not only how modern people will act in a given situation but can also "predict" how people acted in the historical past. This can be useful when trying to interpret the historical record. There are often gaps in the historical record because not all of the records created in any given time period have been preserved. Further, historians and other researchers searching historical records often use them for purposes other than those for which the records were created. A good example of the problem created by this secondary use of those sources is demonstrated by this thesis which used the Ordinary's Account to learn about the crowds at an eighteenth century hanging although there is no reason to believe the Ordinary was creating the Accounts in order to describe the crowd at a hanging. Interpretation of historical sources and attempts to fill in the gaps can be accomplished by using the principles developed by scholars in other disciplines when applicable. Again, a good example of this is provided in this thesis where the principles of social psychology are used to state with some confidence that even though the descriptions of the crowd provided by the Ordinary is not determinative and is open to multiple interpretations, the picture created by those descriptions is of a crowd acting in accordance with the expectations created by the rituals associated with hanging and that those rituals dictated that the crowd listen to the last dying speeches of the condemned and react according to the content of those speeches and the crimes for which the condemned were hanged. There was no expectation that the crowd would riot or be unduly rowdy. The descriptions provided by the Ordinary are therefore consistent with the principles of crowd behavior set forth by modern social psychologists.

Likewise, research conducted by historians can be helpful to sociologists and psychologists. Ideally, research conducted in these fields involves the use of human beings. For ethical reasons, however, the experiments conducted by these scholars must meet certain standards. It can therefore be helpful to examine the historical record to determine if people in the past acted in accordance with the theory being tested by the scholar. Again, this thesis provides an example. For obvious reasons, a social psychologist interested in crowd behavior cannot create a crowd situation leading to a riot in order to test a theory regarding the conditions that cause a crowd to riot. But that researcher can review the historians have done on rioting crowds to test his or her theory. This review will not be determinative but it is certainly illuminating.

In conclusion, there is reason to believe that one scholarly discipline can be used to inform or illuminate the study of another discipline.

Final thoughts

Writing this thesis was often frustrating because there are no ready-made blueprints to follow when conducting and writing an interdisciplinary study of a topic. Consequently, much time was spent on mental dithering while trying to seamlessly meld the three disciplines. Hopefully, at least a small amount of success was achieved in regards to that endeavor.

Researching and writing this thesis was also immensely rewarding. Although the purpose of this thesis was to test the commonly held viewpoint that hanging crowds were rowdy and disorderly if not riotous, it soon became clear that the study of crowds illustrates many problems endemic to human beings. One of those problems is the use of

language or terms without providing an exact definition for the term. This can lead to confusion regarding exactly what phenomenon is being studied. For example, reading the existing research on crowds from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, and history showed that many words are used in connection with the study of crowds which are open to multiple interpretations but this fact is generally not acknowledged. A prime example of this phenomenon is the use of the term "crowd". That word is often used without any attempt to define it. It can therefore describe of group of three or more people gathered together in a diner to eat a meal or a group of hundreds or thousands of people engaged in destructive behavior in Miami in 1980. Another term that is often used without definition is "riot." This term can be used to describe three or more people disturbing the peace or hundreds of people destroying property and attacking other people. Recent scholars are becoming sensitive to this problem and many are providing operational definitions of these and similar terms but it should be kept in mind by the reader of research.

The historical study of crowds can also illuminate how social trends affected the common person. It has been said that history is the story of the winners. It is also often the story of the upper or privileged classes. The lower classes are often ignored (although this changing) and it is only when they act as a "crowd" that they are studied. For example, as the historical review provided in Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrates, the drive of the middle and upper classes in England in the eighteenth century to create a more vital economy caused disruptions in the lives of the lower classes who did not always appreciate these changes. It was only when they banded together as a "crowd" that they had any hope of affecting those changes. Likewise, the sociology of the crowd

has suffered from neglect except when they acted in a destructive manner. As Chapter 1 demonstrated, that is changing.

Finally, researching and writing this thesis on crowds provided the writer with an appreciation of the formation of public opinion. It was during the eighteenth century when literacy rates reached a level where newspapers, pamphlets, and other written documents could be published and widely circulated. These documents seem to have been used to express the social and political views of their writers in attempts to affect or inform public opinion. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to study how these documents affected public opinion but there are indications that at least as in regards the hanging crowds public opinion was gradually shaped by social commentators like Henry Fielding to create the impression that these crowds were composed of members of the lower class who did not adequately appreciate the solemnity of the occasion. This contrasts with the impression created by the few mentions of the crowd in the Ordinary's Account. Further research should be done to study more widely how or whether depictions of the hanging crowd changed throughout the eigtheenth and nineteenth centuries.

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